

Manjari Svarupa Nirupana



Kuñja Bihārī Dās Bābājī

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Translator's Preface

It may be asked why this relatively recent work on an aspect of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theology should be selected for translation. It is not a modern treatment of theology, but one that is extremely traditional in its approach: its purpose is to flesh out that which Gauḍīya practitioners have for generations accepted as the ultimate goal of their practice. However, as Kuñja Bihārī Dāsī himself explains in his introduction, although the concept of *mañjarī-bhāva* is the highest ideal of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, it was not written about as a topic in its own right by the authors of the Gauḍīya canon.

The word *mañjarī* in its sense as a servant-girl of Rādhā does not seem to have been used anywhere prior to Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmin's writings and even then it is not found in a large number of his works such as *Vidagdha-mādhava*, *Lalita-mādhava*, *Dāna-keli-kaumudī*, *Haṁsadūta*, *Uddhava-sandēśa*, *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta*, etc. The mood of the *mañjarīs* called *bhāvollāsā rati* has been identified and defined in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, written in 1463 Śaka, i.e., AD 1541, but the word *mañjarī* itself is nowhere used. In fact, the first occurrence of the term in the corpus of Rūpa's oeuvre is in *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, which was likely finished in 1464 or 1465 Śaka, i.e. AD 1542-3. There the names of Kastūrī Mañjarī, Maṇi Mañjarī and Lavaṅga Mañjarī are found and they are identified as Rādhā's maid-servants.¹

In the *Rādhā-kṛṣṇa-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā*, which was written in 1472 Śaka, i.e. AD 1550, the names of eighteen chief *mañjarīs* are listed. Of these, the first name mentioned is that of Rūpa Mañjarī.² Rūpa Gosvāmin is identified as an incarnation of Rūpa Mañjarī in the *Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā* of Kavi Karṇapūra (AD 1571) and it is thus felt that out of humility he did not write about her in any work prior to the *Rādhā-kṛṣṇa-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā*, but in this, his very last book, he could not avoid mentioning her name. Another early occurrence of the term is found in Jīva Gosvāmin's *Mādhava-mahotsava* (AD 1555), where the names of Kastūrī Mañjarī and others are mentioned.

Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmin worshipped the Divine Couple as a follower of Rūpa Mañjarī, as is clear from his *Stavāvalī*. Indeed, it is evident from a verse in the *Vilāpa-kusumāñjalī* that even though he had spent many years in the company of Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu in Puri as the protigī of Svarūpa Dāmodāra, it was not until he came to Braj in 1535 that he was introduced to the concept of serving Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa as a *mañjarī*. Thus Raghunātha writes at the end of his *Muktā-carita*: "Holding straw in my teeth, I beg

¹UN 4.41, 8.66.

²Verses 182-3.

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repeatedly to become a speck of dust at Rūpa's lotus feet, birth after birth.”

In the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava school, Rūpa Gosvāmin and Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmin are particularly held to be the exemplars of worship in the mood of the mañjarīs. Of the two, Rūpa Gosvāmin is the guru of Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmin.

Rūpa's elder brother Sanātana describes himself as *Rādhā-dāsyecchuḥ*, “one who desires the service to Rādhā,” in his *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* (2.1.21). The sum and substance of Sanātana's own commentary to the word *Rādhā-dāsyecchuḥ* is that such a person desires only to be the servant of Madana Gopāla's most dear Rādhā. He considers that the obtention of such service is all perfection to him; from this all things even beyond his own desires are attained automatically. From this it is clear that service to Rādhā is the extraordinarily supreme great goal of spiritual life.

It is evident, then, that the subject matter of *Mañjarī-svarūpa-nirūpaṇa* rests on a presumed understanding of the entire corpus of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theology, a post-graduate course, as it were. It is for this reason that the work, despite being published for the first time only in 1963, is of great value for those who seek an understanding of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism theology, without a knowledge of which misconceptions are bound to arise. Furthermore, since Kuñja Bihārī Dāsī used the model of Rūpa Gosvāmin's works on divine aesthetics as his model, it is difficult to understand this work without a knowledge of the language of the aestheticians. The insufficiency of English to duplicate the subtle differences in the terms which are used for the various *sthāyi-bhāvas* is particularly noticeable. Words like “love,” “feeling” or “affection” are customarily used to translate *prema*, *bhāva* or *sneha*, but the English words here do not reflect the hierarchical character that Rūpa Gosvāmin intended for these terms. Other terms such as *rati*, *bhāva* and *sthāyi-bhāva* approximate each other, and are translated variously as the dominant mood, affection, love. They refer to the particular relational quality of the affective mood. Though these terms are to some extent explained in the text, the reader is advised to familiarize her or himself with the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* and *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, which are the sources of this terminology.

In its original form, this translation was an English rendition of Kuñja Bihārī Dās Bābājī's *Mañjarī-svarūpa-nirūpaṇa* as well as a shorter supplement to that work, *Mañjarī-bhāva-sādhana-paddhati*, which is represented in this final version as chapters eight and nine, “The mañjarīs' sacred rapture in separation and in union” and “The practice that leads to becoming a handmaiden.” Upon completion of the first draft, it was evident that there was some overlap in the two books and that there was a more natural way to integrate their contents. This led to more editing of the original text through the addition of (generally short) bridging comments which are not identified in the text as mine. Any footnotes in English are mine. Although I made a concerted effort to find the original texts for all references used by Kuñja Bihārī Dāsī, some were regrettably never found.

Several Sanskrit and Bengali verses have been translated into English verse. At no

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time did I intend to translate all verse in this way, but I did not feel that these efforts diminished entirely the meaning of the originals and could not bring myself to reduce them to prose. For this I apologize.

Acknowledgements

I first of all thank Ananta Dās Bābāji Mahārāj for approving the publication of this translation as well as for making his biography of his spiritual master available to me.

I would like to thank Neal Delmonico for doing a thorough re-edit of the introduction, which he first published in the rather short-lived review *Time after Time* in 1986. The use of English translations for the titles of Sanskrit and Bengali books is his innovation and I hope that he will forgive me for abandoning this convention in the later chapters. I am also indebted to Dr. Delmonico for his translation of the problematic word *rasa* as “sacred rapture.” The Sanskrit term is multi-valenced and it should not be thought that any single English word could be used across the board as a synonym for it, yet for the greater part of this text, “sacred rapture” at least adequately conveys *rasa*’s character as an ultimate religious experience.

Steve Rosen is also to be thanked for republishing the text of the introduction in *The Journal of Vaiṣṇava Studies*, thus bringing the same material to a wider audience including Sinisa Kotic (Rādhāśaraṇa Dāsa) of Zagreb, Croatia, whose letters inspired me to bring the entire text to publication.

An important note of thanks is reserved for Joseph O’Connell, of St. Michael’s College at the University of Toronto and to Katherine Young, professor of religious studies at McGill University, both of whom are masters in the art of friendship and encouragement.

It would also be inappropriate for me not to thank all those other teachers, too many to name, through whose kindness I possess the little knowledge I have. Knowing them all to be manifestations of the Paramātman, I bow down to them in reverence.

And last, but not least, I thank my wife Anne, who always stands by me.

Jan Brzezinski

May 21, 1997

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pīyūṣa-sāra-śīśirān api candra-pādān
dhīrān maranda-madhurāṁś ca madhoḥ samīrān |
vāñchanti ke bhuvī tathāmṛta-sindhu-pūrān
śrī-rūpa-pāda-kavitā-surasam nīpiya || 1 ||

After having drunk just once
the delicious juice of Rūpa Gosvāmin's poetry,
who on this earth desires the rays of the moon,
said to bring the dewy essence of ambrosia?
And who would wish
for the sweet, dulcet breezes of spring
or the waves of the ocean
of the nectar of immortality?

paśyanti ke sura-bali ramaṇīyatām tām
mandākinī vikaca-kāñcana-padma-lakṣmīm |
sampūrṇa-śārada-sudhākara-maṇḍalam vā
śrī-rūpa-pāda-kavitā-surasam nīpiya || 2 ||

After having drunk just once
the delicious juice of Rūpa Gosvāmin's poetry,
who would look upon the beauty
of the garden of the gods,
or upon the beauty of blooming golden lotus flowers
in the Ganges of the heavens,
or upon the disc of the full moon of autumn?

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ke vā rasāla-mukuleṣv ali-jhaṅkṛtāni

śṛṅvanti kinnara-vadhū-kala-kaṅṭhi-nādān |

kuñjeṣu mañju-kala-kokila-kūjitam vā

śrī-rūpa-pāda-kavitā-surasam nipīya || 3 ||

And of those who have drunk just once
the delicious juice of Rūpa Gosvāmin's poetry,
who would still listen to the sweet buzzing
of the bees as they taste the mango flowers,
or to the song of the wives of the heavenly choir,
or the sweet song of the koīl in the forests?

Chapter One

An introduction to Mañjarī-bhāva

*yasya sphūrṭi-lavāṅkureṇa laghunāpy antar munīnām manaḥ
sprṣṭam mokṣa-sukhād virajyati jhaṭity āsvādyamānād api
preṃṣas tasya mukunda sāhasitayā śaknotu kaḥ prārthane
bhūyāj janmani janmani pracayinī kintu sprhāpy atra me*

O Mukunda, giver of liberation!
Who in the world is there with the courage
to pray for the gift of sacred love,
of which the slightest manifestation,
when brushing against the minds of the great sages,
makes them forget the happiness of liberation?

My prayer therefore to you is this:
that I should simply desire for such *prema*,
and that this desire should increase forever,
in this world, birth after birth.
(Rūpa Gosvāmī, *Aṣṭādaśa-cchanda, Vastra-haraṇa, 2*)

Even those self-satisfied sages who directly experience the happiness of liberation immediately become indifferent to that pleasure simply on coming into contact with the fractionally germinated seed of *prema*; what person in this world is so bold that he would pray for such wealth? I, therefore, always pray only that, wherever I should take birth, I may constantly develop the thirst and enthusiasm for attaining that great prize—that I should remain forgetful of all else and thirst for it in the way that a fish from its pond craves for a return to water, as a cātaka bird thirsts for the appearance of a cloud, or as the fabled cakora seeks the rays of the moon.

Brahmānanda is the name given to the joy found in the transcendentalist's realization of universal spiritual identity. This pleasure is so highly lauded by its proponents that it is said to make all worldly pleasure, even that of being an emperor or universal creator like Brahmā, appear completely insignificant. Yet this *brahmānanda* itself becomes an object of scorn for one who has attained the fortune of getting even the slightest scent of Kṛṣṇa-*prema*, or love for Kṛṣṇa. *Prema* is therefore the ultimate goal of life, or *prayojana-tattva*.

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There are unlimited varieties of *prema*, but there is a vast difference in their magnitude. According to Viśvanātha Cakravartī's commentary on the varieties of heroine in "The Blazing Sapphire" (*Ujjvala-nīlamanī*), the four degrees of magnitude are: atomic, comparatively substantial, great and exceedingly great.³ In those persons whose devotional taste has not yet developed (*ajāta-ruci*), *prema* is present only in atomic quantity; it is only barely detectable and consequently, the Lord's giving of himself to such devotees is also just barely perceptible. At the opposite extreme, *prema* is found to be of exceedingly great magnitude only in the person of the Queen of Vrindavan, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. There, because *prema* is present in its fullest possible manifestation, Kṛṣṇa is also in complete subordination to her. Sacred love (*prema*) is great in all the residents of Vrindavan and therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa accepts the role of a subordinate to them also. The Lord submits himself to devotees like Nārada, in whom sacred love is greater or lesser, in proportion to their devotion. When the Lord consents to become a subordinate to his devotee, i.e., in a case where love is either great or exceedingly great, his majestic aspects remain completely hidden in the presence of so much devotional sweetness, in the way that the potencies of a feudal baron, though relatively apparent to his subordinates, remain subdued in the presence of the emperor.

The strength and magnitude of Rādhā's love is further eulogized in "The Jewel Box of Sacred Love" (*Prema-samputikā*):

*loka-dvayāt svajanataḥ parataḥ svato vā
prāṇa-priyād api sumeru-samā yadi syuḥ
kleśās tad apy atibalī sahasā vijitya
premaiva tān harir ibhān iva puṣṭim eti*

As a strong lion defeats many elephants
and then becomes further nourished
and strengthened by feeding on them,
so too does sacred love, when exceedingly great,
conquer all obstacles before it,
whether they come from this world or the next,
from enemies or from family members,
from one's own body or the things connected to it,
or even from that dearest one
who is the object of the love itself.

Even if such obstacles should be as vast
as the immeasurable Mount Meru,
sacred love will conquer them and,
having conquered,

³From the commentary by Viśvanātha Cakravartī on Rūpa's *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, 5.7. (ed.) Pandit Durgaprasad and Vasudeva Lakshmana Shastri Pansikar, reprinted (Delhi: Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan, 1985), 105.

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become stronger and more vital. (*Prema-samputikā*, 54.)

Sacred love is the essence of Kṛṣṇa’s internal potency, known as the *hlādinī* or bliss-giving energy.⁴ This energy manifests in different types of devotees in four basic varieties known as servitorship, comradeship, guardianship and the sweetest affection known as “mistress-ship.” This mistress-ship is called “sweet love” (*madhurā rati*) because it is the most relishable of the devotional sentiments. It is of three types: common (*sādhāraṇī rati*), compromising (*samañjasā rati*), and competent (*samarthā rati*). Of the three, the last is considered the most perfect. In *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, Rūpa Gosvāmin has described this competent love as *kāma-rūpā bhakti* or the devotion that has the form or appearance of sexual attraction:

That devotion or love which makes the desire for sexual union submit to it and take on its own form, i.e., makes it function only for the purpose of Kṛṣṇa’s pleasure, is known as *kāma-rūpā bhakti*. Where such devotion exists, all efforts are made only for his happiness and never for one’s own pleasure or satisfaction, even though externally or superficially this desire for Kṛṣṇa’s pleasure may appear like a desire for one’s own sexual satisfaction. *Kāma-rūpā bhakti* is widely known to exist only in the cowherd girls of Vrindavan. Learned persons have given the name of sexual attraction (*kāma*) to the love of the cowherd girls for Kṛṣṇa because, in the multifarious expressions of sweetness, such sports as embracing, kissing and other amorous activities take place. Even great devotees like Uddhava adore the spirit of the cowherd girls because it transforms the essentially selfish sexual desire into pure devotional love or desire for the Supreme Lord’s sensual enjoyment. These devotees desire to attain that level of devotion, but remain forever unable.⁵

In “The Story of Gopāla” (*Gopāla-campū*)⁶ and “The Treatise of Sacred Love” (*Prīti-sandarbhā*), Jīva Gosvāmin writes that the Lord gave Uddhava a position in his life in the spiritual world of Goloka, but even so, Uddhava was unable to obtain the form of a cowherd girl or the true identity of one. This does not mean that Uddhava’s status is not extremely elevated. According to the *Bṛhad-Bhāgavatāmṛta* (the larger “Nectar of the Lord’s Devotee”), there are five kinds of devotees: (1) the devotee in knowledge (*jñāna-bhaktā*), such as Bharata Mahārāja, (2) the pure devotee (*śuddha-bhaktā*) like Ambarīṣa

⁴Śrī Jīva, *Durga-saṅgaminī* on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, 1.3.1.

⁵*sā kāma-rūpā sambhoga-tṛṣṇāṁ yā nayati svatām |*
yad asyām kṛṣṇa-saukhyārtham eva kevalam udyamaḥ ||
iyam tu vraja-devīṣu suprasiddhā virājate |
āsām prema-viśeṣo'yaṁ prāptaḥ kām api mādhurīm ||
tat-tat-kṛīḍā-nidānatvāt kāma ity ucyate budhaiḥ ||
tathā ca tanre premaiva gopa-rāmāṇām kāma ity agamāt prathām || iti ||
ity uddhavādayo'py etaṁ vāñchanti bhagavat-priyāḥ || BRS, 1.2.283-6.

⁶ii.37.11.

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Mahārāja, (3) the devotee in sacred love (*prema-bhakta*) like Hanumān, (4) the devotee entirely fixed in sacred love (*prema-para-bhakta*) like the five Pāṇḍava brothers, and (5) the devotee completely absorbed in and moved by sacred love (*premātura-bhakta*) like the Yādavas, of whom the chief is Uddhava. Each of these divisions is superior to the one preceding it.⁷ Nevertheless, even though Uddhava stands as superior to all the above-mentioned devotees, he cannot attain to the ultimate standard of devotional sentiment known as the mood of the cowherd girl (*gopī-bhāva*).

Devotion to Kṛṣṇa in the form of sexual desire (*kāma-rūpā*) is further subdivided into two divisions. One entails desiring to be a mistress to Kṛṣṇa. This is called *sambhogecchā-mayī*, or devotion formed of the desire for a direct sexual relationship with the Lord. The second division is called *tad-bhāvecchātmikā*, devotion arising out of a desire for the feelings of Rādhā, i.e., devotion which approves of and follows in the wake of the “leading lady’s” affairs with her leading man, Kṛṣṇa. This second category is the one into which the devotion of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī’s girlfriends (the *sakhīs*) falls.

Amongst Rādhārāṇī’s girlfriends or *sakhīs* there are again several divisions, all of which participate in the spirit of *tad-bhāvecchātmikā* devotion. Some of the girlfriends have equal love for both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa; others are more inclined to either one or the other. Those who are more favorable to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Kṛṣṇa’s leading lady, are known as *Rādhā-snehādhikā*; these are also known as the *mañjarīs*, or “flower buds.” Rūpa Gosvāmin has given their unique affection or devotional sentiment a special name, that of *bhāvollāsā ratī*, for they consider themselves to be exclusively the maidservants of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and are more devoted to her than to even Śrī Kṛṣṇa himself.

Pure devotional service, the general definition of which is given at the beginning of the “Ocean of the Nectar of Sacred Rapture” (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.6: *anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam...*), namely that it is completely free from any other desire, finds its most perfect actualization in this spirit of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī’s maidservants, *bhāvollāsā ratī*.

The love of the cowherd girls of Vrindavan is called “competent” (*samarthā*) because it has the power to control Kṛṣṇa, to make him who is the Supreme Lord (“capable of doing anything he pleases, or of not doing it, or of changing from one mode of action to another according to his whim”) incapable of paying back the debt he feels to them. He himself admits to this in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

I am completely unable, even if given a lifetime of the gods, to repay you
your good deeds, for you have dedicated yourselves to me completely,
breaking off the powerful chains that kept you bound to home and family

⁷ *jñāna-bhakti*; as tu teṣu eke śuddha-bhaktāḥ pare'pare |
prema-bhaktāḥ pare prema-parāḥ premāturāḥ pare ||
tāratamyavatām eṣām phale sāmāyam na yujyate |
tāratamyam tu vaikuṇṭhe kathaṅcid ghaṭate na hi || (2.1.16-17). See commentary also.

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to worship me. You will therefore have to be satisfied with your good deeds alone.⁸

Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the chief of Vrindavan’s milkmaids; she is the presiding deity of this competent devotion. Nevertheless, she herself is incapable of creating any change or transformation in the determination of the mañjarīs to exclusively serve her, their mistress.⁹ Even though she is the source and abode of the innumerable goddesses of fortune, she still feels herself to be indebted to the mañjarīs. She is the reservoir of unlimited compassion and is always anxious to fulfill the desires of all the devotees, but the mañjarīs’ only desire is service to her, and they will have nothing else of her. These are confidential and difficult facts that are not known to all, secrets only the select few can comprehend.

In the *Prīti-sandarbhā*, Jīva Gosvāmin has shown that the Supreme Lord enjoys four types of pleasure: one from simply being situated in his being, another that comes from his immeasurable opulences, another that arises from his mind; and the last and best, one that is derived from the love of his devotees.¹⁰

In the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, the Lord is described as the “devotee of his devotees.”¹¹ Similarly, it is written in the *Caitanya-bhāgavata*:

*kṛṣṇa tāhā pūrṇa koren, jāhā māgen bhṛtya |
bhakta-vāñchā-pūrti bhinna nāhi anya kṛtya ||*

“Kṛṣṇa gives whatever is prayed for by his servant. He has no duty other than to fulfill the wishes of his devotees.” (CBh, 3.2.478)

When Lord Gaurāṅga, the combined form of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, appeared on this earth, Rādhā’s dearest maidservant, Rūpa Mañjarī, also appeared as Rūpa Gosvāmin. The following incident from Śrī Rūpa’s life will help clarify the above statement. At one time, Rūpa Gosvāmin was living and performing his bhajan at a place called Tero Kadamba, which lies halfway between Nanda Gram and Javat (Yāvaṭa) in the district of Braj. One day he thought to himself that if he only had some milk and sugar he could prepare some condensed milk (*khīr*) to offer his deity and then serve it as sacred remnants (*prasād*) to his spiritual master, Sanātana. Only a few moments after having this thought, a young girl came by carrying milk and sugar, which she gave to him, telling him to make *khīr* for his deity. Having done this, she went away. Rūpa then did as he had been told; he boiled the

⁸BhP 10.32.22. *na pāraye’haṁ niravadya-saṁyujāṁ sva-sādhu-kṛtyaṁ vibudhāyusaṁpi vaḥ |
yāṁ ābhajan durjara-geha-śṛṅkhalāḥ saṁvṛścyā tad vaḥ pratīyātu sādhunā ||*

⁹See UN, 8.88-9, *Vṛndāvana-mahimāmṛta*, 16.94.

¹⁰PrītiS. 63: *bhagavad-ānandaḥ khalu dvividhaḥ: svarūpānandaḥ svarūpa-śakty-ānandaś ca | antimaś ca
dvividhaḥ: mānasānanda aiśvarya-nandaś ca | tatrānena tadīyeṣu mānasānandeṣu bhakty-ānandasya sāmṛjyaṁ
darśitam |*

¹¹BhP 10.86.59: *bhagavān bhakta-bhaktimān.*

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sugar and milk down into a sweet and delicious preparation for offering up to the Lord. Afterwards he gave the sacred remnants to Sanātana to enjoy. While Sanātana was eating, he was seized by uncontrollable spasms of ecstasy. When he had calmed down somewhat, he inquired from his brother where he had gotten his ingredients. Rūpa told him the story of the Vrajavāsī girl. When he had heard the entire account, Sanātana immediately realized that it had in fact been Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī herself who had come personally bearing gifts for them. But Sanātana was concerned because, despite the great blessing Rādhā had given them, she was their goddess and they were her servants. As the proper relation of served and servant had thus been reversed, he therefore strictly forbade Rūpa accepting any such gifts in the future.¹²

Sanātana Gosvāmin called this servitude to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī “the most uncommon and elevated of all spiritual goals” in his commentary on his own *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*.¹³ Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, once the spiritual guide of sixty thousand ascetics, elaborates on this idea in his *Vṛndāvana-mahimāmṛta* (“Nectar of the Greatness of Vṛndāvana”):

Glorious are those persons who desire to climb out of the well of material existence and attain liberation; even more glorious are those who have dedicated themselves to the service of the Lord. More elevated again are those who have become attached to Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet. Those who love the husband of the Queen Rukmiṇī are superior again to such devotees, while more praiseworthy still are those who are dear to the son of Yaśodā. More glorious again are those who have made friends with Subala’s comrade. Superior to those in the mood of friendship are those who worship the Lord as the lover of the gopīs. Yet standing at the head of all devotees in the creation are those whose thoughts have been washed away by the flood of sacred rapture emanating from the daughter of King Vṛṣabhānu, Rādhā, and worship her above all.¹⁴

That devotion that has been described in the introductory verse to the *Vidagdha-mādhava* (and then quoted in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*) as “the most elevated of all sacred erotic raptures” is this affection of Rādhārāṇī’s girlfriends, who care even more for her than they do for Kṛṣṇa himself. Their *bhāvollāsā-rati*—a mood of constant exultation in Rādhā’s divine feelings for Kṛṣṇa—is the crown jewel of all mystic achievements. It is the priceless boon of Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s limitless mercy.

anarpita-carīm cirāt karuṇayāvātīrṇaḥ kalau

¹²*Bhakti-ratnākara*, 5.1311-30.

¹³*sarvāsādharāṇa-parama-mahā-sādhyavastu*, BṛBhāg 2.1.21 comm.

¹⁴*dhanyo loke mumukṣur hari-bhajana-paro dhanya-dhanyas tato'sau
dhanyo yaḥ kṛṣṇa-pādāmbuja-rati-paramo rukmiṇīsa-priyo'taḥ |
yāśodeya-priyo'taḥ subala-suhṛd ato gopakāntā-priyo'taḥ
śrīmad-vṛndāvaneśvary-atirasa-vivaśa-vivaśārādhakaḥ sarva-mūrdhni || 2.35.*

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samarpayitum unnatojjvala-rasām sva-bhakti-śriyām |
hariḥ purata-sundara-dyuti-kadamba-sandīpitaḥ
sadā hṛdaya-kandare sphuratu vaḥ śacī-nandanah ||

This elevated, effulgent, taste of sacred rapture
is the wealth of devotional love;
the Lord never gives it at any time;
yet, out of his mercy, he came in this Age of Quarrel
to distribute this treasure to the world,
becoming incarnate in his golden form.
The son of Śacī is like a lion;
may he dwell in your hearts forever.¹⁵

Mahāprabhu infused all of his power into the heart of Rūpa Gosvāmin, his dearest associate, and had him reveal to the world what was his own heart's desire. In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* it is said:

The Lord taught Rūpa the truths about Kṛṣṇa, devotion to him and sacred æsthetics, as well as the conclusions of the Bhāgavata. Those conclusions he had heard from Rāmānanda Rāya he compassionately infused into Rūpa. The Lord transmitted his own powers into the heart of Śrī Rūpa and made him an expert in explaining all these truths.¹⁶

When will that Rūpa
who has established on earth
the heart's desire of Śrī Caitanya,
bestow on me a place at his feet?¹⁷

Caitanya Mahāprabhu himself resided in the whorl of Rūpa's lotus-like heart in the form of the raptures of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa for the purpose of giving himself to the unfortunate souls of the world. As a result, Śrīla Rūpa Prabhu was able to produce two master works on the varieties of spiritual experience: *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, "The Ocean of the Nectar of Sacred Rapture," and *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, "The Blazing Sapphire."

The non-devotees cannot see directly what is before their eyes, just as an owl is unable to see the bright rays of the sun.¹⁸

¹⁵The text here is based on an anonymous Bengali verse translation of *Vidagdha-mādhava* 1.2 (CC 1.3.2).

¹⁶CC 2.19.105-7.

¹⁷*Prema-bhakti-candrikā*, 2: śrī-caitanya-mano'bhīṣṭam sthāpitam yena bhūtale |
so'yaṁ rūpaḥ kadā mahyaṁ dadāti sva-pādāntikam ||

¹⁸dekhiyā nā dekhe tāre abhaktera gaṇ |
ulūke nā dekhe jaiche sūryera kiraṇ || CC 1.3.86.

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In the twelfth verse of the *Manaḥ-sikṣā* (“Instructions to the Mind”), Raghunātha Dāsa writes: “One who recites this poem becomes a follower of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmin and his group and receives the jewel of worship of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in the forest of Gokula.”¹⁹ In his gloss to this verse, Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa expands on the idea by saying, “One should follow in the footsteps of Rūpa Gosvāmin and of those in his entourage (i.e., Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, Śrī Sanātana, Śrī Lokanātha, etc.) by living in Vrindavan and serving Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa there.”

Raghunātha Dāsa also designated Śrī Rūpa as the leader of the six Gosvāmins elsewhere, in *Muktā-carita* (“The Story of the Pearls”) where he makes the following final prayer:

*ādadāno radais tṛṇam idam yāce punaḥ punaḥ |
śrī-rūpa-padāmbhoja-dhuliḥ syām janma-janmani ||*

Taking straw in my teeth, I make this one prayer again and again: May I
become a piece of dust at Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmin’s lotus feet, birth after birth.

The conclusion, then, is that if one wishes to get a full appreciation of the inner desires of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, he should know that he has no alternative but to wholeheartedly follow in the footsteps of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmin.

In *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, the five chief types of sacred feelings with all their component ingredients are described in an comprehensive manner. Sacred erotic love (*madhurā rati*) has there been characterized as standing above all other kinds of sacred attitude towards the Supreme; nevertheless, it was only summarized there briefly as Rūpa reserved his extensive treatment of the subject for the exhaustive *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*. Rūpa himself explains why:

*nivṛttānupayogitvād durūhatvād ayam rasaḥ |
rahasyatvāc ca samkṣīpya vitatāṅgo vilikhyate ||*

Three types of person are unqualified to hear about sacred erotic rapture:
(1) renunciates who are excessively inclined to asceticism, (2) others who
are unable to distinguish between mundane sexuality and the divine eros,
and (3) those who, though devotees, are indifferent to the erotic mysticism
of the Bhāgavata-purāṇa. Since the subject is esoteric and rather difficult to
understand, as well as being expansive, I have only given an abbreviated
description of it here.²⁰

Over the course of these two works, however, only the first division of erotic devotion,

¹⁹ *sayūtha-śrī-rūpānuga iha bhavan gokula-vane
jano rādhā-kṛṣṇātula-bhajana-ratnam sa labhate || Manaḥ-sikṣā 12.*

²⁰ *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, 3.5.2.

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i.e., *sambhogecchā-mayī*—that of devotees who desire to be Kṛṣṇa’s lovers, has been described extensively with all the ingredients necessary for the production of its form of rapture, the experience of transcendental emotion. However, the second division of erotic devotion called *tad-bhāvecchātmikā*, consisting of a desire to serve, promote and share in the feelings of Kṛṣṇa’s lovers, which is the possession of Rādhā’s sakhīs and mañjarīs, who are imbued with a spirit of complete dedication and service to her, has not been described anywhere in the same far-reaching manner. Some details of this type of devotion have been provided here and there in those and a large number of other works, albeit somewhat obscurely. It would be a difficult task for an ordinary person to put these details together in an orderly fashion for contemplation, yet for the practitioners of the devotional life who yearn for the mystic perfection of direct service to the Divine Couple, such knowledge is an absolute necessity. Without the kind of guidance provided by such a manual, eager aspirants for the mood of a mañjarī would not really know from which models they should take inspiration, nor which moods are appropriate, nor with whose feelings they should seek to empathize. For this reason, for an aspirant to mañjarī-bhāva, a complete familiarity with the mañjarīs’ dominant emotions, the specifiers, notifiers and so forth, is an absolute necessity.

In the *Muralī-vilāsa* (“The Sport of the Flute”), Jāhnavā Ṭhākuraṇī supplies some answers to these questions in a conversations with her adopted son and disciple, Rāmāi Ṭhākur (Rāmacandra Gosvāmin):

Rāmāi Ṭhākur said, “Please continue. Tell me about this attitude called *bhāvollāsā*. Where is it to be found?”

Mother Jāhnavā answered, “Dear one, listen carefully. This *bhāvollāsā-rati* can only be found in the holy land of Vrindavan. The Lord’s abode of Vrindavan is even beyond the reach of the gods. There, the ever youthful Divine Couple reigns supreme. Serving them rhapsodically day and night are hand-maidens like Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī and Śrī Anaṅga Mañjarī who possess this *bhāvollāsā rati*. The happiness of the Divine Couple is their happiness; they know nothing else. Always immersed in an ocean of bliss in the service of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, they are oblivious to time. Their love, which delights in feeling, like a companion mood, aims at giving pleasure to Kṛṣṇa; it feeds and nourishes the love between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. They are all identical with Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī; they merely possess different bodies—one life, one soul, they all are expansions of Rādhā. When she and her lover are at the height of rapturous intimacy and the hair stands erect on her body, the very same phenomenon occurs on the bodies of her girlfriends. They experience seven times the pleasure that Rādhā does! Sometimes, on some pretext, she arranges for them to have trysts with Kṛṣṇa, seeing which her happiness increases thousands of times. This is a description of the *bhāvollāsā* love, which caused the Lord to say in the circle

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dance, 'I am unable to repay you gopīs for the love you have shown me.'”²¹

The process of attaining *bhāvollāsa* love is described by Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura in the first song of his famous “Moonbeam of Sacred Love” (*Prema-bhakti-candrikā*):

The love of the Divine Couple is as pure
as gold refined thousands of times.
May glory crown Rūpa and Sanātana,
who revealed this treasure to the world.
O, please be kind and give me that treasure of love
and I will wear it as a pendant around my neck.
In their books, these two great ones
clearly showed all the intricacies of this sacred love.
Hearing their works produces
the greatest joy in the heart
and shelter in the erotic rapture of the loving Couple.²²

Raghunātha Dāsa writes:

*anārādhyā rādhā-padāmbhoja-reṇum
anāśritya vrndāṭavīm tat-padānkām |
asambhāsyā tad-bhāva-gambhīra-cittān
kutaḥ śyāma-sindho rasāvagāhaḥ ||*

Not ever having worshipped once the dust
that sprinkles from Śrīmatī's lotus feet;
not having taken shelter even once
of Vraja Dhām, marked with her dainty tread;
not ever having spoken with the souls
so laden with a weighty love for her ,
how foolish they who think that they can plunge
into the secret sea of nectar that is Śyāma!²³

And from the *Padyāvalī*,

*kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa-bhāvita-matiḥ
kriyatām yadi kuto'pi labhyate |*

²¹Muralī-vilāsa, ch. 6, p. 46.

²²yugala-kiśora dhan, yena lakṣa-bāṇa hem, hena prema prakāśila yārā
jaya rūpa-sanātan, deha more sei dhan, se ratan mor gale hārā ||
prema-bhakti rīti jata, nija granthe subekata, kariyāchen dui mahāsay |
jāhāra śravaṇa haite, parānanda hay citte, yugala madhura rasāśray ||

²³Svasamkalpa-prakāśa-stotra, 1.

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*tatra laulyam api mūlyam ekalam
janma-koṭi-sukṛtair na labhyate ||*

O friend, if you should find it anywhere,
that heart absorbed in Kṛṣṇa rasa so rare,
be quick to buy, how much the soul's in need!
In that bazaar is posted just one price;
millions of pious works will not suffice,
the cost is to be paid in coins of greed.²⁴

Where does such spiritual greed come from? Rūpa Gosvāmin summarizes this in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*:

When one has gained some perception, from hearing the Bhāgavata Purāṇa or other books on the Lord's sports written by rapturous devotees, that all of Kṛṣṇa's senses are pleased by the feelings, beauty and qualities of the residents of Vraja such as Nanda and Yaśodā, an attitude arises that is indifferent to scripture or argument and is a symptom of the development of eagerness or greed (*lobha*). This attitude is, more specifically, the innate, spontaneous desire for the sweetness of those various moods: "May I also have the same kinds of feelings and qualities."²⁵

Even though spontaneous attraction to the mood of the residents of Vrindavan is so natural, not all persons develop it instantly upon first hearing about it. The *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* says: "Some rare fortunate soul develops greed on hearing the glories of the residents of Vrindavan."²⁶

One needs the mercy of a devotee who is himself endowed with this spirit and the candidate must be possessed of certain qualities on his own—a certain lucidity or clearness of mind—before such greed can appear. Therefore, Rūpa says in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.309) that it is *kṛpāikalabhyā*, "only available through the mercy of the Lord and his devotees."

In the *Bhakti-sandarbha* ("Treatise on Devotion"), Śrī Jīva describes the development of greed in the following way:

A devotee whose heart is clear like a crystal will find that when the rays of the moon-like devotion of the residents of Vraja fall upon it, it lights up and takes on that glow itself, i.e., eagerness manifests itself in his heart. Then a

²⁴*Padyāvalī* 14. Also quoted at CC, 2.8.11.

²⁵*tat-tad-bhāvādi-mādhurye śrute dhīr yad apekṣate |
nātra śāstram na yuktīm ca tal lobhotpatti-lakṣaṇam || BRS 1.2.292.*

²⁶*ihā śuni lubdha hay kono bhāgyavān. CC 2.22.87.*

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curiosity about the dealings or feelings or passions of the eternally perfect residents of Vraja such as Nanda, Yaśodā, etc., arises in the practitioner. In other words a desire to know more about the patterns of their feelings occurs and he develops a taste or hunger for those patterns.²⁷

The candidate who is qualified for practicing devotion in pursuit of erotic passion (*kāmānugā bhakti*) is further described in Rūpa Gosvāmin's *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*:

Those who have seen the beauty of the image of the Lord or who have heard about his sports with his lovers, from their “falling in love” (*pūrvā-rāga*) to the ecstasies of the circle dance, and who have become eager for the feelings of either the heroines or their friends are qualified for the practice of one of the two types of this form of devotion.²⁸

Jīva's commentary on this verse is as follows:

Previously [in verse 1.2.292], only the process of hearing was mentioned. Now it appears that it is necessary to see Kṛṣṇa's form also. Seeing Kṛṣṇa's images, certainly, is also dependent on hearing, for without hearing, there is no possibility that the Lord's beauty or activities will spring into reality. Moreover, even without seeing the image of the Lord, hearing of his sports will be effective.²⁹

Who then is not qualified? Expanding on the verse from *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (3.5.2), which was quoted above (page xx), Viṣṇu Dāsa writes in his commentary on *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* (1.2):

- (1) This spiritual discussion is unedifying for those who, though they are devotees of Kṛṣṇa, have no inclination toward erotic sacred rapture and for those who, considering the Lord's erotic dalliances to be the same as mundane sexuality, feel dispassion or lack any taste for them.
- (2) Although there are many devotees in erotic sacred rapture, still, because they have not been properly trained or purified, not all of them are proficient at tasting rapture. For them, this discussion is difficult to grasp.
- (3) It is improper to discuss this topic before those whose minds are deeply absorbed in the path of injunctions, who, because of having various tendencies, are by nature unaware of the path of passion. The superiority of

²⁷ *tādṛśa-rāga-sudhākara-karābhāsa-samullasita-hṛdaya-sphaṭika-maṇeḥ sādhakasya tat-paripāṭīṣv api rucir jāyate. BhaktiS 310.*

²⁸ *śrī-mūrter mādhurīm prekṣya tat-tal-līlām niśamya ca | tad-bhāvākāṅkṣiṇo ye syus teṣu sādhanatānayoḥ || BRS 1.2.300.*

²⁹ *tasyās tad-bhāvādi-mādhuryam niśamyeti śrutvā, kevalam śravaṇam yat pūrvam uktaṁ tatra tu tasyāḥ prekṣaṇe'pi tasya śravaṇasya sāhāyiam avaśyam mṛgyata ity abhipretam, yad vinā mūla-tat-tad-rūpa-līlādy-asphūrṭiḥ.*

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the path of passion means, after all, that there are unlimited lesser natures unsuited for it.

This conception of the mañjarī is as difficult to comprehend as it is rare. Yet, as it is extremely important we have no other recourse than that of familiarizing ourselves with it. Although such a task is beyond the capabilities of an uneducated, foolish and most unqualified person such as myself, still, because of the indomitable influence of this holy land and of the blessings of the Vaiṣṇavas, who are all embodiments of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's compassion, I have been inspired to take up this task with enthusiasm.

Chapter Two

Sthāyi-bhāva:

The Dominant Mood (I): Erotic Divine Love

2.1 An overview of the concepts of sacred rapture

When the causes, effects and concomitant factors that contribute to the Lord's relishing of his loving affairs with his devotees are expressed in poetic or dramatic form, they act upon the subconscious makeup of a sympathetic audience of devotees, influencing them to experience different moods, feelings and ecstasies. These different elements are referred to by terms coming from the technical language of æsthetics; they are known as *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas*, *sāttvika-bhāvas* and *sañcāri-bhāvas*.

Rūpa Gosvāmin defines *sthāyi-bhāva* in the following manner:

That emotion or mood which dominates over all others, whether they are favorable or antagonistic to it, and lords over them like a strong king, is called the dominant emotion or *sthāyi-bhāva*.³⁰

The media through which emotion arises are called *vibhāvas*. There are two categories of *vibhāva*: (1) the personalities or lovers experiencing the original emotion, who are called the *ālambanas* or props, and (2) the circumstantial inspirations for the emotion, such as the setting, the season and its symptoms, or reminders of past emotions, etc., which are known as the *uddīpanas*. The personalities are also divided into two according to the role they play: the one experiencing the dominant emotion has been given the name of *āśraya-vibhāva*, or repository of love; the other is the object (*viśaya*) of the emotion, the one who inspires love in the *āśraya*.³¹ The *uddīpanas* or kindlers of rapture awaken the dominant mood, which then manifests itself externally in certain physical responses; these are called *anubhāvas* if they are done somewhat consciously or willingly (like the coquettish

³⁰*aviruddhān viruddhāmś ca bhāvān yo vaśatām nayet |
surājeva virājeta sa sthāyī bhāva ucyate || BRS 2.5.1.*

³¹In traditional Sanskrit drama, the subject and object of love can be either male or female. Indeed, as one character expresses love for the other, he takes on the role of subject while the other is the object of that love. In the devotional context, the same is to a certain extent true, particularly where Rūpa Gosvāmin's dramas are concerned: Kṛṣṇa's emotional involvement is an important aspect of the drama in both *Lalita-mādhava* and *Vidagdha-mādhava*. However, from a devotional point of view, the devotee is strictly speaking the repository or subject of love (*āśraya*) for Kṛṣṇa who is the object of that love.

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movements of a woman who is attracted to her man), and *sāttvikas* if they are spontaneous or uncontrollable (like tears or hair standing on end). *Sañcārīs*³² (“concomitant feelings”) are the passing emotions, like excitement or frustration, which appear in the lovers in particular situations. They arise from the dominant mood and give it beauty and variety, like waves in the ocean. All the different ingredients combine together to produce the full æsthetic experience known as *rasa*.

Devotional rapture, or *bhakti-rasa*, takes place when the dominant mood of love for Kṛṣṇa, being nourished by a feeling of wonder, is relished in the heart of a devotee along with the different *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas*, *sāttvikas* and *vyabhicāris*, through the devotional processes of hearing about Kṛṣṇa’s form, qualities and activities, etc.³³

The different identities of relationship with Kṛṣṇa are called *sthāyi-bhāvas*, or dominant moods. When one of these is mixed with the four ingredients known as *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas*, *sāttvikas* and *vyabhicāris*, the sweet taste of sacred rapture can be had, just as when, in a given recipe, the main ingredient when combined with other spices and condiments takes on a unique flavour. Rūpa himself gives the example of yogurt, which when mixed with sugar, butter, pepper and camphor becomes the delicious concoction known as *rasāla*.³⁴

2.2 The person qualified to experience sacred rapture

Those who have cultivated a desire for devotion to the Lord, in previous lives as well as this one, can become connoisseurs of sacred rapture. The following series of verses from the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* describes the preconditions leading to the manifestation of sacred rapture and the importance of lifetimes of devotional experience in the development of the dominant mood of love (*sthāyi-bhāva*) and its subsequent transformation into sacred rapture:

*bhakti-nirdhūta-doṣāṇām prasannojjvala-cetasām
śrī-bhāgavata-raktānām rasika-saṅga-raṅginām
jīvanī-bhūta-govinda-pāda-sevā-sukha-śrīyām
premāntaraṅga-bhūtāni kṛtyāny evānutiṣṭhatām*

³²Also known as *vyabhicāri-bhāvas*.

³³*vibhāvair anubhāvaiś ca sāttvikair vyabhicāribhiḥ |
svādyatvaṁ hṛdi bhaktānām ānītā śravaṇādibhiḥ |
eṣā kṛṣṇa-ratiḥ sthāyī bhāvo bhakti-raso bhavet || BRS 2.1.5.*

³⁴*ei sab kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa sthāyi-bhāva |
sthāyi-bhāve mile yadi vibhāva anubhāv ||
sāttvika vyabhicāri bhāver milane |
kṛṣṇa-bhakti rasa hay amṛta āsvādane ||
yaiche dadhi sitā ghrta marica karpūr |
milane rasāla hay amṛta madhur || CC 2.19.180-2.*

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*hṛdayeṣu virājanti saṁskāra-yugalojjvalā
ratir ānanda-rūpaiva nīyamānā tu rasyatām*

For those whose faults have been entirely removed by the performance of devotional practices and whose minds are peaceful (making them suitable for the appearance of pure goodness' special features) and effulgent (and thus equipped with full knowledge), who are attached to hearing the Bhāgavata Purāṇa and who find happiness in the association of devotees, for whom the joy of service to Govinda has become the *raison-d'être* of their existence, and who are always engaged in the most confidential process of developing love for Kṛṣṇa, namely hearing and chanting about his qualities and pastimes, have a love (*rati*)³⁵ for Kṛṣṇa which is effulgently manifest due to the conditioning of both the past and previous lives. This love, which is an embodiment of the divine joy, becomes experienced as *rasa* without any dependence upon the fine quality of the poetry or dramatic performance being witnessed as is the case in material aesthetic experiences, but simply due to the different inspirators, etc., connected with the person of Kṛṣṇa.³⁶

2.3 Kṛṣṇa is the object of divine love

God, Kṛṣṇa, is the object of love in all devotional relationships. There are, nevertheless, differences in the way that God manifests himself to his devotees in accordance with their desires. A fundamental distinction is made between the Lord's majesty and his sweetness. This book is more

concerned with Kṛṣṇa as the original god of love or Kāmadeva than it is with his manifestation as the Lord of the universes. It is in this latter form that he is the object of the *gopī*'s love.

2.31 God's majesty and his sweetness

The word *bhagavān* has been given many definitions. Jīva has defined it to mean "that Truth which contains an extraordinary combination of both godly opulences and human sweetness."³⁷ Generally speaking, however, the word *bhagavān* refers to the possessor of the six opulences of wealth, strength, fame, beauty, knowledge and renunciation. These opulences can be considered in two divisions, namely supreme majesty and supreme sweetness. Majesty, or *aiśvarya*, refers to those powers by which the Supreme Lord controls the entire universe. The contemplation of the Lord's majestic potencies results in

³⁵The term *rati* is synonymous here with *sthāyi-bhāva*. *Rati* is being described as the raw material for *rasa* or sacred rapture.

³⁶BRS 2.1.6-10.

³⁷Laghutoṣaṇī to BhP 10.11.12.

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responses like fear and excessive respectfulness in the devotee. On the other hand, sweetness (*mādhurya*) refers to those qualities of the Lord which cause his form and pastimes themselves to become the object of the devotee's delight. Realization of those qualities results in love (*prema* or *prīti*) for the Lord.

Knowledge of God's formless aspect or essence (*svarūpa*) results in the experience of the bliss known as *svarūpānanda*, whereas a feeling for God's sweetness covers both the essential and majestic aspects of his nature. In other words, in the ocean of the devotee's experience of God's sweetness, knowledge of the Lord's essence and glories become covered like a submarine mountain.³⁸

Jīva Gosvāmin further states that although knowledge of the Lord's essence and majesty is certainly knowledge of bhagavān, if one has no appreciation or realization of the Lord's sweetness through which he can be loved, then his knowledge or realization of God's other qualities is tantamount to ignorance or non-experience. As an example, he gives the person whose secretions of bile have increased to such an extent that he cannot taste the sweetness of sugar even though it is in his mouth.³⁹

Furthermore, knowledge of the Lord's impersonal or majestic aspects leads to a certain ossification of the inner being, after which one is left with nothing more than a sense of reverence. Such a spirit of awe does not result in the softening or melting of the heart which can only come about through an appreciation of God's sweetness.⁴⁰ An example of awe acting as an impediment to devotion can be found in Arjuna's consternation upon seeing the universal form of the Lord.⁴¹

In the *Sādhana-dīpikā*, the subject is treated as follows:

There are two kinds of devotees, those sensitive to the Lord's majesty (*aiśvarya*) and those who are appreciative of his sweetness (*mādhurya*). The former have a disposition to the Lord's divinely majestic form, activities and amusements while the latter have a leaning to his human-like body, activities and amusements. Even so, it should be noted that without any knowledge whatsoever of God's glorious aspect, there is no possibility of having a full or fixed insight into his *mādhurya* [because this latter sense develops out of the former]. Without such an awareness, a sense will arise that the Lord's *līlā* is mundane in nature and that is certainly not the import of *mādhurya*. Even so, if one has no feeling for the Lord's sweetness he will be baffled in his attempt to achieve love for him.⁴²

³⁸*Durgama-saṅgamanī* to BRS 4.4.15.

³⁹*Bhakti-sandarbhā*, section 187.

⁴⁰*Durgama-saṅgaminī* to BRS 2.4.268.

⁴¹*Bhagavad-gītā*, 11.41-47.

⁴²*kiṁ ca, bhaktās ca dvidvidhāḥ, aiśvaryaṅubhavino mādhuryaṅubhavinaś ca | aiśvaryaṁ tāvad deva-līlā-deva-*

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Elsewhere, Śrī Jīva says that the external structure of devotion is built by the sense of majesty, whereas the life of that structure, i.e., that portion that is related to love, is animated by the sense of his sweetness.⁴³

In the *Siddhānta-ratna* (“The Jewel of Conclusive Truth”), Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa also argues that consciousness of God’s majesty is not entirely absent from the one devoted to his sweetness:

A devotee of the *mādhurya* aspect of the Lord has a sense of his majesty in the way same way that one can observe the Sarasvatī River at the confluence of the three holy rivers at Prayag. In fact, one cannot see the Sarasvatī there at all, and yet its presence cannot be denied; similarly, a perception of the Lord’s majesty exists hidden behind the devotee’s absorption in his sweetness. It is for this reason that, in the course of his affectionate dealings with the Lord, the devotee who has experienced his sweetness does not become troubled by feelings of fear or reverence, even when he happens to perceive the Lord’s greatness. Even when he catches sight of the Lord’s divine opulences, such a devotee’s dominant affection does not shrink. He rather continues to think of the Lord as his son, friend or lover, becoming even happier to think, “My son (or my friend, or my lover) is the Supreme Lord,” much in the way that people in this world become filled with pride when their own son or lover receives some honor or attains an important post. Such pride simply increases their basic feeling of parental or conjugal affection. Therefore, if one has the sense that the Lord is his son or lover, that sense does not become stifled even in the event of direct perception of his being the Supreme God and abode of unlimited celestial opulences and sweetness. It rather becomes increased by the thought, “My son (or husband) has become so glorious.”⁴⁴

In fact, this sense of the sweetness of the Lord keeps the knowledge of his actual magnificence and divine identity covered. Consequently, devotees such as the residents of Vraja-dhāma, who are dedicated to his most felicitous aspects, do not accept his supreme divinity even when they are directly confronted with the fact. Their only knowledge on the platform of heart-felt perception is that he is their son, their friend, the lord of their life. Thus Kṛṣṇadāsa states:

ceṣṭā-deva-vapur ity ādikam, mādhuryam ca nara-līlā-nara-ceṣṭā-nara-vapur ity ādikam | kim ca, aiśvaryaṁ vinā mādhuryasya nityatā na sambhavati | kevala-nara-ceṣṭā-sādharmyeṇa māyikatvāpātān mādhuryasyāpy asiddheḥ | mādhuryam vinā bhakta-prema-hāniḥ syāt | Sādhana-dīpikā, 9.22.

⁴³*tad evaṁ pāramaiśvaryaṁ bhaktaḥ yat kvacid uddīpanatvaṁ, tat tu sambhrama-gaura-vādi tad-avayavyaiva | tatrāpy avayavini prītyaṁse tu mādhuryasyaivoddīpanatvaṁ | Prīti-sandarbhā, 98.*

⁴⁴*Siddhānta-ratnam 2.3.*

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The essence of the Lord's God-hood is the sweet or beatific aspect which he revealed in Vrindavan. That aspect was described to some extent by Vyāsadeva's son, Śuka, in the Bhāgavata; and it is the hearing of these portions which drives the devotees mad.⁴⁵

2.32 Kṛṣṇa in his form as “the charmer” is the object of the gopīs' love

Mādhurya is thus the essence of the Lord's divinity. It has its ultimate realization in his form as Śrī Kṛṣṇa when he adopts the pose of a charming and flirtatious gallant (*dhīra-lalita*). A leading man (*nāyaka*) of this type is considered by the poeticians to be the best of the various types of romantic hero. In the *Stavāvalī*, Rādhārāṇī is described as having performed austerities in order to have Kṛṣṇa's playful *dhīra-lalita* disposition increase.⁴⁶

Rūpa Gosvāmin characterizes this charming gallant in the following manner:

*vidagdho nava-tāruṇyaḥ parihāsa-viśāradaḥ
nīscinto dhīra-lalitaḥ syāt prāyaḥ preyaśi-vaśaḥ*

The charmer is suave, youthful, clever at amusing flirtations, always carefree and usually dominated by his mistress.⁴⁷

Rūpa lists sixty-four of the Lord's qualities in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*; these attributes are appreciated by devotees of all the five inclinations. Of these sixty-four, however, only twenty-five are considered to be stimuli for the erotic mood. The *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* confirms this when it is said, “The gopīs' ears are enlivened by hearing about each of the twenty-five qualities of the Lord that are dominant in *madhura-rasa*.”⁴⁸

The Lord has unlimited qualities and it is through an attraction to these qualities that the devotee's love develops. In his *Prīti-sandarbhā*, Śrī Jīva categorizes these qualities as the causes of particular changes or developments in the heart of the devotee (*bhakta-citta-saṃskriyā-viśeṣasya hetavaḥ*) or the root causes of a devotee's particular self-conception.⁴⁹

In the erotic relation, some of the Lord's attributes enliven the devotee's (the gopī's) heart, thus elevating her to the point of *bhāva*, feeling.⁵⁰ The appreciation of the Lord's further

⁴⁵*mādhurya bhagavattā sār, braje kaila paracār, tāhā śuka vyāsera nandan |
sthāne sthāne bhāgavate, jānāiyāche dekhāite, jāhā sune māte bhakta-gaṇ || CC 2.21.110.*

⁴⁶*dhīra-lālitya-vṛddhy-artham kriyamāṇā vratādikā |*

⁴⁷ BRS 2.1.230.

⁴⁸*mādhurya-rase śrī-kṛṣṇer pañcis guṇ pradhān |
ek ek guṇ śuni jurāy gopīr prāṇ || CC 2.19.*

⁴⁹*Prīti-sandarbhā, 92.*

⁵⁰The author here lists the *sthāyi-bhāvas* of *madhura-rati* as found in *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, 14.53 (Chaukhamba edition, 416). In this case, an exact English rendering of the terms is next to impossible. I have used traditional words used to translate them, but it must be remembered that the English words cannot possibly reflect the hierarchy of feeling that is intended by the Sanskrit technical terms. These feelings are specific to

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qualities create in her the spirit of possessiveness, which is the dominant characteristic of *prema*, love. Other qualities melt the heart completely, bringing her to the point of *sneha*, affection. Further qualities strengthen the gopī's self-assurance in her loving relationship with the Lord and she thus rises to the next stage called *māna*, jealous pride. Those qualities that awaken a sense of intimate trust elevate her to *praṇaya*, confident love. Others create the intense desire or attachment that is the symptom of *rāga*, passionate love. Finally, some of the Lord's attributes madden the devotee with their unequalled marvels—this is the platform of *mahā-bhāva*, great feeling. These different levels are the higher stages of the *sthāyi-bhāva*.⁵¹

Of course, the appreciation of the different attributes of the Lord depends a great deal on the nature of the devotee and the intensity of her emotion: not all devotees appreciate all of God's qualities. Those qualities which enmadden due to their unequalled marvels (*asamordhva-camatkāreṇonmādayati*) are appreciated by the cowherd beauties of Vraja alone. As a result of this, the highest devotional mood known as *mahā-bhāva*, not found in any other devotee, appears in them. The qualities of Kṛṣṇa which awaken this mood are only perceived and relished by them and thus they are the only ones who have a proprietary claim on them.

Different devotees experience and express different spiritual emotions; and just as there are such different devotees, there are corresponding manifestations of the Lord. In the *Prīti-sandarbha*, Jīva Gosvāmin makes the following comment on the relation between a devotee's particular devotional attitude and the Lord's revelation of his qualities:

It is said that during the predominance of the Svāti asterism, pearls are produced from the rainfall; however, this rain-water does not produce pearls everywhere, but only in those special receptacles known as oysters. Similarly, although it is quite within Kṛṣṇa's capabilities to awaken devotional sentiments up to the point of *mahā-bhāva* [in any-one at all], not everyone's love is developed to that extent. The development of the highest love depends on the receptacle. [This is the unique achievement of the Vṛndāvana gopīs.]⁵²

Certain indicators (*anubhāvas*) of *mahā-bhāva*, such as intolerance of even the momentary interruption to the vision of Kṛṣṇa's face caused by the blinking of the eyelids, are to be found only in the gopīs.⁵³

the erotic rapture, and appropriate to the feminine, thus the feminine pronouns have been used. (Translator)

⁵¹tatra pūrveṣāṃ guṇānām svarūpāṇi tais tasyās tāratamyam bhedās ca yathā prītiḥ khalu bhakta-cittam ullāsayati, matatayā yojayati, visrambhayati, priyatvātiśayenābhimānayati, drāvayati, sva-viṣayam praty abhilāṣātiśayena yojayati, pratikṣaṇam eva sva-viṣayam nava-navatvenānubhāvayati, asamordhva-camatkāreṇonmādayati ca | Prīti-sandarbha, 84.

⁵²yadyapi śrī-kṛṣṇasya tādr̥ṣa-bhāva-janakatvam sva-bhāva eva, tathāpy ādhāra-guṇam apekṣate svāty-ambuno muktādi-janakatvam iva. PrītiS 92.

⁵³Ibid. nimeṣāsahatvam tāsām eva.

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Jīva further states in the *Prīti-sandarbhā* that the first development in the process of the growth of this erotic love is the perception of a certain form of the Lord equipped with particular qualities. The experience of such a form produces a particular sense of self-awareness in the devotee, which later develops into an attachment or loving possessiveness. The first manifestation of the Lord's specific form depends on the association of devotees attached to such a form.⁵⁴ For example, let us say that Lord Kṛṣṇa has a certain devotee known as Kṛṣṇa Dāsa with whom he deals as a friend. Another person named Hari Dāsa is bereft of such good fortune until he is one day blessed with Kṛṣṇa Dāsa's company. Then he develops a similar sentiment for the Lord. Not only that, but the Lord also starts thinking of Hari Dāsa as a friend. As a result, the quality of devotion known as *sakhya-rati* develops in Hari Dāsa.

As stated in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, the basis of the birth of sacred love for Kṛṣṇa is the association of saintly persons.⁵⁵ Still, it should be remembered that one's devotional sentiment would necessarily be the same as that of the company one keeps.⁵⁶

According to the extent that the Lord's different devotees perceive his qualities which are related to the erotic mood, they come to different conceptions of self-identity. The Supreme Lord and his devotees attract each other like a magnet and iron filings. As a result of this essential characteristic, the devotee's specific sense of identity is also brought into being by the eternally true nature of the Lord. Thus, according to the particular form and nature the Lord reveals in certain times and places, a corresponding sense of identity is born in the devotee who experiences him. This is the source of the relative superiority or inferiority of devotional moods or *sthāyi-bhāvas*. This shows that the sense of self-identity or *abhimāna* and the feeling of devotional passion (*rāga*) are mutually interdependent, each being nourished by the other. They therefore appear simultaneously. Although the various senses of self-identity are many in number, there are only four dominant types in Vrindavan those of servitude, friendship, guardianship or parenthood and mistress-hood, which, as has already been stated, is supreme amongst them all.

2.33 Kṛṣṇa is the original god of love or Kāma-deva

The following important verse is found in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa:

*jayati jananivāso devakī-janma-vādo
yadu-vara-pariṣat svair dorbhir asyann adharmam*

⁵⁴*tatra yathā yatra prakāśas tathā tatrābhimāna-viśeṣa-mayī prītir udayate | prakāśa-vaiśiṣṭya-hetuś ca bhaktaviśeṣa-saṅga eva | PrītiS 94.*

⁵⁵*kṛṣṇa-bhakti janma-mūla hay sādhu-saṅga | CC 2.22.83.*

⁵⁶Though one's attitudes may change or become fixed despite particular associations. The best example of this is Rūpa and Sanātana's own brother Vallabha, who did not give up his attachment to Rāma despite his brothers' best efforts at persuasion. A more recent example found in O.B.L. Kapoor's *Braj ke bhakt* is that of Svāmī Kṛṣṇānanda, a disciple of Prāṇa Gopāla Gosvāmī, who became a devotee in *sakhya-rasa* even though his guru worshiped in *madhura-rasa*.

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*sthira-cara-vrijina-ghnam susmita-śrī-mukhena
vraja-pura-vanitānām vardhayan kāma-devam*

May that Kṛṣṇa who resides in the hearts of all living beings be ever victorious; for though he is their resting place, he becomes incarnate in the womb of Devakī. [This is thus generally accepted as being the truth although it is only an appearance.] That Lord is served by the best of the members of the Yadu dynasty; he removed the influence of the irreligious with the help of the Pāṇḍavas and others who are like his own arms, killing all the demons through them. He removed the sufferings of all the moving and non-moving creatures and, by the glances from his softly smiling, beautiful face, caused the quickening of desire (*kāma*) in the hearts and minds of the womenfolk of the pastures [of Vraja] and the city [of Dvārakā], who thus desired for romantic intrigues with him.⁵⁷

This verse has been elucidated in Sanātana's commentary on his own *Bṛhad-Bhāgavatāmṛta* (2.7.154). He particularly elaborates at length on the use of the word *kāma-devam* found in the fourth line.

[This verse makes three apparently self-contradictory statements. The first of these is that] he who resides as the Supersoul in the hearts of all living beings has appeared in the womb of Devakī as her son; for others he remains within, unseen. Though he likewise remains within Devakī also, he externalizes himself and walks and talks with her.

[The next apparent contradiction is that though] the great powerful heroes of the House of Yadu were all fully dedicated servitors of his and were competent to destroy any number of unruly opponents, he himself removed the oppressive irreligious elements by the strength of his own arms.

[The third such statement is that] even though he removes the sins of all creatures, stationary or moving, he still acts as the paramour of the gopīs, increasing their lusty desires (*kāma*), i.e., their “sin.” Despite this appearance of contradiction, there is actually none: there is no offence on Kṛṣṇa's part because it is the nature of his sweetly smiling beautiful face to set the minds of others aflame. Even so, the gopīs count the glories of his world-enchanting smile, which destroys the effects of material desire (*kāma*) in the life of family attachments.

This last portion of the verse (*vardhayan kāma-devam*) can also be taken in this way: “He has become victorious by manifesting in the hearts of the

⁵⁷ BhP 10.90.48.

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gopīs all those manifold desires that will bring about his own personal pleasure” or “He becomes victorious over material desire (*kāma*) by increasing the gopīs’ celestial love (*kāma*) for him.”

Lust or material desire (*kāma*) is said to be the destroyer of all honorable intentions in life, yet for the gopīs this lust is the destroyer of the cycle of material existence (*samsāra*). This is because it is in fact love (*prema*); it brings Kṛṣṇa under their control and thus becomes the fruit of devotion as well as liberation. It became newer and fresher at every moment until it reached its transcendental climax. In other words, Śrī Kṛṣṇa manifested himself in the hearts of the gopīs in an uninterrupted series of ever-new blossoming appearances, enkindling this love-lust of theirs to ever newer and greater heights. This is the way in which he establishes his glories.

Furthermore, because *kāma* or lust when related to Kṛṣṇa becomes elevated to the highest and most perfect type of love, the word *deva* used in the verse in composition with *kāma* indicates its divine nature. On the other hand, the word *deva* is derived from the root *√div* which has the meaning “to play,” implying that this *kāma* is not noxious like the destructive desire of this material world, but is full of sportive amusements. Thus the meaning reached here is that the Lord is ever glorious because, by manifesting unlimited masses of beauty and sweetness, he produces the different erotic sports and dalliances in the gopīs. That devotion which has such amorous amusements as its external form causes the experience of a specific joy that arises from the direct vision of Kṛṣṇa’s glowing lotus-like face. That joy is the bliss-giving potency (*hlādinī śakti*) emanating from his personal form which causes all the other achievements of human life to dwindle into insignificance. For this reason, this lust-love of the gopīs is the ultimate perfection of all kinds of devotion and should be recognized as the highest wealth of divine love. The vision of Kṛṣṇa’s glowing lotus face, etc., here implies all the glories of his beauty, sweetness, charm, etc., in short, all of his opulences in their most intense aspect.

Kāmarūpā bhakti and worship or devotional practice in its wake (*kāmānuga bhakti*) have a particular form of Kṛṣṇa with particular attributes which are especially conducive to their development. In his commentary on the third verse of *Kṛṣṇa-karṇamṛta* (“Nectar for Kṛṣṇa’s

ears”), Kṛṣṇa Dās Kavirāja states:

This Kṛṣṇa is the beguiler of infinite numbers of goddesses of fortune; he is the lover of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and the enchanter of even Cupid (*Kāmadeva*), the god of love himself. He is the seed of the unlimited gods of love throughout the unlimited universes. From him alone do they have their birth. Pradyumna of the first *catur-vyūha* is the original

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Cupid and his expansions fill the universes. These are the trunk and branches developing out of the first seedling. The leaves are the mundane gods of attraction who manifest only a fragment of the original potency present in the seed, Kṛṣṇa. Thus the ever new Cupid of Vrindavan is the root cause of all the gods of love, both divine and mundane.⁵⁸

One should not mistakenly think that Govinda himself has any touch of the mundane Eros in him. It is stated in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* that Kṛṣṇa is like the sun, whereas the material nature can be likened to darkness. Wherever Kṛṣṇa is present, there the powers of illusion have

no authority to approach. The Bhāgavata (1.1.1) similarly states “The Supreme Truth, upon whom I meditate, is always free from material contamination by virtue of his own divine effulgence” (*dhāmnā svena sadā nirasta-kuhakam*). The gopīs’ pure love is simply known by the name of kāma as is clearly stated in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.285).⁵⁹

Kṛṣṇa is the source of all existences, material or spiritual; without his nod of approval even one leaf dangling on the branch of a tree cannot move. “Material nature is herself incapable of creation as she is dull and lacking consciousness; only when Kṛṣṇa mercifully instills the potency

within her does she become so able.”⁶⁰ Thus, just as it is through his potency that all the material and spiritual universes spring into existence, so it is also due to him alone that the energies which go by the name of “gods of attraction” or kāmadevas have their creation. These gods also have the epithet of *Manmatha*, “mind churner,” but the original mind-churning potency remains his. He is the shelter of these energies just as he is the shelter of the entire material nature without having any material tinge to him whatsoever.

In the Āgama-śāstras there are injunctions for worshiping Lord Kṛṣṇa with the mantra known as *kāma-gāyatrī* and with the seed mantra named kāma (*klīm*). Accompanying these mantras is the meditation on Kṛṣṇa as the “bewilderer of Cupid”: he is the enchanter of millions of Cupids; he

attracts an infinite number of minds; he is the ocean of the sweet nectar of charm. Those great sensitive souls who have been able to achieve the highest standards of devotional worthiness perceive him in this way. He is the beguiling cowherd of the sacred land of Vrindavan; he is the source of all the incarnations of the deity, but he is especially the

⁵⁸The two following paragraphs appears as a footnote in the Bengali edition.

⁵⁹premaiva gopa-rāmāṇām kāma ity agamāt prathām |

⁶⁰jagat-kāraṇ nahe prakṛti jaṅga-rūpā |

śakati sañcare tāre kṛṣṇa kari kṛpā || CC 1.5.59.

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cause of all the manifestations of sweetness. Therefore, the writers of the many scriptures have repeatedly glorified him in his lovely blackish form in the circle dance:

All glories to the circle dance which forever unite the bugle of the Lord's urbanity and the drum of Rādhā's good fortune.⁶¹

The outcome of the rāsa dance was that the Lord of that dance and the embodiment of *mahā-bhāva* joined together to become Caitanya—the beautiful golden-coloured form of God, Gaura-sundara. He is none other than Kṛṣṇa taking on the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. That Lord Gaurasundara spoke to Sanātana Gosvāmin while fully absorbed in that mood:

Sanātana! Just contemplate the sweetness of the Lord!
A mellifluent sea of mead
For which my mind in lusty greed
Has come and sits in waiting by its shore.
And thinking it will quickly drink its fill
Is fated to know it never will.
Misfortune has come in doctor's guise
and allows it not one drop despite its cries.

Pray tell, can sweetness be still more than sweet?
And then more sweet, a sweetness even more complete?
With just one drop, the entire cosmos fills
And drowns within those lovely honey swills;
In sweetness all directions merge and meet.
The smiling rays of camphor touch his lips,
The smile melts from his misty mouth and drips
Ent'ring by force the ears of all the skies
Beguiles, and ravishing it ties
The hearts of all, and most of all the girls.

⁶¹rāsa-līlā jayaty eṣā yayā saṁyujyate'niśam |
harer vidagdhatā-bheryā rādhā-saubhāgya-dundubhiḥ ||

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Just hear about that dulcet flute's disgrace!
It steals wives from their husbands' sweet embrace,
Destroys their dharm and their chasteness vows.
And Lakṣmī too in heaven is aroused,
So what hope have we poor gopīs to save face?

It looses the brides' clothes before their grooms,
Makes them leave their chores unfinished in their rooms;
It makes them dance as if tied to a string
Forgetting fear, shame and every thing,
Then drags them to where the lotus lord's smile blooms.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa's arms like jewelled bars of steel
No, not arms but cobras black who steal
Between the furrows of the gopīs' breasts
To pierce their hearts and put their fangs to rest,
To leave a wound that only he can heal.⁶²

⁶² Sanātan! Kṛṣṇa-mādhurya amṛtera sindhu |
mora mana-sannipāti, sab pite kare mati
durdaiva-vaidya nā dey eka bindu ||
madhura haite sumadhur, tāhā haite sumadhur,
tāhā haite ati-sumadhur |
āpanāra eka kaṇe, vyāpe saba tribhuvane,
daśadik vyāpe yāra pūr ||
smita kiraṇa-sukarpūre, paīse adhara-madhure,
se-i madhu mātāy tri-bhuvane |
vaṁsī chidra-ākāse, tār guṇa-śabde paīse,
dhvani-rūpe pāiyā pariṇāme ||
se dhvani caudike dhāy, aṇḍa bhedi vaikuṇṭha yāy,
bale paīse jagatera kāṇe |
sabā mātoyāla kari, balātkāre āne dhari,
viśeṣataḥ yuvatīra gaṇe ||
dhvani baṛa uddhata, pativratār bhāṅge vrata,
patī kol haite ṭāni āne |
vaikuṇṭhera lakṣmī gaṇe, yei kare ākarṣaṇe,
tāra āge kebā gopī gaṇe ||
nīvi khasāy pati-āge, grha-karma karāy tyāge,
bale dhari āne kṛṣṇa sthāne |
loka-dharma-lajjā-bhay, sab jñāna lupta hay,
aiche nācāy sab nārī-gaṇe ||
subalita-dīrghārgal, kṛṣṇa-bhuja-yugal,
bhuja nahe kṛṣṇa sarpa-kāy |
dui śaila-chidre paīse, nārīr hṛdaya daṁś,
mare nārī se viṣa-jvālāy || CC 2..21.137-143.

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The tutelary god of lusty attraction, Cupid, who reigns over the hearts of the gopīs, is embodied in Kṛṣṇa himself. “He is the transcendental, ever-fresh Cupid of Vrindavan.” In the material world, lust reigns in the hearts of everyone creating a self-centred substitute for love which results in attraction to members of the opposite sex. The actual attraction is not to the individuals involved at all, but is rather the following of a drive created by the internal erotic impulse. In the case of the gopīs, however, they are directed to the supreme lord of love; their internal impulse and the object of that impulse are not different from one another. They love Kṛṣṇa internally and externally; there is no third force called lust which drives them. The driving force and its object are one.

In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, the following passages are found in the conversation of Rāmānanda Rāya with Caitanya Mahāprabhu:

Kṛṣṇa attracts the hearts of all living entities, including himself because he has taken form as the embodiment of the romantic sentiment... He attracts the consciousness of all creatures, whether male or female, still or moving; he is the churner of even Cupid’s mind... Kṛṣṇa has the character of a *dhīra-lalita*, charming lover, whose only business is to engage in amorous sports.⁶³

Rūpa Gosvāmin writes in his *Hari-kusuma-stava*:

I offer obeisances to him who is the desire tree of all welfare for the pious, who wields the flower arrows which pierce the hearts of all the beautiful young maidens, who is the most expert in protecting those who have taken shelter of him, and who is the scorching sun drying up the lilies of the impious.⁶⁴

In the Bhāgavata Purāṇa:

⁶³śṛṅgāra-rasa-rāja-maya-mūrti dhar |
ataeva ātmā paryyanta sarva-citta har ||
puruṣa-yoṣit kimvā sthāvara-jaṅgam |
sarva-cittākaraṣak sākṣāt manmatha-mathan ||
rāy kahen kṛṣṇa hayen dhīra-lalit |
nirantara kāma-kriḍā yāhāra carit || CC 2.8.143, 139, 187.

⁶⁴hita-sādhu-samihita-kalpa-taruṁ taruṇi-gaṇa-nūtana-puṣpa-śaram |
śaraṇāgata-rakṣaṇa-dakṣatamaṁ tam asādhu-kulopala-caṇḍa-karam || 6

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O gopīs! When Kṛṣṇa places his left cheek on his own left shoulder and makes his eyebrows dance, he rests his flute on his lips and plays on it with his delicate fingers, then his legs are also crossed in his three-fold bending form by which he has gotten three names: *tribhaṅga-lalita*, “one who charms by standing in this attractive curved position,” *tiryag-grīva*, “one who stands with his neck held horizontally,” and *trailokya-mohana*, “enchanter of the three worlds.”⁶⁵

The subsequent verse from the Bhāgavata is as follows:

When the perfected beings hear this sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute, they as well as their wives become amazed. They then become embarrassed due to the presence of Cupid's arrow in their hearts; they become bewildered, for even though their waist-cloths become slackened due to the erotic influence of the flute's melody, they are not sufficiently aware to adjust them.⁶⁶

Viśvanātha Cakravartin's gloss on this verse brings out Kṛṣṇa's characteristics as enchanter of the three worlds and his erotic influence on the gods and goddesses:

[The wives of the gods become amazed in the following way:] “O! We have never before perceived such a potent enchanting force as that which this flute possesses, because it is bewildering us even though we are most chaste.” Their husbands are similarly thinking, “We are men, and yet the sound of the flute is bewildering us in such a way that we are having feminine responses to it.”

Seeing Cupid's flower arrows which carry desire for Kṛṣṇa in them, the demigoddesses say, “O arrows of desire for Kṛṣṇa! we all surrender our minds to you; quickly pierce

⁶⁵vāma-bāhu-kṛta-vāma-kapola-valgita-bhrūr adharārpita-venum |
komalāṅgaulībhīr āśrita-mārgaṁ gopya īrayati yatra mukundaḥ ||
BhP 10.35.2

⁶⁶vyoma-yāna-vanitāḥ saha siddhair vismitās tad upadhāya salajjāḥ |
kāma-mārgana-samarpita-cittāḥ kaśmalāṁ yayur apasmṛta-nivyaḥ ||
BhP 10.35.3

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them. We have thrown our fidelity to the winds; Kṛṣṇa may freely be intimate with us, by his kindness.” At the same time, their husbands are also thinking, “We disavow our masculinity and our position as gods; may Kṛṣṇa immediately give us the bodies of cowherd girls here in Vrindavan so that we may consummate our feelings for him.”⁶⁷

By these different references, we have tried to give an idea of Kṛṣṇa in his position as the object of the erotic affection or *madhura-rasa*. Now we shall go on to the *āśraya-tattva*.

2.4 The cowherd girls of Vrindavan are the repositories of competent affection

In the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, the following verses are found in the chapter on erotic sacred rapture:

In this madhura-rasa, the props are Kṛṣṇa and his beautifully-browed mistresses. There Kṛṣṇa is characterized as the object of romantic affection, possessed of unequalled assets of beauty, clever and attractive movements, urban wit, etc. The most excellent repositories of that love are the dear milk-maids of Vrindavan.⁶⁸

Kṛṣṇa, the embodiment of Eros and the king of sacred rapture, always has desires for amorous fulfilment arising within him; to fulfill those desires there is a corresponding state of existence, naturally functioning with a compliant lusty attitude and its subsequent actions. This state of existence as it is personified is known by the name “gopī.”

The gopīs are functions of the internal personal energy of the Lord; all their senses are in existence only for the pleasures of the Supreme Lord; they are the life of the supreme enjoyer. From the tips of their toes to the tips of their hairs, they are created from such materials as will be useful to fulfill his desires. Amongst the gopīs, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is especially so constructed. “She is the very form of divine love; her entire body is saturated with divine love; she is famed throughout all existence as the best of the Lord’s beloved ones. Her worship of him consists of fulfilling his every desire.”⁶⁹

⁶⁷Aho! veṇu-nādasayaitāvan mohanatvam anubhūta-caram yato’smān sādhvīr api mohayati | asmān puruṣān api strī-bhāva-yuktikṛty mohayatīti | śrī-kṛṣṇa-viṣayaka-kāma-śārān ālakṣya, bhoḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-kāma-śārāḥ | yuṣmabhyam etāni asmac-cittāni dattāni, etāni śīghram viddhikurutaḥ asmābhiḥ pātivratyāya jalāñjalir dattaḥ | kṛṣṇo’smābhiḥ saha kṛpayā ramatām iti | tathā asmābhir api sva-puṁstvam devatvam ca tyaktam | kṛṣṇo’smān sadya eva svayogena gopa-strī-kṛtyāsmābhiḥ saha ramatām |

⁶⁸asmin ālambanaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ priyās tasya tu subhruvaḥ |
tatra kṛṣṇaḥ asmānordhva-saundarya-lilā-vaidigdhī-sampadām |
āśrayatvena madhure harir ālambano mataḥ || BRS 3.5.3-4.

⁶⁹premera svarūp deha prema-vibhāvita |
kṛṣṇera preyasī śreṣṭha jagate vidita ||

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If two mirrors are held face to face, as soon as some object falls between them, its reflection appears in both simultaneously; similarly the desires for conjugal union which appear in the gopīs and Kṛṣṇa are coinstantaneous. This is an eternal fact, nevertheless, it always increases with newer and newer freshness. The nature of Rādhā's love is that it is unlimitedly great and yet it continues to increase with newness at every moment. Rādhā's love is so vast that there is no place for it to increase, and yet it increases at every moment.⁷⁰

When one eats, one's hunger dissipates and so food and hunger have a mutually destructive relationship. On the other hand, look at the unique nature of spiritual love where desire and its object cause each other to increase. The gopīs' love nourishes Kṛṣṇa's sweetness and as it grows, their love becomes greatly satisfied. Their craving never becomes completely pacified, however, and keeps on increasing forever. If they should be separated from him for even a fraction of a second, it seems like an age to them. Kṛṣṇa's sweetness held before the mirror of the gopīs' minds increases with new freshness at every step; their love and his sweetness compete with one another to see which can increase the more and neither wants to admit defeat. There is an ever-fresh, unlimited supply of both!⁷¹

2.5 The dominant mood of erotic divine love

The dominant mood of erotic divine love has received various names in the Vaiṣṇava literature. The most common name, derived from the Sanskrit writings on drama, is *madhurā rati* ("the sweet affection"). Rūpa has further identified the particular quality of love found in the gopīs of Vṛndāvana as *samarthā rati* ("competent affection") and given it the name of *kāma-rūpā bhakti* ("devotion in the shape of desire") in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. We will here examine the discussions in the literature of these three terms.

2.51 Madhurā rati

Madhurā rati is first defined in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* by Rūpa Gosvāmin:

The original cause of Kṛṣṇa and the doe-eyed damsels' engagement in the eight types of union (*sambhoga*), beginning with meditation and viewing, is the amorous feeling which dwells in those damsels' breasts. That feeling guarded within them, which has Kṛṣṇa as its object, reaches rapturous

kṛṣṇa-vāñchā-pūrti-rūpa kare ārādhane | CC 2.8.162.

⁷⁰vibhur api kalayan sadābhivṛddhim | DKK, 2. Quoted at CC, 1.4.131.

⁷¹rādhā premā-vibhu yāra baṛhite nāhi ṭhaṇi | tathāpi se kṣaṇe kṣaṇe baṛhaye sadāi || CC 1.4.128. kṣudhā āra bhojya-vastu madhyete jeman | ubhaye ubhaya hay nāsera kāraṇ || prema-rājye ei rīti ati vilakṣaṇ | ubhaye ubhaya hay vardhana-kāraṇ || gopī-prema kare kṛṣṇa mādhyer puṣṭi | mādhyura bāṛhāy prema haiyā mahā-tuṣṭi || CC 1.4.198. ṭṣṇā sānti nāhi hay satata bāṛhay | kṣaṇe adarśane koṭi yuga mane hay || CC 1.4.149. gopī bhāva darpaṇ, nava nava kṣaṇe kṣaṇ, tār āge kṛṣṇera mādhyura | domhe kare huṛāhuṛi, bāṛhe mukha nāhi muṛi, nava nava domhāra prācuryya || CC 2.21.118.

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fulfillment (*rasatva*) and is then relished by both parties. This amorous affection [here called *priyatā*] is also known by the name of *madhurā rati*. Its symptoms or manifestations are unlimited; they include sidelong glances, eyebrow movements, sweet words, smiles, etc.⁷²

What is the cause of the “eight types of union”? Jīva writes in his commentary on this verse that it is the desire for such union, i.e. the strong desire of each party to encounter the other in every possible way.⁷³

When and why does such a desire awaken? For Kṛṣṇa and the gopīs, it is eternally existant. Even so, the pastimes of the Lord are all performed in a human-like way, as stated in both the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, “the Lord has human-like amusements and is totally absorbed in human activities”⁷⁴ and the *Vedānta-darśana* (2.1.33): *lokavat tu līlā-kaivalyam*, “the Lord is, like a human being, absorbed exclusively in his own play.”⁷⁵ This means that, as with human beings, the gopīs’ and Kṛṣṇa’s love for each other develops in a sequential fashion, as though they had had no prior relationship.

In this connection, it is especially important for the devotional aspirant to concentrate on knowing the original causes for the birth of the gopīs’ feelings for Kṛṣṇa; the causes for the manifestation of Kṛṣṇa’s feelings are less important.

The first manifestation of romantic feeling is called *bhāva*. Although the gopīs have a general feeling of love for Kṛṣṇa, only when they reach the age of puberty does Cupid makes his appearance and their feelings take on specific, erotic characteristics. Only at that time does their love become qualified as romantic or *madhurā rati*.

Bhāva has been characterized in the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* in the following manner: “The first transformation symptomatic of the awakening of romantic feelings in the theretofore unchanged and simple mind is called *bhāva*.”⁷⁶

In this connection, Viśvanātha Cakravartin has commented that Rūpa Gosvāmin has given the name *sāmānya-rati*, “an unspecific, general feeling of love” to the eternally self-

⁷²mitho harer mṛgākṣyāś ca sambhogasyādi-kāraṇam |
madhurāpara-paryāyā priyatākhyoditā ratiḥ |
asyām kaṭākṣa-bhrūkṣepa-priyavānī-smitādayaḥ || BRS 2.5.36.

⁷³harer mṛgākṣyāś ca yo mithaḥ sambhogaḥ smaraṇa-darśanādy-aṣṭavidhaḥ, tasyādikāraṇam yā mṛgākṣyā ratiḥ sā priyatākhyā kathiteti | *Durgama-saṅgamini*. [According to a more literal understanding of the commentary, Jīva states that *rati* (the loving feeling of the gopīs) which has the name of *priyatā* (because it is the feeling of the gopīs for Kṛṣṇa and not the other way around) is the cause of the eight kinds of union (*sambhoga*).]

⁷⁴laukika-līlā loka-ceṣṭā-may.

⁷⁵A more accurate translation of the sūtra in its original context would be “as with the world, the motivation for the Lord’s actions is his own play.”

⁷⁶prādurbhāvaṁ vrajaty eva raty-ākhye bhāva ujjvale |
nirvikārātmake citte bhāvaḥ prathama-vikriyā || UN 11.6.

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manifested love of the gopīs for Kṛṣṇa as it exists from the time of their birth until puberty.⁷⁷ When, during the time of the manifestation of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes in the material universe, the gopīs reached adolescence, then erotic feelings for Kṛṣṇa appeared and they developed the desire to please him by giving their own bodies to him to enjoy. It is only at the attainment of such a metamorphosis that their sentiment is graced by the name of *madhurā rati*.

The definition of *bhāva* given above is found in the chapter on *anubhāvas*, or following emotions, in the *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*. It is there defined as an ornament or *alaṅkāra*. It specifically refers to the first external manifestation of feeling [by which the word *bhāva* is more accurately translated] when Cupid makes his entrance on the stage of adolescence, as has been described by Vidyāpati:

How youth has bloomed! Rādhā’s eyes
are casting wistful glances:
her shyness has developed and her smile has become sweet.
Now she takes the mirror to dress and decorate herself
as she inquires from her girlfriends
on the modalities of amorous sport.⁷⁸

2.52 *Samarthā rati*

The dominant mood of erotic sacred rapture is also given the name of *samarthā rati* (“competent affection”). Kṛṣṇa is the greatest lover in the supernatural *affaires-de-coeur* of the sacred land of Vrindavan and there, the supreme amongst his lady-loves are the cowherd girls. Here Viśvanātha Cakravartin makes some relevant comments about *samarthā rati* in his commentary on *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*:

This *samarthā rati* is extremely potent and exists eternally in the gopīs; it does not depend therefore on any other causes such as hearing Kṛṣṇa’s qualities, etc. It is present in them even prior to their attainment of adolescence, first in a general or indistinct (*sāmānya*) way. Even so, they loved Kṛṣṇa with all their hearts, and all the activities of their senses were for his satisfaction only. Afterwards, in the manifest *līlā*, when they came of age and sexual desire emerged, they developed a specific affection for him. In their minds arose the desire for physical association with Kṛṣṇa, which was similarly for his satisfaction exclusively. Therefore, no difference whatsoever exists between their personally craving erotic contact with him and their love for him; the two had merged into a single identity. Such a

⁷⁷kañcid viśeṣam aprāptā sādharmaṇa-janasya yā |
bālikadaiś ca kṛṣṇe syāt sāmānyā sā ratir matā || BRS 2.5.9.

⁷⁸aba yauvana bhelo bañkima diṭh | upajolo lāja hāsa bhelo miṭh ||
mukura lei abo koroto siṅgār | sakhire puchoye koiche suroto vihār ||

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fusion of these two spirits is possible in the Vrindavan gopīs and cannot exist elsewhere. This is the sign of their competence and makes their love for Kṛṣṇa worthy of the name *samarthā rati*. From the time of their reaching maidenhood, they desired to serve the Lord through this gift of their own bodies—that was their vow; this love of theirs is thus known as *madhurā rati*.⁷⁹

Again, in the same book, commenting further on UN 14.51, Viśvanātha expands on the meaning of the term *samarthā rati*:

Because the gopīs' desire for erotic love has fused with their selfless affection for Kṛṣṇa and has not the slightest hint of egocentricity to it, it is called competent affection. Competent in what respects? First of all, it is competent to tame their lover, the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and bring him to complete submission. Secondly, it gives them the competence to fully relish his form, qualities, talents and sweetness in a way that no one else can. Third, it is competent to bewilder and astonish Śrī Kṛṣṇa, even as he himself bestows appreciation of himself on them. Fourth, it is so potent that it causes Kṛṣṇa's already extraordinary qualities, forms and talents, etc., to take on newer and newer freshness and thus causes the increase of even their unlimited excellence. Therefore the name of "competent affection" or *samarthā rati* is exceedingly fitting.⁸⁰

In the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, 10.47.61,⁸¹ Uddhava states that because they had reached the highest degree of attachment for Kṛṣṇa, the Vraja milk-maids were competent (or capable) to give up their relatives as well as the path of conventional morality despite the difficulties involved in such abnegation.

Adopting this path of extreme attraction, they found an unexcelled process for attaining Mukunda, the giver of liberation. This unexcelled process has been searched for by the śrutis, the more ancient portion of the scriptures, but they have not yet been able to

⁷⁹*samarthā-rateḥ svarūpa-siddhatvād guṇādi-śravaṇānapekṣitvena prābalyāt vayah-sandheḥ pūrvam eva vraja-bālāsu rateḥ ... prādurbhāvaḥ | sāmānyākāreṇa prādurbhūtāyām ca tasyām tāsām śrī-kṛṣṇa evaṁ prīti-matīnām sarvendriya-vṛttayaḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-sukha-tātparyavatya evābhuvan | athāyāte vayah-sandhau kandarpodgamena yā sambhoga-tṛṣṇā raty-ākṛānte manasy ajaniṣṭa sāpi tat-sukha-tātparyavatya evābhūd iti sambhoga-tṛṣṇāyā ratyā saha tādātmyam | tām avasthām ārabhyaiva tāsām svāṅga-saṅga-ditsayaiva tat-sukha-viṣeṣotpādane saṅkalpavatīnām ratir madhurābhidhānābhūt | Ānanda-candrikā, 14.50.*

⁸⁰*tathā hi, sva-ramaṇasya śrī-kṛṣṇasya sarvato-bhāvena vaśīkāre tad-rūpa-guṇa-mādhuryānām sāmastyenāsvādanāyām tathā sva-mādhuryānu-bhāvya-mānasya tasyāpi mohane para-camatkāra-prāpaṇe ca svato'pi mahaiśvarya-sya vismāraṇe tathā sādharmaṇasya rūpa-guṇa-kalā-mādhuryānām sāmastyenāsvādanāyām nitya-navīni-karaṇe sarvotkarṣe ca sāmārthyavatīti samarthā | Ānanda-candrikā, 14.36.*

⁸¹*āsām aho caraṇ-reṇu-juṣām ahaṁ syām
vṛndāvane kim api gulma-latauṣadhīnām |
yā dustyajam ārya-patham sva-janam ca hitvā
bhejur mukunda-padavīm śrutibhir vimṛgyām || BhP 10.47.61.*

discover it. In other words, such an intensity of passion is outside the regular standards of behaviour found in the Vedas. Nevertheless, that which is the object of the search of the scriptures is certainly going to be the supremely ecstatic, eternally spiritual truth and not otherwise.

The definition of *samarthā rati* as given by Rūpa Gosvāmin is as follows:

According to the school of æsthetics, the affection known as *samarthā rati* is characterized by a superiority to all other affections such as *sādhāraṇī* and *samañjasā* because of its spontaneous and self-manifesting character. It is competent to control Kṛṣṇa because of its intensity; it brings sensuality into its tow and unifies it with selfless love. It bursts into existence on the slightest contact, either with other mistresses of the Lord or the sound of his name, etc. Even the slightest fragrance of this *samarthā rati* causes one to leave aside the considerations of family, religion, composure or modesty, and to become oblivious to any obstacles to such renunciation. It is the most intense kind of love, to the extent that no other affection can coexist with it.⁸²

2.53 Kāma-rūpā bhakti

This love of the gopīs, as has been previously mentioned, is known by the name of kāma “desire,” or according to Rūpa Gosvāmin, by the longer term, *kāma-rūpā rāgātmikā bhakti*, “passionate devotion which takes the form of [sexual] desire.” This variety of devotion exists in the gopīs alone.⁸³ Jīva Gosvāmin adds in his commentary that the word *kāma* usually refers to the desire for one’s personal sense gratification. Although it usually implies gross bodily activity, sensual desire has a subtle or psychological aspect also. The mentality of the gopīs is, “May Kṛṣṇa get pleasure from me,” and due to the intensity of that inner feeling, their external activities of kissing and embracing, etc., are also translated into genuine selfless acts of affection or love. This is the competence which earns it the title of *samarthā rati* by which it has also become known.

The following is an example from Viśvanātha’s “The Nectar of thinking about Kṛṣṇa” (*Kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāmṛta*, 9.65). It is described that when when the Divine Couple first meet for their noontime dalliances, they embrace and begin to exchange kisses and caresses. These embraces and caresses begin to increase the beauty of their love just as the rays of

⁸²kañcid viśeṣam āyantyā sambhogecchā yayābhitāḥ |
ratyā tādātmyam āpannā sā samartheti bhānyate ||
sva-svarūpāt tadyād vā jāta yat-kiñcid-anvayāt |
samarthā sarva-vismāri-gandhā sāndratamā matā || UN 14.52-3.

⁸³iyam tu vraja-devīṣu suprasiddhā virājate | BRS 1.2.284.

the moon increase its loveliness without being something distinct from it. In other words, just as the moon and its cooling light are not different from one another, neither are Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa’s love for one another and their expression of it in erotic activity. The moon and its rays may be distinguished for the sake of analysis, but actually one is simply the expression or by-product of the other; so too is it with the Divine Couple’s love and its expression in embracing, kissing, etc. The same applies equally to all the other girls of Vrindavan. By way of contrast, in mundane sexual affairs no such distinction between external expression and internal feeling can be made, for true selflessness in the carnal act is nowhere to be found.

In Rūpa Gosvāmin’s hymn containing Rādhā’s 108 names, he calls her *Gokulendra-suta-prema-kāma-bhūpendra-pattanam*: “the capital city of the king of lust-like love for the son of the king of Gokula.” When Rādhā feels lusty desire for Kṛṣṇa, that should be known as pure love or *prema* and nothing else.

Kṛṣṇa’s servants, friends and parents also feel passionate devotion for him (*rāgātmikā bhakti*). They also have an intense craving to unite their senses with his form, taste, touch, sound and smell. This they do in accordance with their own status and propensity. The distinct features of the gopīs’ erotic desire is that, due to it, they crave for the touching of hearts as well as the union of every limb of their body with his. “My heart cries out for the touch of his heart,” sings the gopī.⁸⁴ It can thus be concluded that spontaneous craving or passionate devotion for Kṛṣṇa reaches its zenith in the mood of the gopīs. Thus we conclude that there is no difference between the *kāma-rūpā bhakti* of the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* and the *samarthā-rati* of *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*.

In the *Prīti-sandarbhā* also (367), Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmin has described *samarthā rati* as being natural to the gopīs.⁸⁵ “Though its external form is that of carnal desire, it is pure love or *prema*. The love that Rādhā feels for Kṛṣṇa is spontaneous to the extent that she does not have to hear his name, what to speak of seeing him, in order to sense him within and without at all times.” Rādhā’s love is self-manifesting (*svataḥ siddhaḥ*); it does not arise from any other source. Thus Rādhā and the gopīs have an unconstrained, unlimited craving to experience Kṛṣṇa’s bodily beauty and fragrance, the sound of his voice and flute, the taste of his lips and the feeling of his embrace—all for his enjoyment alone! Thus the meaning of *samarthā rati* and *sambhogecchā-mayī kāma-rūpā bhakti* is the intense desire for union of their every limb with his for his satisfaction.⁸⁶

2.6. Kāmānuṅā bhakti and its two divisions

That type of *bhakti* which embraces the desire for erotic union within itself is called

⁸⁴hiyār paraś laḡi, hiyā mor kānde. Song of unknown origin.

⁸⁵svarūpābhinnā-sambhogecchā kānta-bhāvaḥ... śrī-vraja-devīnām eṣa svābhāvika eva.

⁸⁶Locana-rocanī, 14.38.

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kāmarūpā: “devotion in the form of [erotic] desire.” The main characteristic of this love is that the only motivation for any action is the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa.⁸⁷

In his commentary on UN, Śrī Jīva Prabhu has described two kinds of *sambhoga* or union: in the first, also known as lust, one uses the beloved to satisfy one’s own senses; in the other, one uses the conjugal act to satisfy the beloved and to make him happy. This is also called love or *prema*.⁸⁸

Kāmānuga-bhakti is that devotion, possessed by the gopīs, which is based on a craving to have the sexual form of love.⁸⁹ This pursuant devotional practice is of two types. This is due to the two-fold nature of *kāma-rūpā bhakti* itself.⁹⁰ These two types are defined in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*:

That devotion in practice which has as its goal the enjoyment of dalliance with Kṛṣṇa is called “[following] devotion which desires [erotic] union.”
That devotion which is filled with the desire to experience the sweetness of the mistresses” mood is called “devotion desiring the mood.”⁹¹

The word *sambhoga* (“union”) refers to the affection which Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa’s other mistresses feel for him, with its concomitant expression in physical love. Those endowed with such feelings are called *nāyikās* and their devotion is called *sambhogecchāmayī*. The girlfriends of the *nāyikā*, or leading lady-love, are called *sakhīs*. They include Lalitā and Viśākhā as well as Rūpa Mañjarī and Rati Mañjarī. The *sakhīs* are not so much concerned with direct bodily association with the Lord, but prefer to assist in his intrigues with Rādhā, their dearest friend. In this they find an indescribably greater happiness. The mood of friendship which they feel is attractive to both parties and is called *tad-bhāvecchātmikā* (i.e., desiring for the conjugal happiness of the *nāyikā*).

In the *Prīti-sandarbha* (365), this same division is made.⁹² In section 375, Jīva subdivides *sambhoga* into four types: union through sight, conversation, touch and actual sexual

⁸⁷sā kāma-rūpā sambhoga-trṣṇāṁ yā nayati svatām |

yad asyām kṛṣṇa-saukhyārtham eva kevalam udyamaḥ || BRS 1.2.283.

⁸⁸sambhogaḥ khalu dvidiḥ | priya-jana-dvārā svendriya-tarpaṇa-sukha-mayaḥ sva-dvārā tad-indriya-tarpaṇa-bhāvanā-mayaś ceti | tatra pūrvecchā kāmaḥ sva-hitonmukhatvāt, uttarecchā tu ratiḥ priya-jana-hitonmukhatvād iti |

⁸⁹kāmānugā bhavet trṣṇā kāma-rūpānugāminī |

sambhogecchāmayī tat-tad-bhāvecchātmicā sā dvidhā || BRS 1.2.297-8.

⁹⁰kāmānugāyās tu dvaividhya-darśanāt kāma-rūpāyā api dvaividhyam iti |

Ānanda-candrikā on UN 5.26.

⁹¹keli-tātparya-vaty eva sambhogecchāmayī bhavet |

tad-bhāvecchātmikā tāsām bhāva-mādhurya-kāmitā || BRS 1.2.299.

⁹²atha kānta-bhāvaḥ sthāyī... eṣa ca sthāyī sāksād upabhogātmakas tad anumodanātmakas ceti dvidiḥ | pūrvaḥ sāksān nāyikānām uttaraḥ sakhīnām |

union.⁹³

2.7 The dominant mood of the lady-loves

Rūpa Gosvāmin's discussion of the feminine aspect of the erotic sacred rapture, i.e. the *āśraya-vibhāva*, begins with the following two verses which give the general characteristics of Kṛṣṇa's sweethearts:

All the qualities which are possessed by Kṛṣṇa, such as beautiful features of the entire body (*suramyāṅga*) and being marked with all the auspicious characteristics (*sarva-sulakṣaṇānvita*) are equally present in his sweethearts. They are the foremost repositories of the riches of delicious sweetness and vast love.⁹⁴

Not only that, but from their adolescence, their teacher, they have learned well the ultimate in loving feelings, sweetness and expertise in amorous intrigues. The examiner of their education, to whom they give the fruits of their learning, is Kṛṣṇa. They are the crest-jewels of all the maidens of all the universes; they are endowed with such loveliness that they must have performed many lifetimes of pious actions. I bow down before them, the beloved mistresses of the Supreme Lord.⁹⁵

Kṛṣṇa has two kinds of lady-love: those who are “his” (*svakīyā*) and those who are “another's” (*parakīyā*). The *svakīyā* sweethearts are those to whom he is married, the queens in Dvārakā. They are not of the *kāmānugā* devotional category, because, for the queens, their relational status as wives and queens has predominance over desire and its manifestations within the relationship. The *parakīyā* mistresses of the Lord are the beauties of Vrindavan. They belong to the *kāma-rūpā* devotional category. These girls are seemingly married to other men in Vraja; this status produces certain distinctive emotional characteristics in them which have been pointed out by Rūpa Gosvāmin as the marks of the superiority of their love. They are: the necessity to conceal their affection, the presence of many obstacles which must be overcome before they can

meet, as well as social disapproval; all these feed the fire of their love. Therefore Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmin says in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*:

⁹³sandarśana-saṁjalpa-saṁsparśa-saṁprayoga-lakṣaṇa-bheda-catustaya-bhinnatvaṁ dṛśyate |

⁹⁴hareḥ sādharmaṇa-guṇair upetās tasya vallabhāḥ |
pṛthu-premṇām sumādhurya-sampadām cāgrimāśrayāḥ || UN 3.1.

⁹⁵praṇamāmi tāḥ parama-mādhurī-bhṛtaḥ
kṛta-puṇya-puñja-ramaṇī-sīromaṇiḥ |
upasanna-yauvana-guror adhīrtya yāḥ
smara-keli-kausalam udāharan harau || UN 3.2.

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So this love has been given the name of *madhura-rasa*; it has two divisions, *svakīyā* and *parakīyā*. Of these two, the relation of the paramours is filled with unique blissfulness. It has no existence anywhere outside of Vraja.⁹⁶

In the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, the following example is given of the leading ladies of the *sambhogecchāmayī* love.

One day, one gopī was remembering the previous night's rendez-vous with Kṛṣṇa and was becoming quietly excited and enthusiastic to meet with him again. Still, due to shyness, she suppressed her display of emotion and spoke to her bosom friend as follows: "O friend! My mind is constantly searching out the memory of those amorous experiences, that drama directed by Cupid. What a wonderful night we had! Both of us were fearless and bold; both of our bodies were decorated with the scratch marks of our passionate fingernails. His peacock feather, both our garlands, dress, decorations and makeup were scattered and spoiled, what to speak of his necklace of guñja berries and mine of pearls! That love tore the bracelets from my hands and was made even more beautiful by the erotic murmuring sounds emitted by us both."⁹⁷

In another verse from *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī sends Viśākhā to Kṛṣṇa to act as a go-between (*dūtī*) on her behalf, saying:

"You are my life air externalized; you are my other self! How great are your qualities and capabilities, your eloquence! Please, dear friend, so that I don't dwindle into complete insignificance, go today and somehow or other interest Mādhava in me."⁹⁸

Viśvanātha's commentary on this verse elaborates Rādhā's instructions to Viśākhā in the art of acting as a go-between and her fantasy of the conversation which will take place

⁹⁶ataeva madhura rasa kahi tāra nām |
svakīyā parakīyā bhede dvidvidha samsthān ||
parakīyā bhāve ati rasera ullās |
braja binā ihāra anyatra nāhi vās || CC 1.4.46-7.

⁹⁷udañcad-vaiyātyām pṛthu-nakha-padākīrṇa-mithunām
skhalad-barhākalpām dalad-amala-guñjā-maṇisarām |
mamānaṅga-kṛīḍām sakhi valaya-riktī-kṛta-karām
manas tām evocair maṇita-ramaṇīyām mṛgayate || UN 5.46, as embellished by Viṣṇu Dāsa's Svātma-prabodhinī commentary. Kuñjavihārī Dāsa also uses Haridāsa Dāsa Bābājī's translation. (p. 81).

⁹⁸tvam asi mad-āsavo bahīś carantas
tvayi mahatī paṭutā ca vāgmitā ca |
laghur api laghimā na me yathā syān
mayi sakhi rañjaya mādham tathādyā || UN 7.87.

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between her friend and Kṛṣṇa as she tries to interest him in Rādhā.⁹⁹

Dear friend, you are my life externally manifested, therefore I have unlimited faith in you. What is more, you are very clever and glib of tongue, therefore I am requesting you to go into the forest with a friend on the pretext of picking flowers and, as you are wandering there, approach Kṛṣṇa. Act as if you don't see him but all the while, talk about me with your friend in a loud voice so that he is sure to hear you. Speak about me in such a way that my beauty, qualities and love for him are described as being greater than anyone else's. When he hears that, he is sure to come and say to you, "O, hey! What unparalleled and amazing beauty is that you are describing there?"

Then you will reply, acting all the while as if anxiety-ridden and afraid, "I wasn't talking about anyone."

Then he will say, "Dear friend, what is there to be afraid of? There is no harm in telling me, is there? Even if you don't tell me, I'll find out anyway."

Then you will say, "Mādhava, what need do you have to know about whom I am talking?"

Then he will answer, "It's a secret!"

Then you will say, "Look, move aside, I'm picking flowers. You and she are of entirely different natures. You should have nothing to do with her."

Hearing that, he is sure to say, "Tell me, what difference is there in our natures that cannot be overcome?"

Then you will answer, "Mādhava, you are a debauche! She is a chaste and

⁹⁹tvayā puṣpāvacya-miṣeṇa vanam bhrāmantyā tasya nikaṭa eva tam adṛṣṭavatyeva tam śrāvayitvā sva-sakhībhiḥ saha kathopakthāsu vadhū-jana-prasaṅge sarvābhyaḥ sakāśād api mad-rūpa-premādaya ādhikyena varṇanīyāḥ | tataś ca tenāgatya tvan-nikaṭa evam vaktavyamsakhi, kām evam adbhuta-mādhuryam varṇayasīti | tataś ca tvayā sa-sambhramam vaktavyamna kām apīti | sakhi, mā bhaiṣiḥ ko'py atra doṣo na bhaviṣyati | yām avocas tām paricāyāmīti | Mādhava, tayā jñātayā tava kim kāryam iti | sakhi, asti mahad eva rahasyam kāryam iti | Mādhava, ito'pasara | tasyās tava ca mahad eva vaisādṛṣyam svabhāva-vaijātyāt | atas tava tayā na kimapi kāryam iti | sakhi, kim tat svabhāva-vaijātyam | Mādhava, tvam strī-lampāṭaḥ, sā pativratā | tvam cañcalaḥ, sā parama-dhīrā | tvam dharma-karma-hīnaḥ, sā deva-pūjā-parā | tvam āsuciḥ, sā tri-savana-snāna-parā dhautavastrālamkāravatīti | sakhi, aham api brahmacāriti durvāsa-munir eva pramāṇam | aham acañcala ity atra sapta-dina-paryantam eka-hastena govardhana-dhāraṇam eva pramāṇam | aham sāmpratam pitrājñayā śrī-bhāgurur guru-devāl labdha-viṣṇu-mantra-dikṣāka ity atra gārgī-nāndīmukhī-paurṇamāsyā eva praṣṭavyāḥ | aham śuciḥ sāksān mūrta evātra tavād-anubhava eva pramāṇam iti | Mādhava, tadapi tvam puruṣa-jātiḥ sā kulajā na tvam drakṣyātīti | sakhi, sā mām mā paśyatu, aham tu tām parama-dharmavatīm dūrād api dṛṣṭvā kṛtārthī-bubhūṣāmīti | Mādhava, kas tatropāya iti | sakhi, atraiva govardhana-kandara-mandire'dyaiva mayā ekā sūrya-deva-mūrtiliḥ sthāpanīyā sva-hastena mandira-lepanādikam api kṛtvā dūre sthāsyāmi | tvayādṛṣṭa-carasya devasya darśana-pūjanādy-artham sātrānetavyā | tataś ca tasyāḥ pūjārtham atopaviṣṭāyāḥ pṛṣṭha-deśa-darśanenāpi kṛtārthī-bhaviṣyāmi | yadi ca tava kṛpayā saṁmatir bhāvinī tadālakṣitam āgatya śanaiḥ pāda-pīṭhaś ca spraṣṭavya iti | Mādhava, atra kamapy utkocam dāsyasīti | sakhi, ātmānam eva tava haste vikreṣyāmy utkocasya kā vārteti | Mādhava, samāśvāsihi manoratham imam te sampādaiṣyāmi ity uktvā āgatya mām tatra nayeti Śrī-Rādhāyā manogata evopadeśaḥ sva-sakhyai viśakhāyai jñeya iti | Ānanda-candrikā to UN 7.83, Kāvya-mālā edition, p. 184.

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religious woman. You are wanton and irresponsible, whereas she is very calm and serious. You are unregenerate and irreligious, while she is always absorbed in worshipping the gods. You are unclean, while she bathes thrice daily and puts on clean clothes and ornaments after each bath! How could there be any harmony between such incompatible persons?”

After hearing this, Kṛṣṇa will surely say, “Viśākhe! I am also a celibate. Did you never hear what Durvāsas Muni said about me? He described me as a brahmacārin in the *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad*. And you say I'm irresponsible. That's a wild accusation if I ever heard one! Why I held up Govardhana for an entire week without even moving an inch; that's hardly the symptom of someone with a flickering mind! And why do you say that I am irreligious? I took initiation in the Viṣṇu mantra from Bhāguri Muni on my father's order. You can ask Gārgī, Nāndīmukhī or Paurṇamāsī, any one of them can confirm it for you. As far as my being unclean is concerned, I'll have you know that I am purity personified.¹⁰⁰ Of that I am sure you have personal experience!”

After that you should say, “Mādhava, even so, you are a man and she is the daughter of a respectable household, a chaste married woman. She will never look at you.”

He will answer, “Friend! She may never look at me, that's alright. If I know who she is, then at least I will be able to look at her from a distance and fulfill my life by seeing such a pious and saintly woman.”

You should say, “What chance is there of ever seeing her?”

Then Kṛṣṇa will say, “There is one chance, listen! Today I will go to Govardhana and prepare an altar and deity for worshipping the sun god. After purifying it with my own hands, I will go and hide myself at some distance. It will be a most gorgeous arrangement. You should bring her to see it. Then, when she sits down to perform the worship, I will achieve the perfection of my eyes simply by seeing her back! Afterward, if you are merciful and allow me to do it, I will come quietly and unobserved by her and, just once, touch the sole of her foot.”

Then, Viśākhā, you should say, “Mādhava, what will I get out of all of this? Are you going to offer me anything?”

Then he will surely respond by saying, “What, are you asking me for a

¹⁰⁰For the word śuci, “pure,” is also a synonym for śṛṅgāra and ujjvala, which are words used for the erotic sentiment.

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reward? I'm ready to give you my very soul, what to speak of anything else!”

You should then answer him, “Alright, take it easy, Mādhava, I'll make all the necessary arrangements to fulfill your desires.” Then you should immediately run here and take me to the trysting place at Govardhana!

In this way, Rādhā reveals her desires to Viśākhā.

Ordinarily, in the judgement of the writers of Indian aesthetics, it is considered contrary to the principles of rapture for a woman to blatantly reveal her erotic desires. This is not the case, however, for the girls of Vrindavan who are possessed of the competent affection. As a matter of fact, it is considered to be even more pleasing and relishable because the purpose of that brazenness is the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa. As previously explained, there is not the slightest trace of egocentric sensuality in their desires.

In his *Ānanda-candrikā* commentary on the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* verse quoted above, Viśvanātha confirms the same point:

For those possessed of the devotional affection known as *samarthā rati*, even the intense enthusiasm for sexual contact is to be understood as being completely for the pleasure of the Lord. Therefore, in this verse too, it is not illogical that the desires of the mistress for union with the lover is for his pleasure and not otherwise.¹⁰¹

Again, in another place in the same work, Viśvanātha further elucidates the same point:

In this verse, Rādhārāṇī clearly states, “I loosened the bonds of modesty, nay, gave them up entirely, just to enjoy the pleasure of sitting on his lap!” This seems like a direct expression of an egocentric sensual desire, but it should be known that all of the *gopīs* are possessed of *samarthā rati*, which means that they have a subtle, and yet overpowering mental undercurrent to all their acts which can be expressed as follows: “I must see that Kṛṣṇa’s pleasure is increased in a new and special way.” When this is true of all the *gopīs*, then how much more so it must be true in the case of Rādhā herself! Nevertheless, this subtle mental undercurrent is not always revealed in their speeches, but is kept hidden in the treasury of their hearts and they speak as if they are desiring egocentrically. Kṛṣṇa is the supreme sovereign amongst the perceptivesurely he is able to detect their true motives. If it were not the case that they sought his pleasure, he would not be influenced

¹⁰¹samarthā-rati-matīnām gopīnām āsām ratautsukyādikam api sarvaṁ kṛṣṇa-sukhārtham eva phalati... ato'syā nāyikātvāt tādrśa-sambhogābhi-lāṣaḥ sva-kānta-trṭti-prayojanako nānupapanna iti | *Ānandacandrikā* to UN 5.46 (5.44 in *Kāvya-mālā* edition, p. 123.)

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or conquered by their love. The evidence that he is so influenced is provided by the Bhāgavata verse (10.32.22) where Kṛṣṇa states that he is eternally indebted to the gopīs on account of their selfless love for him. Therefore, we have no other alternative but to make such a conclusion.¹⁰²

By way of contrast, he writes further in the same section:

On the other hand, the beauties of the city of Dvārakā, who are possessed of samañjasā rati, even though they also have no desire for their own happiness, do have a slight and subtle proclivity for thinking, “Kṛṣṇa will make me happy by touching me, etc.” Kṛṣṇa is not unaware of such a tendency in their minds. This has to be concluded as the corollary to the previous arguments, for in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa (1.11.36), Śrīla Śukadeva clearly states that although Kṛṣṇa’s queens tried to attract his senses repeatedly with sidelong looks, etc., they were not able to make much progress.¹⁰³

Viśvanātha again elaborates on the same point in his *Sārārtha-darśanī* commentary to the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*:

Because the gopīs are possessed of competent affection, it can be concluded that they are filled with exclusive and selfless love for Kṛṣṇa; they have no consciousness of the destruction of their own distress or the attainment of their own happiness. Their every action, whether mental, verbal or physical, is for the exclusive purpose of pleasing him. When such gopīs make a direct appeal to Kṛṣṇa for cohabitation as they do in this verse, it should be interpreted that they are doing so to arouse his desires and consequently, his pleasure. They are very expert in romantic dealings and therefore do not lighten their love by expressing it vocally. They keep their love hidden while externally verbalizing their feelings of sensual desire, thus indirectly minimizing it. As an example, we can cite the person who sees that his friend is hungry and so carefully prepares a variety of sweetmeats with which to feed him. Seeing the elaborate preparations, the

¹⁰²*yasyotsaṅga eva sukham tasya sukha-mūrtitvāt tad-āśayā utsaṅ-prāpty-artham ity arthaḥ | yadyapy atra spaṣṭoktyā sva-sukha-sprhā pratīyate tadapi sva-saundarya-vaidagdhy-ādibhiḥ śrī-kṛṣṇam aham viśeṣataḥ sukham prathayānīti sūkṣmo mānaso vyāpāraḥ samārtha-rati-matīnām sarvāsām eva vraja-sundarīnām sadaivāsty eva kimuta tasyāḥ sarva-vraja-vāmā-mukuta-maṇi-bhūtāyāḥ | kimtu sa tābhiḥ sva-vāg-viṣayī-bhūtaḥ prāyeṇa na kriyate śrī-kṛṣṇas tv abhijñā-cūḍāmaṇis taṁ jānāty eveti na pārāye’ham niravadya-saṁyujām ity ādibhis tad-vaśīkārānyathānu-papattyā evaṁ vyākhyāyate | ataevoktaṁ yad asyām kṛṣṇa-saukhyārtham eva kevalam udyama iti | Ānanda-candrikā to UN 13.3 (Kāvya-mālā edition, p. 343.)*

¹⁰³*samañjasa-rati-matīnām pura-sundarīnām sva-sukha-sprhāyā abjāve’pi svāṅga-sparsādibhiḥ śrī-kṛṣṇo mām sukhayatv iti sūkṣmo mānaso vyāpāraḥ kenāpy aṁśenāsty eva, taṁ ca śrī-kṛṣṇo jānāty eva yasyendriyam vimathitum kuhakair na śekur iti śrī-suka-vākyānyathānu-papattyāiva vyākhyāyata iti | ibid.*

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friend asks him what he is up to, in response to which his host disguises his actual intentions and says, “I am preparing all of these things for myself, not you! I was preparing them for a special event which was to take place today, but you just happened to turn up.” By dissimulating it in this way, the value of his love is actually increased. If he were to say the truth, “I am doing all this for you and not for myself, I have no need to do this, etc.” then his love would be devalued.¹⁰⁴

To further strengthen his point, Viśvanātha quotes from his own work, *Prema-samputikā*:

Love’s candle burns bright in the lovers' hearts
To set aglow those chambers' darkest parts;
If one should bring it out the verbal door,
Pride’s wind will blow and it shall glow no more.¹⁰⁵

Therefore the gopīs, consummate in their expression of conjugal love, say to Kṛṣṇa in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, “O friend of the distressed, we are your servants, so please cool our lust-parched breasts and heads with the touch of your lotus hands.”¹⁰⁶

Govinda Dās Kavirāj has also written a nice song in this vein:

O friend!
What a beautiful young man I have seen
at the foot of the kadamba tree!
Seeing his youthful loveliness, I could only stare.
Was it a black tamāla tree or lightning-filled night sky?
I could not make out if he was black or gold.

The movements of his body, the movements of his eyes
were all crooked and sly;
his lips were smiling and he held a flute in with his hands.

¹⁰⁴atrābhiḥ samarthā-rati-mattvena mahā-premavatībhiḥ svīya-duḥkhāpāya-sukhaprāpti-jñāna-rahitābhiḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-sukhaika-prayojana-kāyika-mānasa-vyāpārābhis tasyaiva saurata-sukhoddīpanārtham eva svīya-rūpa-yauvana-kāma-pīḍām vivṛṇvatībhiḥ parama-vidagdhabhiḥ prāyaḥ premṇo vān-niṣṭhatā-lāghavo na kriyate, kintu kāmasyaiva | yathā bhojana-lampatām kañcit sva-mitram bubhuḥsam abhilakṣya snehena tam bhōjayitu-kāmaś caturvidha-miṣṭānna-sādhane prayatamāno janas tena pṛṣṭo’pi svārtham evāham prayāsyāmi na tvad-artham iti brūte tadaiva premā gurur bhavati | yadi tv etavān mamāyāsa tvat-sukhārtham eva na tu svārtham niṣkāmatvād iti brūte tadā premā laghu bhavati | Commentary to BhP 10.35.7.

¹⁰⁵premā dvayo rasikayor ayi dīpa eva
hṛd-veṣma bhāsayati niścalam eva bhāti |
dvārād ayaṁ vadanatas tu bahiṣkṛtaś cen
nirvāti śīghram athavā laghutām upaiti ||

¹⁰⁶tan no nidhehi kara-paṅkajam ārtabandho
tapta-staneṣu ca śiraḥsu ca kiṅkariṇām | BhP 10.29.41.

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A peacock feather rested horizontally on his crown.
How many young girls have become lusty by looking at him?

My lips yearn for the nectar of his kiss;
my heart craves for the touch of his heart;
my life wants to be merged in his life;
this body seems to exist only for association with his.
What can I do to resolve this dilemma?

On the one hand, I am but a lone girl
whose sister-in-law is a black-hearted woman;
Fate has made me a wife with a respectable position.
How can I live while suffering such unhappiness?
I shall drown this miserable body in the Yamunā,
so says Govinda Dās.¹⁰⁷

2.8 Different examples of the attainment of perfection by aspirants on the path of desire for physical union with Kṛṣṇa

Rūpa Gosvāmin, in his *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* tells that Kṛṣṇa has two types of mistress: one group consists of the eternally perfect gopīs who descend to the earthly plane at the time of his incarnation. The second group consists of those who have attained that status through devotional practice and the mercy of the Lord. The devotees of the second division sometimes achieved their perfection in groups, sometimes individually. Those who arrived in groups include the Vedas and the sages of the Daṇḍakāraṇya. Gāyatrī is mentioned in the scriptures as one who became Kṛṣṇa's mistress through her own individual effort.¹⁰⁸ Passages which describe these devotees are cited here.

2.81 The Vedas

In his commentary on the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, where the Vedas report having attained a perfection similar to that of the gopīs, Viśvanātha has quoted the following passage from the *Vāmana Purāṇa*:

¹⁰⁷nabahu ruci deha sakhi, nipahu mūle pekhanu, nayana mama bhai geo bibhor | nūtana tamāla kiye, kiye dāminī ambara, lakhite nāri kiye kāla ki gaura || aṅga gati bhāti ati, baṅkima se cāhani, adhara hāsi karete bānśi śobham | ucca cūrā śikhi, puccha tachu kopari, heriye kata yuvatī mana lobham || adhara cāhe adharāmṛta, hṛdaye hṛdi māgañ, prāṇe puna rākhite cāhe prāṇ | śyāma vapu lāgiye, nijahu vapu sādhiye, kaiche hām karaba samidhān || eke ta hām ramañi bhela, nanadi bhela kālare, vihita more karala kula nārī | Govinda Dāsa kahe, e duḥkhe kata jiyaba, e duḥkhe tanu yamunā nire ḍāri ||

¹⁰⁸UN 3.40-51.

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The Vedas said, “O Kṛṣṇa! Seeing how lovely your form is, more beautiful than thousands of Cupids, our minds have become disturbed by erotic desires, exactly like the minds of women, of this there is no doubt. The gopīs of Vrindavan worship you as their own lover, their paramour in extra-marital adventures. We wish to worship you in the same way.”

The Lord answered, “You have desired something very wonderful, but at the same time, something rare and difficult to achieve. Nevertheless, I approve of your desire and it shall be fulfilled completely. In the future creation, when Brahmā is born and sets about the work of universal reconstruction, then, in the Sārasvata-kalpa, you shall be born in the bodies of cowherd girls. You shall take birth in my sacred abode of Vrindavan in the area of Mathura in Bhāratavarṣa. There you will attain me as your lover in the circle dance. With great affection, intense attachment greater than that of any person, you shall know me as your paramour and thus become completely fulfilled.”¹⁰⁹

2.82 Gāyatrī Devī

Gāyatrī Devī is one of the goddesses who became a gopī at the time of the incarnation. Jīva Gosvāmin has cited the following passage from the *Padma Purāṇa*, *Sṛṣṭi Khaṇḍa*, in his commentary on *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, 3.46:

Gāyatrī Devī also attained Kṛṣṇa after becoming a gopī in Vrindavan. It is described as follows, “After her marriage to Brahmā, she worshipped Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He was satisfied and gave her the benediction that she could take birth with her parents and family as cowherds in the village of Gokula. He was able to understand that her intention was to have him as her husband and so he said to some friends, “My friends, listen. At this particular time I have arranged that Gāyatrī Devī should be married to Brahmā, but when I take birth amongst you for the purpose of fulfilling the mission of the gods, then she shall become my mistress.”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹śrutaya ūcuḥ—kandarpa-koṭi-lāvanye tvayi dṛṣṭe manāmsi nah | kāmīnī-bhāvam āsādyā smara-kṣubdhāny asaṁśayam || yathā tval-loka-vāsīnyah kāma-tattvena gopikāḥ | bhajanti ramaṇam matvā cikīrṣājani nas tathā || śrī-bhagavān uvāca —durlabho durghaṭas caiva yuṣmākaṁ sumanorathah | mayānumoditaḥ samyak satyo bhavitum arhati || āgāminī viriṅcau tu jāte sṛṣṭy-artham udyate | kalpaṁ sārasvataṁ prāpya vraje gopyo bhaviṣyatha || pṛthivyaṁ bhārate kṣetre mātūre mama maṇḍale | vṛndāvane bhaviṣyāmi preyān vo rāsa-maṇḍale || jāra-dharmaṇa susnehaṁ sudṛḍhaṁ sarvato'dhikam | mayi samprāpya sarve'pi kṛta-kṛtyā bhaviṣyatha || Sārārtha-darśinī to BhP 10.87.19. Portions of this citation are also found in both Jīva and Viśvanātha's commentaries to UN 3.46.

¹¹⁰Gopakanyā-rūpatayā jātāyās tasyā brahmaṇā pariṇaye tat-pitrādi-gopeṣu bhagavad-vacaḥ—mayā jñātvā tataḥ kanyā dattā caisā viriṅcaye | yuṣmākaṁ tu kule cāham deva-kāryārtha-siddhaye | avatāraṁ kariṣyāmi mat-kāntā tu bhaviṣyati || Kuṅjavihārī's rendering of this passage is problematic. According to the *Padma Purāṇa*, Gāyatrī had in fact already been born as a gopī during a different incarnation and had been married to Brahmā when Kṛṣṇa blessed her with this benediction.

2.83 The sages in Daṇḍaka forest

The sages in the Daṇḍaka forest are probably the best-documented of the devotees who attained an erotic relation with Kṛṣṇa. Rūpa gives them as an example of males desiring and successfully gaining a female form in order to have such a relation with him.

Previously, all the great sages who lived in the Daṇḍaka forest saw Hari in the form of Rāma, and because of his beauty, desired to enjoy him sexually.¹¹¹

Śrī Jīva Prabhu comments, “The sages here are desiring to attain to Kṛṣṇa in abeyance to his loved ones there.”¹¹² This subject also arises in Sanātana’s *Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī* commentary on the Bhāgavata in connection with the gopīs’ performance of the austerities to please the goddess Kātyāyanī in order to get Kṛṣṇa as their husband. Sanātana comments that these sages belonged to that group of gopīs.¹¹³

¹¹¹purā maharṣayaḥ sarve daṇḍakāraṇya-vāsināḥ |
dṛṣtvā rāmaṁ hariṁ tatra bhoktum aicchan suvigramam ||
BRS 1.2.301. Cited from Padma-purāṇa.

¹¹²maharṣayo’tra śrī-gokulastha-śrī-kṛṣṇa-preyasy-anugata-vāsanāḥ |
Durgama-saṅgamanī to the above verse.

¹¹³tābhir evāyam mantro dṛṣṭo’sṭīti kecit āhuḥ padma-purāṇānusāreṇa pūrva-janmani śrī-raghunāthāvatāre
tāsām eva ṛṣitvāt | Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī to BhP 10.22.2.

The Dominant Mood (II): Rādhārāṇī's girlfriends

3.1 The Spirit of Rādhārāṇī's girlfriends

In the previous chapter, the *sthāyi-bhāva* of Kṛṣṇa's mistresses was described in extenso. Here we turn to the dominant mood of affection of Rādhā's girlfriends and its various divisions.

Tad-bhāvecchātmikā bhakti is defined as a type of devotion that is saturated with the desire to realize the fullness of the sweet mood which succeeds in winning the interest of the lover and his beloved, because it finds extreme joy in helping Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's other leading ladies enjoy erotic dalliances with him and takes pleasure in seeing their fulfillment. This mood (*bhāva*) is also called the mood of the girlfriends (*sakhī-bhāva*).

Sakhī-bhāva means unqualified love for the leading lady or *yūtheśvarī*. That love is without limit and is free from even the slightest touch of selfishness, to the extent that the *sakhī* thinks that the leading lady is dearer to her than her own life or her own self.

The essence of *sakhī-bhāva* is trust, or *viśrambhā*, which Jīva Gosvāmin has further defined as meaning a feeling of mutual identity.¹¹⁴ As a result of maintaining this intimate trust, the *sakhīs* are able to understand the *nāyikā* spontaneously, without her having to say anything, or make the slightest hint or gesture.

Kavi Karṇapūra has also defined the *sakhī* in the following way:

Those who are dedicated with an untainted love, who feel happiness and distress in accordance with the moods of the *nāyikā*, and who are similar to her in age and temperament, and are thus able to know her heart, are called *sakhīs*.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴*viśrambho gādha-viśvāsa-viśeṣaḥ* | BRS 3.3.106. Jīva's gloss: *gādha-viśvāsa-viśeṣo'tra parasparam sarvathā svābheda-pratītiḥ* |

¹¹⁵*nirupādhi-prīti-parā sadṛśī sukha-duḥkhayoḥ* |
vayasya-bhāvād anyo'nyam hṛdaya-jñā sakhī bhavet || AK 5.279

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Rūpa Gosvāmin's definition is found in *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*:

Those who sincerely feel greater love for each other than they do for even themselves, who have intimate confidence in one another, and who are equal in age, dress, talent, beauty and temperament, are known as sakhīs.¹¹⁶

In the chapter treating the subject of the sakhī in the same book, Rūpa writes:

The sakhīs are the perfect expanders of the loving affairs and intrigues of the Divine Couple and are veritable treasure chests of the rare and valuable secret jewels of faith and trust.¹¹⁷

The *nāyikā*'s mood is one of desiring to give pleasure to her lover (*nāyaka*) by serving him with every limb of her own body. The sakhī's mood is one of desiring especially for the union of the lover and his mistress, the *nāyaka* and the *nāyikā*. The *nāyikā* is her friend and by giving her pleasure in this way, she achieves her own plenitude and perfection. This is the difference between the two types of *gopīs* participating in the creation of erotic sacred rapture.

The worshipable object of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and the other leading lady-loves of the Lord is Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone and no other. On the other hand, the sakhīs have the feature of wanting to see Kṛṣṇa with Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī (or some other *nāyikā*, as the case may be). As Narottama Dās Ṭhākura has put it, "My life and soul are the Divine Couple, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa." The purpose of this work is to explain *sakhī-bhāva* specifically where the *nāyikā* is Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

There are primarily three divisions amongst Rādhā's girlfriends. Some are equal in their affection for both Kṛṣṇa and his mistress, others lean toward Kṛṣṇa, while others are more sympathetic to Rādhā. The sakhīs belonging to this last category are otherwise known as *mañjarīs*. No matter how intense the feeling of friendship the *mañjarīs* have for Rādhā, their special interest is to exclusively serve the Divine Couple. This is their life; it is as if their feelings of intimate friendship and servitude have merged. It is as though their friendship has become the manifestation of their service and their service identified with their friendship.

In his *Stavāvalī*, Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmin expresses this feeling of dedication to

¹¹⁶*svātmano'py adhikam prema kurvāṇānyo'nyam acchalam |
viśrambhinī vayo-veśādibhis tulyā sakhī matā ||*
UN 7.70. (*Kāvya-mālā* edn., 7.66, p. 178).

¹¹⁷*prema-līlā-vihārāṇām samyag vistārikā sakhī |
viśrambha-ratna-peṭī ca tataḥ suṣṭhu vivicyate ||* UN 8.1.

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Rādhā's service in the following famous prayer:

O Goddess! I pray for nothing from you at any time
other than single-minded service to your lotus feet.
If you should say, "Become my friend, my equal,"
then my answer is, "I offer eternal obeisances to such friendship.
I bow down to it, but in truth I pray
that my taste for being your hand-maid
should ever increase, yes, increase forever.
This is my prayer, and this is my vow."¹¹⁸

3.2 The five divisions of sakhī-bhāva

The above-mentioned general division of *sakhī-bhāva* has been further subdivided into five in the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*. There it is said that Rādhārāṇī, queen of Vrindavan, has five kinds of sakhī, know respectively as sakhī (friends), *priya-sakhī* (dear friends), *parama-preṣṭha-sakhī* (dearliest friends), *prāṇa-sakhī* (life-companions) and *nitya-sakhī* (constant companions).¹¹⁹ In this classification, sakhīs are those inclined primarily toward Kṛṣṇa; they include Dhaniṣṭhā and Vindhya. *Priya-sakhīs* and *parama-preṣṭha-sakhīs* are equal in their affections to both the lover and the beloved; Kuraṅgākṣī and Sumadhyamā belong to the former grouping, while Rādhā's closest companions—Lalitā, Viśākhā, Campakalatā, Sucitrā, Indulekhā, Tuṅgavidyā, Raṅgadevī and Sudevī (often known as the eight friends, or *aṣṭa-sakhī*) belong to the latter. Their title of *parama-preṣṭha-sakhī* would indicate that they are the dearest of all to Rādhā. The last two categories, which include the mañjarīs, are *Rādhā-snehādhikā*, i.e., they have stronger feelings of love for Rādhā than for Kṛṣṇa. Kastūrī and Maṇi Mañjarīs' names are specifically mentioned in the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* as *nitya-sakhīs*, while Śāśimukhī, Vāsantī and Lāsikā are the names of some *prāṇa-sakhīs*.

3.21 Kṛṣṇa-snehādhikā

Viśvanātha has discussed *rāgānugā bhakti* and the different categories of sakhī in his *Ānanda-candrikā* commentary to *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*:

In the opinion of those devoted to the *rāgānugā* path, one must follow a specific gopī with a feeling of submission at least equal to the one with which one worships Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, if one follows with less affection for

¹¹⁸ *pādābjayos tava vinā vara-dāsyam eva
nānyat kadāpi samaye kila devi yāce |
sakhyaāya te mama namo'stu namo'stu nityam
dāsyāya te mama raso'stu raso'stu satyam || Vilāpa-kusumāñjalī, 16.*

¹¹⁹ *asyā vṛndāvaneśvaryaḥ sakhyah pañca-vidhā matāḥ |
sakhyas ca nitya-sakhyas ca prāṇa-sakhyas ca kāścana |
priya-sakhyas ca parama-preṣṭha-sakhyas ca viśrutāḥ || UN 4.50*

the devotee, then there is no distinction between the *vaidha* and *rāgānugā* paths, for one cannot attain the desired result of *rāgānuga*-bhakti without following in the footsteps of one of the Vrindavan devotees. In this case, though, if one adores a girlfriend of Rādhā's whose affections lean proportionately somewhat more towards Kṛṣṇa, then Rādhā's prominence is diminished; she takes a position inferior to that of her own girlfriend. This is a great breach of protocol, for Rādhārāṇī is the greatest of all the *yūtheśvarīs* or *nāyikās*.¹²⁰

The conclusion is that Dhaniṣṭhā and other sakhīs of her category are not to be followed by one who wishes perfection on the *rāgānugā* path and attainment of spiritual handmaidenhood.

3.22 Sama-snehā

Priya-sakhīs have exactly the same measure of love for Kṛṣṇa as they do for their dear friend, the *yūtheśvarī*. That love is simultaneously, inexplicably great and yet always clearly expressed. Their numbers are greater than the other types of girlfriend. Rūpa gives the following example of the actions of a sakhī of this type:

One day, when Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and Kṛṣṇa were separated as a result of some misdeed of his, Śyāmā's friend Bakulamālī came and revealed her mind to Campakalātā, "Dear friend, when Rādhā is separated from Kṛṣṇa, then to see her gives me a pain in the heart. And when I see Kṛṣṇa without Rādhā, I truly feel great suffering. What misery! O beautiful one, I pray therefore that I shall never take any birth in which I shall not be able to drink with my eyes the beauty of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's moon-like faces, creating a joyful festival, together."¹²¹

The *parama-preṣṭha-sakhīs* like Lalitā and Viśākhā are also *sama-snehā* like the *priya-sakhīs*, with the distinction that, although they love both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa equally, they definitely feel themselves to be Rādhā's. These eight sakhīs (Lalitā, Viśākhā, Sudevī, Raṅgadevī, Campakalātā, Citrā, Tuṅgavidyā and Indulekhā) have reached such heights of love for both members of the Divine Couple that they sometimes appear to feel more affection for

¹²⁰ *rāgānugīya-bhakta-mate śrī-kṛṣṇād anyūna-prītimattayaivānujigamiṣitā gopī khalv anugamyate | tasmān nyūna-prītyāpy anugamane vācye vaidhād rāgasya ko viśeṣaḥ ? bhaktānugatim vinā vaidha-bhakter apy asiddheḥ | tasmāc chrī-kṛṣṇe'dhikā sakhī tad-anujigamiṣubhir janaiḥ śrī-kṛṣṇād anyūna-prīti-viṣayī-kartavyā | śrī-rādhikādyā sarva-yūtheśvarī tu śrī-kṛṣṇād iṣan-nyūna-prīti-viṣayī-kāryeti sakhyāḥ sakāśād api yūtheśvaryā apakarṣe dyotite mahān evānaya iti | ataḥ sakhyo nānugamyanta iti tā eka-vidhā eveti sarvam avadātam. Ānanda-candrikā to UN 8.137 (Kāvya-mālā edn., 238)*

¹²¹ *vinā kṛṣṇam rādhā vyathayati samantān mama mano vinā rādhām kṛṣṇo'py ahaha sakhī mām viklavayati | janaiḥ sā me mā bhūt kṣaṇam api na yatra kṣaṇaduhau yugenākṣnor lihyām yugapad anayor vaktra-śaśināu || UN 8.128*

either the one or the other, but this distinction is slight and manifests only briefly. For example, when Rādhārāṇī is in one of her sulking moods, then their sympathies might sway toward Kṛṣṇa, the spurned and forlorn lover. On the other hand, when Kṛṣṇa breaks his promise or fails to appear for an assignation, they will take Rādhā's side.

3.23 Rādhā-snehādhikā

The *prāṇa-sakhīs* and *nitya-sakhīs* are more affectionate toward Rādhā. Of these two groups of *sakhīs*, the first category is more prominent. In his *Ujjvala-nīlamanī-kiraṇa*, Viśvanātha states that the *prāṇa-sakhīs* are chief amongst the *nitya-sakhīs* who include all those who are *Rādhā-snehādhikā*.¹²² In his commentary on *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* 8.129 already partially quoted above, Viśvanātha makes the following further distinction between these two types of *mañjarī*:

Those devotees who are to be followed for the attainment of spiritual perfection should be *nitya-siddha* or eternally perfected souls. Those who are *labdha-siddha*, having become perfected either through grace or long practice, are seen in a slightly lesser light. This difference has existed since time immemorial and is here expressed in this verse by making a division between the *prāṇa-sakhīs* and the *nitya-sakhīs*, the latter being followers of the former.¹²³

The example given of these *sakhīs* is found in *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*. One day an outspoken girlfriend of Rādhā's who belongs to the *prāṇa-sakhī* category tried to stop Rādhā from going to a pre-arranged tryst with Kṛṣṇa. She said to Vṛndā Devī, the go-between,

“Vṛnde! Stop making all these clever arrangements for a liaison. Just go and tell the son of the cowherd king that it is the rainy season. There are so many poisonous snakes slithering about in the dark forests, how can he expect this timid girl, Rādhā, to find her way to the mountain cave? Tell him that he should take the trouble to come here in secret himself.”¹²⁴

3.3 The superiority of the Rādhā-snehādhikā sakhīs

In the *Ānanda-candrikā* commentary on *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* 2.15, Viśvanātha writes that although all *sakhīs* find their own happiness by arranging for the pleasure of the *nāyikā* in union with her Lord, still a general division can be made of two categories from amongst

¹²² yā rādhikāyām snehādhikā sā nitya-sakhī, tatra mukhyā yā sā prāṇa-sakhī uktā.

¹²³ gopī-padavī-prāpti rāgānugām bhaktiṁ vinā na bhavātīti pūrva-pratipāditvāt siddhāntād ānugamī ca vina rāgānugāyā asiddhe rāgānugamanenaiva rāgavatīnām tāsām apy anugatir vyākhyātetī anugamī nitya-siddhā gopya ivānugantryo'pi labdha-siddhāyo'nādita evānugamībhyah kiñcin nyūnatayā vartanta eva

¹²⁴ viramatu tava vṛnde dūtya-cāturya-caryā
sahacari vinivṛtya brūhi goṣṭhendra-sūnum |
viśama-viśadhareyam śarvarī prāvṛṣeṇyā
katham iha giri-kuñje bhīrur eṣā praheyā || UN 8.13

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them. They are (1) those whose bodies are extremely attractive to Kṛṣṇa due to their having salient qualities of love, beauty and coquettishness, etc., and (2) others who are somewhat inferior in these respects and so are not so attractive to the Lord's romantic aspirations. Thus, girls of the former category may occasionally, at the behest of their friend and mistress (*yūtheśvarī*), desire for erotic dalliance with Kṛṣṇa, for his pleasure. These *sakhīs* include Lalitā and the other *parama-preṣṭha-sakhīs*. The second category of *sakhī*, however, never entertain such aspirations. They are Kasturī and the other *nitya-sakhīs*.¹²⁵

For an example, we can look to the *Vṛndāvana-mahimāmṛta* by Prabodhā-nanda Sarasvatī:

One day one of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's handmaidens whose exclusive desire is to relish the flavour of serving her lotus feet and who never thinks for a moment, not even in dreams, that she would have any kind of intercourse with Kṛṣṇa, was accosted by him who shocked her by tearing away at her blouse and uncovering her bosom. She started crying, "No, no, what are you doing?" while Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, my very life and soul, stood by and watched, laughing.¹²⁶

The *nitya-sakhīs* have a certain reward for their unique spirit of abnegation, something which is withheld even from Rādhārāṇī's dearest comrades like Lalitā and Viśākhā. That reward is described for us by Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmin in *Vraja-vilāsa-stava*:

I take shelter of the handmaidens of the Queen of Vrindavan,
who are led by Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī
and who lovingly satisfy her
by offering hazelnuts and other condiments,
massaging her feet, bringing fragrant water
and arranging trysts with her gallant
and have thus become most dear to her.
They are thus allowed to enter the scene
of the Divine Couple's most intimate affairs
without the slightest discomfiture

¹²⁵atra sakhī-bhāvaṁ samāśrita iti | yadyapi sakhyo hi sva-sva-yūtheśvarīṇāṁ śrī-rādhādīnāṁ eva śrī-kṛṣṇāṅga-saṅga-sukhena sukhinyo na tu sveṣāṁ, tadapi tāḥ sāmānyato dvidhā bhavanti: prema-saundarya-vaidagdhyaḍīnāṁ ādhikyena śrī-kṛṣṇasyātilobhaniya-gātryas teṣāṁ nyūnatvena tasyātilobhaniya-gātryaś ca | tatra pūrvāḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-sukhānurodhāt tata eva sva-yūtheśvarīṇāṁ apy āgrahādhikyāc ca kadācit kṛṣṇāṅga-saṅga-sprhāvato'pi bhavanti | tāś ca lalitādyāḥ parama-preṣṭha-sakhyādaya uttarāś tu tad-dvayābhāvāt kadāpi kṛṣṇāṅga-saṅga-sprhāvato na bhavanti | tāś ca kastūry-ādayo nitya-sakhyāḥ | Ānanda-candrikā to UN 2.15 (Kāvya-mālā edn., 46)

¹²⁶ananya-śrī-rādhā-pada-kamala-dāsyaika-rasa-dhī
hareḥ saṅge raṅgaṁ svapana-samaye nāpi dadhati |
balāt kṛṣṇe kūrpāsaka-bhidi kimapy ācarati kāpy
udaśrur mevati pralapati mamātmā ca hasati || VMA 16.94

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a reward not given even to her dearest friends.¹²⁷

This is the area where the mañjarīs are unique and distinctive.

Raṅgaṇamāla and her friends, though they are themselves loving friends, either on their own initiative or at the behest of Viśākhā and her friends, sometimes behave towards the Ever-youthful Couple of Vraja just as if they were maidservants. Behaving shyly, they do this in order to obtain the highest ecstasy by listening to their extremely funny conversations as well as to gain their most cherished service.¹²⁸

Similarly, in the *Kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāmṛta*, it is said,

Rūpa Mañjarī and the other handmaidens of Rādhārāṇī, one sparkle of whose toenails is brighter than a flash of lightning, are certainly qualified in all respects, whether in talents or in coquettishness, to become *yūtheśvarīs* or *nāyikās* themselves, and yet they are completely devoid of any attraction for such glories. They would much rather bathe constantly in the nectarean ocean of Rādhā's service.¹²⁹

A further special feature of the *nitya-sakhīs* or mañjarīs is that just as Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and the other *yūtheśvarīs* are spontaneously and instinctively filled with an intense thirst to relish the flavour of Kṛṣṇa's form, taste, fragrance, touch and sound, so similarly the mañjarīs are spontaneously and instinctively attracted to both Rādhā's and Kṛṣṇa's qualities. To what extent and how they are so attracted can be explained as follows. The nature of *madhura-rasa* is clear: the gopīs want to please Kṛṣṇa by offering their own bodies. Even Brahmā prays to be able to drink “again and again from the cup of his senses the honey-like nectar of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet.”¹³⁰ According to *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, “the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet” means his direct bodily contact.¹³¹ From this we can understand that the *nāyikās* serve Kṛṣṇa by directly relinquishing their bodies to him—that is their qualification for being in the *madhura rasa*. The mañjarīs, on the other hand,

¹²⁷ tāmbūlarpaṇa-pāda-mardana-payo-dānādibhisārādibhir
vṛndāranya-maheśvarīm priyatayā yās toṣayanti priyāḥ |
prāṇa-preṣṭha-sakhī-kulād api kilāsaṅkocitā bhūmikāḥ
keli-bhūmiṣu rūpa-mañjarī-mukhās tā dāsikāḥ saṁśraye || Verse 38

¹²⁸ vraja-navīna-yuva-dvandva-ratnaṁ prati Viśākhādi-dvārā kvacit svayaṁ vā lajjām abhiniya mṛdu bhāṣita-
vivicyamāna-narma-kalā-kalāpa-janita-paramānanda-viśeṣa-lābhāya abhilaṣita-paricarāṇa-viśeṣa-lobhāya ca
raṅgaṇamālā-prabhṛtaya etāḥ parama-praṇayi-sakhyo'pi paricārikā iva vyavaharanti | Mukta-carita, p.111

¹²⁹ tā vidyud-dyuti-jayi-prapadaika-rekhā
vaidagdhya eva kila mūrtil-bhṛtas tathāpi |
yūtheśvarītvam api samyag arocayitvā
dāsyāmṛtābdhim anu sasnur ajasram asyāḥ || KBhA 3.2

¹³⁰ etad hr̥ṣīka-caṣakair asakṛt pibāmaḥ
śarvādayo'ṅghry-udaja-madhv-amṛtāsavam || BhP 10.14.33

¹³¹ aṅghri-padma-sudhā kahe kṛṣṇa-saṅgānanda |
Cf. Commentary on Bṛhad-Bhāgavatāmṛta 1.7.99

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are unenthusiastic about such type of service. They never contemplate such a possibility, even in their dreams. Yet, the question may be asked, if there is no possibility of *madhura rasa* or romance without physical intimacy, how can the platonic spirit of the mañjarīs be graced with the name of *samarthā rati* or *kāma-rūpā bhakti*?

In answer to this question, it should be said that the object of the mañjarīs' affection is the Holy Couple of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa together. Therefore, the perfection of the mañjarīs' power of sight and the thirst of their eyes is to see that couple locked in embrace. The craving of their ears is to hear the Holy Couple's sweet murmuring conversations and that is the fulfillment of their sense of hearing. The desire of their tongues is to relish the flavour of the condiments touched by the Holy Couple's lips, and in that way their sense of taste attains perfection. Similarly, the sweet fragrance that arises at the Holy Couple's union is the object craved for by their nostrils and its experience is the fulfillment of their sense of smell. The tactile sense finds plenitude in massaging the Holy Couple's feet and bodies, and this is the only object of their sense of touch.

In this way, it may be said that of the four types of *sambhoga* (sexual union) mentioned by Jīva Gosvāmin (i.e., by sight, conversation, touch and copulation) the first three are present in the mañjarīs to some extent. The question is, how do they experience *samprayoga*, or intercourse? We get some light on this point from the following passage from the *Govinda-līlāmṛta*:

Just as the moon enlivens the lilies, so Kṛṣṇa is the bright moon who enlivens the lily-like hearts of the residents of Vrindavan. His pleasure-giving potency is personified in Rādhā, who is like a creeper whose fruits are *prema*. Her girlfriends are like the unlimited branches, leaves and flowers which expand out from her self and are thus equal to her. For this reason, when that winding creeper of love is watered with the heavenly potion of Kṛṣṇa's sporting activities, then the leaves and flowers (the *sakhīs*) find hundreds of times more pleasure than if they were themselves to be sprinkled this seems quite normal.¹³²

Just as the all-pervading, omnipotent Supreme God Almighty needs his majestic spiritual potencies to become fulfilled, similarly, the love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, though very elevated, self-manifest and joyful by nature, does not find fulfillment for even a moment without the presence of her girlfriends, the *sakhīs* and mañjarīs. What person, genuinely learned in the science of sacred rapture, would not therefore take shelter of them?¹³³

¹³²sakhyāḥ śrī-rādhikāyā vraja-kumuda-vidhor hlādinī-nāma-śakteḥ
sārāṁśa-prema-vallyāḥ kiśalaya-dala-puṣpādi-tulyāḥ sva-tulyāḥ |
siktāyām kṛṣṇa-līlāmṛta-rasa-nicayair ullasantyām amuṣyām
jātollāsāḥ sva-sekāc chata-guṇam adhikam santi yat tan na citram ||
GLA 10.16, quoted in Caitanya-caritāmṛta, 2.8.211.

¹³³vibhur api sukha-rūpaḥ sva-prakāśo'pi bhāvaḥ
kṣaṇam api nahi rādhā-kṛṣṇayor yā rte svāḥ |
pravahati rasa-puṣṭim cid-vibhūtir iveśaḥ

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Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī also states in the *Vṛndāvana-mahimāmṛta*,

The pleasure felt by the eyes of the sakhī alone in seeing Rādhā merged in the ocean of love for Kṛṣṇa makes all the Supreme Lord's festive arrangements for his own happiness seem insignificant.¹³⁴

Another quote from the *Govinda-līlāmṛta* (11.137) of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja illustrates the power of the vicarious pleasure of the mañjarīs:

If Kṛṣṇa should touch Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī,
then lo and behold! her sakhīs start to tremble
they sweat and their body hairs stand on end
and tears well in their eyes.
And if Kṛṣṇa should carefully sip
the spirituous liquor of Rādhā's lips,
it is they who become intoxicated!
This is truly something wonderful.¹³⁵

In his commentary on this verse, Vṛndāvana Cakravartin observes that this verse contains the rhetorical embellishment (*alamkāra*) known as *asaṅgati* or “non sequitur.” *Asaṅgati* is defined as arising when causes are described as being inflicted on one entity have their effects reproduced in a completely distinct one. Here, the Lord is touching and kissing Rādhā, but the effects of trembling and intoxication are described taking place in the bodies of the sakhīs.¹³⁶

Another verse can be quoted here from the *Āhnikā-kaumudī* of Kavi Karṇapūra where Kṛṣṇa says:

O doe-eyed beauties!
When your girlfriends are absent,
you may have to look at a mirror
before you can say whether you are happy or sad.
They reflect every mood of yours

śayati na padam āsām kaḥ sakhinām rasajñāḥ || GLA 10.17

¹³⁴ rādhā-nāgara-keli-sāgara-nimagnāli-dṛśām yat sukham
no tal-leśa-lavāyate bhagavataḥ sarvo'pi saukhyotsavaḥ || VMA 1.54

¹³⁵ sprśati yadi mukundo rādhikām tat-sakhinām
bhavati vapuṣi kampa-sveda-romāñca-bāṣpam |
adhara-madhu mudāsyās cet pibatya eṣa yatnād
bhavati bata tad āsām attatā citram etat || GLA 11.137

¹³⁶ atyanta-bhinnādhāratve yugapad-bhāṣaṇam yadi | dharmayor hetu-phalyos tadā sā syād asaṅgatiḥ ||
rādhāṅga-sparśa-tad-adhara-madhu-pāna-rūpa-hetuḥ tat-sakhinām āṅga-rūpa-bhinnādhāre hetu-janyam
phalam yayos tayor dharmayo rādhā-sparśadhara-pāna-kampādi-mattatā-rūpayor yugapad-bhāṣaṇam
atrāsaṅgatiḥ

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they perform all the services of a looking glass!
When tears fall from your eyes they also cry;
when you are excited, their hairs stand on end;
when you laugh they also do so;
and when you become depressed,
they also look down-hearted.¹³⁷

In the *Kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāmṛta*, there is another verse which illustrates the point:

Rādhā's handmaids are unable to maintain their lives if they cannot see the pastimes of the beautiful Divine Couple; with great eagerness they had gathered about the window of the forest cottage in which Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa were locked in embrace and one of them said, "Friends, what an amazing and wonderful situation is this they have gotten themselves into."¹³⁸

If the sakhīs can feel intoxicated when Kṛṣṇa kisses Rādhārāṇī, then it is not altogether surprising if they get an even greater pleasure by watching the intimate activities of the Lord and his mistress than they would from their own. The reason for this is that they are not lovers in the mundane sense, but are supreme, the transcendental Lord and his celestial mistress.

Kṛṣṇa is romantic love personified. He has appeared in his form as the king of sacred rapture (*rasa-rāja*) and thus he attracts all the minds of everyone in the universe, including his very self. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the supremely worshipable personification of *mahā-bhāva*, the ultimate achievement in the domain of *prema*. Verily she is the embodiment of *prema* herself, for her entire body is vibrant with pure devotional love for Kṛṣṇa.

Not only are Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa transcendental, but so also are the sakhīs and mañjarīs. In the *Kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāmṛta* they are described in the following way:

These handmaidens of Rādhārāṇī are unexcelled in this universe for their beauty is without bounds. The rays coming from the nails of their toes defeats the glory of the lightning bolt. Each one of them is an incarnation of Rādhārāṇī's expertise in loving dalliance and thus competent to herself become a competitor for Kṛṣṇa's affections. Yet such desires do not enter

¹³⁷ pataty asre sāsra bhavati pulake jāta-pulakāḥ
smite bhāti smerā malimani jāte sumalināḥ |
anāsādyā svālir mukuram abhivikṣya sva-vadanam
sukham vā duḥkham vā kimapi kathaniyam mrgadṛśaḥ || AK 5.128

¹³⁸ yās tv etayoḥ keli-vilokanam vinā
naiva śvasanty āsu gavākṣa-sañcayam |
śrītāsu kācin nijagāda paśyatā-
nayoḥ daśā keyam abhūd ihādbhutā || KBhA 20.26

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their minds for even a moment because they are completely desireless. In this way, they are eligible to eternally dive into the ambrosial sea of service to her.¹³⁹

Without *bhāva* or feeling, the ecstasies of sacred rapture cannot be experienced. Without feeling, the ecstasies of love cannot be appreciated. To relish Kṛṣṇa's sweetness, one must become similar to him in quality, otherwise it will not be possible. Just as Rādhārāṇī's competent affection is not separable from her identity, eternal and self-manifest, so too the sakhīs and mañjarīs have love for the Divine Couple which is similarly uncaused, self-manifest and directly produced from their own identities. This is beyond normal experience and thus inconceivable. "Those things which are inconceivable are not accessible by mental speculation."¹⁴⁰ The actions of the Lord are supra-mundane, its ways and means are all transcendental; thus the unfortunate hear about them and even so develop no faith in him.

Sometimes the mañjarīs even faint from the ecstasies they feel when they watch the intimate pastimes of the Divine Duo through the spaces between the forest vines. Rūpa Gosvāmin¹⁴¹ has described such an instance in the *Nikuñja-rahasya-stava* ("Praises of the secrets of the forest-bower"):

O mind! remember Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa,
shining in the groves of Vṛndāvana.
Their sakhīs, saturated with love,
fasten their eyes on them
through the branches of the forest grove
where they are expanding their work of love
in wondrous variety; and overwhelmed
with ecstasy, they fall to the ground in a swoon.¹⁴²

Sometimes Rādhārāṇī makes arrangements for the mañjarīs to meet Kṛṣṇa to be enjoyed by him; but even this intercession on her part does not shake their indifference to such direct erotic union with the Lord. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmin gives an example in the *Ujjvala-*

¹³⁹tā vidyā-dyūti-jayī-prapadaika-rekhā
vaidagdhya eva kila mūrti-bhūtās tathāpi |
yūtheśvarītvam api samyag arocayitvā

dāsyāmṛtābdhim anusasnur ajasram asyāḥ || KBhA 2.1

¹⁴⁰acintyāḥ khalu ye bhāvā na tāns tarkeṇa yojayet | MBh cited at BRS 2.5.93

¹⁴¹Some question about Rūpa Gosvāmin's authorship of this work has been raised. No authoritative listing of Rūpa's writings such as those found in Caitanya-caritāmṛta or Bhaktiratnākara include it. Stylistically it also shows characteristics unfamiliar to Rūpa, leading some to feel that the poem is perhaps the work of Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī.

¹⁴²praṇayamaya-vayasyāḥ kuñja-randhrāpitākṣiḥ
kṣīti-talam anu labdhvānanda-mūrcchām patantīḥ |
prati rati-vidadhānau ceṣṭitāis citra-citraiḥ
smara nibhṛta-nikuñje rādhikā-kṛṣṇa-candrau || Verse 24.

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nīlamanī, which Viśvanātha expands upon as follows:

One day, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī arranged through another of her friends for Mañi Mañjarī to have a rendez-vous with the Lord in some forest glen. That friend, after trying persuasively to convince the reluctant mañjarī finally returned to Śrīmatī's side in failure. She then said to her, "Dear friend, you told me to try and I did. I went to Mañi Mañjarī and tried to tempt her in many ways. I said, 'My friend, I don't believe there is any thrill in this entire universe that can compare with the ecstasy of Kṛṣṇa's embrace; you really should try it one time. Lalitā and the other sakhīs sometimes have trysts with him, why shouldn't you, just this once? They can act as both friends and, occasionally, independently as Kṛṣṇa's mistresses too. There's nothing wrong with it, why don't you be like that too? Otherwise, you become too insignificant!'

"Rādhē, after hearing these arguments of mine, Mañi answered me by saying, 'Friend, when Rādhārāṇī enjoys the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa's company, then I find the happiness I feel is greater than that which I could gain by doing anything for myself at all.' Therefore, dear Rādhē, I am completely convinced that her heart is entirely pure because despite all temptations and clever tricks on my part, she showed not the slightest urge for going for a meeting with Kṛṣṇa."¹⁴³

Sometimes Kṛṣṇa also personally tries to seduce the mañjarīs and meets with similar failure. One day one of Rādhārāṇī's girlfriends was picking flowers for the purpose of making a garland. Śrī Kṛṣṇa chanced upon her at that time and immediately proposed to her, "O beautiful one, why not perfect your life by passing a few moments with me in this forest grove?" as well as saying many other sweet and enticing words. The bewildered girl put aside all her feminine tactics and arguments and very simply said to the Lord,

Govinda, I have only one desire:
to have the ever-greater intelligence
to be able to serve you and Rādhā
on the field of your ever-expanding, ecstatic romance
so that you experience newer and newer bliss;
for by such service, unlimited gopīs have attained
the very limit of the fulfillment of their desires.
Therefore, oh Lord of Gokula, my mind
never becomes eager for your direct embrace;
it does not crave for such enjoyments,
please just engage me in that service.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³tvayā yad upabhujyate murajid-aṅga-saṅge sukham
tad eva bahu jānātī svayam avāptitaḥ śuddha-dhīḥ |
mayā kṛta-vilobhanāpy adhika-cātūrī-caryayā
kadāpi mañi-mañjarī na kurute bhisāra-sprhām || UN 8.89

¹⁴⁴Rādhā-raṅga-lasat-tvad-ujjala-kalā-saṅcāraṇa-prakriyā-

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Direct erotic union with the Lord is thought by many to be the ultimate object of the fulfillment of the gopīs' desires but the mañjarīs have no attraction for it. Viśvanātha glosses the above-quoted gopīs' words: "Secretly watching your activities with Rādhārāṇī in the forest groves seems to me to be hundreds of times more rapturous than direct intercourse with you."¹⁴⁵ When a higher happiness can be found in other ways, then what intelligent person will take up inferior ways of pleasure-seeking?

Everyone seeks happiness and naturally they most intensely crave those things which give them the most happiness. So therefore, the spontaneous craving of the mañjarīs is to be witness to the varieties of Rādhārāṇī's loving sports with Kṛṣṇa. This craving is called *mañjarī-bhāva*.¹⁴⁶

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmin has written a nice verse in his poetical work *Mādhava-mahotsava* ("The spring festival"):

O sakhī! Kastūrī has achieved, along with her associates, the fruit of her vow: she is completely averse to being personally embraced by Kṛṣṇa himself and totally dedicated to the happiness of her friend Rādhā. Now today, here in the best of Hari's forests, she sprinkles her with water [to celebrate the occasion of her coronation as Queen of Vṛndāvana.]¹⁴⁷

The mañjarīs are dedicated to the service of the Divine Couple, that service is their life and soul and such service performed after their union in exhausted intimacy is the highest object of their desires. Rādhā Mohan Dās, the grandson of Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, has written a song which is appropriate to this situation:

When the lover and beloved
are exhausted after their erotic war,

cātur्यottaram eva sevānam ahaṁ govinda samprārthaye |
yenāśeṣa-vadhū-janodbhāṭa-mano-rājya-prapañcāvadhau

notsukyaṁ bhavad-aṅga-saṅgama-rase'py ālambate man-manaḥ || UN 8.88

¹⁴⁵tvayā saha svāṅga-saṅga-sukhād api jāla-randhrādau śrī-rādhāṅga-saṅga-darśanotthaṁ sukham adhikam anubhūtaṁ man-manasā

¹⁴⁶The direct act of love-making functions as a climax to the variegated sportings of the transcendental loving pair and is not prominent as their highest source of happiness. As Rūpa Gosvāmin describes it at the very end of *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* (15.253): "Those who are knowledgeable about sacred rapture have experienced that the actual sexual act is not as great a cause of happiness for experienced lovers as their various flirtations and loving exchanges." (vidagdhānām mitho līlā-vilāsena yathā sukham | na tathā samprayogena syād evaṁ rasikā viduḥ ||) Furthermore, the sexual act of the Supreme Lord has no tinge of mundaneness to it whatsoever. One should bear these points in mind at all times while going through this or any other book on the supramundane love life of the Lord

¹⁴⁷Baka-ripu-parirambhāsvāda-vāñchā-viraktim

vratam iva sakhī kartrī svāli-saukhyāika-tṛṣṇā |

phalam alabhata kastūry-ādir āliḥ sakhīnām

hari-vana-vara-rājye siñcate tām yad adya || MādhM 7.131

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they bring them condiments of betelnut;
sandalwood and saffron, musk and camphor,
they mix and smear upon their bodies;

How incomparably beautiful the love of these *priya-sakhīs*!
Rādhā is worth ten million lives to them;
Not equalled in purity by gold smelted thousands of times,
they offer her the lamps of their lives.

They place enchanting garlands around their necks;

they fan to give a cooling breeze;

they offer water, cold and fragrant,
drinking which the lovers' thirst is pacified.

They massage their feet gently
and rid them of their fatigue.
The lovers signal them to take rest, and they all do so,
feeling that their every desire has been fulfilled.

Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa close their eyes in slumber on the flower bed,
the mañjarīs, seeing them do so, feel the happiness
resulting from service executed well.
Rādhā Mohan Dās, seeing all these things
is liberated from all mental pain.¹⁴⁸

3.4 The official term for the dominant mood of the mañjarīs is *bhāvollāsa-rati*

The definition of the word *sakhī* has been given separately in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* and *Alaṅkāra-kaustubha*. Five kinds of *sakhīs* were listed, amongst whom the *prāṇa-sakhīs* and *nitya-sakhīs* have the greatest freedom from self-consciousness when present at the loving couple's most intimate moments, being always well-fixed in

¹⁴⁸ rati-raṇe śrama-yuta, nāgarī-nāgara, mukha-bhari tāmbūla yogāy |
malayaja kuṅkuma, mṛgamada karpūra, militahi gāta lāgāy ||
aparūpa priya-sakhī prem |
nīja-prāṇ koṭi, dei nīramañchañ, naha tula lākh-bān hem ||
manorama mālya, duhuñ gale arpañ, bījañ śīta mṛdu bāt |
sugandhī śītala, karu jala arpaṇa, jaiche hota duhuñ sāt ||
duhuñka caraṇa puna, mṛdu sambāhana, kari śrama karalahī dūr |
īngite śayana, karala duhuñ sakhīgaṇa, sabahu manoratha-pūr ||
kusuma śeje duhuñ, nidrita herañ, sevana parāyaṇa sukh |
rādhā-mohana dās, kiye heraba, meṭaba sab manodukh ||

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the wealth of love. Their love, however, is of such a unique nature that although Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmin had indicated in his reference to *kāma-rūpā* devotion's division called *tad-bhāvecchātmikā*, still he desired to give it another special name, that of *bhāvollāsā rati* (“love that is enlivened by their feelings,” or “that love which enlivens their loving sentiment for one another.” This *bhāvollāsā rati* is the *sthāyi bhāva* or dominant mood of the mañjarīs.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the object (*viṣaya*) of *madhurā rati* and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the subject (*āśraya*). Those devotees who are endowed with a similar dominant mood of love towards the Lord are naturally friends (*suhṛt*); the name of the friendly affection that Lalitā and her other friends feel towards Śrīmatī is therefore called *suhṛd-rati*. If this *suhṛd-rati* is equal to the feeling of affection that they have for Kṛṣṇa, or if it is somewhat less, then it serves the function of a *sañcāri-bhāva*, a helper or inspirator to the dominant mood. Thus the friendly affection that the *sama-snehā* and *kṛṣṇa-snehādhikā* sakhīs feel for Rādhā is an inspirator in their love for Kṛṣṇa. On the other hand, if the feeling of love for the friend, namely Rādhā, exceeds the devotion to even Kṛṣṇa, and is always increasing due to intense absorption, then even though it remains on the one hand in the *sañcāri* category, due to its uniqueness it is given the special name of *bhāvollāsā rati*.¹⁴⁹

These devotees of Kṛṣṇa who share a common genus of love for the Lord naturally feel a mutual empathy and think of each other as friends. The best of the devotees in each of the four categories of loving relationship, such as Raktaka and Patraka amongst Kṛṣṇa's servants at Nanda Grāma, Subala and Śrīdhāman amongst the friends, Kṛṣṇa's parents Nanda and Yaśodā, and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and Candrāvalī amongst his mistresses, are usually loved by their friends to a degree slightly less than their level of feeling that friend has for Kṛṣṇa himself. On occasion it may equal, but certainly not exceed it. In such cases, the *sthāyi bhāva* or dominating mood is the love the devotee has for Kṛṣṇa, and the feeling of friendship for the more advanced or superior devotee is a subordinate feeling or *sañcāri-bhāva*—a wave in the ocean of that love.

Yet we see that in the case of *madhura-rasa* there is a unique situation in which some of the friends of Rādhārāṇī feel more affection for her than they do for even Kṛṣṇa and this affection is always increasing due to the intense desire they have to please her. This feeling is a special type of *sthāyi-bhāva* known as *bhāvollāsā rati*.

Other than Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in the *madhura-rasa*, such a thing is unheard of in relation to any devotee of any other *rasa*. Nowhere has it been said anywhere that a devotee is hundreds of times greater than even Kṛṣṇa, except in the case of Rādhā. Kṛṣṇa says in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*:

¹⁴⁹ sañcāri syāt samāno vā kṛṣṇa-ratyāḥ suhṛd-ratiḥ |
adhikā puṣyamāṇā ced bhāvollāsā ratiḥ || BRS 2.5.128

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“The three worlds have me alone as the source of their pleasure—who is there who will give pleasure to me? That person who is hundreds of times more qualified myself is the one who will be able to gladden my mind; yet how is it possible that anyone in the universe can be more qualified than I? I can only see such virtues in Rādhā. The whole world becomes happy at seeing the beauty of my form, yet my eyes become fulfilled only by seeing her. The sound of my flute fills the whole world with bliss, yet my ears are stolen away by the sound of her voice. The entire universe is fragrant due to my bodily odour, yet her fragrance steals my life and soul. The world is filled with flavour due my *rasa*, yet the taste of her lips completely overthrows me. Even though the touch of my body is cooling to all, I myself can become cooled only by touching her. In these ways am I the source of the world’s joy, yet the form and qualities of Rādhārāṇī are my life and soul.¹⁵⁰

It is for this reason that only in *madhura-rasa* is it possible for the mañjarīs to feel even more strongly about Rādhārāṇī than they do about Kṛṣṇa. In no other circumstance could it possible for someone to feel an affection of comparable strength for any other devotee; *bhāvollāsā rati* is only possible in the case of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī

Devotees relish the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s sweetness according to their own particular dominant mood of love. The cause of relishing is thirst (*trṣṇā*) and thus, according to the genus and degree of thirst or desire, it is possible to gauge the relative values of the tasting of sacred rapture. The mañjarīs are very clever; they think that their degree of desire to serve the Lord is very little and that therefore it is best not to try to enjoy Kṛṣṇa directly; they choose rather to remain constantly absorbed in the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the embodiment of the ocean of desire for Kṛṣṇa’s service, the epitome of the highest devotional affection of *mahā-bhāva* in its ultimate, maddening stage known as *mādana*. They thus show more devotion to her than to him, convinced that by so doing they will be able, not just to attain a higher level of pleasure themselves, but will also be able to please him more.

Previously it was stated that *madhura-rasa* is only possible if the lover and beloved share a mutual desire for romantic love. From this a question about the specific mood of the

¹⁵⁰āmā haite ānandita hay tribhuvan | āmāke ānanda dibe aiche kon jan ||
āmā haite yāra hay śata śata guṇ | sei jan āhlādite pāre mora man ||
āmā haite guṇī baḍa jagate asambhav | ekali rādhāte tāhā kari anubhav
mora rūpe āpyāyita kare tribhuvan | rādhāra vacane hare āmāra śravaṇ
yadyapi āmāra gandhe jagat sugandha |
mora citta ghrāṇa habe rādhā aṅga-gandha ||
yadyapi āmāre rase jagat suras | rādhāra adhara rase āmā kare vaś ||
yadyapi āmāra sparśa koṭīndu śītal | rādhikāra sparśe āmā kare suśītal ||
ei mata jagatera sukhe āmi hetu | rādhikāra rūpa guṇa āmāra jivātu ||
CC 1.4.239-248

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mañjarīs arises. One who is devoid of such erotic desire for Kṛṣṇa may feel servitude, friendship or even parental affection for Rādhārāṇī, but there is no possibility of *madhura-rasa*. The relationship between two women of the type under discussion cannot be called romantic love. The dominant affection of the mañjarīs is toward the Divine Couple in a romantic way; they are attached to and absorbed in them as a unit. Thus, Caitanya was indicating this spirit of the mañjarīs when he asked Rāmānanda Rāya to “to hear of the loving dalliance of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa” after having heard from him “the truths of the love that exists between them.”¹⁵¹

Similarly, Narottama Dās Thākura sings:
Remembrance is the life of the mind;
what an exceedingly sweet abode!
The essence of remembrance
is the pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa;
this is the practice, this is the perfection
there is nothing more than this.
This is the quintessence of all the rules
and regulations of devotional life.¹⁵²

The conclusion is that the object of the sakhīs and mañjarīs’ dominant mood of devotional love is Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa together, and not Rādhā nor Kṛṣṇa alone. This is demonstrated in the following poem by Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāja:

Without her jewels, King Bhānu’s girl
If put by Kṛṣṇa’s side,
Her eyes blossom in happiness,
Love’s beauty shines inside;
To see her full in joy with him
Her friends all swell with pride.

Without her Lord, King Bhānu’s girl
Trembles in lonely fright,
Though decked in jewels and finery
She is not a happy sight.
She wilts and so do all her friends
Like lotuses at night.¹⁵³

¹⁵¹prabhu kahe—jāniluṅ kṛṣṇa-rādhā prema-tattva |
śunite cāhiye doṅhār vilāsa-mahattva || CC 2.8.186

¹⁵²maner smarāṇa prāṇ, madhura madhura dhām, yugala-vilāsa smṛti-sār |
sādhya-sādhana ei, ihā par āra nei, ei tattva sarva-vidhi-sār || PBC

¹⁵³vināpy ākalpaiḥ śrī-vṛṣaravi-sutā kṛṣṇa-savidhe
mudotphullā bhāvābharaṇa-valitālīḥ sukhayati |
vinā kṛṣṇam tṛṣṇākulita-hṛdayālaṅkṛti-cayair
yutāpy eṣā mlānā malinayati tāsām tanu-manah || GLA 11.134

Manjari svarupa nirupana

It is shown here that without Kṛṣṇa, Rādhā alone is not the cause of happiness for the sakhīs and mañjarīs. Therefore the dominant mood of affection of the mañjarīs has both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa together as its object. As Narottam Dās sings,

“My destination in life or death,
the Lords of my heart are Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.”¹⁵⁴

The temperament of the mañjarīs is something new in the science of devotion. This *bhāvollāsā rati* is known therefore as a division of kāmārupā bhakti, a type of erotic feeling, because they are attached to witnessing the union of the Divine Couple.

In his commentary to *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 2.5.128 (cited above on page 68), Jīva Gosvāmin directly mentions the name of Lalitā, but the dearest friends of Rādhā, the *aṣṭa-sakhīs*, who all in the *sama-snehā* category, at certain instances swing pendulum-like in their affections, from Rādhā to Kṛṣṇa. For this reason their affection cannot be called *bhāvollāsā rati*. Therefore, who exactly is being referred to by the word “etcetera” (*ity ādi*) in the phrase “Lalitā, etc.” in Jīva’s commentary?

Kastūrī Mañjarī, Maṇi Mañjarī, etc., are *nitya-sakhīs*. Maṇi Mañjarī is a follower of Śrī Guṇa Mañjarī; therefore, there can be no doubt that Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī, Śrī Rati Mañjarī, Śrī Guṇa Mañjarī, etc., are all Rādhārāṇī’s girlfriends (sakhīs), even though they function as confidential hand-maidens (mañjarīs). Narottam Dās Ṭhākura has variously called them *narma-sakhīs* (“pleasure-companion”)¹⁵⁵, *sevā-parā sakhī* (“friends dedicated to service”), etc. In the *Govinda-līlāmṛta*, Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī has been called *priya-narma-sakhī* (“most dear pleasure companion”, 1.86), Guṇa Mañjarī *dāsikā* (“maidservant,” 1.87) and Rati Mañjarī *sakhī* (2.52). In *Muktā-carita* Raṅgaṇamālā and Tulasī Mañjarī are called *parama-praṇayī-sakhīs* (“most loving friends”).

In Kavi Karnaṇpūra’s *Alaṅkāra-kaustubha*, the *priya-narma-sakhīs* are defined as being “those girlfriends who cause no feeling of inhibition to manifest in the leading lady, even if she is lying on her couch with her lover in an undressed state, and whom she feels to be identical with her very self.”¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ jivane maraṇe gati, rādhā-kṛṣṇa prāṇa-pati | Prema-bhakti-candrikā

¹⁵⁵ In Sanskrit dramatic literature, the hero would normally have a companion known as the *narma-saciva* or *narma-suhṛt* who acted as a kind of minister to his diversions. In *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* (2.13), the term *priya-narma-sakhā* is used to describe Subala, Arjuna and other of Kṛṣṇa’s friends. The definition given there is as follows: “The *priya-narma-sakhā* is the best of all of Kṛṣṇa’s companions for he is knowledgeable about the most intimate of his activities (*ātyantika-rahasya-jñāḥ*) and is possessed of the attitude of a girlfriend (*sakhī-bhāvam āśritaḥ*). See also Kālidāsa’s *Mālavikāgnimitra* (2.7 and 1.11) and Śiśupālavadhā (1.59), etc

¹⁵⁶ na saṅkocaṁ yayā yāti kāntena śayatotthitā |

ātmano mūrtir anyaiḥ priyanarma-sakhī tu sā || Alaṅkāra-kaustubha 5

Mañjarī svarūpa nirūpana

These sakhīs are further described in the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*:

All those girlfriends who nurture a feeling that “we are Rādhā’s,” who always feel affectionate to her, even more than they do to Kṛṣṇa, are called *sakhī-snehādhikā*. Therefore, they are the girlfriends of Rādhārāṇī who possess the devotional mood known by the name of *bhāvollāsā rati*.¹⁵⁷

In the *Prema-bhakti-candrikā*, Narottama Dās warns not to confuse the *sama-snehā* girlfriends with those who prefer Rādhā to Kṛṣṇa. His description of the *asama-snehā sakhīs* is as follows:

Don’t identify the *sama-snehā friends* of Rādhā with those who are *asama-snehā*; I will describe here those who are more affectionate to Rādhārāṇī. They always remain near her talking about Kṛṣṇa’s playful diversions and are thus known as her *narma-sakhīs*.

Of them, the best is Rūpa Mañjarī; Rati Mañjarī is also noteworthy, as are Lavaṅga Mañjarī and Mañjulālī. Kasturikā Mañjarī and others also happily serve along with Śrī Rati Mañjarī.

I will beg service to the Holy Couple from all of these mañjarīs, always be obedient to them and able to understand the purpose of their slightest motion or hint. Being absorbed in Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa’s qualities and beauty I shall always be enthusiastically affectionate; I will make my residence amongst the sakhīs.¹⁵⁸

In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* also, Rāmānanda Rāya says:

Whoever follows in the mood of the girlfriends of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī becomes eligible for attaining service to the Divine Couple in Vṛndāvana’s forest groves; other than this there

¹⁵⁷ tadīyatābhīmānīnyo yāḥ sneham sarvadāśritāḥ |

sakhīyām alpādhikām Kṛṣṇāt sakhī-snehādhikās tu tāḥ || UN 8.131

¹⁵⁸ sama-snehā asama-snehā, nā kariha dui lehā, ebe kahi adhika snehā-gaṇ |

nirantara thāke saṅge, kṛṣṇa-kathā līlā-raṅge, narma-sakhī ei sab jan ||

śrī-rūpa-mañjarī sār, śrī-rasa-mañjarī ār, lavaṅga-mañjarī mañjulālī |

śrī-rati-mañjarī saṅge, kastūrikā ādi raṅge, prema-sevā kare kutūjalī ||

e sabār anugā haiyā, prema-sevā niba cāiyā, iṅgite bujhibo sab kaje |

rūpe guṇe ḍaga-magi, sadā habo anurāgī, basati karibo sakhī-mājhe |

is no other means to such an attainment.¹⁵⁹

3.5 Why has *bhāvollāsa-rati* earned the name of a separate *sthāyi-bhāva* rather than being known as a *sañcāri-bhāva*?

In the commentary on the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* verse that defines *bhāvollāsa*, it is said that this particular devotional mood was added by Rūpa Gosvāmin as an afterthought and should actually be thought of as belonging to the *sañcāri-bhāvas*. The affection of the dearest girlfriends of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī such as Lalitā is also included in the *sañcārīs* for *madhura-rati*. There are thirty-three of these *sañcārīs* described in the appropriate section of the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*; of these, all but two (augrya “nastiness” and ālasya “laziness”) are considered to be suitable to the erotic mood of sacred rapture. Along with these thirty-one *sañcārīs* comes this additional feeling: “Love for friends of a similar temperament of feeling for Kṛṣṇa are also known as *sañcārīs*.”¹⁶⁰

Along with friends are messengers and any other objects or persons that serve as go-betweens for the lover and beloved, including also Kṛṣṇa’s male friends.

An example of Rādhā’s affection for a friend is given in *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*:

One day on Govardhana hill, Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī observed Rādhārāṇī displaying extreme affection to Lalitā during the course of her dalliances with Kṛṣṇa. She said to one of Lalitā’s friends in praise of her great fortune: “O friend, just see how Rādhārāṇī is cleaning the perspiration and rearranging the hair from Lalitā’s face even though she is simultaneously sporting with Kṛṣṇa.”¹⁶¹

The idea is that Rādhā’s strong show of affection to Lalitā by wiping the perspiration arising in the course of their activities with the Lord does not take precedence over her feelings to Kṛṣṇa, but serves to feed the fire of that love even more. Therefore, it is not a *sthāyi-bhāva* or dominant mood, but a *sañcāri* or transitory feeling.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ei sakhī bhāve jei kare anugati | rādhā-kṛṣṇa kuñja-sevā sādhyā sei pāy | sei sādhyā pāite nāhika upāya || CC 2.8.204-5

¹⁶⁰sakhyādiṣu nija-premāpy atra sañcāritām vrajet || UN 13.2

¹⁶¹śaila-mūrdhni hariṇā viharantī roma-kuḍmala-karmabita-mūrtiḥ | rādhikā salalitām lalitāyāḥ paśya mārṣṭi lulitālakam āsyam || UN 13.104

¹⁶²lalitāyā āsyam mārṣṭi viharajam prasvedam apanayatīti lalitā-viṣayā śrī-rādhā-ratir apy atra sañcāri-bhāvo bhavan śrī-kṛṣṇa-ratiṁ puṣṇāti | Viśvanātha’s commentary to the above-quoted verse. Kāvya-mālā ed’n, to UN 15.101, p.385

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On the other hand, in his *Ṭikā* to the above verse, Viśvanātha cites *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 2.5.128 and concludes that *bhāvollāsa*, the feelings that Mañi Mañjarī and the other *nitya-sakhīs* have for Rādhārāṇī, feelings that are stronger than those they harbour for Kṛṣṇa, are of a different type. Because the predominating feelings or *sthāyi-bhāvas* have been defined as exclusively those which deal directly with Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord and one object of all the different types of devotion, it can hardly be called a *sthāyi-bhāva* as its predominant object is Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. But as these feelings are not temporary, fleeting moods, they cannot be called *sañcāri-bhāvas* either.¹⁶³ In view of this paradox, Rūpa Gosvāmin has explained Rādhā's feelings toward the *sakhīs* as a new *sañcāri-bhāva* and the feelings of the mañjarīs to Rādhā as a new type of *sthāyi-bhāva* as a subdivision of *madhura-rati*.

Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa,
In either birth or death, my only goal
Lord and lady of my life and soul.

Here the word *prāṇa-pati* (“lord of my life”) is generally used to refer to one’s lover, but in the above line by Narottam Dās, it is referring to the conjugal unit of both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. It is definitely something novel and has no precedent in Vaiṣṇava theology. Such an attitude cannot function other than towards Rādhā. The greatest of the tasters of sacred rapture, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmin has thus made another lasting contribution to the science of sacred rapture by coining the term *bhāvollāsa*.

3.6 The competence of mañjarī-bhāva in conquering Kṛṣṇa

Love when greater for Rādhārāṇī than for even Kṛṣṇa is more competent in conquering the Lord’s own affections. For example, in the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, it is said that one day Mañi Mañjarī advised a new girlfriend,

Listen: if you're clever, I'll tell you a secret
that all of us have discovered:
Make friends with Rādhārāṇī.
[If you think, “Why should I waste my time
abandoning efforts to conquer Kṛṣṇa
to win her over?” then listen]:
If you just make friendship with Rādhā,
then the joyous wealth of love for Kṛṣṇa

¹⁶³yadi kvacit kṛṣṇarateḥ sakāśād apy adhikā syāt tayā puṣyamāṇā ca syāt tadā bhāvollāsa itiryate na tasyāḥ sañcāritvaṁ nāpi tasyāḥ sthāyitvam iti bhāvaḥ | Ibid.

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will come automatically and offer itself to you.¹⁶⁴

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmin comments that the wealth of happiness that exists in loving Kṛṣṇa is existentially an integral part of friendship with Rādhā.¹⁶⁵ Viśvanātha also paraphrases Mañi Mañjarī's instruction to the new arrival:

When you become Rādhārāṇī's confidential friend then he will know you as his beloved's sakhī and will show spontaneous affection for you, even more so than if you became his mistress independently. So by becoming friends with Rādhā, intimacy with Kṛṣṇa will follow automatically. If you become Rādhā's friend, then in certain situations when she is angry with him or when it is hard for him to meet her because her mother-in-law or others keep her entangled in household affairs or locked in her room, then he will have to come to you for help. Without your having to do anything, he will come to you to make friends. There will be no need for you to make any independent effort to gain his affectionate attention."¹⁶⁶

For this reason, the mañjarīs pray to Rādhārāṇī as follows:

O Queen of Vṛndāvana! I pray always
for your mercy, again and again.
By your mercy, even the killer of Keśin
will come and appeal to me in flattering words
to get help from me to meet you.¹⁶⁷

3.7 The mañjarīs' way of devotion

The mañjarīs pray to Rādhā:

O goddess of the month of Kārttika,
I beg you with sweet words to give me
the best of benedictions:

¹⁶⁴vayam idam anubhūya śikṣayāma
kuru cature saha rādhayaiva sakhyam |
priya-sahacari yatra bādham antar-
bhavati hari-praṇaya-pramoda-lakṣmīḥ || UN 8.133

¹⁶⁵yatra śrī-rādhā-sakhye śrī-hari-praṇayānanda-sampattir antar-bhāvaṁ prāpnoti | Locana-rocanī to UN 11.133 (Kāvya-mālā, 11.125, p.236)

¹⁶⁶tava śrī-rādhā-sakhīte tu siddhe mat-preyasyaḥ sakhyam iti tvayi śrī-kṛṣṇasya snehādhikāyām avāśyam bhāvi | śrī-rādhāyaḥ kadācin māna-guruṇi rādhādāv atidurlabhye tat-prāptyartham tvām apy apekṣiyamāṇena tena prathamata eva tvayā saha sakhyam avāśyam kartavyam iti tena saha tava sakhyam ayatna-siddham iti || Ānanda-candrikā to ibid

¹⁶⁷karuṇām muhur arthaye param tava vṛndāvana-cakravartini |
api keśi-ripor mayā bhavet sa cātu-prārthanā-bhājanam janaḥ ||
Rūpa Gosvāmin, Stava-mālā: Cātu-puṣpāñjali, 23.

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by which Kṛṣṇa, the killer of Baka,
knowing me to be yours,
will become more merciful to me.¹⁶⁸

And their prayer to Kṛṣṇa:

O son of Mahārāja Nanda!
I fall at your feet and beg
with thousands of tearful prayers
that I may become the object of Rādhā's mercy,
for she is the crown diamond of all the beauties of Vraja.
Please fulfill this desire.¹⁶⁹

The sentiment can thus be summarized: “My mistress is the queen of Vṛndāvana; I worship the lifter of Govardhana knowing that he is her lover.” Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmin expresses the same idea in the “Teachings to the Mind” where he states:

O dear mind! Remember always
that the moon of the forests of Vraja
is my mistress Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's lover,
and that she is the one who rules him.
Think of Lalitā as her unequalled and chief sakhī,
of Viśākhā as the spiritual master who delivers
the different intimate teachings of loving service;
and remember that the king of mountains and the dear pond
are the givers of attachment, eagerness and devotion
whereby Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's direct presence can be perceived.¹⁷⁰

3.8 Bhāvollāsā rati is the gift of Caitanya Mahāprabhu's special mercy

Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the combined form of the king of all transcendental tastes and the embodiment of mahā-bhāva. After fulfilling his three special desires he also relishes this mood of the mañjarīs. This *bhāvollāsā rati* is the gift that was never before bestowed on the world and the special mercy of his incarnation.

Kṛṣṇa, known as the foremost amongst the relishers of sacred rapture, accepted the mood

¹⁶⁸ bhavatīm abhivādyā cātubhir varam ūrjeśvari varyam arthaye |
bhavadīyatayā kṛpām yathā mayi kuryād adhikām bakāntakaḥ || UV, 20

¹⁶⁹ praṇipatyā bhvantam arthaye paśu-pāendra-kumāra kākubhiḥ |
vraja-yauvati-mauli-mālikā karuṇā-pātram imaṁ janaṁ kuru || ibid, 19

¹⁷⁰ mad-iśā-nāthatve vraja-vipina-candraṁ vraja-vane-
śvarīm tan-nāthatve tad-atula-sakhīve tu lalitām |
viśākhām śokṣāli-vitarāṇa-gurutve priya-saro-
girīndrau tat-prekṣā-lalita-rati-datve smara manaḥ || Manaḥ-sikṣā 9

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and lustre of his chief consort Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī with a view to fulfilling three desires (viz., to know what is the nature of Rādhā's love, what is the extent of his own sweetness, and what is the nature of the happiness that she experiences in her love for him). After he, in his form as Gaurasundara, had experienced the fulfillment of those desires through various pastimes, a new desire manifested within him: due to being filled with sweet and beneficent love, he wished to experience the sentiment of the friends of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in their intimate service of the Divine Loving Couple and after relishing it himself, to distribute it to the people of the world. This is the devotion that is glorified in the beginning of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* as *anarpita-carīm cirāt... unnatojjvala-rasām svabhakti-śriyam*, “the most elevated and effulgent, flavorful, intimate devotional beauty that had not been offered to the world for an inestimable length of time.”¹⁷¹

From Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja's account in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* we can get a little idea of how this unique pastime of the Lord was experienced by him in this special manifestation as the combination of *rasa-rāja* and *mahā-bhāva*.

Those ecstatic transformations that had never before been seen anywhere were all manifest in the Lord's body. Sometimes the joints of his arms and legs would separate to a distance of 8 or 10 inches with only the tightened skin holding the limbs together. Then again, sometimes his head and limbs would contract and withdraw into his body in the manner of a tortoise.¹⁷²

The gopīs constantly relish the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's qualities, his form, taste, fragrance, sound and touch; my mind is a mendicant who comes to them with his five ragged disciples, the senses, to beg from them the remnants of their feast by which he will maintain his life.¹⁷³

In his half-conscious state, Mahāprabhu babbled the following:

¹⁷¹Caitanya-caritāmṛta 1.1.4 (Vidagdha-mādhava 1.2)

¹⁷²kāhān nāhi śuni je je bhāver vikār |
sei bhāva hay prabhura śarīre pracār |
hasta-pader sandhi sab vitasti pramāṇe |
sandhi chāri bhinna haye carma rahe sthāne ||
hasta pada śira sab śarīre bhitare |

praviṣṭa hay kūrma-rūpa dekhiye prabhure || CC 2.2.11-13

¹⁷³kṛṣṇa guṇa-rūpa-rasa, gandha-śabda-paraśa, se sudhā āsvāde gopī-gaṇ|
tā-sabāra grāsa-śeṣe, āni pañcendriya śiṣye, se bhikṣāy rākhaye jivan ||
CC 3.14.49

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I saw the Yamunā and was immediately transported to Vṛndāvana where I saw the son of the king of Vraja playing water sports with Rādhikā and the other gopīs. They were frolicking with great amusement in the waters of the Yamunā. I stood on the shore with the other gopīs watching; one sakhī particularly showed me everything, pointing out the special features of the sports. O sakhī! See the water games being enjoyed by Kṛṣṇa! He is like a maddened elephant agitating the waters of a pond in the association of all his gopī she-elephants. Seeing all these amusements of Kṛṣṇa and the gopīs, my mind is overjoyed and my eyes and ears have attained supreme satisfaction.¹⁷⁴

Tasting this rasa himself, he taught it to all the devotees; the Lord was rich with the jewels of *prema*. He discriminated not as to the place or recipient; he was the greatest of all philanthropists. Not even a drop of this ocean of secret spiritual emotions is attained by Brahmā and the other demigods, yet this wealth was distributed by the Lord throughout the world. No one can describe successfully the glories of such an incarnation, so merciful and so charitable, the equal of whom has never been seen. All these things should not be revealed openly, yet if they are not explained no one will ever understand, yet only those who become subservient to the servant of the servant of the Lord and who thus receive his mercy will be able to comprehend these wonderful līlās of his.¹⁷⁵

These pastimes of the Lord are transcendental as are their intricacies and details; the unfortunate develop no faith in them, even after hearing.¹⁷⁶

Therefore the Lord himself accepted the sentiments of a gopī and called out to Kṛṣṇa as “the Lord of my heart.” He is Kṛṣṇa and yet he is a gopī what a contradiction! How incomprehensible the character of the Supreme Lord! Don’t doubt it by raising many objections. All things are possible by his inconceivable potencies. The Lord’s amusements are inconceivable to the mundane mind, how amusing they are! How wonderful his emotional transformations, how wonderful his qualities, how wonderful his behaviour

¹⁷⁴sakhī he! dekha kṛṣṇera jala-keli-raṅge | kṛṣṇa-matta kari-var, cañcala kara puṣkar, gopī-gaṇ kariṇira saṅge || jāhā kari āsvādan, ānandita mora man, netra karṇa jugma juṛāila || CC 3.18.80-82; 84

¹⁷⁵āpane kari āsvādane, śikhaīla bhakta-gaṇe, prema-cintāmaṇira prabhu dhanī | nāhi jāne sthānāsthān, jāre tāre kare dān, mahāprabhu dātā śiromaṇi | ei gupta-bhāva-sindhu, brahmā nā pāy eka bindu, hena dhan bilāila samsāre | aiche dayālu avatār, aiche dātā nāhi ār, guṇa keho nāre varṇibāre || kahibāra kathā nahe, kahile keha nā bujhaye, aiche citra caitanyera raṅga | sei se bujhite pāre caitanyera kṛpā jāre, hay tāra dāsānudāsa saṅga || CC 2.2.81-83

¹⁷⁶alaukika līlā prabhura alaukika rīti | śunileha bhāgya-hīnera nā hay pratīti || CC 1.17

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with his devotees.¹⁷⁷

In the *Caitanya-candrāmṛta* also, Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī also states that,

As much as an aspirant devotee develops devotion for the Lord Gaurāṅga by the grace of those intimate with him, that is the extent to which the ocean of nectar of love for the service of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī manifests suddenly in his heart.¹⁷⁸

The purport is that as much as a devotee experiences Mahāprabhu directly through devotion, that is the extent to which he will realize the nature and extent of Rādhārāṇī's *mahā-bhāva* and its different external manifestations. The glory of Rādhā's love for Kṛṣṇa will be comprehended by the aspirant devotees through Mahāprabhu to the fullest extent and as a result he will know love for her as her hand-maid. Therefore Vāsu Ghoṣa sings in a famous song:

Had Gaura not appeared, then what would have happened? How would I have maintained my life? Who would have revealed the glories of Rādhārāṇī's love for Kṛṣṇa to the world?

Who would have known the secret of entering into the sweetest chambers of the Lord's abode in the mellow realm of Vṛndāvana? Who would have had the strength to worship the Lord in the mood of the damsels of Vraja?

Free your mind from the complication of doubt and simply glorify the great qualities of Lord Gaurāṅga! I cannot see any person in this entire universe who is as merciful as he.

How is it that even after crying out the name of Gaurāṅga my heart does not melt? How is it that I am still alive? Vāsu Ghoṣa says that it seems that the creator has made him with a heart made out of stone.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ ataeva āpane prabhu gopī bhāva dhari | vrajendra-nandane kahe prāṇanātha kari || sei kṛṣṇa sei gopī parama virodh | acintya-caritra prabhur ati sudurbodh || ithe tarka kari keho nā kara saṁśay | kṛṣṇer acintya-śakti ei mata hay || acintya adbhut kṛṣṇa-caitanya vihār | citra-bhāva citra-guṇa citra-vyavahār ||
CC 1.17.303-6

¹⁷⁸ yathā yathā gaura-padāravinde vindeta bhaktim kṛta-puṇya-rāśiḥ |
tathotsarpati ḥṛdy akasmād rādhā-padāmbhoja-sudhāmbu-rāśiḥ ||
Caitanya-candrāmṛta 78

¹⁷⁹ jadi gaurāṅga nā hata, ki mene haṅta, kemane dharitām de |
rādhāra mahimā, rasa-sindhu-sīmā, jagate jānāto ke?

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madhura vṛndā-vipina mādhurī praveśa cāturī sār |
varaja-juvatī bhāvera bhakati śakati haīta kār ||
gāo gān puna gaurāṅgera guṇa sarala hañyā man |
e tin bhuvane dayāra ṭhākura nā dekhiye eka-jan ||
gaurāṅga baliyā nā gela galiyā kemane dharila de |
vāsura hiyā pāṣāṇa diyā kemane gaṛila ke

The Causes of Sacred Rapture

4.1. Defining the term *vibhāva*

The *vibhāvas* or causes for experiencing any specific dominant mood of love for Kṛṣṇa as sacred rapture are twofold: the props and the inspirators.¹⁸⁰



The purport of this verse is that when a receptive devotee hears the activities, names, forms, qualities, etc. of the Lord and his associates, then they act on his subtle makeup (*saṁskāra*), awakening his desire for a specific type of direct devotional service. This desire, when developed, becomes one of the dominant moods of devotional love (*sthāyī-bhāva*). The aforementioned activities, names, forms, qualities, etc., are therefore known as *vibhāvas* because they cause devotion to flourish. [The root meaning of the verb *vi vbhū* is “to grow, to flourish or to become glorious.”]

The primary division of the *vibhāvas* is in two, the first called the *ālambanas* or props, the second *uddīpanas*, which can be translated as enkindlers or as inspirators. The *ālambanas* are again divided into two—the *viṣaya* or love's object and the *āśraya* or its receptacle. In *bhāvollāsā ratī*, the receptacles or containers of the love are the *mañjarīs* and the object of their love is the Divine Couple of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Those particular things that enkindle their devotional spirit toward the Divine Couple are their *uddīpanas*. All these things will be progressively described in this chapter.

4.2 The object of the *mañjarīs*' love

The props of erotic sacred rapture are the leading man and his lady; the greatest of all such lovers and sweethearts are the son of the King of Vraja and Śrīmatī Rādhikā.¹⁸¹

Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, the Divine Youthful Couple, are my life and soul. They are my only destination in life and death.¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰tatra jñeyā vibhāvās tu raty-āsvādana-hetavaḥ |
te dvidhālabhanā eke tathivoddīpanaḥ pare || BRS 2.1.14

¹⁸¹nāyaka nāyikā dui rasera ālamban | sei dui śreṣṭha rādhā vrajendra-
nandan || CC 2.23.92. vrajer nandan kṛṣṇa nāyaka cūṛāmaṇi | nāyikāra śiromaṇi rādhā ṭhākuraṇi || CC
2.23.66

¹⁸²jīvane maraṇe gati Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa prāṇa-pati | Narottama Dās Ṭhākura

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In the *Kṛṣṇa-sandarbha* (189), Jīva writes:

Even though the most wonderful, intense manifestation of spiritual existence is that of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana, still even more delightful is his form when joined with Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.¹⁸³

He further states elsewhere, “The greatest form of worship is that performed to Kṛṣṇa as he engages in his erotic dalliances with Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.”¹⁸⁴

In the *Vṛndāvana-mahimāmṛta*, Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī writes:

Beyond this ocean of Māyā lies the first effulgent light known as the impersonal *brahma-jyoti*. Beyond that lies the second effulgence of the Lord's majesty called the *aiśa-jyoti*; better than that is the sweet effulgence known as the *madhura-jyoti* and Vṛndāvana is the *mahā-madhura-jyoti* which is made of intensified *madhura-rasa* or conjugal love.¹⁸⁵

Within this sacred abode of Vṛndāvana, there is an enchanting forest cottage which enhances the glories of even this most effulgent abode. In that cottage in the groves of Vṛndāvana, the beautiful Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are eternally engaged in their maddening, yet completely pure, erotic pastimes, surrounded by all the necessary ingredients and inspirators for the full experience of that primordial form of sacred rapture.¹⁸⁶

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Lord of Vṛndāvana; He makes the land of Gokula honey sweet by his presence. He is the son of Nanda Mahārāja and his body spreads rays of nectar throughout the universe; he is therefore called Kṛṣṇa-candra. His form is blackish like a new rain cloud, shining more beautifully than the best of sapphires, a fresh youth dressed in yellow silk like a player on the stage, he enchants all the ladies. He plays the flute, his eyes are

¹⁸³sarvato'pi sāndrānanda-camatkāra-kara-śrī-kṛṣṇa-prakāśe śrī-vṛndāvane'pi paramādbhuta-prakāśaḥ śrī-rādhayā yugalitas tu śrī-kṛṣṇaḥ | KṛṣṇaS 189

¹⁸⁴parama-śreṣṭha-śrī-rādhā-saṁvalita-lilā-maya-śrī-kṛṣṇa-bhajanam tu paramatamam eva | BhaktiS 338

¹⁸⁵advaita-brahma-saj-jyotiṣi jayati mahānanda-saj-jyotir aiśam tasmīn svādyāika-ratyātmaka-madhura-mahā-jyotir ekaṁ cakāsti | śrīmad-vṛndāvanam tad-ghanam iha tad adhi śyāmalenāsti rādhā nitya-kṛīḍā-kiśorī smara madhuratarām tat-pada-dvandva-rociḥ || VMA 7.2

¹⁸⁶atyantādbhuta-vaicitryā śrīmad-vṛndāvanojjvalā | yatrātyam sarvam āścaryam rasa-sāraika-dīpakam || kāma-bīja-vilāsātma-sarva-sāra-sukhākaram | yatra śrī-rādhikā-kṛṣṇau sarva-sundara-sundarau || sahaśārya-kaiśora-vayaḥ śrī-viśva-mohanau | mahā-vimala-kandarpa-rasonmāda-nirantarau || VMA 7.79-81

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like lotuses tinged with the colour of dawn; he wears a garland of many flowers that hangs down to his knees, his is decorated profusely with ornaments and jewels and his body is smeared with unguents making him the ultimate inspiration for romantic attraction. He stands in his enchanting three-fold bending form; he is the lover of the charming flirt (*dhīra-lalita*) category. He has thirty-two auspicious physical characteristics, sixty-four qualities unique to himself. His age is fifteen years, nine months and seven and a half days. He lives in Nandīsvara and enjoys his pastimes in Vṛndāvana.

Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī stands to his left. She is the worthy daughter of King Vṛṣabhānu. She is the personification of the highest perfection of devotional love called *adhirūḍha-mahā-bhāva*. Her bodily hue is a more beautiful golden lustre than that of the golden champak flower sprinkled with saffron; she wears a cloth known as the blue-cloud garment, which is a beautiful shade of blue like a dark cloud. She dresses herself expertly in a way delightful to the Lord; her face is bent down slightly in shyness. She is a newly blossomed beautiful maiden decorated with all auspicious characteristics; her body has the fragrance of a lotus flower, her eyes are black and full blown like an expanding blue lotus flower. She has the sixteen cosmetics and the twelve ornaments increasing her beauty. Although she has unlimited qualities, twenty-five are outstanding personal features. She is expert in the sixty-four arts; her nature is called *vāmā-madhyā* as she is temperamental in her romantic dealings; her love is of the single-pointed variety known as “competent affection” or *samarthā rati*.

Her attachment to Kṛṣṇa is called *madīyatā* because she thinks of Kṛṣṇa as her own rather than think of herself as being his. Her affection is called honey-like (*madhu-sneha*) because it needs no addition to be completely pleasing to the Lord. Her pouts are called *lalita* because they increase Kṛṣṇa's erotic spirit, her intense attraction to Kṛṣṇa is called *mañjiṣṭha-rāga* because of its ever-newness and independence from and indifference to all hamperings and obstacles.

She is the grand-daughter of Mukharā, her mother's name is Kīrtidā; her mother-in-law is Jaṭilā, her so-called husband is Abhimanyu; her sister-in-law is called Kuṭilā and her brother-in-law is Durmada. Her older brother is Śrīdāman and her younger sister Anaṅga Mañjarī and her home is in Jāvaṭ. Her eternal age is fourteen years, two months and fifteen days. She serves Kṛṣṇa constantly in the spirit of conjugal affection. Her pastimes take place in Cupid's pleasure garden known as Madanānandada Kuñja near Rādhā Kuṇḍa.

In the *Vṛndāvana-mahimāmṛta*, there is a special description given of the Divine Couple:

Their enchanting bodily lustres are a heavenly golden and blackish. Each and every limb of their bodies emits forth flashing rays of effulgence that illuminate all the directions. Their celestial forms are wonderfully apportioned and in every detail filled with loveliness; they are the shoreless ocean of unparalleled and astounding beauty. The ocean of their love for one another overflows its banks as it increases constantly. Every limb of

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their bodies is constantly spinning with the intoxication of lustful attraction; due to their absorption in their loving affairs their entire forms are covered by waves of shivers that manifest as their bodily hair repeatedly stands on end. Their minds are untouched by any desire other than that for conjugal enjoyment. They are interested in no other amusements for their own sake. They are totally dedicated to one another in an unbroken erotic attachment; this attachment is increased even more by beautiful songs. They are always engaged in pastimes and are constantly floating on the surface of and again plunging into the depths of the ocean of their love for one another. They are always served by Rādhā's girlfriends and handmaids. These sakhīs and mañjaris are their very life because they are expert in plunging them deeper and deeper into the ocean of loving ecstasies.¹⁸⁷

Rūpa Gosvāmin has written a meditation on the forms of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa that has been quoted by Rādhākṛṣṇa Dāsa Gosvāmin in his *Daśaśloki-bhāṣya*. The first verse of that meditation is translated here:

I meditate on the forms of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa as their bewitching eyes drink in each other's beauty with mutual glances of intense affection; they have their trembling arms wrapped around one another in mutual embrace; their black and gold bodies are dressed in gold and black garments respectively and they are aglow with their intense eagerness for erotic pastimes.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷sahajāścarya-kaiśora-vayaḥ-śrī-viśva-mohanau |
mahā-vimala-kandarpa-rasonmāda-nirantarau ||
mahā-divyatama-snigdha-gaura-śyāma-tanu-cchavī |
ekaikāṅgocchalat-svaccha-cchaṭaugha-cchanna-dik-cayau ||
mahā-mohan-divyāṅga-kānti-līnākhila-dvayau |
lāvaṇya-sāra-sarvasva-divyāṅga-valanādbhutau ||
asamordhva-mahāścarya-saundaryāpāra-vāridhī |
paras-parāstya-maryāda-varधिṣṇu-prema-sāgarau ||
madonmadānaṅga-rasa-ghūrṇa-mānākhilāṅgakau |
raty-āveśa-vaśa-bhrāmyat-sarvāṅgotpulkāvalī ||
khelantāv atyavicchinna-pronmadānaṅga-kelibhiḥ |
anyonya-sahitānaṅga-kṛdānyāsparśi-mānasau ||
paramāścarya-saṅgīta-kalojjṛmbhita-manmathau |
ati-śuddhānurāgaika-mahādbhāv ādya āplutau ||
nityam viharato divya-sakhī-maṇḍala-lālitau |
mahā-vidagdha-svātmaika-rasa-magnāli-jīvanau || VMA 7.81-88

¹⁸⁸koṇenākṣṇoh pṛthu-ruci mitho hāriṇā lihyamānāv
ekaikena pracura-pulakenopagūdhau bhujena |
gaurī-śyāmau vasana-yugalaṁ śyāma-gauram vasānu
rādhā-kṛṣṇau smara-vilasitoddāma-tṛṣṇau smarāmi || (ed.) Haridās Śāstrī, (Vrindavan, Purana Kalidaha: Gadādhara-Gaurahari Press, 1982) 61-2

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Another prayer by Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmin in the *Stavāvalī* goes as follows:

When will I have the great fortune to see the original of all infatuated amorous couples, Śrī Śrī Gāndharvā and Giridhārin in Vṛndāvana, whose appearance sends forth such a deluge of ambrosia in which Cupid's inspirations take a dominant role in expanding their loving activities and giving them great joy.¹⁸⁹

In the concluding verses of the *Prīti-sandarbha*, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmin writes:

The girlfriends of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī carefully nurture the wish-fulfilling tree of Rādhā and Mādhava's jubilant pastimes in Vṛndāvana's fertile soil, constantly hoping for the appearance of fruits and flowers; they watch it grow and develop and when the fruits and flowers appear, they relish them; may that tree, by its unparalleled beauty, give pleasure to me also.¹⁹⁰

Jīva also writes a verse in glorification of the Divine Couple in the *Gopāla-campū*,

Wise persons have determined that though these two are of a black and golden hue, in their minds they are of the opposite colours, as are, externally, their clothes also. This is some pure, unblemished love become incarnate, taking on this form with a dual manifestation which is both divided and a unity.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹prādurbhāva-sudhā-draveṇa nitarām aṅgitvam āptvā yayor
goṣṭhe'bhikṣnam anaṅga eṣa paritaḥ kṛidā-vinodaṁ rasaiḥ |
prītyollāsayatīha mugdha-mithuna-śreṇī-vataṁsāv imau
gāndharvā-giridhāriṇau bata kadā drakṣyāmi rāgeṇa tau ||
Vraja-vilāsa-stava, 4.

¹⁹⁰ālibhiḥ paripālitaḥ pravalitaḥ sānandam ālokitaḥ
pratyāsaṁ sumanaḥphalodaya-vidhau sāmodayam āmoditaḥ |
vṛndāraṇya-bhuvi prakāśa-madhuraḥ sarvātīśāyī-śriyā
rādhā-mādhavayoḥ pramodayatu mām ullāsa-kalpa-drumaḥ ||
(ed.) Chinmayi Chatterjee (Calcutta: Jadavpur University, 1988), 157.

¹⁹¹imau gaurī-syāmau manasi viparītau bahir api
sphurat-tat-tad-vastrāv iti budha-janair niścitam idam |
sa ko'py accha-premā vilasad-ubhaya-sphūrtikatayā
dadhan-mūrtibhāvaṁ pṛthag-apṛthyag apy āvirudabhūt ||

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Viśvanātha Cakravartin introduces his commentary on the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* with the following verse:

Even though they fan each other
with the corners of their constantly moving eyes,
still their bodies are wet with perspiration;
although residing comfortably
in the abode of each other's effulgence,
still they are agitated and restless;
and even though they are constantly drinking the nectar
of each other's slightly smiling faces,
still they are disturbed by a sense of ever-increasing thirst.
May that eternally frolicksome Divine Pair
bestow upon us love for them.¹⁹²

One ancient anonymous verse sums up the vision of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa that is idealized by the mañjarīs:

The water increases the beauty of the lotus
and the lotus increases the beauty of the water;
both the lotus and the water enhance the charms of the lake.
The bracelet is beautified by the jewel
and the jewels by the bracelet,
and both combine to increase the beauty of the hand.
The night becomes more lovely when the moon shines,
the moon appears more beautiful at night;
when both are present together, the sky's charm is heightened.
So it is with Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa;
each of them increases each other's beauty
and together they augment the glories of Vṛndāvana.¹⁹³

Gopāla-pūrva-campū 15, verse 2.

¹⁹²svidyan dṛganta-capalāñcala-vijito'pi
kṣubhyan sva-kānti-nagarāntara-vāsito'pi |
tṛṣyan muhuḥ smita-sudhām paripāyito'pi
śrī-rādhayā praṇayatu pramadām harir naḥ ||
Ānanda-candrikā, Kāvya-mālā edn., p. 1.

¹⁹³payasā kamalam kamalena ca payaḥ payasā kamalena vibhāti saraḥ |
mañinā valayaṁ valayena ca mañiḥ mañinā valayena vibhāti karaḥ ||
śaśinā ca niśā niśayā ca śaśi śaśinā niśayā vibhāti nabhaḥ |
hariṇā ca rādhā rādhayā ca hariḥ, hariṇā rādhayā vibhāti vanam ||
Kuñjavihārī Dāsī cites this verse as prācīna śloka.

4.3 The receptacles of *mañjarī-bhāva*, the *mañjarīs*

In the *Vṛndāvana-mahimāmṛta*:

O friend, just follow the hand-maids of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, whose bodies are made of the froth coming from the ocean of solidified spiritual effulgence that emanates from her lotus feet; they are expert in all aspects of conjugal love and are in the charming fullness of maidenhood; their forms have become wonderfully enchanting due to the new manifestation of adolescence and decoration with jewels and beautiful garments.¹⁹⁴

In the *Govinda-līlāmṛta*, Kṛṣṇadāsa glorifies Rādhā's handmaidens as follows:

Rādhārāṇī's girlfriends who are entirely devoted to her service are like the branches, leaves and flowers of a divine creeper of love that is Rādhā herself, the pleasure-giving potency of Kṛṣṇa, who is like the moon giving delight to the lily-like damsels of Vṛndāvana. Thus they are also equal to her very self.¹⁹⁵

It should be pointed out in describing the qualities of the *mañjarīs* that all the good qualities of the Lord are manifest in his devotees. Of course, this rule has its limitations due to the differences between the *jīva* and the Supreme Lord—not all of his qualities can be fully manifest in the tiny receptacle of the *jīva*. Rādhārāṇī's girlfriends are all her personal expansions, so they also have her qualities, with some differences in the type and quantity.

Rādhārāṇī has twenty-five qualities that are especially described in the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* (4.11-15) beginning from *madhurā* (“sweet”), “blossoming maidenhood,” “enchanting sidelong glances,” “glowing smile,” etc. (See below, p. xx.) In the *Vṛndāvana-mahimāmṛta*, 8th chapter, these and other qualities are described in connection with Rādhārāṇī's handmaidens:

The *mañjarī* is of a glistening, pleasing golden-coloured, a charming picture of sweetness. Her bodily lustre, her loveliness as well as her stocks of honey-like sweetness are all

¹⁹⁴srī-rādhā-pāda-padma-cchavi-madhuratara-prema-cij-jyotir ekā-mbodher udbhūta-phena-stavaka-maya-tanūḥ sarva-vaidagdhya-pūrṇāḥ | kaiśora-vyañjitās tad-ghana-rug-apaghana-śrī-camatkāra-bhājo divyālaṅkāra-vastrā anusarata sakhe rādhikā-kiṅkarīs tāḥ || VMA 2.8

¹⁹⁵sakhyāḥ śrī-rādhikāyā vraja-kumuda-vidhor hlādinī-nāma-śakteḥ sārāṁśa-prema-vallyāḥ kiśalaya-dala-puṣpādi-tulyāḥ sva-tulyāḥ | GLA 10.16, quoted in Caitanya-caritāmṛta, 2.8.211.

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unlimited.¹⁹⁶

She is in the first flush of maidenhood and her breasts have budded beautifully. She wears star-like spangled necklaces and multicoloured blouses.¹⁹⁷

Her arms are as shapely as bananas and are further enhanced by bracelets and jewelled arm bands. The vine of her braids hangs down to her captivating buttocks and its lolling movements augment her beauty.¹⁹⁸

She has an enchantingly thin waist. A divine silk garment, folded alluringly, hangs down over her ankles.¹⁹⁹

A fine cloth decorated with flowers and leaves covers the hair and sides of her face. The enchanter Kṛṣṇa glances at her again and again.²⁰⁰

She has sweet and shy smiles. She has playful glances. She knows how to make many attractive movements.²⁰¹

She is always feeling thrilled by the loving affairs of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. She is expert in the many arts, having been taught by Rādhārāṇī herself.²⁰²

She is especially attractive due to being decorated by the Divine Couple's gifts of leftover garlands, ornaments and clothes. She is endowed with unlimited good qualities of which

¹⁹⁶kāntyānantām śriyā'nantām mādhyair apy anantakām |
susnigdha-lalita-svarṇa-gaurīm madhura-cchaviṁ | VMA 8.24

¹⁹⁷tārā-hārāvali-cāru-citra-kañcuka-dhāriṇīm |
vyañjad-adbhuta-kaiśorām sujāta-mukula-stanīm || ibid. 8.25

¹⁹⁸snigdha-cchatā-kanda-doh-kandalī-cudāṅgada-śriyam |
cāru-śroṇi-taṭe kriḍan-mahā-veṇī-latojjvalām | ibid. 8.26

¹⁹⁹atyanta-cāru-sukṛṣa-madhya-deśa-manoharām |
divya-kuñcita-kauseyenāgulphaparimaṇḍitām || ibid. 8.27

²⁰⁰nicolenātisūkṣmeṇa sva-gucchañcala-śobhinā
alakānta-parivṛtām muhur mohana-vikṣitām || ibid. 8.28

²⁰¹sa-vṛḍhā-madhura-smera-salilāpāṅga-vikṣaṇām |
nānāścarya-kalodārām nānā-bhaṅgi-mayākṛtim || ibid. 8.29

²⁰²rādhā-kṛṣṇa-mahā-premodaṅci-romaṅca-sañcayām |
śrīśvarī-śikṣitāśeṣa-kalā-kausala-śālinīm | ibid. 8.3

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humility and mannerliness are foremost.²⁰³

She is competent to understand Rādhā's wishes by her slightest glance or hint. She relishes Kṛṣṇa's leftover pān and betelnut and is very much the object of the Divine Couple's affections.²⁰⁴

She carries the necessary paraphernalia (like golden water jugs, etc.) for the nightly meetings of the Holy Pair. She constantly tastes the sacred rapture arising from Rādhā's form, qualities and pastimes, and thinking of her affairs with Kṛṣṇa, she always feels a thrilling sensation.²⁰⁵

She is always immersed in an ocean of happiness due to her intense loving affection for Rādhārāṇī. In past, present or future, whether awake, dreaming or in deep sleep, she desires nothing other than service to Rādhā's lotus feet. Other than Rādhā's lotus feet, she knows nothing, not even in her dreams. She rushes toward anything that bears even the most insignificant relation to Rādhā in the way that the rivers rush to the ocean; she is washed away by the ocean of love. In separation from Rādhārāṇī for even a moment she almost dies. Day and night she remains inseparable as a shadow from her mistress's lotus feet.²⁰⁶

Her maidenly beauty is so great that not only the whole universe but even Śiva and Ananta are astonished by it. At every moment, her skin is covered with goosebumps as she tastes the sacred rapture of service. She enchants everyone with her bodily lustre and loveliness

²⁰³preṣṭha-dvandva-prasāda-srag-vastra-bhūṣādi-mohinī |
mahā-vinaya-sauśilyādy-anekāścarya-sad-guṇām || ibid. 8.31

²⁰⁴śrīśvarī-dṛṣṭi-vāg-ādi-sarveṅgita-vicakṣaṇām |
śrī-kṛṣṇa-datta-tāmbūla-carvitām tat-tad-ādr̥tām || ibid. 8.32

²⁰⁵gudha-śyāmābhisārāṅga-bhṛṅgārādibhir anvitām |
rādhā-prīty-anukampādi-pravṛddha-prema-vihvalām | ibid. 8.33

²⁰⁶rādhā-prīti-sukhāmbodhāv apāre buḍitām sadā |
rādhā-padābja-sevānya-spr̥hā-kāla-trayojjhitām || ibid. 8.34.

rādhā-pādāmbujād anyat svapne'pi na jānatīm |
rādhā-sambandha-sandhāvat-prema-sindhogha-sālinīm | ibid. 8.35.

kṣaṇam caraṇa-vicchedāc chrīśvaryaḥ praṇa-hāriṇīm |
padāravinda-samlagnatayaivahar-nisām sthitām || ibid. 8.22

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as she moves from place to place in her anxiety to better serve Rādhā.²⁰⁷

Her bodily effulgence fills all the ten directions which are beautified and enriched by it. She is satisfied and happy with the sweet secret conversations enjoyed in private by Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.²⁰⁸

She is overjoyed to listen to the nectarean words, cooling and sweet, which spill from the mouth of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.²⁰⁹

In the *Sāadhanāmṛta-candrikā* of Siddha Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī of Govardhana, a meditation on the form of a mañjarī is given as follows:

Taking refuge in devotion, one should constantly meditate
on one's own form as a mañjarī,
whose body is drenched with the mercy of the spiritual master,
a cowherd girl decorated with many and various ornaments,
with elevated and fully-developed breasts,
expert in the sixty-four arts and crafts,
wearing a red skirt and white shawl,
wearing a blouse covered in pearls
and bordered with red and gold ribbon,
anointed with unguents of musk and sandalwood,
who is always sweetly smiling,
who is always eager for service
and expert in finding out new ways of serving,
who is endowed with all good qualities like humility,
who always prays for Rādhā's mercy,

²⁰⁷ seṣāseṣa-mahā-vismāpaka-kaiśora-rūpiṇīm |
kṣaṇe kṣaṇe rasāsvāda-prodañcat-pulakāvalīm ||
sarvāṅga-kānti-saundaryair apāraiḥ sarva-mohinīm |
rādhā-karmākulatayā tatra tatra vicālinīm || ibid. 8.36-37

²⁰⁸ citrayantīm iva diśo vicitraṅga-cchaṭā-cayaiḥ |
sa-lilā-pada-vinyāsaiḥ sunūpura-raṇat-kṛtaiḥ ||
kāñjī-valaya-nādaiś ca madhurair viśva-mohinīm |
rādhā-kṛṣṇa-raho-goṣṭhī-sudhā-madhura-sītalām || ibid 8.39-40

²⁰⁹ tat-tad-vacana-piyūṣair mahā-madhura-sītalaiḥ |
śrī-rādhā-mukha-candrānu-galitair abhinanditām || ibid. 8.41

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whose every action is only for the pleasure of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa,
who is like a beautiful lotus flower herself,
who has a deep and secret feeling of love for Kṛṣṇa,
whose beauty bewilders even Cupid with joy,
who is expert in making conversation
that increases the pleasures of the conjugal affairs,
who is transcendently, beautifully formed,
who is always jubilant due to absorption
in songs that are pleasing to the Holy Couple,
whose bodily lustre is of molten gold,
who is free from even the slightest hint of self-centred desire,
who is overwhelmed day and night
by feelings of love for the Divine Couple.²¹⁰

And this meditation is augmented by further verses from the same author's *Paddhati-traya*:

...who is always in the spirit of a paramour in extra-marital love,
who is always bringing the two lovers together in a secretive fashion,
who is situated as a part of Rādhārāṇī's galaxy of friends, specifically as a
member of Lalitā's group,
who follows in the footsteps of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī and is a resident of Jāvaṭ
village,
who is dedicated exclusively to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and absorbed constantly
in her service,
loving her even more than she loves Kṛṣṇa.²¹¹

²¹⁰ śrī-guru-caraṇāmbhoja-kṛpā-sikta-kalevarām |
kiśorīm gopa-vanītām nānālakāra-bhūṣītām ||
pṛthu-tuṅga-kuca-dvandvām catuṣṣaṣṭhi-kalānvītām |
rakta-citrāntarīyām āvṛta-śuklottarīyakām ||
svaraṇa-citrāruṇa-prānta-muktādāma-sukañculīm |
candanāguru-kāśmīra-carcitāṅgīm madhu-smitām ||
sevopāyana-nirmāṇa-kuśalām sevanotsukām |
vinayādi-guṇopetām śrī-rādhā-karuṇārthinīm ||
rādhā-kṛṣṇa-sukhāmōda-mātra-ceṣṭām supadminīm |
nigūḍha-bhāvām govinde madanānanda-mohinīm ||
nānā-rasa-kalālāpa-sālinīm divya-rūpiṇīm |
saṅgīta-rasa-saṃjāta-bhāvollāsa-bharānvitām ||
tapta-kāñcana-śuddhābhām sva-saukhya-gandha-varjitām |
divānīśam mano-madhye dvayoḥ prema-bharākulām |
evam ātmānam anīśam bhāvayed bhaktim āśritaḥ ||
Sādhanaṃṛta-candrik

²¹¹ parakīyābhīmānīnyas tathāśya ca priyajanāḥ |
pracchannenaiva kāmena ramayanti nijapriyām ||
gāndharvikā-sva-yūtha-sthā lalitādi-gaṇānvitā |

4.4. The *uddīpanas*, kindlers of loving emotion

There are two words used in connection with the Lord's form which are similar and yet subtly different. They are *svarūpa* and *rūpa*. The philosophical reality of the Supreme Lord, which includes his form, his qualities, his amusements, etc., all make up the *svarūpa*, generally translated as “natural condition” or “true constitution,” of the Lord. His all-pervasiveness, his non-material self-manifestness, his supreme blissfulness, are all qualities or properties of his *svarūpa*. Thus references to the *svarūpa* in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* say, “The Lord's natural condition is to be full of eternity, knowledge and bliss.”²¹² “The Lord's true constitution is of non-differentiated full consciousness.”²¹³ “In the spiritual relationship of peacefulness (*śānta-rasa*), there is only knowledge of Kṛṣṇa's *svarūpa*.”²¹⁴ The devotees of the *śānta-rasa* are the worshippers of this *svarūpa*, but they are not appreciative of the sweet nature of the Lord's form, qualities and pastimes.

Similarly, there is a distinction to be made between the *rūpa* and *svarūpa* of the Supreme Lady, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and her expansions the *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs*. Raghunātha Dāsa writes that Rādhā's body has been formed out of the wish-fulfilling jewel that is bright with the great love

(*mahā-bhāva*).²¹⁵ Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja paraphrases this verse by saying that “Rādhā's true nature (*svarūpa*) is that of a wish-fulfilling jewel of the great love, *mahā-bhāva-cintāmaṇi*.”²¹⁶ Elsewhere he paraphrases his own verse from the *Govinda-līlāmṛta* saying, “Rādhā's *svarūpa* is that she is the wish-fulfilling creeper of love for Kṛṣṇa, and her girlfriends and hand-maids are the leaves, flowers and fruits on that vine.”²¹⁷

In the *Muralī-vilāsa*, the following passage is found:

Lalitā and the other girlfriends are Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's *svarūpa*. Śrī Rūpa and the other *mañjarīs* follow Rādhā's nature. They want to increase Kṛṣṇa's happiness through following her mood, and in submission to her, they are absorbed in both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Taking shelter of her, they try to

rūpa-mañjary-anugatā yāvaṭa-grāma-vāsini ||
rādhikānucarīm nityam tat-sevana-parāyaṇām |
kṛṣṇād apy adhikaṁ prema rādhikāyām prakurvatīm || Paddhati-trayam

²¹² sac-cid-ānanda-pūrṇa kṛṣṇera svarūp | CC 2.8.154

²¹³ advaya jñāna-tattva vastu kṛṣṇera svarūpa | CC 2.20.152

²¹⁴ kevala svarūpa-jñān hay śānta-rase | CC 2.19.192

²¹⁵ mahā-bhāvōjjvalac-cintā-ratnodbhāvita-vigrahām |

Rādhā-premāmbhoja-marandākhya-stava-rāja, 1.

²¹⁶ mahā-bhāva-cintāmaṇi rādhāra svarūp | CC 2.8.165.

²¹⁷ rādhāra svarūpa Kṛṣṇa-prema-kalpa-latā |

sakhī-gaṇ hay tār pallava-puṣpa-pātā || CC 2.8.209

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increase Kṛṣṇa's happiness. They are called priya-narma-sakhīs. Being born from Rādhārāṇī's passionate attachment (*rāga*) for Kṛṣṇa, one mañjarī is named Śrī Rāga Mañjarī. Another's existence springs from Rādhā's form (*rūpa*) and is therefore known as Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī. Anaṅga Mañjarī arises from her desire, and so it is with all the mañjarīs.²¹⁸

In the *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*, those things which enkindle appreciation for the Lord's *svarūpa* have not been taken as *uddīpanas*, but rather his beautiful body, his sweet characteristics and romantic dalliances have been concentrated on. Still, one should be careful to remember that within all things connected with the Lord, his *svarūpa* or philosophical aspect remains as an essential part. Divorced from the philosophical understanding or connection, simple meditation on the qualities, etc., of the Lord will become something mundane. Without the existence of the Lord's majestic aspect, there is no possibility of the existence of a sweet aspect. Simply a similarity to the activities of ordinary men is not sufficient to make something *madhura*, otherwise everything and everyone in the mundane existence would possess such sweetness. On the other hand, without the sweet aspect, there is no possibility of the devotee's developing love for the Lord.²¹⁹

In his commentary to the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, Jīva Gosvāmin also writes that feeling for the Lord's sweetness includes the knowledge of his *svarūpa* or majestic aspect and this makes it possible for the devotee to relish the Lord's form, qualities and pastimes.²²⁰

The first verse of the section on *uddīpanas* in the *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmin writes:

Those things that arouse feelings of love for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are called *uddīpanas*. They are of six kinds: either Hari or his dear ones' qualities, names, activities, dress, connected items and general impetuses for romantic feeling.²²¹

Kṛṣṇa's qualities are enkindlers of Rādhā's emotion, whereas Rādhā's qualities, etc., arouse feelings of love in Kṛṣṇa and her girlfriends and handmaids. Therefore, in this analysis of the nature of the mañjarīs, the qualities of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī will be given special treatment.

²¹⁸lalitādi sakhī-gaṇ rādhikā svarūp | śrī-rūpa mañjarī ādi rāi anurūp || tad-bhāvecchā-mayī bali kṛṣṇa-sukhollās | tat tat bhāve rasa-mayī ubhaya āveś

|| rādhikā āśray haiyā kṛṣṇa sukha cāy | priya-narma-sakhī bali sakaḷe gāy || rāgete udaya teṇi rāga-mañjarī kahi | rūpete udaya rūpa-mañjarī bolahi || anaṅga haṅte anaṅga mañjarī uday | rasa-vilāsādi kari ei mata kay || kahila saṅkṣepe ei mañjarī ākhyān || Muralī-vilāsa, ch. 1.

²¹⁹Sādhana-dīpikā, 9.22. Cf. supra, p. 20

²²⁰Durgama-saṅgaminī, 4.4.15

²²¹uddīpana-vibhāvā hares tadīya-priyāṅm ca |

kathitā guṇa-nāma-carita-maṅḍana-sambandhinas tatasthās ca || 10.1

4.41 Qualities that enkindle ecstatic love

Kṛṣṇa has many varieties of qualities that arouse loving feelings in his devotee. They are primarily divided into three categories: mental, verbal and physical. His mental qualities are many, mainly gratefulness, forgiving spirit, mercy, etc.²²²

One gopī, after seeing Kṛṣṇa began to contemplate his divine qualities and becoming absorbed in them, described them to a friend:

O sakhi! My mind has become anxious to meet with Kṛṣṇa after seeing him, for he is captivated by even the slightest amount of service (gratefulness); he simply smiles even after being grievously offended (forgiving spirit) and he becomes overwhelmed with compassion upon seeing the smallest distress of others (mercy).²²³

Rādhā's physical features are divided into seven categories according to the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*: (1) her age, (2) her form, (3) her loveliness (*lāvanya*), (4) her beauty (*saundarya*), (5) her nobility (*abhirūpatā*), (6) her sweetness (*mādhurya*), and (7) her softness (*mārdava*). These qualities have been described by Prabodhānanda in his *Vṛndāvana-mahimāmṛta*:

(1) Her age (*vayas*): “Her divine form reveals a new, exciting youthfulness.”²²⁴

(2) Her form (*rūpa*): “Her amazing form causes the entire universe, including the Supreme Lord, to lose consciousness and fall in a faint. It bewilders the mind, for it is the very picture of sweetness overflowing.”²²⁵ *Rūpa* is defined as “that quality by which a young damsel appears to be fully bedecked with all varieties of ornaments when in fact she is not.”²²⁶

²²² *guṇāḥ kṛtajñatā-kṣānti-karuṇādyās tu mānasāḥ* | UN 10.3

²²³ *vaśam alpikayāpi sevayāmum
vihite'py āgasi duḥsahe smitāsyam |
para-duḥkha-lave'pi kātaram me*

harim udvikṣya manas tanoti tṛṣṇām || UN 10.4

²²⁴ *āścarya-nava-kaiśora-vyañji-divyatamākṛtiḥ* | VMA 7.96

²²⁵ *śeṣāśeṣa-jagan-mūrcchākāriṇyāścarya-rūpiṇī* | VMA 7.92

mahā-mādhuryaughā-rūpa-mohanāṅgocchala-cchaviḥ | VMA 7.98

²²⁶ *āṅgāny abhūṣitāny eva kenacid bhūṣaṇādīnā |
yena bhūṣitavad bhāti tad rūpam iti kathyate* || UN 10.25

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(3) Her loveliness (*lāvanya*): “She is the embodiment of billions of oceans of loveliness.”²²⁷ *Lāvanya* is defined by Rūpa Gosvāmin as “an indescribable aura that emanates from within every limb of a young woman in the way that a glow expands from a pearl.”²²⁸

(4) Rādhā's beauty (*saundarya*), defined as “the perfect and charming arrangement of all the limbs of the body,”²²⁹ “At every step, Rādhā enchants the world with her amazing beauty.”²³⁰ “She is the foremost of the milkmaidens of Vṛndāvana, she is decorated with all good qualities and in every limb is perfectly and beautifully formed.”²³¹ “The beauty of even the tip of her fingernails causes the best of the universe's beauties like Lakṣmī, Pārvatī, Rati, etc., to all bow their heads in shame. Her grace and golden lustre are unlimited.”²³²

(5) Her exquisiteness (*abhirūpatā*), defined in the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* as “the unique quality which causes the beautiful properties of one's own body to be transmitted to other objects that are situated in proximity to it.”²³³ The following example is given of this particular quality:

One day, by the banks of Rādhā Kuṇḍa, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī was twirling a white lily that had been given her by Vṛndā. At that time, Kṛṣṇa playfully took it and touching it first to her breasts and then to her hair said, “O Rādhē! How wonderful that this one lily blossom has taken three different forms: When in contact with your golden jug-like breasts, it appears to be a golden campaka flower; when by your hand it takes on the form of a pink lotus, and when held near your hair, which glistens blacker than a bumblebee, it looks just like a beautiful blue lotus.”²³⁴

In *Vṛndāvana-mahimāṃṛta*:

²²⁷ nava-lāvanya-pīyūṣa-sindhu-koṭi-pravāhiṇī | VMA 7.97

²²⁸ muktāphaleṣu chāyāyās taralatvam ivāntarā |
pratibhāti yad aṅgeṣu lāvanyaṃ tad ihocyate ||
UN 10.28. Rasa-sudhākara 1.181

²²⁹ aṅga-pratyāṅgakānām yaḥ sanniveśo yathocitam |
susliṣṭa-sandhi-bandhaḥ syāt tat saundaryam itīryate || UN 10.31

²³⁰ pade pade mahāścarya-saundaryāśeṣa-mohinī | VMA 7.97

²³¹ sarvāsām nūtanābhīra-sundarīṇām śiromaṇiḥ |

sarva-lakṣaṇa-sampanna-sarvāyava-sundarī || VMA 7.91

²³² mohinī-śrī-pārvatī-raty-ādi-rūpavatīr varāḥ |
kurvatī yan nakha-prānta-saundaryaughair avān-mukhīḥ |
tapta-kāñcana-gaurāṅgī susnigdhananta-kānti-bhṛt || VMA 7.92-3

²³³ yadātmīya-guṇotkarṣair vastv anyan nikāta-sṭhitam |
sārūpyam nayati prājñair ābhirūpyam tad ucyate || UN 10.33

²³⁴ vakṣoḥ tava campaka-cchavim avaṣṭambhoru-kumbhopame
rādhē kokanada-śriyaḥ karatale sindūrataḥ sundare |
drāg indindira-bandhureṣu cikureṣv indīvaraābhām vahan
nakaḥ kairava-korako vitanute puṣpa-trayī-vibhramam || UN 10.35

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Her golden bodily lustre fills the ten directions with its glow and all things, within the universe, conscious or unconscious; all become one in the ocean of her exquisite beauty.... She is the embodiment of all charm arising from the ocean of pure and great love for Kṛṣṇa with ten million lives and she bears the charm born of the foremost of all loving sentiments, the conjugal... She is a self-manifested picture of the spiritual non-duality of ecstatic love.²³⁵

(6) The quality of sweetness (*mādhurya*) is defined as an inexpressible quality of all-pervading charm or sweetness in the body of a beautiful girl.²³⁶ “It is as if great heaps of sweetness have been gathered together in her body just to enchant the universe.”²³⁷

(7) The *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* defines *mārdava*, “delicacy” or “softness,” as “the inability to tolerate the touch of any hard object.”²³⁸ Vidyāpati also writes, “This young girl's body is as soft as a garland of flowers.”²³⁹

In the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, a list of Rādhā's twenty-five qualities is given, all of which are said to bring Kṛṣṇa under her control. These qualities are divided into four groups: physical, mental and verbal as well as those that are related to her dealings with other people. The six qualifications of the first group are that she is: (1) sweet, (2) a fresh maiden; (3) she has enchanting sidelong glances and (4) a glowing smile; she is (5) decorated with auspicious signs on her hands and feet, etc., (6) her bodily fragrance is potent to enmadden Mādhava himself.

The mental qualities are ten in number: she is (1) modest, (2) compassionate, (3) expert, (4) clever, (5) shy, (6) mannerly, (7) calm and patient, (8) grave, (9) knowledgeable in the ways of love and (10) possessed of the highest perfection of love, namely *mahā-bhāva*.

Those of her qualities which are related to speech are three in number: she is (1) highly talented in music and singing, (2) expert in speaking attractively and (3) clever in making plays on words.

Other than these 19 qualities, Rādhā has six virtues that are connected to her dealings with others: she is (1) the object of all Vraja's love; (2) her glories are spread throughout the entire creation; (3) she is treated with the greatest affection by all the older folk in

²³⁵ daṣa-dīn-maṇḍalācchādi-sugaurāṅgocchala-cchaviḥ |
cid-acid-dvaitam āmajjaty ucchalan madhura-cchaviḥ ||
mahā-prema-rasāmbhodhi-jṛmbhaṇaikādbhuta-cchaviḥ |
śrī-kṛṣṇātma-prāṇa-kotī-nirmaṇchaika-rasa-cchaviḥ ||
svayaṁ prabhā cid-advaita-sat-premaika-rasa-cchaviḥ || ibid. 7.94-6

²³⁶ rūpaṁ kim apy anivācyaṁ tanor mādhuryam ucyate | UN 10.36

²³⁷ mahā-mādhuryaughā-rūpa-mohanāṅgocchala-cchaviḥ | VMA 7.99

²³⁸ mārdavaṁ komalasyāpi saṁsparaśāhatocyate | UN 10.38

²³⁹ se je alpa-vayasī bālā | tanu gāthanī puhupa-mālā |

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Vṛndāvana. She is (4) controlled by the devotion of her girlfriends and is (5) the chief of all those beloved of Kṛṣṇa. Finally, (6) Kṛṣṇa himself is always ready to obey her slightest command.

Prabodhānanda gives a further description of Rādhā in the seventh and eighth chapters of *Vṛndāvana-mahimāmṛta*:

Her long black hair falls like a net over her head, above which is a veil of exceedingly fine cloth; her braid, which tumbles down to her buttocks, is decorated throughout with flowers, and at its end dangles a string while at its base are flowers and jewels. This braid that enchants the entire universe has the appearance a long black snake.

Her face is golden like the whorl of a lotus flower; her teeth are effulgent like a row of pomegranates. Her lovely lips are red like the bimba fruit, spreading forth an ocean of sweetness. Her chin is decorated with a black beauty spot made of musk which makes her even more bewitching.

Her eyes are extended; they move back and forth like hummingbirds as she smiles sweetly. The playful movements of her eyebrows defeat the expertise of Cupid's bow and are an indication of her good fortune.

Her beautifully shaped nose has a gold decoration with a pearl in it. Her ears have rings piercing through them both at the bottom and the top. Her neck is smooth like a conch shell and has a golden necklet (*niṣka*) of jewels around it.

Her breasts are like two golden flowers fully bloomed. Their beauty is amazing; they are filled with an inner glow of loveliness. They are the full, upraised embodiment of her sweetness. Even though covered by her bodice, the shy Rādhā covers them again and again with the hem of her upper garment.

Her arms are decorated with bangles and armlets, all of which are sprinkled with a variety of precious gems. Every one of her fingers is decorated with a jewelled ring.

Her lovely waist is alluringly thin. Her hips are broad, nourished with the very essence of beauty and sweetness. Her thighs glow; they are soft and yet shaped like golden bananas. Her knees are charming and her calves are like the stems of lotus flowers.

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The beauty of her feet bewilders all the moving and non-moving living beings; their charming movements attract the mind of even the supreme Cupid himself, Kṛṣṇa. They are decorated with golden ankle bells and a golden string of little jingling bells. Her neatly pleated silken garment covers her ankles. Each of her toes has a ring decorating it.

Thus Rādhā charms the entire creation by the glory of each of her limbs, all of which are equal to millions of oceans of splendour. Her form of fresh maidenly beauty moves with such delightful gestures, so erotically enticing that not only Kṛṣṇa, but even her girlfriends all fall into a swoon.²⁴⁰

In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* it is said that Satyabhāmā envies Rādhā her good fortune; all the damsels of Vṛndāvana come to her to learn the techniques and arts of love. Lakṣmī and Pārvatī wish to have her beauty; Arundhatī, the greatest of the devoted wives desires to possess a devotion like hers. Kṛṣṇa himself is unable to describe satisfactorily her virtues, so what can poor humans like us hope to achieve in glorifying her?

4.42 The inspirations for love arising out of the Divine Couple's holy names

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmin writes in his hymn *Utkalikā-vallarī*,

“O Kṛṣṇa! At any time at all, in any connection whatsoever, if you hear the name of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, you immediately forget your own identity as well as all your clever innovations for captivating young women. O Rādhē! As soon as the two syllables *kṛ* and *ṣṇa* enter your ears, your entire body becomes overwhelmed by the symptoms of ecstatic love, especially that of being stunned.²⁴¹”

Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmin writes in his “Indications of my mind's Desires” (*Abhīṣṭa-sūcana*):

O my greedy tongue! Don't you know that the name of Rādhā is like fresh new ambrosia and the name of Kṛṣṇa is like wonderful sweet and thickened milk; add the camphor scent of your attachment and mix them together and then drink, drink eternally to your heart's content.²⁴²

²⁴⁰VMA 7.99-8.15

²⁴¹kvāpy ānuṣaṅgikatayodita-rādhikākhyā-
vismāritākhila-vilāsa-kalā-kalāpam |
kṛṣṇeti-varṇa-yugala-śravaṇānubandha-
prādurbhavaj-jaḍima-ḍambara-samvṛtāṅgim || 1

²⁴²rādheti nāma nava-sundara-dīdhu-mugdham
kṛṣṇeti nāma madhurādbhuta-gāḍha-dugdham |

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The following names are relished by the mañjarīs. In affection for Kṛṣṇa, they call him Gokulānanda (“Joy of Gokula”), Govinda, Prāṇeśa (“Lord of our lives”), Goṣṭhendra-kulacandramah (“Moon of the dynasty of the king of the cowherds”), Sundarottamsa (Crown of the beautiful”), Vṛndāvana-candra (“Moon of Vṛndāvana”), Nāgara-śikhāmaṇe (“Crest-jewel of the playboys”), Goṣṭha-yuvarāja (“Prince of the cowherd community”), Manohara (“Mind-stealer”), Rasika-śekhara (“Chief of the aesthetes”), Śyāma-sundara (“Beautiful black-skinned one”), Bhāṇḍira-baṭeśvara (“Lord of the banyan tree”), Mayūra-picchabhūṣaṇa (“One who decorates himself with a peacock feather”), etc.

When angry, they call him, “Rāma, Durlīeśvara (“King of the badly behaved”), Kīṭavendra (“Lord of the cheats”), Mahādhūrta (“Great rascal”), Kaṭhōra (“Hard-heart”), Nirlajja (“Shameless one!”), Atidurlalita (“Extremely ill-mannered”), Gopībhujaṅga (“Snake who poisons the gopīs”), Rata-hiṇḍaka (“Seducer of women”), Padmāṣaṇḍa (Padmā’s eunuch”), Kadambavana-taskara (“Thief of the kadamba forest”), Navanīta-caura (“Butter-thief”), Vasana-caura (“Clothes-thief”).

In loving affection, they address Rādhā with the following epithets: “Ūrjeśvarī (“Goddess of the month of Kārttika”), Vṛndāvaneśvarī (“Empress of Vṛndāvana”), Śyāma-sohāginī²⁴³ (“Kṛṣṇa’s most fortunate mistress”), Vṛndāvana-kalpa-vallī (“Wish-fulfilling creeper of Vṛndāvana”), Apāra-karuṇā-nidhi (“Blessed with the treasure of unlimited compassion”), Prāṇeśvarī (“Lady of our lives”), Svāminī (“Mistress”), Devi (“Your highness”), Sumukhi (“Pretty-face”), Kalyāṇi (“Auspicious one!”), Vṛndāvana-rājñī, Sarasijākṣī, Navadalita-haridrā-garva-gauri, Indīvarākṣī, Sunetrā, Subhagā, Kṛṣṇodari, Cañcalākṣī, Mṛga-śāvākṣī, Gāṅgeya-gātrī (“You, whose body is the colour of molten gold!”), Manojña-hṛdayā (“Charming heart”), Kuśalā (“Expert”), Madhurā (“Sweet”), Hṛmatī (“Bashful”), Khañjanākṣī (“Humming-bird-eyed”), Kaṇaka-gaurī (“Golden-skinned”), Madhu-mukhī (“Honey-faced”) Kalāvati (“Talented one”), Mugdhāṅgī (“Lovely body”), Varoru (“Beautiful-thighed”), Subhaga-mukhī (“Beautiful-faced”), Hr ī-puñja-mūrti (“The image of modesty”), Suvratā (“Devoted one”), Sadayā (“Compassionate one”), Dhīrā (“Patient one”), Mañjuvadanā (“Sweet-faced”), Dhīramati (“Collected in mind”), Kṛṣṇakāntā-śiromaṇi (“Best of Kṛṣṇa’s mistresses”), Parama-lajjavatī (“Most shy”), Lolākṣī (“One with moving eyes”), Pakva-bimboṣṭhī (“...whose lips are red like the bimba fruit”), Praṇaya-śālinī (“...whose essence is love”), Sundarī (“Beautiful one”), etc.

In anger they might call her Anabhijñā (“Inexperienced”), Hṛīdagdhā (“One whose modesty has been burned”), Mugdhā (“Foolish one”), Kautūhala-cañcalākṣī (“One whose eyes are active with curiosity”), Kaṭhinī (“Hard-hearted one”), Bajarābuki²⁴⁴

sarva-kṣaṇam surabhi-rāga-himena ramyaṁ
kṛtvā tad eva piba me rasane kṣudhārte || 10

²⁴³This is a non-Sanskrit word, or rather a corruption of the Sanskrit subhāginī that has taken on the meaning in the vernaculars (both Hindi and Bengali as well as other North-Indian dialects, of a fortunate woman who is her husband’s favorite wife

²⁴⁴Another tad-bhāva Bengali word, derived from the Sanskrit Vajra-vakṣī

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(“Thunderbolt-heart”), Apariṇāma-darśitā (“One who refuses to change her ways”), Māna-bhujāṅga-damśitā (“You who have been bitten by the snake of petty spitefulness”), Durvinītā (“Ill-mannered one”), Caṇḍī (“The angry goddess”), Kopinī (“Ill-tempered one”), etc.

4.43 Inspirators arising from the activities of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa (*carita-uddīpana*)

Carita or character is divided into moods (*anubhava*) and activities (*līlā*). Here, *līlā* is being dealt with. *Līlā* is described in the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* as the charming and playful amusements of the Lord such as his dancing or playing the flute, his herding or milking of the cows, his walking and lifting Govardhana, etc. The inspirators for the mañjarīs’ love coming from Rādhā’s activities can be found in her charming movements, her playing on the vīṇā, her drawing pictures, making flower garlands, her cooking, her gait while walking, her singing, etc.

4.44 Inspirators arising from dress and decorations (*maṇḍana-uddīpana*)

According to *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* (11.54), Kṛṣṇa’s dress and decoration (*maṇḍana*) are of four types: clothing, ornaments, garlands and cosmetics. The terminology of the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* is somewhat different. There three types of *prasādhana* or toilet are mentioned. These are clothing, decorations and ornaments (*maṇḍana*).²⁴⁵ In the following verses, Rūpa Gosvāmin describes Kṛṣṇa’s clothing as being of three types: the first a simple outfit consisting of both an upper and lower garment; a second rather more formal ensemble [in the Northwest Indian style] including a shirt, turban and sash with his dhoti; the third is his ostentatious and theatrical costume which has various pieces of differently coloured cloth all over it. His decorations include his hair styling, cosmetics, garlands, decorations of tilaka and other body paintings, his confection of betel nut (which colours the teeth), lotus flowers, etc. Ornaments include various jewels as well as minerals, feathers and flowers, etc., found in the forest. The jewelled ornaments include crown, earrings, necklaces, madallions, armbands, bracelets, rings and ankle bells. His forest decorations consist of a crown of flowers, flower earrings, unguents of red oxide, etc.

The mañjarīs’ mood of love is further inspired by Rādhā’s sixteen forms of toilette (*ṣoḍaśa-śṛṅgāra* or *ṣoḍaśākalpa*) and twelve ornaments (*dvādaśābhūṣaṇa*). The sixteen forms of toilette are listed in the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* (4.9): (1) bath, (2) effulgent pearl decorating the fore part of her nose, (3) a blue garment, (4) a sash around her waist, (5) her hair done into a braid, (6) a flower decoration on the ear, (7) unguents of camphor, sandalwood and musk spread on her body, (8) a flower decoration in her hair, (9) a garland around her neck, (10) a lotus as a plaything in her hand, (11) betel in her mouth, (12) a black beauty mark of musk on her chin, (13) back cosmetic (mascara) on her eyes, (14) a musk

²⁴⁵kathitā vasanākalpamaṇḍanādyaṁ prasāadhanam | BRS 2.1.178

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decoration of leaves and dots, etc., on her cheeks, (15) red lac juice beautifying the soles of her feet, and (16) tilaka on her forehead.²⁴⁶

The twelve ornaments are also found in the same place.²⁴⁷ They are: (1) a jewelled crown, (2) golden earrings, (3) a golden chain of bells around her hips, (4) a golden medallion around her neck, (5) hoops and golden needles piercing her ears, (6) many bangles and bracelets on her arms and wrists, (7) a choker around her neck, (8) rings on her fingers, (9) a large necklace like a constellation of stars on her bosom, (10) armlets on her upper arm, (11) ankle bells with profuse jewelled decorations, and (12) toe-rings.

4.45 Inspirators through relation (*sambandhi-uddīpana*)

Items that are intimately connected with Kṛṣṇa and inspire ecstatic love in *madhura-rasa* are his flute song, the call of his buffalo horn, his singing, the fragrance of his body, the tinkling of his ankle bells, the jingling of the ornaments on his body, his foot-prints, his different artistic creations, etc.

Other items that become connected are his used clothes and garlands, his necklace of guñja beads and peacock feathers, the red oxide, the cows, his stick, his flute, his buffalo horn, his dear friends like Subala and Ujjvala, the dust by the cows' hooves, the Vṛndāvana forest, those creatures who are devoted to him such as the peacock named Tāṇḍavika, the parrot Vicakṣaṇa, the bees, the deer named Suraṅga, the forest groves, the decorative karṇikāra flower, the kādamba tree, Govardhana Hill, the Yamunā River, and the scene of the circle dance.

Items intimately connected with Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī are the sound of her lute, her singing, her sweet bodily fragrance, the sounds of her bangles, waist and ankle bells, etc., her footprints, garlands she has strung herself, her cooking, her paintings and other artistic works, etc.

Other connected items are the remnants of her cloth, food and garlands, etc., her lute known as Vipañcī, her intimate friends like Lalitā and Viśākhā, Śrī Rādhā Kuṇḍa, those

²⁴⁶snātā nāsāgrā-jāgran-mañir asita-paṭā sūtriṇī baddha-veṇī
sottāmsā carcitāṅgī kusumita-cikurā sragviṇī padma-hastā |
tāmbūlāsyoru-bindu-stavakita-cibukā kajjalākṣī sucitrā
rādhālaktojjvalāṅghriḥ sphurati tilakini ṣoḍaśākalpinīyam ||

²⁴⁷divyaś cūḍā-mañīndraḥ purata-viracitāḥ kuṇḍala-dvandva-kāñcī-
niṣkāś cakri-śalākā-yuga-valaya-ghaṭāḥ kaṇṭha-bhūṣormikāś ca |
hārās tāranukārā bhujā-kāṭaka-tulākoṭayo ratna-kliptās
tuṅgā pādāṅguriya-cchavir iti ravibhir bhūṣaṇair bhāti rādhā || UN 4.10

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who have taken shelter of her like the peahen Sundarī, the swans Śubhā and Tuṇḍakerī, the mynahs Sūkṣmadhī and Mañjubhāṣiṇī, etc., the bees, the doe Raṅgiṇī, the grove known as Kāma-mahātīrtha, “the great pilgrimage place of the god of love.”

Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmin writes about Rādhā Kuṇḍa in his famous work *Vilāpa-kusumāñjalī*:

O blooming lotus-eyed Rādhārāṇī! As soon as I caught sight of your beautiful water tank known as Rādhā Kuṇḍa, filled with sweet waters and lotus flowers, surrounded by hundreds of humming bees that is when I developed an ardent desire to become your personal maidservant.²⁴⁸

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura sums up the *uddīpanas* in his compilation of songs, *Śaraṇāgati*:

The shores of the Rādhā Kuṇḍa, with its groves and cottages, the banks of the Yamunā and the mountain Govardhana, the tank of flowers known as Kusuma-sarovara, Mānasa-gaṅgā, the Yamunā with her undulating waves, Vamśī-vaṭa, Gokula, Dhīra-samīra, the forest of Vṛndāvana with its innumerable trees and vines, the birds, the deer, the soft breezes, the peacocks and bees, the song of the flute, the flute itself, the buffalo horn, the markings of their feet on the ground, the black clouds in the sky, the moon, the spring, the sound of the conchshell, the sound of the hand cymbals, all these things are conducive to remembrance of the loving affairs of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kuṇḍa and I am inspired by all of them.²⁴⁹

4.46 Inspirators coming from neutral sources (*taṭastha-uddīpana*)

The neutral or *taṭastha-uddīpanas* inspire love due to providing an atmosphere conducive to love or through their metaphorical relationship to the love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. They are: the spring, the rainy season with its lightning and new rows of black clouds and golden creepers winding around black tamāla trees, the autumn season, especially its full moon and moonlit nights, the cool and scented breezes, the cakora birds kissing the

²⁴⁸yadā tava sarovaram sarasa-bhrṅga-saṅghollasat-
saroruha-kulojvalam madhura-vāri-sampūritam |
sphutat-sarasajākṣi he nayana-yugma-sākṣād-babhau
tadaiva mama lālasājani tavaiva dāsyē rase || Vilāpa-kusumāñjalī, 15.

²⁴⁹Rādhā-kuṇḍa taṭa kuñja-kuṭīr | govardhana parvata yāmuna-tīr ||
kusuma-sarovara mānasa-gaṅgā | kalinda-nandinī vipula-taraṅgā ||
vamśī-vaṭa gokula dhīra-samīr | vṛndāvana tarul-latikā-vānīr ||
khaga-mṛga-kula malaya-bātās | mayūra bhramara muralī vilās ||
veṇu, śṛṅga, pada-cihna, megha-māla | vasanta-śaśāṅka saṅkha-karatālā yugala-vilāsa anukūla māni |
līlā-vilāsa uddīpana jāni ||

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moonbeams, the buzzing bees thirsty for fresh nectar from new flowers, etc.

A few examples of the above inspirators in relation with Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's loves as experienced by the mañjarīs are given below. Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmin writes in his *Prārthanāmṛta*:

When will my eyes worship that form of Kṛṣṇa which is being embraced by Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in the way that the cakorī bird worships the moon with its moonlight, the way that the cātaka bird worships the black cloud embraced by the lightning flash and the way the bee worships the tamāla tree as it is being clung to by the golden creeper.²⁵⁰

In the same work, Raghunātha Dāsa writes the following verse about the golden creeper clinging to the tamāla tree:

O friend Rūpa Mañjarī, just look at the golden yūthi vine as it entwines around the tamāla tree, surrounded by bees attracted to her lovely freshly blooming flowers. Seeing that blossoming yūthī creeper, I am reminded of the smiling golden-lustred Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī as she clings to Kṛṣṇa, whose bodily hue mocks the colour of the new clouds in the rainy season.²⁵¹

Rūpa Gosvāmin glorifies the spring season in his play *Vidagdha-mādhava*. The following is a speech by Rādhikā to one of her friends:

Sakhi! May the breeze coming from the Malayan mountains in the south continue to play in its gentle way, and may the cuckoos continue to be absorbed in their amusements, singing sweetly on the fifth note of the scale; let the bees continue to pierce my very being with their buzzing sounds; all of them can help me forget my miseries, for if they continue like this, then I will shortly lose consciousness and I will be relieved of these torturous thoughts of Kṛṣṇa.²⁵²

²⁵⁰cakorīva jyotsnāyutam amṛtaraśmim sthira-taḍid-
vṛtam divyāmbhodaṁ navam iva raṭac-cātaka-vadhūḥ |
tamālaṁ bhṛṅgīvodyata-ruci kadā svarṇa-latikā-
śritam rādhāśliṣṭam harim iha ḍṛg eṣā bhajati me || Prārthanāmṛta 17

²⁵¹tamālasya kroḍe sthita-kanaka-yūthīm pravilasat-
prasūnām lolālim sakhi kalaya vandyām ciram imām |
tiraskartur meghadyutim aghabhido'ṅke sthita-calad-
dṛṣam smerām rādhām taḍid-atirucim smārayati yā || Prārthanāmṛta 20

²⁵²vikrīḍantu paṭīra-parvata-taṭī-saṁsaṅgiṇo mārutāḥ
khelantaḥ kalayantu komalatarām puṁskokilāḥ kākalim |
saṁrambheṇa śilimukhā dhvanibhṛto vidhyantu man-mānasam
hāsyantyāḥ sakhi me vyathām param amī kurvanti sāhāyakam || VM 2.15

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Again, in the seventh act of the *Vidagdha-mādhava*, Rūpa describes the rainy season in a speech by Vṛndā Devī:

Aha! The breezes are filled with the scent of blossoming kadamba flowers; the yūthī flowers are also blooming, attracting bees who are humming pleasantly; the peacocks are dancing and the earth has become dark with dense new grasses. Now that summer has ended, the twelve forests of Vṛndāvana are filled with such a new fascination that my mind is experiencing an extremely wonderful sensation.²⁵³

Viśvanātha remarks in his commentary to this verse that three of the six seasons, namely spring, autumn and the rainy season are especially inspirational for romantic affairs. A beautiful song by Govinda Dāsa describes the third of these, the autumn season, time of the circle dance, in words reminiscent of the Bhāgavata:

The soft breeze blows
while the full autumn moon glorifies the sky;
the forests are filled with the scents of various flowers;
the bees are maddened by the many
blossoming mallikā, mālatī and yūthī flowers.

Seeing such a beautiful effulgent night,
Śyāmasundara is overcome by feelings of romance
and begins to blow on his flute,
in the sweet key of the fifth note of the scale;
the thief of the faithful wives' minds.

Hearing it, the gopīs immediately fall in love with him
and mentally offer him their entire selves;
and they start on their way to meet him,
absorbed in the beautiful music of the flute.²⁵⁴

²⁵³kadambālī-jṛmbhā-parimala-bharodgāri-pavanā
sphuṭad-yūthī-kṛta-madhupa-gāna-praṇayinī |
naṭat-kekī-stomā mṛdula-yavasa-śyāmalim abhūs
tapānte'dya svāntam mama rasayati dvādaśavanī || VM 7.1

²⁵⁴This song is customarily sung in kīrtanas of the rāsa dance. Its translation unfortunately leaves only the bare bones of literal meaning, losing its alliteration: śarada canda pavana manda, vipine bharala kusuma gandha, phulla-mallikā mālatī yūthī, matta-madhukara bhoraṇī | herāṇ rāti aichana bhāti, śyāma mohana madane māti, muralī gāna pañcama tān, kulavatī cita coraṇī | śunata gopī prema ropī, manahi manahi āpanā soṇpi | tāhi calata yāhi bolata, muralika kala lolani |

The Expressions of Love

5.1 Services rendered by the sakhīs

Those activities which are manifested by the body and senses after the different causes of love (*vibhāvas*) have acted on the dominant feeling of love are called *anubhāvas*. In other words, the *anubhāvas* are the expressed effects of those causes. The definition given in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* is as follows: “Those activities which appear almost as spontaneously as physical transformations revealing internal feelings are called *anubhāvas* or sometimes as *udbhāsvaras*.”²⁵⁵

These *anubhāvas* or expressions of love nurture the feelings of love and make them more relishable after the causes have awakened the first loving responses.

In the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* (8.97-99), the major activities of the sakhīs and mañjarīs are listed as follows:

- (1) glorifying the qualities of the lover to his beloved or of the beloved to her lover;
- (2) increasing their attachment for one another;
- (3) taking them out to meet one another;
- (4) offering their dear friend (the *nāyikā*) to Kṛṣṇa;
- (5) joking with them;
- (6) giving consolation to them in times of anxiety;
- (7) dressing and decorating the Divine Couple;
- (8) getting them to reveal their inner feelings;

²⁵⁵ *anubhāvās tu cittastha-bhāvānām avabodhakāḥ |
te bahir vikriyā-prāyāḥ proktā udbhāsvarākhyayā || BRS 2.2.1.*

In fact, *udbhāsvaras* (“shining, radiant”) are defined as a subcategory of *anubhāvas* in *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*. (11.1, 11.69-70) and include such reactions to inner feelings as the spontaneous loosening of clothing, slipping of flower decorations from the hair, yawning, sighing, etc. The term itself appears to be original to Rūpa Gosvāmin. In the BRS (2.2.3), Rūpa subdivides *anubhāvas* into “cool” or passive and “hurling” or active expressions of love, the former include yawning, etc., the latter dancing, etc. Kuñjavihāri Dāsī’s understanding of the term is rather broader than that found in the works of the aestheticians.

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- (9) concealing the faults of the *nāyikā*;
- (10) deceiving her husband and other guardians;
- (11) giving beneficial instructions;
- (12) bringing the two together at the appropriate time;
- (13) fanning with yak-tail whisks and performing other timely services;
- (14) chastising both lover and beloved for their faults in the course of their romantic affairs;
- (15) delivering messages;
- (16) protecting the *nāyikā* from all types of dangers.

Of course, besides these sixteen activities there are many other things that Rādhā's handmaids and friends can do, such as glorifying the qualities, beauty and sweetness and love of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, investigating the activities and intentions of the other competing *nāyikās*, bringing the food Rādhā has prepared to Nanda Mahārāja's house to be served to Kṛṣṇa and returning with his remnants to be relished by her, finding out what Kṛṣṇa is doing from Subala and Dhaniṣṭhā, etc.

Some examples of such activities are given here:

5.11 The delivering of messages:

When will I give you both joy by bringing you each other's life-giving messages when seeing each other has become difficult due to the controls of your elders?²⁵⁶

5.12 Describing Rādhā's love to Kṛṣṇa

O Kṛṣṇa! Looking at your portrait, the full-moon-faced Rādhā thinks of you as the collyrium for her eyes; hearing your qualities she thinks of you as the lotus which decorates her ears and contemplating you in her heart, she thinks of you as the blue sapphire that adorns her bosom.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁶gurvāyattatayā kvāpi durlabhānyonya-vikṣaṇau |
mithaḥ sandeśa-sidhūbhyām nandayisyāmi vām kadā ||
Stavamālā, Kārṇya-pañjikā, 34.

²⁵⁷tvām añjanīyati phalāsu vilokayanti
tvām śṛṇvati kuvalayīyati karnapūram |

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O Kṛṣṇa! In separation from you, Rādhā is feeling her heart to be completely vacant; although last night her friends somehow persuaded her to take pān, here it is the morning and the betel nut is still whole in her mouth and the pān leaf is still intact in her hand.²⁵⁸

O Lord of the Universe! Rādhā's body has completely withered due to separation from you. She has fallen from her bed to the floor and is unable to lift herself onto it again.²⁵⁹

O killer of the Mura demon! How can I describe fully the glory of Rādhā's courage? Though merged in the ocean of suffering due to your separation, she still continues to bear the burden of intense love for you.²⁶⁰

O Kṛṣṇa! Rādhā sings aloud every word of the messages you send; she plays them on her flute and on her vīṇā; she even teaches them to her pet mynahs in the cage so that they will recite them again and again.²⁶¹

5.13 Describing Kṛṣṇa's love to Rādhāraṇī love:

In this town, oh Rādhā, there are many beautiful, lotus-eyed girls, all of whom are easy for this expert charmer to seduce. You must have performed some great austerities in a

tvām pūrṇima-vidhu-mukhī hṛdi bhāvayanti
vakṣo-nilīna-nava-nīlamanim karoti || Padyāvalī 186

²⁵⁸grhītaṁ tāmbūlaṁ parijana-vacobhir na sumukhī
smaraty antaḥ-śūnyā murahara gatāyām api niśi |
tathavāste hastaḥ kalita-phaṇita-phaṇi-vallī-kisalayas
tathavāsyam tasyāḥ kramuka-phala-phālī-paricitam || ibid., 187.

This verse is attributed to Harihara by Rūpa. It is cited elsewhere (Śṛṅgāra-prakāśa, Subhāṣita-ratna-bhāṇḍara, etc.) as Bilhaṇa's.

²⁵⁹prema-pāvaka-liḍhāṅgī rādhā tava jagat-pate |
śayyāyāḥ skhalitā bhūmau punas tām gantum akṣamā || ibid., 188
(Kavicandra).

²⁶⁰gāyati gīte śamsati vaṁśe vādayati sā vipaṅciṣu |
pāṭhayati pañjara-śukam tava sandeśākṣaram rādhā || ibid., 190.

This verse is attributed to Govardhana; it is verse 211 of his Ārya-sapta-śatī, Kāvya-mālā edition

²⁶¹gāyati gīte śamsati vaṁśe vādayati sā vipaṅcim |
pāṭhayati pañjara-śukam tava sandeśākṣaram rādhā || ibid., 190

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previous life, for Dāmodara is attached to none other than you.²⁶²

O beautiful one! The son of Nanda is sighing in deep separation from you, sitting in a lonely forest copse with his head bent. He takes no pleasure in wandering by the banks of the Yamunā in the cooling breezes; he has given up herding the cows and has even stopped playing the flute.²⁶³

O most desired nymph of Vraja! The enemy of the Mura demon, Kṛṣṇa, is the most wonderful male in existence. He is expert in all aspects of romantic dealings; he is affectionate and most handsome. Now it seems to me that if he himself comes to you seeking your good graces, then you should be cooperative. Could there be any greater gain in the universe than this, oh beautiful one?²⁶⁴

5.14 Arranging meetings of the Divine Couple:

O Rādhē! Kṛṣṇa! When the two of you are searching in the forests of Vṛndāvana, unable to find one another, then I will arrange your meeting and bring you together. Thus I will earn so much affection that you will reward me with a gift of a necklace.²⁶⁵

5.15 Giving beneficial instructions:

²⁶²kelī-kalāsu kuśalā nagare murārer
ābhīra-nīraja-drśaḥ kati vā na santi |
rādhē tvayā mahād akāri tapo yad eṣa
dāmodaras tvayi paraṁ paramānurāgaḥ || ibid., 191 (Anon.)

²⁶³vatsān na cārayati vādayate na veṇum
āmodate na yamunā-vana-mārutena |
kuñje nilīya śīthilam valitottamāṅgam
antas tvayā śvasiti sundari nanda-sūnuḥ || ibid., 192 (Daityāri Paṇḍit)

²⁶⁴sarvādhikaḥ sakala-keli-kalā-vidagdhaḥ
snigdhaḥ sa eṣa muraśatrur anargha-rūpaḥ |
tvām yācate yadi bhaja vraja-nāgari tvam
sādhyaṁ kim anyad adhikaṁ bhuvane bhavatyāḥ || ibid., 193 (Rānga)

²⁶⁵gaveṣayantāv anyonyam kādā vṛndāvanāntare |
saṅgamayya yuvām lapsye hāriṇam pāritoṣikam ||
Stavamālā, Kārpaṇya-pañjikā-stotram, 35

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O lotus-eyed one! Blind with love, you have already offered your entire body of unequalled beauty to Govinda. Now why don't you glance at him with a little affection? After selling the elephant, what trader quibbles over the price of the stick used to control it?²⁶⁶

5.16 Taking them to the appointed trysting place:

O humming-bird eyed Rādhā! The lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa is playing in the forest groves, decorating his ears with bright spring flowers in a most attractive way. You are well-versed in amorous dealings, so how is it that these hands have not yet abandoned their meaningless household duties? What shall we say to you? This is not the moment to procrastinate!²⁶⁷

There is a saying that if anyone sees a humming bird in a lotus flower that he becomes a king. The intention of the sakhīs in describing Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa as hummingbirds and lotus flowers respectively is that if the two of them meet one another then not only will they be highly fortunate, but the sakhīs who unite them will also get the highest pleasure in seeing them come together, just as though they had become kings. Therefore, the implication is, “for our benefit, Rādhā, kindly go and meet with Kṛṣṇa.”

5.2 Glorifying the service of the mañjarīs

In the *Kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāmṛta*, there is the following statement:

²⁶⁶ govinde svayam akaroḥ saroja-netre
premāndhā vara-vapur arpanam sakhi |
kārpaṇyam na kuru darāvaloka-dāne
vikrīte kariṇi kim aṅkuṣe vivādaḥ || Padyāvalī 197 (Anonymous)

²⁶⁷ aklānta-dyutibhir vasanta-kusumair uttamsayan kuntalān
antaḥ khelati khañjarīṭa-nayane kuñjeṣu kañjekṣaṇaḥ |
asmān mandira-karmatas tava karau nādyāpi viśrāmyataḥ
kim brūmo rasikāgraṇir asi ghātī neyam vilamba-kṣamā ||
Padyāvalī 209 (Rūpa Gosvāmin)

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Even when the first rays of dawn colour the eastern sky with its rouge, then Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is still fast asleep in her room. Before she rises all her dedicated hand maids have already completed their bathing, dressing and decorating their own bodies. By adorning themselves with the remnants of Rādhā's flower garlands and other items of clothing, etc., their beauty is increased many fold. They have given up all desires entirely and are eager for only one thing, the personal service of the Divine Couple. Their names have been given to them for their qualities which are derived from and therefore equal the qualities of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Therefore Rūpa Mañjarī's beauty (*rūpa*) is equal to that of Rādhā, etc. Either that, or all the mañjarīs' beauty and sweetness is derived from and subordinate to that of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī.²⁶⁸

The following passage is found in the *Vṛndāvana-mahimāmṛta*:

I take shelter of the dear handmaids of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī who are decorated with her used ornaments and clothing, flower garlands, etc., and with great eagerness serve the Divine Couple while they enjoy their amorous diversions in the Vṛndāvana forest by giving them garlands, various cosmetics and perfumes of saffron, aguru, musk, etc., clothes and condiments and well as playing instruments and singing with great talent and sweetness.²⁶⁹

Some gopī girls are making sandalwood paste mixed with saffron, others are stringing garlands; others are adeptly arranging various types of jewelry while others are preparing different eatables for their enjoyment.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁸snātānulipta-vapuṣaḥ pupuṣuḥ svabhās tan-
nirmālya-mālya-vasanābharaṇena dāsyah |

prāsyā svakāmam anuvṛtti-ratās tayor yāḥ
śrī-rūpa-mañjarī-samāna-guṇābhidhānāḥ || KBhA 3.1

²⁶⁹preṣṭha-dvandva-prasādābharaṇa-vara-paṭa-srag-navābhīra-bālā
mālālaṅkāra-kastūry-aguru-ghuṣṛṇa-sad-gandha-tāmbūla-vastraiḥ |
vādyaiḥ saṅgīta-nṛtyair anupama-kalayā lālayantiḥ sa-tṛṣṇā
rādhā-kṛṣṇāv akhaṇḍa-svarasa-vilasitau kuñja-vīthyām upaimi ||
VMA 2.40

²⁷⁰tāmbūlottama-vīṭikādi-karaṇe kāścīn niviṣṭā navāḥ
kāścīn nartana-gīta-vādyā-sukalā sāmāgri-sampādikāḥ |
snānābhyaṅga-vidhau ca kāścāna ratāḥ saṁvījanādye sadā
kāścīn saṁnidhi-sevanāti-muditāḥ kāścīn samastekṣikāḥ || 42 |

Manjari svarupa nirupana

Some young milk-maids are preparing pān with great absorption, others are gathering instruments and other paraphernalia for displaying in dramatic and musical performances; others are collecting the necessary ingredients for massage and bath, others are carrying yak-tail fans to cool the Divine Pair with soft breezes and some of the sakhīs are there supervising all aspects of the service.²⁷¹

Some other gopīs are absorbed in simply watching the beautiful Divine Couple's activities and have completely forgotten their personal duties; some such gopīs are chastised by the sakhīs and once again return to their own service with attention. Some others directly participate in laughing and joking with the Supreme Lover and his Beloved.²⁷²

In his commentary on the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, Śrīla Viṣṇudāsa Gosvāmin has quoted the following thirteen verses from the *Kṛṣṇa-keli-mañjarī* (an otherwise unknown work) that describe the service of the mañjarīs to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī:

At that time Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's friends brought pitchers of water scented with camphor and slowly, rapturously, washed her lotus face. Then drying it with a soft, delicate cloth they made quick preparation for her bath. Taking her into the courtyard to the jewelled platform under the shade of a large bakula tree, they rubbed her limbs with scented oils, the colour of red sindūra and then removed the oil with other fragrant unguents. Others enthusiastically brought jewelled jugs of scented water to the platform and placed them there for her bath. Absorbed in glorifying her beauty and pastimes, they never became fatigued although their bodies were worn by repeatedly walking back and forth and carrying heavy jugs of water.²⁷³

²⁷¹kāścīt sva-priya-yugma-ceṣṭita-dṛśaḥ stabdhā sva-kṛtye sthitāḥ
kṣiptvānyāli-pravartitā dayitayoḥ kāścīt sukhelā-parāḥ |
itthaṁ vihvala-vihvalāḥ praṇayataḥ śrī-rādhikā-kṛṣṇayor
dāsīr adbhuta-rūpa-kānti-vayasa vṛndāvane'nvīyatām || 43 ||

²⁷²kāścīc candana-gharṣiṇīḥ sa-ghuṣṛṇaṁ kāścīt srajo granthatīḥ
kāścīt keli-inkiṅja-maṇḍana-parāḥ kāścīd vahantīr jalam |
kāścīd divya-dukūla-kuṅcana-parāḥ saṁgrhṇatīḥ kāścānā-
lankāraṁ navam anna-pāna-vidhiṣu vyagrās ciraṁ kāścāna || 41 |

²⁷³karpūrādi-suvāsitaīḥ suvimalair bhṛṅgāra-nīrais tadā
śrī-rādhā-vadanāmbujāṁ laghu laghu prakṣālayitvā mudā |
cīnenātha darārdra-paṭṭa-vasanenāmṛjya tasyās tataḥ
snānāyāsu parasparaṁ saha-carī-vargaḥ sayatno'bhavat ||

tad-dvārāgre bakula-ṅgāpi-kroḍa-māṅikya-vedyām

Manjari svarupa nirupana

After being bathed with that water, Rādhārāṇī rose from the platform and sat nearby on a golden throne, her golden body appearing like Mount Meru and her scattered hair like a row of black clouds decorating its peaks. Rati Mañjarī quickly removed her wet bathing garments and dressed her in a fresh clean sari made of silk. Then Rūpa Mañjarī flailed her wet hair with a cloth removing the excess water and then in great ecstasy combed the glistening long, slightly kinky locks with a jewelled comb. Other mañjarīs came forth with cosmetics of saffron, camphor, musk and other perfumes mixed in sandalwood and smeared them over her body, in some places drawing colourful designs with the paste.²⁷⁴

When Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are fatigued after many and various dalliances, the mañjarīs also have an important opportunity for service:

Then Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī, seeing her worshipable mistress Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī exhausted from the enmaddened rapturous pastimes with her Lord, engaged her followers in different types of service suitable for the time and mood. She herself wiped their faces of perspiration with a fine, soft cloth; her hands became moist due to the manifestation of many ecstatic symptoms as a result of directly touching the Divine Couple; thus being slowed, she nevertheless completed her service of rearranging their clothing.²⁷⁵

saṁprāpayya drutam atha sakhī-vṛndam etāṁ krameṇa |
sindūrābhar vara-parimalodgāribhir divya-tailais
tasyā udvartanam akuruta premato'bhyaṅga-pūrvam ||

kāścit sadvāsītāmbhobhṛta-maṇi-kalasa-vrātam autsukya-bhājo
nītvā nītvāmbu-gehāj jhaṭīti parisare vedikāyāḥ samantāt |
rādhā-narmāmṛtenocchalita-madatayā'nyonya-vispardhamānā
yātāyātena khinnā api na vidur amūḥ kleśa-leśam mudāḍhyāḥ |
²⁷⁴sā tair nirupama-nīrair ālībhiḥ snāpitā balac-cikurā |
puraṭāsanam aṅṅu reje merāv iva snāpitā saghanā ||
klinna-vastram apasārya satvaram divya-dhauta-nava-paṭṭa-śāṭikām |
saṁghaṭṭayya rati-mañjarī rahaḥ paryadhāpayad iyam nijeśvarīm ||
ratna-kaṅkatikayā rādhikā-keśa-pās-mati-bhaṅguram mudā |
śuśka-cīna-vasanena śoṣitam sā samaskuruta rūpa-mañjarī ||
karpūra-kuṅkuma-kuraṅga-mada-pradhānaiḥ
śrī-khaṇḍa-panka-nikaraiḥ parilipyā gātram |
patrāvalīm vyaracayan vṛṣabhānujāyāḥ
sakhyo yathārham akhilāvayaveṣu tasyāḥ |
²⁷⁵vihārāntaram ca ābhis tad-ubhayayoḥ sevā yathā tatraiva:
athāvalokā pramadāturau bhṛṣam nijeśvarau keliṣu rūpa-mañjarī |
tayos tadātvocita-sevanāya sā niyojayāmāsa nijānugāḥ sakhīḥ ||

Mañjarī svarupa nirupana

Rati Mañjarī extracted camphored pān from a jewelled container and with a trembling hand placed it in their lotus mouths. All their crowns and ornaments had been displaced due to their erotic dalliances; Guṇa Mañjarī came forth with new strings of pearls as well as flowers and peacock feathers and quickly rearranged everything to make them as tidy as before. Then at the indication of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī, Śrī Rati Mañjarī undid Rādhā's braids and Kṛṣṇa's hair-knot and with great expertise did them up again, intertwined with fresh flowers. Then on Śrī Rūpa's word, *Prema* Mañjarī rearranged the disarrayed flower-bed with new fresh blossoms.²⁷⁶

There is a Bengali song in the same spirit by Rādhā Mohan Ṭhākur in which he describes the service of the mañjarīs in the following way:

When the Supreme Lover and his beloved are exhausted after their erotic pastimes, then the sakhīs come forward to serve them with overflowing love. Some give them refreshing pān, others smear cooling musk and camphor on their bodies. Their devotion is like oft-smelted gold in its purity, they serve them with their lives offered a million times.²⁷⁷

tataḥ svayaṁ cādra-sucī-nava-vāsasā
mudā mukhāmbhoja-yugaṁ vimṛjya sā |
tayor vicitrāṁ tanu-maṇḍana-kriyāṁ
svedāmbubhiḥ klinna-krākaroc chanaiḥ |
²⁷⁶karpūra-miśram ahi-valli-dalādi-klptaṁ
tāmbūlam āśu-maṇi-sampūtataḥ praṇiya |
vaktrāmbujāntar anayo rati-mañjarī ca
cañcat-karāṅguli-yugena śanair anaiṣit ||
smarāhava-vighaṭṭitaṁ śikhara-hāra-kāñcy-ādikam
punar grathitum utsukā vividha-ratna-muktāphalaiḥ |
prasūna-dala-korakair api tayoh śikhaṇḍādibhir
javena guṇa-mañjarī tad akhilaṁ suramyam vyadhāt ||
śrī-rūpa-mañjary anuśāsanān mudā
vidagdha-rityā rasa-mañjarī drutam |
tayor vimucyātha punaḥ sva-śilpatas
cakāra puṣpaiḥ kaca-jūṭa-bandhanam ||
srastaṁ vividha-vihārais talpādyam prema-mañjarī kusumaiḥ
akuruta punar aticitraṁ rasa-mañjaryā nideśena |
²⁷⁷rati-raṇe śrama-yuta-nāgarī-nāgara, mukha bhari tāmbūla jogāy |
malayaja kuṅkuma, mṛgamada karpūra, militahi gāta lāgāy ||
aparūpa priya sakhī prem |
nija prāṇa koṭī, dei niramāñchaī, nahi tula lākha bāṇa hem |

Manjari svarupa nirupana

An example of a prayer by Dīna Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Bābājī demonstrating a desire to be engaged in such service is given here from the *Prārthanāmṛta-taraṅginī*:

After the two of you have finished making love and are quietly seated in self-contained happiness, then I will serve you along with the other sakhīs. Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī will glance at me indicating I should rearrange your clothing and ornaments; I will bring saffron, musk, sandal, camphor, pān, collyrium, sindūra and so many other things for your pleasure. I will cool you with refreshing breezes from my yak-tail fan. O Rūpa Mañjarī, O Mañjulālī, be merciful and please give me engagement in such service. Make me one of the servants of the hand-maids of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, this is the only prayer of the lowly Kṛṣṇa Dāsa.²⁷⁸

From the same collection of Bengali devotional songs, the following song by Vaiṣṇava Dāsa makes a similar prayer:

O daughter of King Vṛṣabhānu! Rādhe! When will your dear handmaiden Śrī Guṇa Mañjarī take me into her fold? Then, after you two are exhausted from dancing in the circle dance and are sitting together on a raised platform to rest, dizzy and perspiring, then by her mercy, getting her hinting glance, I, along with Rati Mañjarī, will come and fan you with yak-tail whisks. I will wash and dry your faces and feet and Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī will give me pān to place in your mouths. By my service your fatigue will soon be removed and you will feel comfortable and relaxed. Vaiṣṇava Dāsa prays that this desire be fulfilled, for what could be worse than its non-fulfilment?²⁷⁹

²⁷⁸ rati keli kari dūhu baiṭhabi raṅge |
sevana kariba āmi sakhīgaṇa saṅge ||
vīgalita beśa donhāra karite bhūṣaṅ |
śrī-rūpa-mañjarī more karibe iḅṣaṅ ||
keśara, kasturī, cūyā, candan, karpūr |
tāmbūla-vīṭikā, mālā, kājar, sindūr ||
donhāra sammukhe āni e sab dharibo |
vyajan dhariyā kabe bātās karibo ||
śrī rūpa mañjarī mañjulālī hema gaurī |
ei sevā tumi more deha kṛpā kari ||
tomār dāsīr mājhe dāsī kara more |
dīna kṛṣṇa-dāsa ei abhilāṣ kare |

²⁷⁹ hā hā vṛṣabhānu-sute |
tomāra kiṅkarī, śrī-guṇa-mañjarī, more labe nije yūthe ||
nṛtya avasāne, tomarā du'jane, basibe vedīra pare |

Ecstatic Responses

In the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, the eight ecstatic responses known as *sāttvika-bhāvas* are defined as follows:

When one's consciousness is overcome by one of the five dominant moods of love or one of the seven secondary dominant moods, then the condition of one's mind is called *sattva*, "being." The expression of such an emotionally over-whelmed consciousness is called *sāttvika*.²⁸⁰

The *sattva* of the *mañjarīs* comes when their minds are attacked with a mood of appreciation for the spirit of the Holy Couple's activities and emotions; those uncontrolled expressions of their emotionally overwhelmed consciousness are called *sāttvikas*.

There are traditionally only eight *sāttvikas* described in the Sanskrit literature analysing the dramatic arts. These are (1) becoming stunned, (2) perspiring, (3) horripilation, (4) choking of the voice, (5) trembling, (6) discoloration, (7) tears and (8) fainting.

An example of the *mañjarīs* experiencing all eight of these ecstatic responses is given in the *Vṛndāvana-mahimāmṛta*:

May these hand maids who constantly worship Rādhā by their service manifest eternally in my heart. The bees of their minds are always buzzing with intoxication about the honey of the lotus feet of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and due to their intense love for the Holy Couple their eyes are always filled with tears and their bodies are covered with goose flesh. Sometimes they even faint or become stunned due to their feelings of ecstatic affection for them, but because of this they are regretful because a disturbance is created in their

ghāme ṭala-mala, se aṅga atula, rāsa-parīśrama-bhare ||
muñi tānr kṛpā, iṅgita pāiyā, śrī rati mañjarī sāthe |
doṅhāra śrī aṅge, bātāsa kariba, cāmara laṅyā hāte ||
keha duijana, vadana-caraṇa, pākhāli mujhābe sukhe |
śrī rūpa mañjarī, tāmbūla vīṭikā, deyaba doṅhāra mukhe ||
śrama dūre yābe, aṅga sukhī habe, alase bharibe gā |
vaiṣṇava dāsera, ei āśā pūribe, kariba ki manda bā |
²⁸⁰kṛṣṇa-sambandhibhiḥ sāksāt kiñcid vā vyvadhānataḥ |
bhāvaiś cittam ihākṛāntam sattvam ity ucyate budhaiḥ || BRS 2.3.1.

Manjari svarupa nirupana

service.²⁸¹

It is well known that although these ecstatic reactions to internal feelings are often considered to be proofs of high spiritual attainment and signs of the uncontrollable joy brought by devotional service, devotees do not seek out these pleasurable experiences; indeed they become very angry if the ecstasy of serving the Lord directly should interfere in any way with that service. The devotee desires only those things that are pleasurable to the Lord and has no independent desire for his own personal pleasure.²⁸²

Another example from the *Vṛndāvana-mahimāmṛta*:

May those handmaidens of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī manifest always in my heart. Due to their intense, spontaneous and sweet love for the Divine Couple their bodily hairs are constantly standing erect, at every moment they are diving into an ever-increasing ocean of ecstasy; they laugh in the joy of self-forgetfulness.²⁸³

In the *Kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāmṛta* the following description of the mañjarīs' *sāttvika-bhāvas* is given:

The playful couple is now absorbed in the reversal of roles in their erotic pastimes. Rādhārāṇī who is like a flash of golden lightning has taken to attacking the cloud-like Kṛṣṇa due to the egotism created in her by Cupid. Seeing such affairs, the mañjarīs who are watching through the windows of the forest cottage began raining tears of ecstasy and washed the window sills with those tears.²⁸⁴

²⁸¹ rādhā-kṛṣṇa-padāravinda-makarandāsvāda-mādyan-mano-bhṛṅgāḥ santatam udgatāśru-pulakās tat-prema-tivraughataḥ | atyānanda-bharāt kadāpy atilaye śocantya ātmeśayoḥ sevāyā vihateḥ sphurantu mama tāḥ śrī-rādhikārādhikāḥ || VMA 6.81.

²⁸² Cf. Caitanya-caritāmṛta 1.4.201.

²⁸³ sahaja-madhura-rādhā-kṛṣṇa-tivṛānurāga-prasara-muhur-udañcac-cāru-romāñca-puñjāḥ | pratipada-parivṛddhānanda-sindhāv agādhe pratimuhur atimattotphullitāṅgaḥ hasantyaḥ || VMA 6.85.

²⁸⁴ vidyud ghanācikramiṣām yadopari smārād dadhānā vavale'vālepataḥ | tadā tu jālāni sakhīdṛśaḥ balāj

Manjari svarupa nirupana

In the *Stavamālā*, Rūpa Gosvāmin himself gives the following example:

O Kṛṣṇa, when you place your own chewed betel nut in Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's mouth, and then, Rādhe, you become angry and say, "What, am I supposed to eat something you've contaminated?" and throw it in a waste container, I can understand that your purpose is to give me your remnants, your prasāda. As I chew the leftover betel nut and think of your mercy, my whole body will shiver in excitement; when will such a day come?²⁸⁵

The two prayers following are found in the *Stavāvalī* by Raghunātha Dāsa:

When will that time come when Cupid's two best dancers, Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, will be drenched in their own perspiration and are beautified by the hair standing erect on their bodies after becoming fatigued in the circle dance and this insignificant soul will use a yak-tail whisk to fan them with artistic hand movements while her body is being soaked by the incessant rainfall of tears from her eyes?²⁸⁶

I meditate on the slightly smiling Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa as they fight on Cupid's battlefield. As I meditate on them, my body is drenched from head to foot in perspiration and tears; my body is discoloured and the hairs are standing on end and in this way I am experiencing all the eight ecstatic bodily states.²⁸⁷

jālāvalīm harṣa-jalaiḥ plutām vyadhuḥ || KBhA 20.45.

²⁸⁵āsyē devyāḥ katham api mudā nyastam āsyāt tvayeśa

kṣiptam parṇe praṇaya-janitād devi vāmyāt tvayāgre |

ākūta-jñās tad atinibhṛtam carvitam kharvitāṅgas

tāmbūliyam rasayati janaḥ phulla-romā kadāyam || Utkalikāvallārī 62.

²⁸⁶ayam jīvo raṅgair nayana-yugala-syandi-salila-

pradhautāṅgo raṅgo ghaṭita-paṭu-romāi-ṇaṇaḥ |

kadā rāse lāsyaiḥ prema-jala-pariklinna-pulaka-

śriyau rādhā-kṛṣṇau mada-sunaṭau vijayati bhoḥ ||

Prārthanāmṛta-stotra 1.

²⁸⁷premodrekair nayana-nipataḍ-vāridhāro dharanyām

vaivarṇyālī-savalita-vapuḥ prauḍha-kampaḥ kadāham |

svedāmbhobhiḥ snapita-pulaka-śreṇi-mūlaḥ smitāktau

rādhā-kṛṣṇau madana-samara-sphāra-dakṣau smarāmi || ibid., 2.

Manjari svarupa nirupana

The following passage is found in the Kavi Karṇapūra's *Ānanda-vṛndāvana-campū*:

Another mañjarī was fanning the Lord with the end of her sari while the bangles on her arm jingled musically; then, due to her ecstatic trembling, the cloth slipped from her hand. Not noticing this due to her absorption in them, she continued to fan them with her empty hand.²⁸⁸

Some Bengali songs are also appropriate in this connection. In the *Prārthanāmṛta-taraṅginī* there is the following description of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's midday repast on the banks of Rādhā Kuṇḍa:

O moon-faced Rādhā, when will the day come when I go into the jewelled cottage by Rādhā Kuṇḍa and set a place for Kṛṣṇa to sit down, setting a glass of water there for him. Then he will come and take his seat and I will carefully feed him with a trembling hand all the different fruits and vegetables as well as ghee-soaked rice. As I am serving fruits, the jewel decorating my nose will be gently lolling, seeing which Kṛṣṇa will become absorbed.

Madhumaṅgala will then laugh and say, “What affliction has overtaken you, friend, at this most important time of meal-taking? You are trembling spasmodically while eating fried cakes and thus your eating has been interrupted. I think you should put all these cakes with the cream centres on my plate, then your discomfort will be immediately assuaged.”

Rādhē! When you hear Madhumaṅgala's joking words you will laugh aloud in pleasure along with the other sakhīs. When I see your laughing face, I will get the greatest pleasure and the hairs on my body will stand on end.²⁸⁹

tumi saṅge saḥacari |

²⁸⁸svīyottariya-śakalena salilam anyā
pāṇy-ambujena kala-kaṅkaṇa-jhaṅkṛtena |
prāṇeśvaraṁ praṇayataḥ parivījayantī
sraste'pi tatra kara-dhūnanam eva cakre || AVC 19.78.

²⁸⁹hā hā vidhumukhi kabe, se-din ki mora habe,
ratana mandira mājhe giyā |
citrāsana bichāiba, jala jhāri dhari diba,
nāgara basibe tāte yāñā ||

Manjari svarupa nirupana

bhojana karābe tāre, kata bhāti thare thare,
phala mūla padvānnādi kari ||
phala dite prema-bhare, nāsāte keśara dole,
tā dekhi nāgara habe bhor |
tāre dekhi baṭu hāsi, kahibe bohjane basi,
e ki roga haila sakhā tor ||
khāiyā baṭakāvalī, kāmpitecha thara-thari,
āra tumi nā kara bhojan |
amṛta guṭikāvalī, mora patre deha pheli,
roga bhāla hañbe ekhan ||
se madhumāṅgala vāñī, śuniyā sumukhī tumi,
saghane hāsibe sakhī saṅge |
tava mukhe hāsi dekhi, hañba parama sukhī,
pūlakita habe mora aṅge ||

The Transient Feelings

The *vyabhicārins* are concomitant or secondary emotions which especially aid the dominant moods of love and are expressed by mental, verbal, and physical transformations. Because they give motion or life to the dominant mood, they are also called *sañcāri-bhāvas*.²⁹⁰

These *vyabhicāri-bhāvas* are compared to waves that swell and merge in the ocean of the *sthāyi-bhāva* or dominant mood. Upon merging, they lose their individuality and again become one with the ocean and when swelling up they serve to increase the ocean.²⁹¹

There are thirty-three of these transient emotions. They are as follows: (1) despondency, (2) depression, (3) humility, (4) languor, (5) exhaustion, (6) intoxication, (7) pride, (8) doubt, (9) agitation, (10) anxiety, (11) madness, (12) forgetfulness, (13) disease, (14) bewilderment, (15) death, (16) laziness, (17) torpidity, (18) shyness, (19) concealment, (20) remembrance, (21) speculation, (22) certainty, (23) worry, (24) patience, (25) exultation, (26) enthusiasm, (27) nastiness, (28) anger, (29) envy, (30) restlessness, (31) sleep, (32) dreaming, (33) wakefulness.

In the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, it is stated that all of these thirty-three transient emotions are manifested in *madhura-rasa* with the exception of laziness (*ālasya*) and nastiness (*ugratā*).²⁹²

Some examples of the *mañjarīs'* expressions of these secondary emotions are given here:

²⁹⁰athocyante trayastriṅśad-bhāvā ye vyabhicāriṇaḥ |
viśeṣeṇābhīmukhyena caranti sthāyinaṃ prati ||
vāg-aṅga-sattva-sūcyā jñeyās te vyabhicāriṇaḥ |
sañcārayanti bhāvasya gatiṃ sañcāriṇo'pi || BRS 2.4.1-2
²⁹¹unmajjanti nimajjanti sthāyiny amṛta-vāridhau |
ūrmivad vardhayanty enaṃ yānti tad-rūpatām ca te || BRS 2.4.3
²⁹²UN 13.1

7.1 Eagerness (*autsukya*)

From Raghunātha Dāsa's *Vilāpa-kusumāñjali*:

O goddess! I am the insignificant servant of your lotus feet, but my weak vine-like body is being burned in the forest fire of your separation. Please revive me by giving one momentary glance, the elixir of life.²⁹³

One day, when Kṛṣṇa has committed some great offence and you are angry and won't speak to them, he will come to you and fall at your feet and try to appease you with so many sweet words. When will my eyes be gladdened to see you in such a position?²⁹⁴

When will Rādhā bathe me in her service? Will it be on the day that Kṛṣṇa blows his flute revealing his whereabouts and she rushes quickly there, her eyes full of laughter and her entire body blossoming in rapturous pleasure, then shyly scratching her ears?²⁹⁵

O Rādhe! When will you give ecstasy to my eyes? Will I ever see you in Cupid's dearest grove in the forest in the assembly of cowherd girls, defeating Kṛṣṇa with your clever arguments in a battle of words?²⁹⁶

7.2 Intoxication due to good fortune (*saubhāgya-mada*):

O beautifully-thighed Rādhā! Your ears are like ropes that Cupid has placed for use in capturing the maddened elephant known as Kṛṣṇa. When will the day come when I joyfully decorate those ears with earrings.²⁹⁷

²⁹³devi te caraṇa-padma-dāsikām viprayoga-bhara-dāra-pāvakaiḥ |
dahyamānatara-kāya-vallarīm jīvaya kṣaṇa-nirikṣaṇāmṛtaiḥ || VKA 10

²⁹⁴kvacana ca dara-doṣād daivataḥ kṛṣṇa-jātāt
sapadi vihitamānā mauninī tatra tena |

prakaṭita-paṭu-cātu-prārthyamāna-prasādā
kṣaṇam api mama rādhe netram ānandaya tvam ||
Stavāvalī, Rādhikāyāḥ Prema-pūrābhidha-stotram, 8

²⁹⁵prakaṭita-nija-vāsam snigdha-veṇu-prasādair
druta-gati-harim ārāt prāpya kuñje smitākṣī |
śravaṇa-kuhara-kuṇḍam tanvatī namra-vaktrā
snapayati nija-dāsyē rādhikā mām kadā nu || Stavāvalī, Rādhikāṣṭaka, 7

²⁹⁶smara-dayita-nikuñja-prāṅgaṇe vyāvahāsyām
vraja-nava-yuva-rājam vakrimāḍambareṇa |

sadasi paribhavanti saṁstutālikulena
kṣaṇam api mama rādhe netram ānandaya tvam || ibid., 7

²⁹⁷goṣṭhendra-putra-mada-citta-karīndra-rāja-

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O Rādhike! Will I ever have the good fortune to anoint your feet with the red lac that later will decorate Kṛṣṇa's forehead when he comes and bows down to you to get your forgiveness when you are angry with him.²⁹⁸

7.3 Pride (*garva*)

From *Vilāpa-kusumāñjali*:

O sweet-faced Rādhike! When will I see Kṛṣṇa leave Candrāvalī's kuñja (although she has decorated it so nicely just for him) after catching your bodily fragrance in the breeze and like a bee maddened after your honey smile, come buzzing around the shores of Rādhā Kuṇḍa. Seeing this, I will be so proud of you!²⁹⁹

7.4 Concealment (*avahitthā*)

From Rūpa Gosvāmin's *Utkalikā-vallārī*:

O Mukunda, slayer of the Agha demon! When will I come to you while you are in Candrāvalī's kuñja and lie to you that Vṛndāvana has been attacked by a fierce monster in the shape of a bull and that you should quickly come to save the frightened residents? Then, after taking you out of her clutches with these words I will take you to Śrīmatī

bandhāya puṣpa-dhanuṣaḥ kila baddha-rajjvoḥ |
kiṁ karṇayos tava varoru varāvataṁsa-
yugmena bhūṣaṇam ahaṁ sukhitā kariṣye || VKA 27
²⁹⁸ yasyāñka-rañjita-śirās tava māna-bhaṅge
goṣṭhendra-sūnur adhikāṁ suṣamām upaiti |
lākṣā-rasaṁ sa ca kadā padayor adhaste
nyasto mayāpy atitarāṁ chavim āpsyatiḥa || VKA 43
²⁹⁹ tava tanu-vara-gandhāsaṅgi-vātena candrā-
vali-kara-kṛta-malli-keli-talpāc chalena |
madhura-mukhi mukundaṁ kuṇḍatīre milantaṁ
madhupam iva kadāhaṁ vikṣya darpaṁ kariṣye || VKA 74

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Rādhārāṇī's side.³⁰⁰

From Viśvanātha Cakravartin's *Sankalpa-kalpa-druma*:

O mistress Rādhike! In the morning when you and the other sakhīs are rushing toward Yāvaṭa down a concealed path, I will secretly follow Kṛṣṇa and watch him as he tries to appease the crushed Candrāvalī (who spent the entire night waiting for him to come and keep his date). Then I will very proudly relate what I have seen to all the other gopīs when we have gathered together.³⁰¹

7.5 Certainty (*mati*)

From Rūpa Gosvāmin's *Utkalikā-vallarī*:

O Rādhe! One day when pouting over some offence of Kṛṣṇa's you will tell him, “You rascal, go away, I don't want to see you here again. I'll have you know I am very angry with you. Girls! If Kṛṣṇa, that friend of Subala's comes here in some sneaky disguise, be sure to prevent him from entering.” Then when he does come, I will say to him, feigning anger, “Previously you disguised yourself as a woman to deceive the demons and deprive them of the nectar, but there are no demons here; not only that but your mother is calling you. You may disguise yourself as a woman, but Rādhā is surrounded by very clever girlfriends who have been able to recognize you so I don't think you'll be able to get in today. My dear king, please return to your home and contemplate the offences you have committed to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.”³⁰²

³⁰⁰ aghahara balīvardaḥ preyān navas tava yo vraje
vṛṣābhavapuṣā daityenāsau balād abhiyujyate |
iti kila mṛṣā gīrbhīs candrāvalī-nīlaya-sthitam
vana-bhuvī kadā neṣyāmi tvām mukunda mad-īśvarīm || UV 60

³⁰¹ tvām sālim ātma-sadanam nibhṛtam vrajantīm
tyaktvā harer anupatham tad alakṣitetya |
tām khaṇḍitām anumayantam avekṣya candrām
tad-vṛttam āli-tati-saṁsadi varṇayāni || SKD 24

³⁰² sātho'yam nāvekṣyaḥ punar iha mayā māna-dhanayā
viśantam strī-veśam subala-suhṛdam vārāya girā |
idam te sākūtam vacanam avadhāryocchalita-dhīs
chalātopair gopa-pravaram avarotsyāmi kim aham || UV 59

7.6 Jubilation (*harṣa*)

From the *Govinda-līlāmṛta*:

During the midday at Rādhā Kuṇḍa, when Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa first meet and are displaying ever increasing cleverness in their first flirtations, as though the goddess of their bodily beauty was giving a beautiful dancing performance, then watching that performance, the audience of sakhīs and mañjarīs become so pleased that they give the jewels of their hearts and bodies as gifts to the performers.³⁰³

The purport is that upon seeing Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's display of ecstatic symptoms at meeting, the sakhīs and mañjarīs themselves became similarly overwhelmed by *sāttvika-bhāvas*. Out of ecstatic appreciation they gave themselves in surrender to the Divine Couple.

In the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*:

One day, Lavaṅga Mañjarī was sent by Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī to bring Kṛṣṇa, which she did by expertly extracting him from a group of friends where he was engaged in conversation. Upon returning to Rādhā she said, “My dear mistress, I have brought Kṛṣṇa to a nearby place, having taking him out of the assembly of cowherd boys and made him accept the garland of the jewels of your qualities. He will be here before you in a moment. Now order me, is there anything else this servant girl of yours can do?”³⁰⁴

³⁰³tayor dvayor aṅga-lakṣmī raṅga-sthalyām sunartanam |
pravṛttam āsīt tad dṛṣṭvā mudam āpuḥ sabhāsadaḥ ||
kramāt te nartakyau prakatita-kalā-kausāla-bharair
mithas tṛpte dṛpte nija-paraparām tan-nipuṇatām |
vitanvāne bādham nanṛtatur aho yena muditā
drutam sabhyās tābhyām tanu-hṛdaya-ratnāny api daduḥ || GLA 9.8-9

³⁰⁴sahacara-parisattaḥ kṣipram ārād vikṛstas
tava guṇa-maṇi-mālām īsvari grāhitaś ca |
madhuripur ayam akṣṇoḥ prāpitaś cābhikakṣām
bhaṅa punar api seyam kinkarī kim karotu || UN 7.67

The Relishing of Erotic Sacred Rapture

The combination of all the ingredients described above, when nourished in the heart of a devotee who identifies as a mistress of Kṛṣṇa, transforms the emotion of erotic love into *madhura-rasa*, erotic sacred rapture.³⁰⁵ That experience has two phases, namely *sambhoga* (union) and *vipralambha* (separation).³⁰⁶ Examples of these are given in the final chapter of this book called, “The practice that leads to becoming a handmaiden of Rādhā.” At present, however, in view of the similarity of *mañjarī-bhāva* to servitude or *dāsyā-rasa*, we will follow the descriptions of *ayoga-rasa* and *yoga-rasa*, rapture in separation and union, which are found in the section on love in the mood of a subordinate in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*.³⁰⁷

8.1. Rapture in separation

Lack of direct association with the Lord (or in this case, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī) is called *ayoga* or separation. In this condition the servant offers his mind to the Lord and remembers his qualities and thinks of how to attain his association. There are thus two types of separation, one eager (*utkañṭhita*), which is the situation that precedes meeting the object of love, the other disjunction (*viyoga*), which comes when the servant is separated from the Lord after having enjoyed the happiness of service.³⁰⁸

8.11 The eager stage of separation

The eager stage is defined as the deep desire to see the object of love for the first time.³⁰⁹ It

³⁰⁵ātmocitair vibhāvādyaiḥ puṣṭim nītā satām hṛdi |
madhurākhyā bhaved bhakti-raso'sau madhurā ratiḥ || BRS 3.5.1

³⁰⁶sa vipralambhaḥ sambhoga iti dvidhojjvalo mataḥ | UN 15.1

³⁰⁷ayoga-yogāv etasya prabhedau kathitāv ubhau | BRS 3.2.93

³⁰⁸saṅgābhāvo harer dhīrair ayoga iti kathyate |

ayoge tan-manaskatvaṁ tad-guṇādy-anusandhayaḥ ||

tat prāptya-apāya-cintādyāḥ sarveṣāṁ kathitāḥ kriyāḥ |

utkañṭhitam viyogaś cety ayoge'pi dvidhocyate || BRS 3.2.94-5

³⁰⁹adṛṣṭa-pūrvasya harer didṛkṣotkañṭhitam matam | BRS 3.2.96

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has been described in the “Song of Mādhava” (*Śaṅgīta-mādhava*) by Prabodhānanda.

A certain young gopī maiden praises the land of Vṛndāvana in her eagerness to see Rādhā and Mādhava’s love-god inspired dalliances, the only source of eternal, intoxicated joy.³¹⁰

In the *Utkalikā-vallarī*, Rūpa Gosvāmin writes:

O Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa! O goddess Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī! I have given up everything and have come here alone to Vṛndāvana, out of intense eagerness to get your mercy. Crying constantly, I will reveal to you the fire of bitter pain that is burning inside my heart.³¹¹

O Vṛndāvana forest! Who is there in this universe who has not attained the greatest pleasure from serving you? Everyone who renders you service has all his personal desires fulfilled. Therefore, I prostrate myself before you and quietly pray that you kindly instruct me how I can attain the direct sight of your reigning god and goddess, Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā.³¹²

O Vṛndā Devī, oh virtuous nymph of the forest! Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, whose feet have so long been the object of every desire that I carry within me are your lord and lady; therefore, I am asking your permission before approaching them. Turn your eyes, moist with mercy, in my direction; be merciful to me.³¹³

³¹⁰nityonmadānanda-rasaika-kandaṁ kandarpa-lilādbhuta-keli-vṛndam |

śrī-rādhikā-mādhavayor didṛkṣus tuṣṭāva vṛndāvanam eva kācit || SM 1.7

³¹¹prapadya vṛndāvana-madhyam ekaḥ krośann asāv utkalikākulātṁ |
udghāṭayāmi jvalataḥ kaṭhorām bāspasya mudrām ḥṛdi mudritasya ||1||

³¹²aye vṛndāraṇya tvaritam iha te sevana-parāḥ
parām āpuḥ ke vā na kila paramānanda-padaṁ |
ato nīcair yāce svayam adhipayor īkṣaṇa-vidher
vareṇyām me cetasy upadiśa diśam hā kṛṣṇa kṛpām || UV 2

³¹³ḥṛdi cira-vasad-āśa-maṇḍalālamba-pāḍau
guṇavati tava nāthau nāthitum jantur eṣaḥ |
sapadi bhavad-anujñām yācate devi vṛnde
mayi kira karuṇārdrām dṛṣṭim atra prasīda || UV 4

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O Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa! O Queen of Vṛndāvana, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī! Holding my finger to my mouth, I, a forlorn wretch, am crying loudly again and again: O Lord! O Lady! Be pleased upon me, be pleased upon me! Appear before me! Let me see your form as a fresh black raincloud embraced by a bolt of lightning.³¹⁴

8.12 Vīyoga (disjunction)

In the *Rāga-vartma-candrikā*, Viśvanātha Cakravartin writes: “When a devotee who has practiced devotional service all his life and is intensely eager to see the Lord and to directly serve him leaves his gross body, the Lord and his associates come to him at least once and grant him a personal vision and the opportunity for service, even though he may not have attained the higher degrees of love such as sneha, etc., which come after the attainment of *prema*. This is what happened to Nārada Muni in the Bhāgavata.³¹⁵ It is at the time of giving such a vision that the Lord bestows the eternal spiritual body in the form of a gopī upon the practicing aspirant.”³¹⁶

Viśvanātha elaborates on this further in the *Mādhurya-kādambinī*, writing that the Lord then disappears, even after having inundated the devotee with waves of great ecstasy by giving him a direct vision of himself and his eternal intimate associates.³¹⁷

The Lord is very clever in the matter of increasing the feelings that his devotees have for him. Being the greatest relisher of sacred rapture, he acts in the above way just to cause the devotee’s anxiety for service to grow. This is because the greater the devotee’s ardour to serve, the greater his appreciation of the Lord and the greater his happiness in service.

The separation from the Lord which comes after having once attained his direct association is called *vīyoga*.³¹⁸

From the *Stavamālā*,

³¹⁴pradeśinīm mukha-kuhare viniṅṣpan
jano muhur vana-bhuvi phutkaroty asau |
prasīdataṁ kṣaṇam adhipau prasīdataṁ
dṛṣoḥ puraḥ sphuratu tadid-ghana-cchaviḥ || UV 31

³¹⁵Cf. BhP 1.6

³¹⁶sādhaka-deha-bhaṅga-samaye eva tasmai premavate bhaktāya cira-samaya-vidhṛta-sākṣāt-sevābhilāṣa-
mahot-kaṅthāya bhagavatā kṛpayaiḥ sa-parikarasya svasya darśanaṁ tad-abhilaṣaṇīya-sevādikāṁ cālabdha-
snehādi-prema-bhedāyāpi sakṛd diyate eva yathā nārādāyaiva | cid-ānanda-mayī gopikā-tanuś ca diyate |
Rāga-vartma-candrikā, 7th ray

³¹⁷tat-tad-ānanda-mahā-moha-taraṅgiṇyām taṁ nimagnikṛtya svayaṁ parikareṇāntardhiyate | 8th shower.

³¹⁸BRS 3.2.114

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O Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa! O Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī! You are resting by the banks of the Yamunā beneath a vine of mālatī flowers, exhausted after wandering through the forest and enjoying its sights. When will I come and, undoing the braids of my hair, use it to sweep the dust from your lotus feet?³¹⁹

From Raghunātha Dāsa's *Stavāvalī*,

O sweet faced Rādhā, this forest cottage known as Cupid's house of joy is beautifully adorned by vines of mālatī flowers. Will I be able to come and serve you by fanning you while you lie on your flower couch with your Lord and enjoy joking conversation with him, your cheeks covered with goose bumps? When will such a day be mine?³²⁰

O Śrī Rādhā Kuṇḍa! In the course of their romantic affairs, my beloved Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is always sporting on your banks with her lover Kṛṣṇa; you are dearer to Rādhā than anything else, therefore please show her to me for she is more to me than my life.³²¹

O Rādhē! When will you bestow ecstasy on my eyes, if only for a moment? While Mādhava lies on the bed of mallī flowers in the forest groves, I wish to see you adorning his black, cloud-like chest, like a combination of a golden vine of yūthī flowers and a frozen-yet-flickering bolt of lightning.³²²

³¹⁹kalinda-tanayā-taṭī-vana-vihārataḥ śrāntayoḥ
sphuran-madhura-mādhurī-sadana-sīmni viśrāmyatoḥ |
vimucya racayiṣyate sva-kaca-vṛndam atrāmunā
janena yuvayoḥ kadā pada-saroja-san-mārjanam || UV 47

³²⁰api sumukhi kadāham mālatī-keli-talpe
madhura-madhura-goṣṭhīm vibhratīm vallabhena |
manasija-sukhade'smin mandire smera-gaṇḍām
sapulaka-tanur eṣā tvām kadā bijayāmi || VKA 81

³²¹he śrī-sarovara sadā tvayi sā mad-īśā
preṣṭhena sārddham iha khelati kāma-raṅgaiḥ |
tvām cet priyāt priyam atīva taylor itīmām
hā darśayādya kṛpayā mama jivitaṁ tām || VKA 98.

³²²mudira-rucira-vaḥṣasy unnate mādhasya
sthira-cara-vara-vidyud-vallivan-malli-talpe |

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There is a Bengali song by Vaiṣṇava Dāsa which is also appropriate in this connection:

O Lord, moon of Gokula! O, Kṛṣṇa, giver of the greatest happiness! O son of the Queen of Vraja! O Rādhārāṇī, moon-faced beauty! Gāndharvā! Friend of Lalitā! Please be merciful and give me a sweet vision of you.

Your lotus feet are the be-all and end-all of my existence; only if you let me see them just once shall I be able to remain alive. Just look without your vision, I am dying. Please bestow your merciful glance upon me!

Please be kind—reveal yourselves to me in that form which stuns even the most beautiful Cupid, under the shade of the desire trees of Vṛndāvana, surrounded by all the sakhīs and mañjarīs. Show me this sweet scene just once, for only then is there a possibility that I shall go on living.

O friend of Śrīdāman! Let me have a vision of you! O dearest friend of Viśākhā! When will you have pity on me and show me your lotus feet? When will you show me yourselves in the company of your eternal affectionate associates? You are the oceans of compassion, when will you fulfill my desires? This is the only wish present in my mind. I am calling out at the top of my voice with straw held in my mouth: please have mercy on this forlorn Vaiṣṇava Dāsa.³²³

An analysis of the above song is given here according to the different constituents of *rasa*

lalita-kanaka-yūthī-mālikāvaca ca bhāntī
kṣaṇam api mama rādhe netram ānandaya tvam ||
Stavāvalī, Śrī-rādhikāyāḥ Prema-pūrābhidha-stotram, 3
³²³hā nātha, gokula-candra, hā kṛṣṇa paramānanda,
hā hā vrajeśvarīr nandan
hā rādhikā candra-mukhī, gāndharvā lalitā-sakhi,
kṛpā kari deha daraśan ||
tomā donhār śrī-caraṇ, āmāra sarvasva dhan, tāhāra darśanāmṛta pān |
karāyā jīvana rākha, maritechi ei dekha, karuṇā kaṭākṣa kara dān ||
donhe sahacarī saṅge, madana-mohana bhaṅge,
śrī-kuṇḍe kalapa-taru chāy |
āmāre karuṇā kari, dekhāibe se mādhurī, tabe haya jīvana upāy ||
hā hā śrī-dāmera sakhā, kṛpā kari dāo dekhā,
hā hā viśākhāra prāṇa-sakhi |
tomāra karuṇā-rāśi, teṇi citte abhilāṣi, kṛpā kari pūra mora āś |
daśanete tṛṇa dhari, ḍāki nāma ucca kari, dīna-hina vaiṣṇavera dās |

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or sacred rapture.

(1) The dominant mood or *sthāyi-bhāva* here is *bhāvollāsā-rati* or the desire for service to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in the spirit of the mañjarīs.

(2) The *vibhāvas* or causes of rapture are as follows:

(a) The object (*viṣaya*) of love is the Divine Couple, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

(b) The receptacles (*āśraya*) of love are the mañjarīs and other friends of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

(c) The inspirators (*uddīpanas*) are the shores of Rādhā Kuṇḍa, the cool shade of the desire trees, etc.

(3) The expressions of love or *anubhāvas* are crying aloud, shouting, etc. Some lines also imply indifference to the world's opinions, sighing, etc.

(4) The ecstatic symptoms (*sāttvikas*). From the nature of the poem we may infer the presence of tears, perspiration and trembling.

(5) The secondary emotions (*vyabhicārins*) here are despondency due to non-attainment of the goal, humility due to unhappiness, grief and eagerness, etc.

8.2 Union (*yoga*)

According to the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, the rapture of union, the meeting of the Lord and his servants, is divided into three categories known as attainment (*siddhi*), satisfaction (*tuṣṭi*) and security (*sthiti*). *Siddhi* refers to the attainment of the Lord after the utkaṅṭhā stage, i.e., the first meeting with the Lord directly. Satisfaction (*tuṣṭi*) refers to reunion with the Lord after temporary disjunction (*viyoga*). Security (*sthiti*) refers to constant abiding in the Lord's personal association.³²⁴

8.21 The first encounter with the object of love (*siddhi*)

The following example of *siddhi* is given from the book *Saṅgīta-mādhava* by

³²⁴BRS 3.2.129, 130, 133, 136

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Prabodhānanda:

One anxiety-ridden young cowherd maiden, who desired nothing but the direct vision and service of the Holy Couple, fell down at the feet of her own guru-sakhī and then at the feet of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's other dearest associates and cried out, "O dear friends! I can no longer hold my peace. Please tell me where that pair of lovers can be seen enjoying their pastimes!" Seeing the depths of this new maiden's emotion, the sakhīs' hearts melted with affection and they replied to her.³²⁵

Then these sakhīs showed that young maiden the moon-faced, sweetly smiling Lord and his beloved, the eternal springhead of the flow of their own pleasure. Her eyes darted excitedly in all directions like a cakorī bird. As they showed her the forms of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, they sang:³²⁶

"O sakhī, just see the son of the King of Gokula as he stands embraced by Rādhā, his beauty mocking that of Cupid. Just look, sakhī, at Rādhā's enchanting beauty her braids entwined with a delicate garland of sweet-scented mallikā flowers; her bosom covered by a handsome bodice and a resplendent jewelled necklace. She is absorbed in her amorous affairs with Kṛṣṇa by which she fills the universe with waves of unlimited delight. O inexperienced girl! See the fresh youth of Vṛndāvana trembling as he is beaten by the waves of nectar arising from contact with Rādhā's body. She herself is dizzy from the lusty desires welling up inside her and her eyes are reddened as if she were intoxicated; her every limb is enlivened with happiness and covered with erect hairs."³²⁷

As the young gopī looked at Śyāmasundara, the chief of youthful cowherds, she began to

³²⁵atha sā vraja-bhīrur agrataḥ parama-prema-rasāvaśākṛtiḥ |
samudikṣya niješvarīm sakhīm pada-mūle nyapatat prahaṛṣataḥ ||
vadantu vaḥ prāṇadhanam kiśora-dvandvam
mudā krīḍati kutra mohanam |
ittham samutkaṇṭhitayā tayokte

tāḥ sneha-pūrnāḥ kathayām babhūva || Saṅgīta-mādhava, 2.1-2

³²⁶atha nija-rasa-dhārā-kanda-govinda-rādhā-
madhura-madhura-hāsa-prasphurad-vaktra-candram |
diśi diśi paricetuṁ sañcarad-dṛk-cakorīm

kalita-puru-tṛṣantīm darśayantyo jagus tāḥ || ibid. 3.29

³²⁷sakhī he! gokula-rāja-kumāram |
rādhikayā saha kalaya manoja-rasādhikayā sukumāram | dhruvam |
nava-parimala-mallī-dāma-dhammilla-bhārām |
kuca-kalasa-virājat-kañculī-tāra-hārām |
diśi diśi rasa-dhārām ākirantīm apārām
madhuratara-vihārām paśya rādhām udārām ||
bāle vilokaya kiśoram anaṅga-lilā-
kheḷāyamāna-mada-śoṇa-vilocanābjam |
sarvāṅgam ullasitam utpulkanā dadhānam
rādhāṅga-saṅga-rasa-raṅga-taraṅga-lolam || ibid. 3.30-31

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ask herself, “What am I seeing? Could it be the moon-god? No, no, were it so, would he be wandering here on the ground of Vraja? Then is it a dark, black tamāla tree? No, no, a tamāla tree does not walk or talk enchantingly. Could it then be a fresh new cloud? Is it possible? the cloud emits torrents of rain. Then perhaps it is the full, autumn moon.”³²⁸

Looking at Rādhārāṇī, she thought, “Is this the life force of Cupid himself? Perhaps she is the life and soul of Śrī Madhusūdana; she could be the embodiment of the seed of all loveliness in the universe, or the personification of the goddess of all emotional ecstasy. Then again, perhaps she is the wealth of conjugal love herself who has become incarnate and is wandering in the forest of Vṛndāvana.”³²⁹

It seemed to her that the jewel of her very being had divided in two and taken separate forms outside of her body. Gazing at the Divine Youthful Couple, the new mañjarī became immersed in an ocean of *prema*.³³⁰

After a few moments, when she had regained her composure somewhat and with her eyes filled with tears of ecstasy, she began to worship Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī’s lotus feet with the following prayer: “O Rādhē! You are dearer to Kṛṣṇa than his own life. I adore you because you are the unequalled ocean of rapture. You eternally enjoy your pastimes in the secret groves of the Vṛndāvana forest. Please make me a servant at your lotus feet. Teach me the songs that you yourself have composed, the deep feelings behind them, along with the meaningful artistic gestures which accompany them, so that I can sing them for your and Śyāmasundara’s pleasure.”³³¹

³²⁸ aye ko'yaṁ candraḥ sa katham iha vā śyāmalataras
tamālo'yaṁ nāsau vadati lalitāṁ vā na calati |
navāmbhodaḥ kasmād bhavatu rasadaḥ śārada niśā-
patir vā mugdhābhūn madhupatim udīkṣya vraja-vadhūḥ || ibid. 3.33

³²⁹ anaṅgasya prāṇaḥ kim u hṛdayam etan madhupater
mahā-lāvanyaṅām api parama-bījaṁ vijayate |
rasa-śrīr vā sāksān madhura-madhura-prema-vibhave-
ty atarkyāṁ śrī-rādhāṁ kamala-nayanāṁ tarkayati sā || ibid. 3.34

³³⁰ dvidhā-bhūtam iva prāṇa-sāra-ratnaṁ bahiḥ sthitam |
kiśora-mithunaṁ dṛṣṭvā sā magnā prema-sāgare || ibid. 3.35

³³¹ mahā-pṛiti-rasānanda-galad-bāṣpa-vilocanā |
girā gadgadayā prāha vandyamānā nijeśvarīm || ibid. 3.36
śikṣaya mām anupama-nija-kalpita-saṅgitaka-bahu-bhaṅgīm |
harim upagāyaya yathā bhavatīm aham ikṣe ghana-pulakāṅgīm ||
vande bhavatīm atula-rasa-rāṣīm vṛndāraṅya-nikuṅja-vilāsini

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Because this new mañjarī has been able to approach Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī through the mercy and direct order of her guru and Rādhā's other intimate sakhīs, there is no fault in her apparently independent prayer for service.

The mañjarī's prayers in *Saṅgīta-Mādhava* continue:

“O Rādhe! When the young prince of Vṛndāvana takes you tightly to his chest again and again with trembling arms and his radiance makes your beauty even more glorious, then just glance upon me mercifully and make my life successful by giving me some chance to render service.”³³²

On seeing the intensity of the emotion of the new mañjarī, Rādhārāṇī, who by nature is affectionate to her devotees, felt her own eyes fill with tears as her natural affections built. With her lithe and supple body Rādhā embraced the new mañjarī, at which she became overwhelmed with joy. She then turned to Rādhā's supreme object of affection, Govinda, and prayed to him with the following words: “O Mādhava! O personification of supreme bliss! O prince of Vṛndāvana! Your teeth are as beautiful as the white kunda flower's petals. Your slightly smiling face is like a joyful blooming lotus blossom that stupefies the entire world. You are the original source of all happiness! Please drench me in the nectar of service to your most dear Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's lotus feet.”³³³

“All glories, all glories to you Śyāmasundara! May you be ever victorious. You defeat billions and billions of Cupids with your slightest sweet, flirtatious gesture. You are more coolingly radiant than the full autumn moon! O smiling one, bless me with service to your most dear Rādhārāṇī's lotus feet. You are the amorous plaything of Rādhā, the ocean of rasa. Your body is overwhelmed by Cupid's distractions. You are the embodiment of supreme bliss. Please make me one of the handmaids of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, who is dearer

kuru mām nija-pada-dāsīm || dhruvam || ibid. 3.37

³³²atirasa-mada-vṛndāraṇya-candreṇa śaśvat
pulakita-bhuja-daṇḍenāṅkam āropyamāṇe |
ayi nava-sukumāra-sphāra-lāvaṇya-mūrte
rasamayi mayi rādhe snigdha-dṛṣṭīm vidhehi || ibid. 3.38

³³³atha sahaja-vivṛddha-sneha-bāspākulākṣyā
lalita-lalita-mūrtyā rādhayālingitāṅgī |
nija-ramaṇa-padābjaṁ vandayantī tayaiiva
praṇaya-kala-padaṁ sā prāha govinda-candram || ibid. 3.39

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to you than life itself.”³³⁴

After this the new mañjarī enters the perpetual pastime, the *nitya-līlā*:

Hearing these heartfelt words of the new mañjarī, Govinda looked at her with his smiling lotus eyes, thus bathing her in the rainfall of his full affection. After that, by the mercy of the Holy Couple, she became increasingly expert in all kinds of intimate service, so much so that they always kept her nearby. She was then able to take full shelter of them in service and witness pastimes to which even the most confidential friends and relatives of the Lord are not privy.³³⁵

8.22 Meeting after temporary separation (*tuṣṭi*)

The following description of *tuṣṭi* is found in the *Govinda-līlāmṛta*; it takes place at the time of the Divine Couple’s midday sports at Rādhā Kuṇḍa:

Just as Rādhā was expressing the intensity of her desire for union with Kṛṣṇa, Tulasī Mañjarī appeared in the assembly of gopīs carrying Kṛṣṇa’s guñja garland and the campaka flower buds he had given her to bring for Rādhārāṇī. Giving these gifts to Lalitā, she told her everything that Kṛṣṇa had been doing. Then Lalitā took the presents given by Kṛṣṇa that were indications that he would soon be meeting with Rādhā; they were so alluring on account of his bodily fragrance with which they were permeated. Lalitā placed the campaka buds behind Rādhā’s ears and the string of guñja beads on her breast. The mere touch of those items felt to Rādhā like direct contact with Kṛṣṇa’s body; she thrilled and the hairs on her skin stood erect as she shivered in ecstasy. She immediately got up to rush to meet Kṛṣṇa, but managed to compose herself after a moment [on realizing that he was not physically present there].³³⁶

³³⁴vṛndāraṇya-purandara-sundara-kunda-kali-nija-vṛnda |
manda-hasita-bhuvanaika-manohara-vadana-vikasad-aravinda
mādhava rasamaya paramānanda |
nija-dayitā-pada-dāsyā-rase mām abhiśecaya sukha-kanda || dhruvam ||
mahārasaikāmbudhi rādhikāyāḥ krīḍā-kuraṅga smara-vihvalāṅga |
ānanda-mūrteḥ nija-vallabhāyāḥ padāravinde kuru kiṅkarīm mām || 3.40

³³⁵atha śrī-govinde vikasad-aravindekṣaṇa-lasat-
krpā-dṛṣṭyā pūrṇa-praṇaya-rasa-vṛṣṭyā snapayati |
sthitā nityam pārśve vividha-paricaryaika-caturā
na keśāncid dṛṣyam rasika-mithunaṁ sā śritavatī || ibid. 3.42

³³⁶athāgatya sā tulasī sabhām tām guñjāvalīm gandha-phalī-yugaṁ ca |

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In the *Kṛṣṇa-bhāvānāmṛta*, a similar verse is found in the description of Kṛṣṇa's cowherding activities:

Then Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī came with the cāmpa flower garland the Lord had given her for Rādhā and placed it over her heart. How amazing the effects of lifeless objects! As soon as she felt the touch of that garland, Rādhā, who had become practically lifeless, was rejuvenated.³³⁷

In the same book, the following passage is found in the description of Rādhā's evening activities:

In the evening time also, when Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī was burning up with the fever born of separation from the Lord, all the efforts of the sakhīs to reduce her temperature met with failure. The soft lotus stems on which she was lying, the camphor, fragrant uśira roots and sandalwood paste dried and cracked within a moment of being placed on her body. Just when Lalitā was becoming frustrated as to what was to be done, one mañjarī arrived from Nāndīśvara. Lalitā told her to pour a few drops of news about Kṛṣṇa in her ear, which she knew were like the elixir of life and will quickly revive her.³³⁸

The doe-eyed Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī regained consciousness as soon as the description of Kṛṣṇa entered her ears. She rose and said, "Friend! While sleeping I dreamt that a great cloudburst of ambrosia had drenched my ears; these ears which were like a sun-baked, lifeless desert have suddenly become fertile. What can I say? This desert is now giving me pleasure and is a source of coolness instead of dry, parching heat."³³⁹

nivedayantī lalitā-karābje vṛttam samastam muditā śāśamse ||
śravasor avatamsaka-dvayīm hṛdi guñjāsrajam apy amum śubhām |
hari-saṅga-samṛddha-saurabhām priya-sakhyā lalitā mudā dadhe ||
tat-sparśataḥ phulla-saroja-netrā kṛṣṇāṅga-saṁsparśam ivānubhūya |
kampākulā kaṅṭakitāṅga-yaṣṭhir utkāpi gantum sthagitā tadāsīt || 8.9-11
³³⁷ vṛttam ākhyad akhilaṁ sametya sā rādhikām atha tayā vara-srajaḥ |
śleṣeṇāpta-ramaṇāṅga-saurabhaiḥ svīya-jīvitam akāri jīvitam || KBA 8.26
³³⁸ tad-viśleṣa-jvara-śama-lave'py akṣamā yarhy abhuvan
gāndharvāyā visa-kisalayośira-candrāmbujādyāḥ |
kāpy āgatya vyadhita lalitādeśatas tarhi tasyās
tadāvṛttāntāmṛta-rasa-pṛṣat-secanam karna-randhre || KBA 17.7
³³⁹ samjñām labdhvā hariṇa-nayanā sambhramād utthitoce
taptāśrāntam śravaṇa-maru-bhūr āli dhanyā mamābhūt |
asyām svapne'nvabhavam adhunāpūrva-piyūṣa-vṛṣṭim
dhinvanty eṣā tad iha sakhi mām sītālī bobhavīti || ibid. 17.8

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Lalitā smiled gently and answered, “Sweet-faced Rādhā, that was no dream. Tulasī Mañjarī just came from the palace of Vraja’s Queen with news about your lover and whispered it into your ears. That is how you have regained consciousness.” When Rādhā heard these words of Lalitā’s she turned toward Tulasī and said, “My dearest friend, repeat everything you said and pacify my agitated mind.” Upon receiving this order from her mistress, Tulasī Mañjarī began to recite the events and activities of the Lord that had taken place in the evening at Nandagrāma.³⁴⁰

It is thus demonstrated that Kṛṣṇa’s name, his qualities as well as his pastimes are all spiritually full of bliss and are entirely non-different from his very self, as is stated in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.³⁴¹

8.23 Constant association (*sthiti*)

In the scriptures written by the Gosvāmins, two types of constant association are described, one is known as “static” pastimes (*mantramayī-lilā*) which are based on scriptural descriptions, and the other as spontaneous pastimes (*svārasikī-lilā*), which arise out of the personal preferences of the devotee. The following explanation is found in the *Śrī-Kṛṣṇa-sandarbhā*: “Spontaneous pastimes are like the flow of the Ganges, as there are many different pastimes that flow into one another continuously. The static pastimes are compared to a lake created by the Ganges in which one particular pastime is concentrated upon. This is generally meditated upon at the time of mantra worship, hence the name *mantramayī*.”³⁴²

The famous perfected soul of Govardhana, Siddha Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Bābājī, made the following comment on these two types of meditation on the lilās: “*Mantramayī* worship has been compared to a lake and *svārasikī* worship to a flowing river. A lake is part of a river and not the reverse. Therefore one should know that the static form of the pastime is subordinate to the spontaneous form, even though both are eternal.”³⁴³

A verse summarizing the *svārasikī* form of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes is given at the beginning of the *Govinda-lilāmṛta* in the form of an abbreviated review of the Lord’s entire day of activities:

³⁴⁰āyāteyaṁ sumukhi tulasī-mañjarī goṣṭha-rājñyā
gehāt sakhyus tava yad avadad vṛttam asmād ajāgaḥ |
ity uktāyā vada punar api tv ambujākṣy ādideśa
preyaḥ-sāyantana-guṇa-kathāṁ prāha madhye-sabhaṁ sā || KBA 17.9

³⁴¹kṛṣṇa-nāma kṛṣṇa-guṇa kṛṣṇa-lilā-vṛnda |
kṛṣṇera svarūpa sama sab cidānanda || CC 2.17.135

³⁴²tatra nānā-lilā-pravāha-rūpatayā svārasikī gaṅgeva | ekaika-lilātmatayā mantropāsānā-mayī tu labdha-tat-sambhava-hrada-śreṇir iva jñeyā | KṛṣṇaS., para. 153.

³⁴³*Sādhana-dīpikā-pariśiṣṭam*

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*kuñjād goṣṭhaṁ niśānte praviśati kurute dohanānnāśanādyām
prātaḥ sāyam ca līlām viharati sakhībhiḥ saṅgave cārayan gāḥ
madhyāhne cātha naktam vilasati vipine rādhayāddhāparāhne
goṣṭhaṁ yāti pradoṣe ramayati suhṛdo yaḥ sa kṛṣṇo'vatān naḥ*

At the end of the night, the Lord returns home from the forest; in the morning, he milks the cows and takes his meal. In the forenoon, he takes the cows to pasture and at noon meets with Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī at Rādhā Kuṇḍa. In the afternoon, he returns to Nandagrāma with the cows and cowherd boys, enjoying different pastimes with them through the evening. In the later evening he takes a meal and then goes off to meet with Rādhā in the forest. May Lord Kṛṣṇa, whose daily activities are such, be kind and deliver us all.³⁴⁴

8.231 Mantramayī līlā

The *mantramayī-līlā* referred to is generally known as the Yogapīṭha where the Lord and his beloved accompanied by all the sakhīs and mañjarīs are gathered in one place to receive service and give benedictions. One of the most famous examples of this is the following verse of Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāja found in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*:

*divya-vṛndāranya-kalpa-drumādhaḥ
śrīmad-ratnāgāra-simhāsana-sthau
śrīmad-rādhā-śrīla-govinda-devau
preṣṭhālibhiḥ sevyamānau smarāmi*

“I meditate on Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa and Śrīla Govinda Deva, who are seated on a beautiful throne in a jewelled palace under the shade of the desire trees of Vṛndāvana, surrounded by many dear friends and handmaids who eagerly serve them.”³⁴⁵

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmin has written a complete meditation describing in greater detail the positions of the eight chief girlfriends of Rādhā in the Yogapīṭha. Although the first verse of this meditation is found in the *Stavamālā*, the remainder are only to be discovered as a quotation in Rādhā Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Gosvāmin's commentary on the *Daśaślokī*.³⁴⁶

*koṇenākṣṇoḥ pṛthu-ruciḥ mitho hāriṇā lihyamānāv
ekaikena pracura-pulakenopaguḍhau bhujena*

³⁴⁴ GLA 1.4

³⁴⁵ CC 1.1.16

³⁴⁶ The *Daśaślokī* is the ten verses also known as *Smarāṇa-maṅgala* describing Kṛṣṇa's perpetual activities in the eternal Vraja. These verses form the basis for Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja's *Govinda-līlāmṛta*. Rādhākṛṣṇadāsa Gosvāmin, however, attributes the verses to the pen of Rūpa Gosvāmin in his commentary. It is said by some that GLA 23.94 is Kṛṣṇadāsa's own avowal that these are Rūpa's verses (Cf. Sushil Kumar De, *Early History of the Vaishnava Faith and Movement in Bengal*, p. 54).

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*gaurī-śyāmau vasana-yugalaṁ śyāma-gauram vasānau
rādhā-kṛṣṇau smara-vilasitoddāma-tṛṣṇau smarāmi*

I meditate on the forms of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa as their bewitching eyes drink in each other's beauty with sidelong glances of deep affection; they have their trembling arms wrapped about one another in embrace; their black and gold bodies are dressed in gold and black respectively and they are aglow with the unrestrained desire for erotic pastimes.

*bhṛṅgān suhṛd-vadana-gandha-bhareṇa lolān
līlāmbujena mṛdulena nivārantyā
udvīkṣyamāṇa-mukha-candramasau rasaugha-
vistāriṇā lalitayā nayanāñcalena*

Śrīmatī Lalitā Devī stands before them looking at their moon-like faces with glances that increase their ecstatic pleasure, all the while chasing away, with a lotus flower held in her hand, the greedy bees that have been attracted by the sweet fragrance and appearance of their faces.

*cāmarabha-nava-mañju-mañjarī-
bhrājamāna-karayā viśākhayā
citrayā ca kila dakṣa-vāmayor
vijyamāna-vapuṣau vilāsataḥ*

Viśākhā and Citrā Devī stand to the left and right respectively of the Divine Couple, making a cooling breeze with the soft vines that serve them as whisks.

*nāga-valli-dala-baddha-vīṭikā-
sampūṭa-sphurita-pāṇi-padmayā
campakādi-latayā sa-kampayā
dṛṣṭa-prṣṭa-tata-rūpa-sampadau*

Campakalatā stands gazing at the beauty of their backs; her trembling lotus hand contains a golden box filled with condiments of betel nut and pān.

*ramyendu-lekhā-kala-gīta-miśritair
vamśi-vilāsaānu-guṇair guṇa-jñayā
vīṇā-nināda-prasaraiḥ purasthayā
prārabdha-raṅgau kila tuṅgavidyayā*

Indulekhā and Tuṅgavidyā sit in the forefront. Indulekhā is playing the flute with great talent and the greatly gifted Tuṅgavidyā is strumming the vīṇā and singing in dulcet tones. They thus increase the pleasure of the

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Divine Couple.

*taraṅgad-aṅgyā kila raṅga-devyā
savye sudevyā ca śanair asavye
ślakṣṇābhimarśana-vimrjyamāna-
svedāśru-dhārau sicayāñcalena*

The trembling Raṅgadevī is to the immediate left of Rādhā and Sudevī to Kṛṣṇa's right. They carefully wipe the tears and perspiration from the faces of their lord and lady with the corners of their fine soft saris.³⁴⁷

The following songs also contain similar descriptions of the Yogapīṭha. One by Narottama Dāsa is as follows:

What an enjoyable place, this Vṛndāvana, the abode of celestial touchstone! There is a delightful jewelled temple surrounded by the Yamunā River, which is filled with playing swans and golden lotus flowers. In one such large golden lotus is a podium surrounded by eight large petals in which stand the chief girlfriends of Rādhā. In the very centre is a jewel-bedecked throne upon which the beautiful Rādhārāṇī is seated in the company of the blackish and enchanting Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Their forms are like a mountain of loveliness from which nectar is tumbling like waterfalls. They laugh and exchange joking conversation. Narottama Dāsa says that the eternal pastimes of the Lord are full of happiness, may they always be manifest in his mind.³⁴⁸

Another song by Svarūpa Dāsa goes as follows:

All glories to the transcendental tract of land known as Vṛndāvana, which, because it is the scene of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, is auspicious for all persons everywhere. There, at the place of the eternal circle dance, the eight chief girlfriends of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī have their specific appointed places encircling a jewelled podium that is marked with the design (*maṇḍala*)

³⁴⁷ taraṅgad-aṅgyā kila raṅga-devyā savye sudevyā ca śanair asavye |
ślakṣṇābhimarśana-vimrjyamāna-svedāśrudhārau sicayāñcalena ||

³⁴⁸ Vṛndāvana ramya-sthān, divyā-cintāmaṇi-dhām,
ratana-mandira manohar
āvṛta kālindī-nīre, rāja-haṁsa keli kare, tāhe śobhe kanaka kamal ||
tāra madhye hema pīṭh, aṣṭa-dalete veṣṭita, aṣṭa-sakhī pradhānā nāyikā |
tāra madhye ratnāsane, basiyāchen dui-jane,
śyāma-saṅge sundarī rādhikā |
o rūpa lāvaṅya-rāśī, amiya paḍiche khasi, hāsya parihāsa sambhāṣaṇe |
narottama-dāsa kay, nitya-lilā sukha-may, sadāi sphuruk mora mane ||
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appropriate to the *Kāma-gāyatrī mantra*; upon this is placed their throne. There, increasing the glory of the flowered throne are Rādhā and Madana-mohana, who are extravagantly dressed as though prepared to dance on stage; in every direction stand the other friends and hand-maids, all of them eagerly awaiting some order or indication for service. Some of these sakhīs fan them with yak-tails while gazing at their lovely faces and, hearing their sweet conversation, think that their eyes and ears have found fulfilment. Some of them string garlands of mālātī flowers that they place on the Divine Couple's necks and others serve in various other ways. Svarūpa Dāsa prays: When will the devoted hand-maids of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī give me a place amongst them as their single-minded maidservant?³⁴⁹

8.232 Svārasikī līlā

The following song contains a description of the circle dance, perhaps the supreme example of the ever-changing, perpetual activities of the Lord:

Extending their arms, they embraced one another tightly; they held each other's hands; their hair hung loose in the heat of ecstasy, they danced silently their thighs sometimes touching. Kṛṣṇa removed their bodices and touched their breasts, leaving the traces of his nail marks. Exchanging laughter, joking words, and darting glances, they joyfully gave their bodies to one another. All these manifestations of pure and transcendental love should be carefully taken into the hearts of those thoughtful persons who have dedicated their lives to understanding sacred rapture and be relished fully by them. Take these pastimes that are like beautiful jewels and make them the decoration around your neck; keeping them there, always glorify

³⁴⁹jaya śrī-vraja-maṇḍala, nikhila-jana-maṅgal,
kṛṣṇa-līlā-rasera ādhār |
yāhān nitya-rāsa-sthān, aṣṭa-dike aṣṭa-dale,
pradhānāṣṭa-sakhī śrī rādhār ||
madhye maṇi-pīṭhopare, yantrita-ravi-śāśadhare
manasija-bija-ratnāsane |
tathī puṣpāsana-mājhe, śobhana naṭana-sāje
virāje rādhā-madana-mohan ||
sahacarī dui pāse, rahe iṅgitera āše
keha donhe cāmara dhulāy |
heri duhuṅ labāṇi, duhuṅ sambhāṣaṇa śuni
sakhī āṅkhi śravaṇa juṛāy ||
gānthiyā mālātī māle, keha dei duhuṅ gale
sevana karata bahu raṅge |
dāsa svarūpe kabe, dāsī kari rākhibe,
sevā-parā sakhī-gaṇa saṅge |

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them in saṁkīrtana. When you give up the illusory dream of this temporary world, only then will you be able to attain this great wealth.³⁵⁰

During the course of the circle dance, the mañjarīs serve the Divine Couple as follows:

When the Supreme Lord and his beloved lie exhausted after having intimately enjoyed each another, the mañjarīs come with refreshments of betel nuts. They offer cooling unguents made with camphor, musk and sandalwood, delicately smearing their limbs with the fragrant pastes. Just see the wonderful love of these handmaids: they serve the Holy Pair as though giving their lives a million times over. Their love is as pure as gold smelted hundreds of thousands of times. They place garlands around the necklace of the Holy Couple and fan them, giving a refreshing breeze; they give cool and scented water to slake their thirst; they remove their fatigue by gently massaging their feet. Then, at the indication of Rādhā, they leave so the two can take rest. Watching the Holy Couple as they slumber on a bed of flower petals, they themselves feel unexcelled happiness. Rādhā Mohan Dāsa prays, “When will I directly see all these pastimes and forget the fear of material life?”³⁵¹

Similarly, the following song by Jñāna Dāsa contains a meditation on the Divine Couple resting in the morning after their night of love:

In the morning, the young couple lies fast asleep on a couch of flowers, embracing heart to heart. Their lips are pressed to one another's, they are bound up in each other's arms; their feet and thighs point in the same direction. They appear just like a blue sapphire in a golden ring or a black

³⁵⁰ bāhu prasāraṇa, dṛḍha āliṅgana, karākari ālabhan |
alakā lālana, nīraba skhalana, uru-yuga saṁsparśan ||
colī udghāṭana, uroja sparśana, nakhāgre pātana tāy |
nānā parihāsa, kaṭākṣa vilāsa, hasita arpita-kāy ||
e-ṇava vilāsa, mahā-bhāvollāsa, rasika bhāvuka-gaṇ |
hṛdaye dhariyā, yatana kariyā, sadā kara āsvādan ||
e-ṇava-ratana, kaṇṭha-ābharāṇa, kari kara saṁkīrtan |
hārābe yakhana, saṁsāra svapana, tyagi pābe sei-dhan |
³⁵¹ rati-rase śrama-yuta, nāgarī-nāgara, mukha-bhari tāmbula yogāy |
malayaja kuṅkuma, mṛga-mada-karpūra, militahi gāta lāgāy ||
aparūpa priya sakhī prem |
nīja prāṇa koṭi dei nīramañchañ, naha tula lākhabān hem ||
manorama mālya, duhuñ gale arpañ, bījañ śīta mṛdu bāt |
sugandha suśītala, karu jala arpaṇa, yaiche hoyata duhuñ sāt ||
duhuñka caraṇa punaḥ, mṛdu saṁvāhana kari, śrama karalahi dūr |
iṅgite śayana, karala sakhī-gaṇa, sakala manoratha pūr ||
kusuma śeye duhuñ, nidrita herañ, sevana-parā-gaṇa sukh |
rādhā mohana, dāsa kiye heraba, meṭaba bhava bhaya duḥkh |

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cloud surrounded by flashes of lightning; like two moons joined together or the combination of two lotus flowers attracting both the cakora birds as well as the bees. The whole of Vṛndāvana is peaceful, the snake lies in the lap of his enemy, the peacock, without any sadness or fear; the ruddy goose has jumped into the black water of the Yamunā. Time has stopped, the dawn and the darkness of night share the sky and neither wishes to leave. The lover and his beloved both rest unmoved, neither wishes to awaken. In the night, their ankle bells and waist bells, jangled so often in argument with one another, but now they are buried in silent oneness by the arrangement of Fate. The lilies see the sun but do not fold their petals, while Jñāna Dāsa watches all these wondrous pastimes of the Divine Couple.³⁵²

8.3 The superexcellence of the mañjarīs' service spirit

Two verses appear at the conclusion of Jīva Gosvāmin's *Prīti-sandarbhā*, the last of the six volume *Bhāgavata-sandarbhā*. In these verses Jīva indicates that the ultimate object of devotional service in the spirit of Caitanya is the service of Rādhā as a handmaid.

The girlfriends of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī carefully nurture the desire tree of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Mādhava's jubilant pastimes in Vṛndāvana's fertile soil, in constant expectation of seeing its beautiful flowers and fruits; they watch it develop and grow, and when those flowers and fruits appear, they are the ones to relish them. May that tree, by its unparalleled beauty, give pleasure to us also.³⁵³

³⁵²kusuma-śeyopari kiśorī kiśor |
ghumāola duhu jana hiyā jor ||
adhare adhara dhari bhujē bhujē bandha |
uru uru caraṇe caraṇa eke chanda ||
kunda kaṇayā jaḍita nilamaṇi |
nava-meghe joḍāola yena saudāmiṇi ||
cānde cānde kamala kamale eke meli |
cakore bhramare eka ṭhāni kare keli ||
śikhi kore bhujāṅginī nāhi duḥkhja śok |
yamunāra jale kiye ḍubala kok ||
aruṇa timira eka keha nāhi bhāg |
kāma kāmīni eka ṭhāni nāhi jāg ||
kalaha kayala bahu rasanā vasanā |
bihi milāola duhu haṅla maganā ||
sūra heri kumuda mudita nāhi bhela |
jñāna dāsa kahe donhāra adabhuta kela |
³⁵³ālībhīḥ paripālitaḥ pravalitaḥ sānandam ālokitaḥ
pratyāsaṁ sumanaḥ phalodaya-vidhau sāmōdam āmoditaḥ |
vṛndāvana-bhuvī prakāśa-madhuraḥ sarvātīśāyī-śrīyā

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The elements that make up the experience of sacred rapture in the first of these two verses are given here:

- (1) The permanent emotion (*sthāyi-bhāva*) is the *tad-bhāvecchātmikā* spirit, or approval and abeyance to the love of the leading lady.
- (2) The causing factors or *vibhāvas* are (a) the objects of love, Rādhā and Mādhava, (b) the receptacles of that love, the *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs*, and (c) the inspirator, the land of *Vṛndāvana*.
- (3) The expressions of love (*anubhāvas*): the statement “nurturing the desire tree” indicates different services that inspire Rādhā and Mādhava’s love for one another, such as glorifying the love and qualities of one to the other, etc.
- (4) The ecstatic symptoms (*sāttvika-bhāvas*) are indicated by the words *sānandam* and *sāmodam*, etc., which reveal jubilation and the consequent tears of joy, trembling, horripilation, etc.
- (5) The secondary emotions (*vyābhicāri-bhāvas*) are indicated by the words “constant expectation” which shows enthusiasm. Other consequent emotions are certainty, jubilation, pride, etc.

The second of Jīva’s verses stresses that the purpose of Caitanya’s incarnation was to experience and share this particular mood of sacred rapture:

May that Lord Kṛṣṇa ever reign gloriously! He has appeared in his form as Śrī Caitanya in order to relish different moods of ecstatic love—beginning with the fulfilment of his three desires in terms of (1) understanding Rādhā’s love for him, (2) her appreciation of his sweetness, and (3) her happiness in loving him, and culminating in his relishing the spirit of service to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī as one of her handmaids and then to distribute these moods of love to the world. In this form, he is the only shelter of the most fallen souls of the Kali Yuga.³⁵⁴

In one of the introductory verses to the *Govinda-līlāmṛta*, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja makes the following statement:

The loving service of the lotus feet of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī’s lover, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, dearer to her than life himself, is incomprehensible and unattainable by Brahmā, Śiva, Ananta or even Lakṣmī Devī, what to speak of other

rādhā-mādhavayoḥ pramodayatu mām ullāsa-kalpa-drumaḥ |
³⁵⁴ tādṛśa-bhāvaṁ bhāvaṁ prathayitum yo'vatāram āyataḥ |
ādur jana-śaraṇaṁ sa jayati caitanya-vigrahaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ |

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demigods and goddesses. Only those devotees who are completely attached to the pastimes of the Lord in Vṛndāvana with excessive eagerness are eligible to enter into its mysteries.³⁵⁵

In his commentary on this verse, Rādhā Kṛṣṇa Gosvāmin (the second servant of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmin's Govindajī deity) gives evidence of the truth of the statement that this *madhura-bhakti-rasa* is unknown to even the great demigods by citing the Bhāgavata. Two statements there are considered particularly important in this regard: (1) the wives of Kāliya say that Lakṣmī performed austerities for a hundred thousand years (according to the tradition, in Bilvavana in the Vraja area) but was not able to attain the direct association or bodily touch of Śrī Kṛṣṇa³⁵⁶ and (2) Uddhava says that the great fortune of the gopīs in attaining the reward of Kṛṣṇa's lotus hand placed around their necks in the circle dance was never attained by any other woman in the universe, not even the demigoddesses or Lakṣmī herself, even though she is the wife of Nārāyaṇa.³⁵⁷ If Lakṣmī, who is worshipable by Brahmā, Śiva and the rest of the demigods is herself unable to enter into the mysteries of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's conjugal love, then what can be said of others' power to enter there?

It is furthermore stated that the dust of the gopīs' lotus feet is difficult for Brahmā and the other gods to attain. Brahmā himself admits to Bhṛgu and other sages in the *Bṛhad-vāmana-purāṇa* that he performed rigorous austerities for sixty thousand years in order to get the dust of the lotus feet of the milk-maids of Vṛndāvana but was unable to do so. Then how can other, less grandiose souls expect to attain it? The answer is given in the statement: "Only those devotees who are completely attached to the pastimes of the Lord in Vṛndāvana with excessive eagerness are eligible to enter into its mysteries." In other words, those devotees who are dedicated to hearing and chanting the qualities, names and pastimes of the gopīs and their activities with the Divine Couple and who are ardently seeking to attain this particular type of devotional love by following in their footsteps are blessed with this achievement.

³⁵⁵ śrī-rādhā-prāṇa-bandhoś caraṇa-kamalayoh keśa-seṣādy-agamyā
yā sādhyā prema-sevā vraja-carita-parair gāḍha-laulyaika-labhyā |
sā syāt prāptā yayā tām prathayitum adhunā mānasīm asya sevām
bhāvya rāgādhva-pānthair vrajam anucaritam naityikam tasya naumi ||

GLA 1.3

³⁵⁶10.16.36

³⁵⁷10.47.60

Chapter Nine

The Mañjarī's' sacred rapture in separation and union

Rapture (*rasa*) is experienced by a sympathetic audience through identification with the characters, etc., in a drama or other work of literature.

It is said in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* that love for Kṛṣṇa is eternally perfect and not, strictly speaking, attainable through any practice. It manifests, however, in the heart which has been purified through the devotional practices of hearing and chanting, etc.³⁵⁸ The first part of the verse refers to the eternally perfected associates of Kṛṣṇa, while the latter part of the verse is about the situation of the aspiring devotee. Love for Kṛṣṇa, being eternally perfect, exists in those associates of his who remain perpetually by his side in his eternal abode. There is no need for such persons to engage in any practice to attain this love.

Thus Jīva, in his comments on the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, gives the name *bhāvya-bhakta* (“ideal or future devotee”) to the eternally perfect associates of the Lord. The love of these ideal devotees for Kṛṣṇa is passionate, in Sanskrit, *rāgātmikā* devotion. Those who look to these devotees as their model and are influenced by their spirit, who imitate and follow them in body, word and mind are called by Jīva *bhāvaka-bhakta*, which means “the devotee in the process of becoming,” or the devotee on the stage of practice, the *sādhaka*. Sanātana also states that the symptoms or characteristics of the perfected devotee are the practices that should be followed by the would-be devotee.³⁵⁹ The “devotee in the process of becoming,” or one who follows these eternally perfected associates or ideal devotees, is called “one who follows in the way of passion” or *rāgānuga-bhakta*.

In the previous chapter, separation and union were described in terms of the *yoga* and *ayoga* of the sentiment of service. The author of the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* quoted Bilvamaṅgala, himself an aspirant for the sacred rapture in the erotic mood, for examples of *ayoga* separation.³⁶⁰ However, due to the strong identification that the mañjarīs, such as Rūpa and Rati Mañjarī, feel for Rādhā, they too feel *vipralambha* and *sambhoga*, the

³⁵⁸nitya-siddha kṛṣṇa-prem sādhyā kabhu nay |

śravaṇādi śuddha-citte karaye uday || CC 2.22.10

³⁵⁹siddhasya lakṣaṇaṁ yat syāt sā dhanam sādhakasya tat |

Brhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.167 (commentary)

³⁶⁰See 3.2.100, 3.2.102, 3.2.106, 3.2.131

separation and union particular to the erotic mood. The practicing devotee, through the process of “audience identification” or *sādhāraṇatā*, similarly experiences these aspects of erotic sacred rapture upon hearing or reading literature that deals with Rādhā’s loving relations with Kṛṣṇa. This emotion is independent of the *yoga* and *viyoga* which have been described above in connection with the mañjarīs’ personal desires for service.

Examples of the mañjarīs’ experience of *vipralambha* and *sambhoga* will be given, but first, an explanation of the process of identification is given for the benefit of the practitioner.

9.1 The generalization of emotions (*sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*)

The “generalization of emotions” (“empathy” or “identification”) is explained as follows in two verses in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*:

This experience of sacred rapture is extremely difficult to understand on account of its other-worldly nature. Happily, the emotions manifest through the process of generalization (*sādhāraṇatā*). Generalization of the emotions has been defined by previous scholars as the inability [in the course of watching a play or hearing a literary work, etc.] to ascertain whether the emotions being experienced are one’s own or those of another.³⁶¹

In his commentary on the above two verses, Viśvanātha Cakravartin writes that during a reading of the Rāmāyaṇa, a devotee who was listening to the story of Hanumān’s leap over the ocean became so engrossed in the mood of Hanumān that, abandoning shyness and fear, he himself gave a leap in the middle of the audience. Similarly, in a Rāmāyaṇa play, an actor who was playing the role of Rāma’s father, Daśaratha, felt his mood of distress upon Rāma’s banishment to the forest so intensely that, at the very moment that Daśaratha dies in the play, he too gave up his own life.

In each of the two examples of events described by Viśvanātha, the present-day practicing devotee became so absorbed in the emotional state of the ideal devotee that in his profound meditation he performed the same extraordinary acts as the ideal devotee.

Is this a feeling which belongs to another or is it not? Is it mine or not?
While relishing the various ingredients of sacred rapture, it is impossible to
make such distinctions.³⁶²

³⁶¹ Alaukikyā prakṛtyeyam sudurūhā rasa-sthitiḥ |
yatra sādhāraṇatayā bhāvāḥ sādhu sphuranty amī ||
e.sām sva-para-sambandha-niyamānirṇayo hi yaḥ |
sādhāraṇyam tad evoktam bhāvānām pūrva-sūribhiḥ || (2.5.101-2)

³⁶² parasya na parasyeti mameti na mameti ca |
tad-āsvāde vibhāvādeḥ paricchedo na vidyate || (SD 3.12)

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When it comes to relishing sacred rapture, the various elements which compose the experience have an inconceivable power which causes it to manifest in the same way in both the original devotee and the present-day follower. When the sympathetic present-day follower hears about the activities of the original devotee, his sense of identity is so strong that he loses the sense that the emotional experiences are being undergone by the ideal devotee and not himself. In other words, he is not able to say what is his and what is not his, what is the other's and what is not. When this happens, there is no longer any discontinuity in the experience of the various ingredients of rasa, including that of the dominant emotion.

Two verses which show how a devotee cultivates this generalization of emotions are quoted here:

Do not look outside yourself at any time
until your mind is overcome by love;
For if one has nought but love's reflection,
he will not see the divine object of love
in every thing existing.

In constant contemplation of the mood of the great,
through absorption, all of this is forgotten.
Within and without at this point become one,
and, like the great souls, then
there is the taste of sacred rapture.³⁶³

In these verses, "looking" represents all activity of the external senses. "The mood of the great" means that one continually meditates on the mood of the ideal devotees, and when one loses oneself in it, then the illusion of absence of the divine object of love in a particular thing is eradicated. For example, strictly speaking Kṛṣṇa is not present in a tamāla tree, but one who has attained this state sees the tree as Kṛṣṇa himself. If that does not happen, then "if one has nought but love's reflection" one cannot achieve the same result by forcing oneself to see Kṛṣṇa in the tree. Therefore, one should take a contemplative, internalized attitude; abandoning external sense activity, one should constantly follow great persons, i.e., Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmins, etc., in physical activities, by reading and internalizing their works and meditating on them. Until one gets to the point where by so doing one forgets the entire world, even including one's own body, one should remain careful with regards to the dangers of sensory activity.

³⁶³*bāhire nayan nā deo kakhan, bhāvākrānta citta nāhi yad-avadhi
je bhāve abhāva, haibek bhāva, nāile bhāvābhāse habe nā tad-buddhi
mahatera bhāva, bhābite bhābite, tad-āvi.ṣṭe sarva habe vismarana
antar-bāhye tabe ekākāra habe, mahad-bhāve rasa habe āsvādana*
The author does not give the source of these verses.

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One who contemplates on Kṛṣṇa's activities
in the mood of any one of the residents of Braja
will obtain a body suitable to his mood
and association with Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana.³⁶⁴

9.2 The mañjarīs' vipralambha

In this section, some verses from the works of Viśvanātha and Kṛṣṇadāsa are cited as examples of the mañjarīs' experience, through identification, of Rādhā's feelings of separation. For the benefit of the practitioner, each verse has been analyzed according to the different ingredients of rasa. The first of these selections is from the *Kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāmṛta* of Viśvanātha; it describes the early morning pastime of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

(1)

*daivāt tadotsukyabhaṭam vijitya
sā śaṅkā baliṣṭhā vraja-vartma-sīmani |
preya-bhujāśleṣa-nidhiṁ vyapanudad
balena manye sudṛṣotsa-deśataḥ ||*

*ekādhva-gāmitvam api sphuṭam tayā
tarjayanty eva yadānyaśidhyata |
tadādṛśā mākātaratā mithas tayoh
pura-sthitā prāṇa-sakhī varodayat ||*

At dawn, Rādhā and Śyāma, their arms entwined around each other, stepped outside the boundaries of their forest shelter and were about to step into the pastureland which led home. Fearing the imminent rising of the sun and the coming of Rādhā's mother-in-law, Jaṭilā, Śyāmasundara suddenly removed Rādhā's arm from his shoulder and it seemed that the joy of their togetherness had ended at the boundary of the forest and the field, where the kingdom of anxiety began. For all this time it had been as though Rādhā had obtained the great treasure of Kṛṣṇa's arm with the help of her general, eagerness. Now, as soon as they arrived at the limits of Vraja, it was as though a more powerful warrior, doubt, had defeated this general and forcefully removed the treasure that she had possessed. (*Kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāmṛta*)

³⁶⁴vraja-lokera kona bhāva laiya yei bhābe |
bhāva-yogyā deha pāiyā kṛṣṇa pāy vraje || CC 2.8.222.

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2.69-70)

When the threatening doubts disallowed them to continue together any further on their way to their homes, the pain they felt on separating made all their friends who went before them burst into tears.

Here is an analysis of the elements of sacred rapture found in these verses:

- (1) The permanent emotion (*sthāyi-bhāva*) is the spirit of *tad-bhāvecchātmikā*, or approval and abeyance to the love of the leading lady.
- (2) The immediate causal factors or *vibhāvas* are (a) the objects of love, Rādhā and Mādhava, (b) the receptacles of that love, the *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs*, and (c) the inspirators are the pained and tearful looks of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa as they are unable to take the same road together due to their fears.
- (3) The expressions of love (*anubhāvas*) are the lengthy sighs of the *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs*.
- (4) The ecstatic symptoms (*sāttvika-bhāvas*) are the *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs*' shedding of tears, the discoloration or paleness of their faces, etc.
- (5) The secondary emotions (*vyābhicāri-bhāvas*) are depression, low-spiritedness, exhaustion, worry, feverishness, etc.

To be followed by the aspirant: In these verses, the *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs*' experience of sacred rapture is indirect because at the present moment the activity described is going on in another dimension. However, those practitioners or enthusiasts who are affected by the *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs*' mood of love are able to experience this *rasa* directly through the inconceivable power of their love. Through the power of the dominant mood, about which it is so difficult to reason, the adept seems able to see even the non-manifest activities of the Lord as though they were going on before him. Once the dominant mood has been awakened in the adept, he attains a constant, realistic experience of sacred rapture through the practices of hearing and chanting, etc.

In this context, the process of sympathetic identification (*sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*) can be further described as follows: The adept or empathizing enthusiast who has been touched or emotionally affected by the *mañjarīs*' mood of love at first lacks total conviction of his own identity with them—there is an uncertainty or lack of perseverance in his identification. At one moment he thinks that he is a *mañjarī* and is present in the midst of the Divine Couple's pastimes, and at the next moment, he sees himself in his external identity as an aspiring adept who is reading about their activities in the *Kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāmṛta* or is listening to someone else read them. The aspirer to the mood of the *mañjarī* finds that his own feelings are progressively nourished by this the process of

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identification. He gradually progresses through the levels of appetite, attachment, and so on until he reaches the long-desired result of his practice, the state of emotion (*bhāva*), which is the manifestation of pure goodness or being. Here he attains the full self-satisfaction of the realization of the dominant mood of a mañjarī.

When the aspiring enthusiast or empathetic adept has attained the mañjarī's dominant mood, through identification he experiences the type of rapture known as *vipralambha*, which arises out of the separation of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, in the same way that Rūpa and Rati Mañjarī do.

Once the permanent mood has become awakened, the devotional practitioner's mind attains the nature of pure goodness which in turn simultaneously causes the destruction of its material qualities and the realization of its pure spiritual nature. As a result, there is little doubt that he becomes capable of experiencing the sacred rapture, normally beyond the sensory experience of those in this world, all through the inconceivable power of the dominant mood itself.

When one attains a oneness with or a full absorption in the spirit of the loving mood of the eternal companions of the Lord whose ideal they follow, he experiences exactly the same quality of ecstatic pain in separation that the eternal sakhīs and mañjarīs do.

When one is listening to a particular story of the Lord and his associates, if a particular listener is knowledgeable in the matters of sacred rapture and has the same desires as the associates of the Lord in the story, the various ingredients making up the rasa of the eternal associate become one with those of the adept. For one who has already developed love for the Lord, an artificial process of identification is not necessary when he listens to such stories.³⁶⁵

In the nine-step development of *prema*, the stage which follows attachment or *āsakti* is called *bhāva*, or "feeling." This feeling causes the various ingredients (the causes, concomitant factors, secondary emotions, ecstatic responses, etc.) described in works of poetry to be presented before the mind of the adept as though real. In such a situation it is not even necessary for such poetic or dramatic works to be read or performed; the feeling itself causes the particular pastime of the Lord to be presented before the mind of the devotee in such a way that he experiences it as real.

Viśvanātha says that in such circumstances, it is only at this point that the *bhāva* or feeling truly becomes the dominant mood or *sthāyi-bhāva* and that much in the way that a king becomes greatly powerful through the strength of his subjects, this dominant mood then, joined with the other ingredients, causes sacred rapture to be experienced by the devotee

³⁶⁵ athottaratra śrī-bhagavan-mādhuryādi-śravaṇādau tal-lilāntahpātītvāt svatantra eva rasodbodha iti | PṛītiS
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who is a sympathetic enthusiast.³⁶⁶

Rūpa Gosvāmin also writes in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*:

This enchanting feeling transforms Kṛṣṇa, his associates and all the other elements of his activities into the *vibhāvas* and other ingredients of sacred rapture. Then combined with those ingredients, the feeling becomes strengthened. This is comparable to the manner in which the ocean's waters fill the clouds and then return to the ocean to increase its volume.³⁶⁷

(2)

This verse comes from Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja's description of the end of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's mid-day pastimes:

*hṛdaya-dayita-līlā-snigdha-dugdhaiḥ prapūrṇāt
tanu-kanaka-ghaṭīyā subhrūvo'syāḥ sakhinām |
nayana-mudam atānīt sāśu vairasyam āptā
viraha-viṣa-vivarnā netra-santaptaye'bhūt ||*

The beautifully-browed Rādhā's body is like a golden jug which is filled with the smooth milk of her amusements with her heart's beloved. She brings joy to the eyes of her friends, but now [being separated from him] she quickly became dry and colourless from the poison of separation, causing pain to their eyes. (*Govinda-līlāmṛta* 18.94)

In this verse, the ingredients for the production of sacred rapture are given as follows:

(1) The permanent emotion (*sthāyi-bhāva*) is that of the mañjarīs, *bhāvollāsā-rati* in which their affection for Rādhā is greater than that for Kṛṣṇa.

(2) The causing factors or *vibhāvas* are: (a) the object of love is Rādhā who is distressed by separation from Kṛṣṇa, (b) the receptacles of that love are the sakhīs and mañjarīs, and (c) the inspirators are Rādhā's loss of colour due to the poison of separation and her pained looks, etc.

³⁶⁶ *eṣā ratiḥ sva-śaktyā āvirbhāvitair vibhāvānubhāva-vyabhicāribhir ātmeva rājeva prakṛtibhir udbhūta aiśvaryas tan-militaḥ sthāyīti nāmnā vaiśiṣṭyaṁ gacchann ujjvalādiko raso bhavati | Mādhurya-kādambinī 7.2*

³⁶⁷ *vibhāvatādīn ānīya kṛṣṇādīn mañjulā ratiḥ |
etair eva tathābhūtaiḥ svaṁ samvardhayati sphuṭam ||
yathā svair eva salilaiḥ paripūrya balāhakān |
ratnālayo bhavaty ebhir vṛṣṭais tair eva vāridhiḥ || BRS 2.5.94-95*

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- (3) The expressions of love (*anubhāvas*) are the lengthy sighs, etc., of the sakhīs and mañjarīs.
- (4) The ecstatic symptoms (*sāttvika-bhāvas*) are the shedding of tears, the discoloration or paleness of the face, etc.
- (5) The secondary emotions (*sañcāri-bhāvas*) are depression, low-spiritedness, etc.

The practitioner who has been touched by the mood of the sakhīs and mañjarīs will identify and feel the generalization of emotions as was described in the context of the previous verse.

(3)

*mugdhā sudhāmsu-kiraṇe
jāla-gate bhavana-dāha-cakitākṣī
ādātum avadhi lekham
praviśati bhavanam nivārya sahayāntī*

Seeing the moon's rays entering through the windows of the house, Rādhā became anxious that it was burning and her eyes started to dart back and forth in fear. Still, thus deluded, she entered the house to get the last loveletter that Kṛṣṇa had written her, stopping her companions from going themselves or from trying to stop her. (*Alaṅkāra-kaustubha* 5.41)

In this verse, the ingredients for the production of sacred rapture are given as follows:

- (1) The permanent emotion (*sthāyi-bhāva*) is the erotic, *madhurā rati*.
- (2) The causing factors or *vibhāvas* are: (a) the object of love is Kṛṣṇa, (b) the receptacle of that love is Rādhā, and (c) the inspirators are each other's feelings of pain in separation, the moonlight, the soft southern breezes, etc.
- (3) The expression of love (*anubhāva*) is her speedy entrance into the house which she thinks is burning.
- (4) The ecstatic symptoms (*sāttvika-bhāvas*) are the shedding of tears, the discoloration or paleness of the face, etc.
- (5) The secondary emotions (*sañcāri-bhāvas*) are agitation, alarm, doubt, nervousness, etc.

Rādhā's true form is that of a desire-fulfilling vine of love for Kṛṣṇa. The sakhīs are her

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twigs, leaves and flowers. If one waters the the roots of the vine with the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's activities, then the twigs, leaves and flowers find greater joy than if they were sprinkled themselves.³⁶⁸

The person whose mood is to be followed in this verse Rādhā. The rapturous experience is beyond perception because the action is currently invisible to material eyes. Nevertheless, when those aspirants living in the present day whose minds have been touched by the mood of the sakhīs and mañjarīs hear or read this particular piece of poetry and drama it is capable of making that which is beyond perception come alive and visible to them.³⁶⁹

The sympathetic enthusiast, the aspiring devotee first thinks that he is a devotee who desires to attain the mood of the mañjarīs who is reading or listening to this particular verse of the *Alamkāra-kaustubha*. As he becomes increasingly absorbed in this particular account of Rādhā's activities, he gradually thinks, "I am one of the mañjarīs, present with my guru-rūpā sakhī, my guru in the form of a girlfriend, amongst Rādhārāṇī's sakhīs."

Then as a result of becoming totally absorbed in this mood following the sakhīs and mañjarīs, the devotee relishes the experience of sacred rapture. In other words, the sakhīs and mañjarīs who are Rādhā's companions see the amazing reaction of confusion in her love and experience the same kind of distress that she does; the sympathetic enthusiast similarly undergoes the same emotional experience. This is the practicing aspirant to the mood of Rādhā's handmaidens experience of sacred rapture.

Kṛṣṇadāsa's statement in the *Govinda-līlāmṛta* summarizes the sakhīs and mañjarīs' vicarious experience of Rādhā's loving ecstasies:

*sakhyah śrī-rādhikāyā vraja-kumuda-vidhor hlādinī-nama-śakteḥ
sārāṁśa-prema-vallyāḥ kiśalaya-dala- puspādi-tulyāḥ sva-tulyāḥ
siktāyām kṛṣṇa-līlāmṛta-rasa-nicayair ullasantyām amuṣyām
jātollāsāḥ sva-sekāc chata-guṇam adhikaṁ santi yat tan na citram*

Rādhā's girlfriends are the twigs, branches, fruits, etc., of the vine of the essence of love, Rādhā herself, who is the pleasure-giving potency of the moon of the lilies of Vraja; they are equal to even her. Considering this, it is not so strange that when she is watered with the nectar of the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and becomes overjoyed, her girlfriends are a hundred times more pleased than they would have been by being themselves watered.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁸CC 2.8.209-210.

³⁶⁹A quote from an unknown source, perhaps Mādhurya-kādambinī : anukārye sa vipralambha-rasa idanīm tat-tal-līlānām līlāśrayānām ca sarveṣām aprakāṭyena parokṣaḥ | sakhī-mañjarī-rati-sprṣṭa-cittānām sāmājikānām āsvādānkura-mūla-bhūtasya sthāyino'cintaniyā śaktir idṛśī yā aprakāṭam api tat-tal-līlām kāvyā-nāṭyā-gatām sāksāt-kāratvena prakāśayati

³⁷⁰GLA 10.16

9.3 The mañjarīs' sambhoga-rasa

(1)

*tayor dvayor aṅga-lakṣmī
raṅga-sthalyām sunartanam
pravṛttam āsīt tad dṛṣtvā
mudam āpuḥ sabhāsadaḥ*

*kramāt te nartakyau prakāṣita-kalā-kauśala-bharair
mithas tṛpte dṛpte nija-para-parām tan-nipuṇatām
vitanvāne bādhaṁ nanṛtatur aho yena muditā
drutaṁ sabhyas tābhyām tanu-hṛdaya-ratnāny api daduḥ*

At noontime, on the banks of Rādhā Kuṇḍa, when Rādhā and Govinda meet, the beauty of their bodies are like two terpsichoreans which reveal their art and their ever increasing expertise through a wonderful display of dance. Seeing the performance, the spectators, i.e., the audience of sakhīs and mañjarīs showered the dancers with the jewels of their bodies and hearts. In other words, upon seeing Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's bodily reaction upon seeing each other, the sakhīs and mañjarīs' minds and their bodies, with tears and horripilation were offered as gifts to them. (*Govinda-līlāmṛta* 9.8-9)

In this verse, the ingredients for the production of sacred rapture are given as follows:

- (1) The permanent emotion (*sthāyi-bhāva*) is that of the mistress, but in its approving, not direct, aspect.
- (2) The causing factors or *vibhāvas* are: (a) the object of love is the Divine Couple, (b) the receptacles of that love are the sakhīs and mañjarīs, and (c) the the banks of Rādhā Kuṇḍa, the midday environment, the bower cottage, etc.
- (3) The expressions of love (*anubhāva*) are the praising of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's beauty through the use of the metaphor of a dancer.
- (4) The ecstatic symptoms (*sāttvika-bhāvas*) upon witnessing the talents of the two "dancers" are perspiration, horripilation, the shedding of tears, etc.
- (5) The secondary emotions (*sañcāri-bhāvas*): When the spectators, the mañjarīs, saw the dancing talents of the Divine Couple's beauty, they threw the jewels of their minds and bodies as gifts, reflecting their delight (*harṣa*). Their absorption in

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watching the transformations of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's bodies is given the name mati or reflection.³⁷¹

(2)

*vidyud ghanācikramiṣām yadopari
smārād dadhānā vavale'valepataḥ |
tadā tu jālāni sakhī dṛśām balāj
jālāvalīm harṣa-jalaiḥ plutām vyadhuḥ ||*

Ah what a wonder! The Divine Couple, caught up in their erotic amusements have now been so overcome with their ecstatic lovemaking that they have reversed their positions. Like a bolt of lightning desiring to attack the cloud-like lover, the beloved, possessed by the hubris of the god of love, shows her lover her power. Seeing this, the mañjarīs, spectators peeking through the windows of the forest cottage drenched the sills with their tears. (*Kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāmṛta* 20.45)

In this verse, the ingredients for the production of sacred rapture are given as follows:

- (1) The permanent emotion (*sthāyi-bhāva*) is that of the mañjarīs, *bhāvollāsā rati*.
- (2) The causing factors or *vibhāvas*: (a) the object of love is Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, (b) the receptacles of that love are the mañjarīs, and (c) the night-time, the forest cottage, the bed of flowers, etc.
- (3) The expressions of love (*anubhāva*) are the whispered conversation of the mañjarīs as they witness Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's activities through the window of the forest cottage.
- (4) The ecstatic symptoms (*sāttvika-bhāvas*) are their tears of love, horripilation, etc.
- (5) The secondary emotions (*sañcāri-bhāvas*): Seeing Rādhā's pride in her attainment, the mañjarīs also feel enthusiasm, pride and delight.

³⁷¹BRS 2.4.140-1. There are a variety of types of mati. The basic definition is "the realization of the true state of things through reflection on the meaning of the scriptures." Its consequences are the performance of one's duty, cutting through doubt and error, giving instruction to disciples, and debating the reality of things. The translator does not see the application of this definition to the example. See the examples in *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* 13.79-80.

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(3)

*ālībhiḥ paripālitaḥ pravalitaḥ sānandam ālokitaḥ
pratyāśaṁ sumanaḥ phalodaya-vidhau sāmōdam āmoditaḥ |
vṛndāvana-bhuvi prakāśa-madhuraḥ sarvātiśāyi-śriyā
rādhā-mādhavayoḥ pramodayatu mām ullāsa-kalpa-drumaḥ ||*

The girlfriends of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī carefully nurture the desire tree of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Mādhava’s jubilant pastimes in Vṛndāvana’s fertile soil, in constant expectation of seeing its beautiful flowers and fruits; they watch it develop and grow, and when those flowers and fruits appear, they are the ones to relish them. May that tree, by its unparalleled beauty, give pleasure to us also.

The elements which make up the experience of sacred rapture in the first of these two verses are given here:

- (1) The permanent emotion (*sthāyi-bhāva*) is the spirit of *tad-bhāvecchātmikā*, or approval and abeyance to the love of the leading lady.
- (2) The causing factors or *vibhāvas* are (a) the objects of love, Rādhā and Mādhava, (b) the receptacles of that love, the sakhīs and mañjarīs, and (c) the inspirator, the land of Vṛndāvana.
- (3) The expressions of love (*anubhāvas*): the statement “nurturing the desire tree” indicates different services which inspire Rādhā and Mādhava’s love for one another, such as glorifying the love and qualities of one to the other, etc.
- (4) The ecstatic symptoms (*sāttvika-bhāvas*) are indicated by the words *sānandam* and *sāmōdam*, etc., which reveal jubilation and the consequent tears of joy, trembling, horripilation, etc.
- (5) The secondary emotions (*vyābhicāri-bhāvas*) are indicated by the words “constant expectation” which shows enthusiasm. Other consequent emotions are certainty, jubilation, pride, etc.

The practitioner who has been touched by the mood of the sakhīs and mañjarīs will identify and feel the generalization of emotions as was described in the context of the previous verse.

The practice that leads to becoming a handmaiden of Rādhā

10.0 Introduction

In this chapter, various devotional practices are examined according to the optic of *rāgānugā bhakti* and are judged in terms of their usefulness for attaining the ultimate goal of the state of mañjarī-hood. Specifically, the positions of Rūpa Gosvāmin, Rādhā Kṛṣṇa Gosvāmin and Viśvanātha Cakravartin are summarized. The conclusion given is that directly hearing and chanting about the activities of the mañjarīs is the most effective. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the mañjarīs' sacred rapture in the context of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's activities.

10.1 Varieties of moods, varieties of ecstasies

The gopīs constantly relish the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's form, his qualities, his taste, his fragrance, sound and touch; coming to beg from them the remnants of their feast are my mind, the mendicant, with the senses, his five ragged disciples, in the hope that they will be able to maintain their lives.³⁷²



Tasting this sacred rapture himself, the Lord taught it to all the devotees. The Lord was rich with the jewels of *prema*; never discriminating as to the place or recipient, he gave them freely to whomever he met. He was the greatest of all philanthropists.³⁷³

The Supreme Lord, his abode and eternal associates, all lie beyond the range of our words and thoughts. The things of the transcendental realm can never be appreciated by the gross material senses. The material mode of goodness can reveal the nature of matter but not the transcendental realm; that is only revealed by the power of the internal potency or *viśuddha-sattva*, which has absolutely no material components. Another name of this state of pure goodness is *vasudeva*, from which the Supreme Lord Vāsudeva makes his

³⁷²kṛṣṇa-guṇa-rūpa-ras, gandha-śabda-paraś, ye sudhā āsvāde gopī-gaṇ |
tā sabāra grāsa-śeṣe, āni pañcendriya śiṣye, se bhikṣāy rākhaye jīvan ||
Caitanya-caritāmṛta 3.14.49.

³⁷³āpane kari āsvādane śikhāila bhakta-gaṇe,
prema-cintāmañira prabhu dhanī |
nāhi jāne sthānāsthāna, yāre tāre kañla dān,
mahāprabhu dātā śiromaṇi || CC 2.2.81.

appearance. Until this state of pure goodness or vasudeva manifests individually in the heart of a devotee, he or she has no ability to comprehend the Lord; therefore the Lord does not appear there. The manifestation of pure goodness is possible only by the grace of an advanced devotee.

The Upaniṣads refer to the Lord, whose form is eternal, full of knowledge and bliss, as the embodiment of sacred rapture. This rapture or relish is manifest in his names, his form, his qualities and his pastimes. “Kṛṣṇa’s name, Kṛṣṇa’s form as well as all his diversions are as transcendental as his essential nature.”³⁷⁴

If one has the fortune to come into contact with a saint who has made the Lord’s name, form, qualities and pastimes his very life and soul, and by his mercy hears all about the Lord’s glories, then just as fire acts on iron to make it gradually take on the properties of fire, so too such a person’s mind becomes gradually spiritualized by constant contact with this transcendental subject matter. It is possible to conceive the Lord along with his eternal associates in a mind thus purified. A devotee thus becomes competent to relish the ways and means of their sweet exchanges of love.

The desire to please one’s own senses is called lust, but the desire to satisfy the senses of the Supreme Lord is called *prema* or love. Lust is the darkness of ignorance whereas love is like the brilliant sun.³⁷⁵

The heart is to be considered impure as long as it is filled with lust or egocentricity. With an impure mind, it is impossible to appreciate the happiness of contact with the Supreme Lord. It is thus necessary for the Supreme Lord’s pleasure-giving potency or *hlādinī-śakti* to come and transform the living entity’s material lust into love after which it makes him eager to always experience the happiness of contact with him. The Lord’s name, form and pastimes are like the resplendent sun freed from the veil of any clouds; it shines down on the lust-darkened heart of the conditioned soul through hearing and chanting and dispels that darkness. Then that heart becomes effulgent with the divine light of *prema*. “Through his *hlādinī* potency the Lord nourishes his devotees. He is the personification of joy and himself experiences happiness; his *hlādinī-śakti* is the cause of the devotee’s enjoyment also.”³⁷⁶

Prema is the essential element in this internal, pleasure-giving potency of the Lord. Devotion is Kṛṣṇa’s *hlādinī* potency mixed with the essence of his consciousness energy or

³⁷⁴kṛṣṇa-nāma kṛṣṇa-guṇa kṛṣṇa-līlā-vṛnda |
kṛṣṇera svarūpa sama saba cidānanda || CC 2.17.135.

³⁷⁵ātmendriya-prīti-vāñchā tāre bali kām |
kṛṣṇendriya-prīti-vāñchā dhare prema nām ||
kāma andha-tamaḥ, prema nirmala bhāskar || CC 1.4.165, 171.

³⁷⁶hlādinī dvārāy kareṇa bhaktera poṣaṇ || CC 1.4.60.
sukha-rūpa Kṛṣṇa kareṇa sukha āsvādan |
bhakta-gaṇa sukha dite hlādinī kāraṇ || CC 2.8.158.

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sāṁvit-śakti. This essence is the particular desire favorable to the Lord which is the essential condition for devotion—the thoughts, moods or state of mind that are favorable to the pleasures of the Supreme Lord. Devotion implies service; the word *ānukūlya* (“favorable”) means service.

Prema is the essential portion of the Lord’s internal potency and is therefore an item that is eternal, spiritual and full of sacred rapture. As a result, it is not possible to “produce” devotion as such in this world; rather, it makes its appearance in the heart of the fortunate soul who has been blessed by a devotee, being aided by his cooperative spirit.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, after stating that the essential portion of the hlādinī potency is *prema*, goes on to say that the essence of *prema* is something called *mahā-bhāva*, “great feeling.”³⁷⁷ Here we will discuss why *bhāva* has been indicated by the devotionally oriented scriptures as the very essence of love of God.

If the Supreme Beauty, filled with desires and exultation, is experienced through a mental inclination or sentiment favorable to him, then that is called *prīti* or love. This favorable sentiment or love must be mixed with a particular dominant mood or taste, otherwise the execution of service will not prove successful. This is not just a vague scriptural statement, but can be seen practically in the world around us also. For example, a mother serves in the spirit of a mother and not as a wife, sister or daughter, etc., and thus her service to her child is successful.

Love is the element which gives one the authority to serve the object of his love; this is something everyone understands. Service without love is nothing more than a superficial imitation; the object of such service is never made happy by it and the servitor also never finds real happiness through it. Nevertheless, even if one does have love, that love must take a particular shape in order for him to be able to engage in that service. A father or mother must have a sense of parental affection which gives shape to their love for their child and creates a situation favorable for serving him. If a servant has some spirit of affection other than that of servitude to his master, then the master will not derive full satisfaction from his service. If the relation of two friends is not mixed with the feeling of friendship (*sakhya-bhāva*), then many trespasses will be committed in the course of that relationship, which is also one of service. In the same way, if the attitude of a beloved to her lover is not mixed with the proper spirit of wife-hood and mistress-hood, then however intense her love for her mate, it will prove incapable of giving him complete satisfaction. These are facts that any person knowing the world can verify from his own experience.

In the same way, loving devotion to the Lord has to take a particular form according to the major types of relation, viz., service, friendship, parental love or mistresshood.

³⁷⁷hlādinīr sāra prema, prema-sāra bhāva |
bhāvera parākāṣṭhā, nāma mahā-bhāva || CC 1.4.68.

otherwise the devotee will never be able to attain service that is completely favorable to the Lord. The example given is that of Laksmī who, wanting to attain Kṛṣṇa in Vraja, performed difficult austerities, but was unable to achieve the fulfilment of her desires because she did not follow in the footsteps of the gopīs of Vrndāvana; she did not accept their lead in rendering service to him. “Worshipping Kṛṣṇa in a sense of majesty is useless; one will never attain him unless he follows the gopīs of Vrndāvana.”³⁷⁸

10.2 Rāgānuṅā bhakti in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*

As we saw above in chapter 2, Kṛṣṇa and his devotees are the props of devotional rapture as the object and shelter of the love respectively. In his commentary to the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, Jiva Gosvāmin says that the person who possesses love for God, i.e., the receptacle of that love, is called the *āśraya*. Through contact with such a “vessel of love,” the present day devotional aspirant can also become loving and affectionate toward the Lord as the love flows from the vessel to his heart and he thus attains perfection.³⁷⁹ Because these shelters of love are its original containers, in one’s own meditative devotional practice, one should concentrate on, as an object of emulation, one of these direct associates and eternal participants in the pastimes of the Lord, each of whom is a personification of great spiritual emotion.

There are five rasas or spiritual tastes namely *śānta*, *dāsyā*, *sakhya*, *vātsalya* and *madhura*. The practitioner of devotional service according to a particular flavour will follow the *āśraya* devotee in that mood. The devotee wishing to serve the Lord in the mood of peacefulness will follow a personification of great spiritual emotion in that mood, for example, Sanat Kumāra. The followers of *dāsyā-rasa* will follow the ideal presented by the *āśraya* devotees of that rasa, such as Uddhava. If he wants servitude in Vrndāvana, then he should follow the great personifications of that mood, namely Raktaka and Patraka.³⁸⁰ One who wishes to attain the mood of the *priya-narma-sakhās* (those friends of Kṛṣṇa who have a role in his affairs with the gopīs) will follow in the mood of Subala and Ujjvala.³⁸¹ One desiring to attain the affection of the Lord’s superiors will follow the *āśraya bhakta* in

³⁷⁸gopī-ānugatya vinā aiśvarya-jñāne |

bhajileha nāhi pāy vrajendra-nandane || CC 2.8.230.

³⁷⁹ādharas tu rater āśrayaḥ | sa cātra mūlaṁ rateḥ pātraṁ gṛhyate, tan niṣyandena hy ādhunikā api bhaktāḥ snigdha bhavanti | sa punaḥ sthāpayiṣyamāna-mahā-rasa-mūrtis tal-līlā-parikara-gaṇa eva || Durgama-saṅgamīni to 2.1.16. Kuṅjavihāri Dāsī cites BRS 1.3.25, which lists the nine qualities of a devotee who has attained the stage of spiritual purity known as *bhāva* that immediately precedes *prema*. These are patience, not wasteful of time, renunciation, humility, unbreakable hopefulness, eagerness, a continuous taste for singing his names, attached to glorifying his qualities, and an affection for his abode, Vrndāvana. *kṣāntir avyārtha-kālatvaṁ viraktir māna-sūnyatā | āśābandhaḥ samutkaṅṭhā nāma-gāne sadā ruciḥ | āsaktas tad-guṇākhyāne prītis tad-vasati-sthale ||*

³⁸⁰BRS 3.2.45.

³⁸¹ibid., 3.4.11.

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that *rasa*, namely the King and Queen of Vraja, the parents of the Lord.³⁸²

Those who wish to attain the direct mistress-ship of the Lord, *nāyikā-bhāva*, will follow the great personifications of spiritual emotion in that mood, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī or Candrāvalī. Those who do not directly wish to become the mistresses of the Lord, but prefer the spirit of approval of that love that is personified in the mañjarīs who carry out the service of the Lord and his Beloved in the groves of Vṛndāvana, should follow the chief of those mañjarīs, the great incarnation of the spiritual emotion known as *bhāvollāsā rati*, namely Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī.

Following Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī means that the execution of the Holy Couple's intimate service in the hidden groves of the Vṛndāvan forest will be carried out fully well. Narottama Dās has prayed:

When will I stand behind Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī, filled with qualms, when the two of them will look directly at me and speak out? Laughingly the Divine Couple, whose hearts are full of compassion, will ask, "O Rūpa, where did this new handmaid come from?" Hearing them, Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī will answer, "O, Mañjulālī Mañjarī brought her here and put her in my care. She told me that she is very humble and I saw it was true; so I kept her with me and let her help me." After telling the two of them these facts, she will engage this Narottama Dās in service to their lotus feet.³⁸³

In the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmin writes that one must follow and serve the Lord in both his external body as well as his internally meditated-upon spiritual body, in both cases following in the footsteps of the residents of Vṛndāvana.³⁸⁴

In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* these ideas are expressed as follows:

There are two systems of practice, one internal, the other external. In the external practice one performs hearing and chanting, while mentally he meditates on his spiritual body and performs service in it to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Always following behind his favorite devotee who is dear to Kṛṣṇa,

³⁸² donhe puna kahibena āmā pāne cañā ||

donhe hṛdaye donhe kahibena hāsi |

kothāya pāile rūpa ei nava dāsī ||

³⁸³ śrī rūpa mañjarī tabe donhā-vākya śuni |

mañjulālī dila more ei dāsī āni ||

ati namra citta āmi ihāre jānila |

sevā-kārya diyā tabe hethāya rākhila ||

hena tattva donhākāra sāksāte kahiya |

narottama sevāya dibe niyukta kariya || Prārthanā.

³⁸⁴ tad-bhāva-lipsunā kāryā vraja-lokānusārataḥ || BRS 1.2.295.

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he constantly engages in service in a meditative mood.³⁸⁵

The intent of these verses is that the practice of *rāgānugā bhakti* is to be done on two levels. In the original text it is said that the first of these is conducted in the *sādhaka-deha*, the external body, that is, the body in which one is presently situated. The second is conducted in a *siddha-deha*, or the desired form that is especially suitable for direct loving service to Kṛṣṇa and which is meditated upon. In this second body, one follows the particular resident of Vraja whose quality of love for Kṛṣṇa one has become ardently eager to attain. These residents of Vraja are those intimate associates of Kṛṣṇa such as Rādhā, Lalitā, Viśākhā, Rūpa Mañjarī, etc., and those who follow them in this world are Rūpa Gosvāmin or Sanātana Gosvāmin, etc.

In the spiritual or perfected body (*siddha-deha*), mental service (*mānasī sevā*) is to be performed in a spirit of obedience to Rūpa Mañjarī and other such residents of Vraja, while the same spirit is to be demonstrated externally towards those devotees of Vraja such as Rūpa Gosvāmin and Sanātana Gosvāmin who set the standards of the practice.

Some people who comment on the lines *vraja-lokānusārataḥ* from the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* verse object that when the words “residents of Vraja” has been taken to mean Rādhā, Lalitā and Viśākhā, etc., then the aspiring devotee should also perform exactly the same service to Kṛṣṇa in his perfected body as they. This is not a logical proposal for this would go against the principle of adherence to the tradition in the practice of *rāgānuga* devotion as established by the great Lord Caitanya. This attitude shows signs of the condemned *ahamgrahopāsanā*, in which one identifies himself as an existing eternal associate of the Lord, or even as the Lord himself. The words “following the residents of Vraja” does not mean exact imitation. Following someone here means being obedient or subservient to or following in the tradition of that person. Thus the aspiring devotee should follow Rādhā, Lalitā and other intimates of Kṛṣṇa by awaiting their orders that will be carried out in the spiritual perfected body.

Once again, Narottama Dāsa illustrates the principle in various songs found in the collection, *Prārthanā*:

Lady of my life! When will you gaze upon me with mercy?
Upon receiving your order, when will I bring
varieties of flowers and hear your and Kṛṣṇa’s sweet words?³⁸⁶

³⁸⁵bāhya, antara ihāra dui to sādhan |
bāhye sādha-ka-dehe kare śravaṇa-kīrtan ||
mane nija-siddha-deha kariyā bhāvan |
rātri-dine kare rādhā-kṛṣṇera sevan ||
nijābhīṣṭa kṛṣṇa-preṣṭha pāche ta lāgiyā |
nirantara sevā kare antarmānā hañā || CC 2.22.156-9.

³⁸⁶Prāṇeśvari! Kabe more habe kṛpā diṭhi |
ājñāya āniyā kabe vividha phula-vara,

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On the orders of Lalitā, Viśākhā and all of your friends,
When will I serve your lotus feet?³⁸⁷

When will Lalitā give me the fan
so that I can cool you with a gentle breeze?³⁸⁸

In the ideal of a handmaiden to Rādhā as established by Caitanya in his incarnation, one has to worship in the perfected body in obedience to Rūpa Mañjarī. Without following her, there is no possibility of receiving orders directly from Rādhā or Lalitā. Narottam Dās sings:

I have heard from the saints, everyone tells me
that one attains the feet of the Holy Couple
by the grace of Śrī Rūpa.³⁸⁹

When will my guru and lord Lokanātha take me with him
and give me to Śrī Rūpa? And Rūpa will look at me,
saying, “So this is the new handmaiden.”³⁹⁰

She will quickly command me, “Servant-girl! Come here!
Quickly tidy all these things needed for service.”³⁹¹
Afraid, I will remain standing behind Śrī Rūpa;
then the two of them will speak, looking upon my face.³⁹²

The devotee on the path of passion aspires to relish the sweet flavours of the activities of the son of the king of Vraja, but it must be emphasized that one cannot experience that world without first entering into the spirit of the acts of Caitanya. In this connection, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja has written:

Kṛṣṇa’s actions are the ultimate nectar of the gods; their hundreds and
hundreds of currents stream in every direction. Send the swan of your mind
to swim on the lake of Caitanya, the fathomless spring from which they

śuniba vacana duṅhu miṭhi ||

³⁸⁷Lalitā Viśākhā ādi yata sakhī gaṇ | ājñāya kariba sevā caraṇāravinda |

³⁸⁸Lalitā kabe more bijana deoba, bijaba māruta mande |

³⁸⁹suniyāchi sādhu mukhe bale sarva-jan |

śrī-rūpa-kṛpāya mile yugala-caraṇ || Prārthanā.

³⁹⁰prabhu lokanātha kabe saṅge laiya yābe | śrī rūpera pāda-padme more
samarpibe || ei nava-dāsī bali śrī-rūpa cāhibe || Prārthanā

³⁹¹śighra ājñā karibena dāsī hethā āy |

sevāra susajjā kāryya karaha tvarāy || Prārthanā.

³⁹²śrī-rūpa paścāte āmi rahiba bhīta haiñā |
doṅhe puna kahibena āmā-pāne cāñā || Prārthanā.

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arise.

The devotees, like swans and geese, all sport in this lake in many moods.
The devotee swan can always find the lotus stems of Kṛṣṇa's playful
activities there, and he constantly ingests them.³⁹³

Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī also writes:

One who has accumulated a great deal of merit, will find
that as his devotion to Caitanya's lotus feet increases,
the ocean of nectar that is the lotus feet of Rādhā
manifests itself suddenly in his heart.³⁹⁴

The purport of this verse is that inasmuch as an aspirant realizes Caitanya's nature and his absorption in the mood of Rādhā, one will develop an understanding of Rādhā's great love (*mahā-bhāva*), its extent and amazing influence. Through the Lord in his form of Caitanya one will be able to fully understand the glory of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's love and thus he will develop true and deep attachment for her.

10.3 The conclusions expressed in the *Daśa-slokī-bhāṣya*

The following discussion is found in Rādhākṛṣṇa Gosvāmin's comments on the first verse of the *Daśa-slokī*: "Brahmā, Śiva and Ananta Śeṣa, etc., are not able to gain access to the service of the feet of the lover of Rādhā. That service is available only to the devotees who are dedicated to the pastimes of Vraja through intense eagerness and ardour."³⁹⁵

According to the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, the love of Rādhā for Kṛṣṇa is exclusively of the erotic type. Thus, only devotional service following in her footsteps or in submission to her can be *tad-bhāvecchātmikā bhakti*—the devotional mood of approval. Otherwise, the word *gāḍha* or "intense," which modifies *laulya* or "ardour" in this verse, becomes meaningless.

Because the love of Vṛndāvana's other damsels for Kṛṣṇa is somewhat less intense than that of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, their love is called *gauṇa-kāmaika-rūpā* or secondary love of the erotic type (whereas Rādhā's is primary). Following in their footsteps is *gauṇa* or secondary *tad-bhāvecchātmikā bhakti*. Thus the intimate service of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in the

³⁹³kṛṣṇa-lilāmṛta-sār, yāra śata-śata dhār, daśa-dig bahe yāhā haite |
se caitanya-lilā hay, sarovara akṣay, mano-haṁsa carāha tāhāte ||
nānā-bhāve bhakta-gaṇ, haṁsa-cakravāka-gaṇ, yāte sabe karena vihār |
kṛṣṇa-keli-mṛṇāl, yāhā pāi sarva-kāl, bhakta-haṁsa karaye āhār ||
CC 2.22.271,274.

³⁹⁴yathā yathā gaura-padāravinde vindeta bhaktim kṛta-puṇya-rāsīḥ |
tatha tathotsarpati hṛdy akasmād rādhā-padāmbhoja-sudhāmbu-rāsīḥ ||
Caitanya-candrāmṛta, 89

³⁹⁵keśa-śeṣādy-agamyā... gāḍha-laulyaika-labhyā. GLA 1.3

groves of Vṛndāvana is only obtainable by those who have ardent eagerness or *laulya* (greed) for it. This greed is present in the mañjarīs alone. Only those devotees who have even greater affection for Rādhā than for Kṛṣṇa, who are thus following the primary erotic devotional mood, whose spirit of devotion takes the name *bhāvollāsā rati*, are practicing devotion with “intense ardour” or *lobha*.

The process by which such ardour is produced is varied, but Rādhā Kṛṣṇa Gosvāmin gives a general outline in five divisions called (1) *svīya-sādhana* (“personal, individualized practice”), (2) *svajātīya-sādhana* (“practice with a common base”), (3) *vi-jātīya-sādhana* (“practice with a different basis”), (4) *taṭastha-sādhana* (“neutral practice”), (5) *viruddha-sādhana* (“contradictory practices”).³⁹⁶

10.31 Svīya-sādhana (“personal, individualized practice”)

The mood of the mañjarīs is another level or division of the highest devotional sentiment that is called competent love or *samarthā rati*. The mañjarīs are the friends of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī who follow her exclusively. The five kinds of friends were described previously.³⁹⁷ *Nitya-sakhīs* and *prāṇa-sakhīs* are also known as mañjarīs. *Svīya-sādhana* means directly desiring with intense ardour to engage in a service for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa similar to that of these mañjarīs. The mañjarīs expertly serve them in the forest groves of Vṛndāvana without desiring for anything else. Amongst them Rūpa Mañjarī is the chief. Therefore, to desire intensely for the devotional mood possessed by her is called direct or *svīya-sādhana*.

This *svīya-sādhana* is of five types:

- (1) attachment to hearing topics of Rādhā Kṛṣṇa and the mañjarīs; this is the best process for it is completely autonomous;
- (2) viewing the beauty of the Lord and his Beloved’s forms;
- (3) serving these forms in the external body;
- (4) serving in the mentally conceived spiritual body. This second group of three is considered subordinate to the first because all are entirely dependent upon it;
- (5) residing in Vraja. The effectiveness of this practice depends entirely on following one of the other processes along with it, therefore it is called lesser (*kaniṣṭha*).

The first process mentioned here is that of attachment to hearing topics directly

³⁹⁶Cf. Daśaslokī-bhāṣya, (ed.) Haridās Śāstrī, 1982, pp. 66-82

³⁹⁷In Section 2.2 above.

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concerned with one's desired worshipable object. This is because it is, of itself, completely capable of bringing one to the perfection of the attainment of *prema*. In the *Bhakti-sandarbha*, Jīva Gosvāmin says, “There is not even any real need for a momentous effort in spiritual practices—if one simply believes with all sincerity that he is the servant of God, that sense of spiritual self-identification will in itself give him all perfection.”³⁹⁸

The mañjarīs consider themselves to be the servants or handmaids of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, who is the sole proprietor of their lives and hearts. Therefore, the best practice or process for achieving a mood of intense ardour for service to their Lordships in abeyance to Rūpa and Rati Mañjarī is an enthusiasm to listen to those topics that foster that sense of identification, i.e., those in which the mañjarīs' mutual affection, etc., are discussed.

Jīva Gosvāmin has spoken of the inconceivable power of such topics in his *Gopāla-campū*:

Kṛṣṇa, the king and queen of the cowherd pastures
and its other residents are of themselves incapable
of even slightly softening my cruel heart;
but even so, the love that they have for Kṛṣṇa,
or that which he has for them, is so strong
that at every moment it turns that stone to liquid.³⁹⁹

In other words, whenever one thinks of that love or remembers that which one has heard about it, he is affected. By regularly hearing, chanting and meditating on the affection of the mañjarīs such as Rūpa and Rati Mañjarī for one another and of their various activities filled with a great thirst for service, a desire awakens in him for service following in the same spirit. This thirst gradually increases through the practice of devotional service until it is transformed into ardent longing (*gāḍha-laulya*). The result of this longing is that the aspirant comes to directly obtain such service of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in the forest gardens of Vṛndāvana.

Hearing this, some fortunate persons become greedy.
Following the mood of the gopīs in greed,
one obtains the object of his practice,
service of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in the forest gardens of Vṛndāvana.
There is no other way to obtain this object.⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁸ astu tāvad bhajana-prayāsaḥ kevala-tādṛśātvābhimānenāpi siddhir bhavati | BhaktiS, 304

³⁹⁹ harir gopa-kṣaunṛpati-mithunam anye ca vividhā
na naḥ krūraṁ cittaṁ mṛdulayitumīśā lavam api |
aho teṣāṁ premā vilasati harau yas tu balavān
harer vā yas teṣu drutayati sa eva pratipadam || GCP 1v64

⁴⁰⁰ ihā śuni lubdha hay kono bhāgyavān |
lobhe vraja-gopīra bhāve anugati | CC 2.22.152-3.
rādhā-kṛṣṇa-kuñja-sevā sādhyā sei pāy |
sei sādhyā pāite āra nāhika upāy || CC 2.8.205

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The words “hearing this” mean that over and over one must mentally cultivate the spirit of the mañjarīs who have the authority to participate in intimate service. As one listens constantly to their moods and the service that is conducive to their development, they become objectified in the mind of the practitioner. This again results in the greed, or ardent longing, which takes shape in the prayer, “May I desire only this kind of service.” The great teacher Sanātana Gosvāmin called such service to Rādhā the most extraordinary, ultimate object of spiritual practice. The eternally perfect Rūpa Mañjarī and her companions became Rūpa, Sanātana and the other Gosvāmins at the time of Kṛṣṇa’s incarnation as Caitanya in Navadvīpa. They churned the scriptures in order to write books on sacred rapture so that devotional aspirants would have texts that would help them quickly develop the ardent longing for intimate service to the Divine Couple. As Narottama Dāsa wrote:

“These two great personalities described all the intricacies of devotional love in their books. They contain the sweet sacred rapture of the Divine Couple’s love, the hearing of which brings transcendental joy to the heart. The Divine Couple’s love is like gold that has been purified a hundred thousand times. Victory to Rūpa and Sanātana who revealed this great love! Please bestow this wealth on me, and I will place it like a jewel around my neck.”⁴⁰¹

10.32 *Sajātīya-sādhana* (“practice with a similar basis”)

Devotion in the erotic mood, i.e., that which seeks a personal erotic relation with Kṛṣṇa in any of the three affections, competent, compromising or common, is called a “practice with a similar basis” for those who wish to attain to *mañjarī-bhāva*. This is one of the categories of *rāgānuga-bhakti* as defined above.

(1) Primary amongst these is the desire to take up the spirit of competent affection (*samarthā rati*). This is called *kāmānugā bhakti* and, as previously described, has two divisions, that which seeks direct sexual relationship with Kṛṣṇa and one which arises out of a desire for the feelings of the leading lady. In the latter case, there is a primary and secondary practice depending on whether one follows Rādhā or her rival Candrāvalī.

(2) The common affection (*sādhāraṇī rati*), although technically inferior, it is considered

⁴⁰¹prema bhakti rīti yata, nija granthe subekata, kariyāchena dui mahāśay
yāhāra śravaṇa haite, parānanda hay cite, yugala madhura rasāśray ||
yugala kiśora prem, yena lakṣavān hem, hena prema prakāśila yārā |
jaya rūpa-sanātan, deha more prema-dhan, se ratana mora gale hārā ||
Prema-bhakti-candrikā.

the next best practice because it has certain qualities similar to the attitude of the gopīs, namely that of “otherness” (*parakīyātva*) and of strong sexual desire (*kāma*).

(3) Due to their connection with Kṛṣṇa through marriage, the compromising affection (*samañjasā rati*) of the queens of Dvārakā has characteristics of relational devotion (*sambandhānugā*) that makes it an inferior practice in this category.

10.33 *Vijātiya-sādhana* (“practice with a different basis”)

Rādhā Kṛṣṇa Gosvāmin lists *sambandhānuga-bhakti* in this category. This refers to devotion in the spirit of the friends of Kṛṣṇa, his servants and his parents and other seniors. Of these, the spirit of Kṛṣṇa’s friends is the best because it can lead to the loving service to Kṛṣṇa in his form as the lover of Rādhā. Following the spirit of Kṛṣṇa’s servants is considered neutral, while it is considered detrimental to follow the spirit of his parents, despite its being superior to the previous two relations, if one wishes to attain to Kṛṣṇa’s erotic pastimes.

10.34 *Taṭastha-sādhana* (“neutral practice”)

Regulatory devotional service, i.e., the sixty-four practices described in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.43-152, is considered to be neutral. The sixty-four limbs of devotional service beginning with taking shelter of a spiritual master and ending with taking up residence in the abode of the Lord, Mathurā, are practiced by the bodily senses as well as by the inner senses and mind. However, regulatory devotional service or *vaidhī bhakti* refers to the worship of the Lord according to the injunctions of scripture on the basis of a faith in his God-hood, simply with a view to fulfilling those injunctions. In short, devotional service performed without greed or ardent longing.

Single-minded devotion performed without reference to the injunctions of the scriptures, i.e, the śrutis, the smṛtis, the Purāṇas, the Pañcarātra, etc., is said to be disruptive. Therefore the difference between *vaidhī bhakti* and *rāgānugā bhakti* is that the impulse for the former is the injunction itself, while the impulse for the latter is greed (*lobha*) or intense ardour.

(1) Of the sixty-four devotional practices (*vaidhī bhakti*), hearing, chanting, remembering, meditating, serving, having the attitude of a servant, a spirit of friendliness, worship of the deity form by looking at it and touching it, etc., are considered to be superior. Because these devotional activities are capable of quickly awakening affection, they can easily fall into the category of *rāgānugā bhakti*. Scholars have accepted that all the sixty-four divisions of *vaidhī bhakti* referred to in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* are also acceptable for the practice of *rāgānugā bhakti*.

(2) Worship of the deity and offering praises are slower in awakening a dominant devotional mood and are thus considered less appropriate.

(3) Because they are even slower at awakening rati, inquiry about religious questions, showing respect to the sacred fig tree, etc., are considered to be inferior.

All these limbs of devotional practice are without any power to directly awaken love (*prīti*); they are neither considered to belong to the *svīya-sādhana*, nor to the detrimental practices, for they have been accepted by the tradition (i.e., in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*) amongst the practices that lead to the development of feeling and the desire for devotional perfection. Nevertheless they are neutral, being different in character from the directly beneficial practices.

Those with an inclination for regulatory devotional service nearly always develop the desire for the mood of a servant to Kṛṣṇa (*dāsya-bhāva*); their love is therefore tinged with knowledge of his great glories.

10.35 *Viruddha-sādhana* (“detrimental practices”)

Dry seeking after knowledge, false renunciation, and ritualistic activities prescribed in the Vedic literature are all practices that are detrimental to the attainment of pure love for Kṛṣṇa.⁴⁰²

(1) Believers in the featureless brahman are considered to be seekers of dry knowledge (*jñāna*). They are indifferent to devotional activities and are only concerned with debate on logical and philosophical issues. By the mercy of Kṛṣṇa and his devotees, such persons may occasionally become interested in pure devotion. For this reason, this is the best of the contradictory practices.⁴⁰³ When a *jñānin* becomes interested in the devotional path, he normally enters the peaceful mood and sometimes that of servitude. However, the practice of *jñāna* is in radical opposition to the intimate service of the lover of Rādhā.

(2) False renunciation (*phalgu-vairāgya*) refers to a lack of appreciation for and abandonment of things that have a favorable relation to Kṛṣṇa’s service, due to the mistaken idea that they have an illusory nature. Such renunciation is damaging to the heart of a person, making him dry and spiritless; even so, on occasion, such a person may fortuitously enter the path of devotion. For this reason, this the second best amongst contradictory practices.

(3) Those who are fixated on ritualistic practices are generally so attached to destructible material goals that there is no possibility of their getting the mercy of the Lord or his devotees. Consequently, there is no way that they can attain even the slightest trace of pure devotion and thus this practice is the worst of the contradictory practices. The

⁴⁰²phalgu-vairāgya-nirdagdḥāḥ suṣka-jñānās ca haitukāḥ |
mīmāṃsakaḥ viśeṣeṇa bhakty-āsvāda-bahirmukhāḥ || BRS 2.5.112

⁴⁰³bhavet kadācit kutrāpi nanda-sūnoḥ kṛpā-bharaḥ |
prathamam jñāna-niṣṭho’pi yo’traiva ratim udvahet || BRS 2.5.111

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Mīmāṃsakas are those who believe in the supreme power of Vedic ritualistic activities. They believe that ritualistic works are more powerful than even God himself. They say that one receives the results of the works one does (referring specifically to the magical power of the rituals) and that thus there is no need to concern one's self with the role of God in the awarding of fruits. Fruits are the results of the acts alone. Those who are indifferent to the devotional path and whose only spiritual practice is renunciation, those who are philosophers without affection for the devotion path and take dry arguments and logic to be their main spiritual practice, and those Mīmāṃsakas who are believers in ritualism and the impersonal aspect of the Deity, are all incapable of relishing sacred rapture. Therefore, just as one hides one's jewellery from a thief, one should keep the jewel of sacred rapture hidden away from these three categories of non-devotee.

10.4 The position of the *Rāga-vartma-candrikā* (1.13-14)

The discussion of the practice of *rāgānuṅgā bhakti* in Viśvanātha's *Rāga-vartma-candrikā* is based on the three important verses of the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.294-6) that have been previously discussed in these pages:

*kṛṣṇaṁ smaran janam cāsya
preṣṭhaṁ nija-samīhitam
tat-tat-kathā-rataś cāsau
kuryād vasaṁ vraje sadā*

The aspiring devotee, fixed in hearing stories of Kṛṣṇa and his intimate associates, those most dear ones who are his ideal, should live in Vraja while remembering them.

*sevā sādḥaka-rūpeṇa
siddha-rūpeṇa cātra hi
tad-bhāva-lipsunā kāryā
vraja-lokānusārataḥ*

One who desires the mood of a particular resident of Vraja, should serve Kṛṣṇa both in his external physical body as well as in his perfect, spiritual body, following obediently that eternally perfect associate of the Lord.⁴⁰⁴

*śravaṇotkīrtanādīni
vaidha-bhakty-uditāni tu
yāny aṅgāni ca tāny atra
vijñeyāni manīṣibhiḥ*

⁴⁰⁴sevā sādḥaka-rūpeṇa siddha-rūpeṇa cātra hi |
tad-bhāva-lipsunā kāryā vraja-lokānusārataḥ ||

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All the elements of devotional service which are considered are part of *vaidhī bhakti* such as hearing and chanting are said by the well-informed to be elements of *rāgānugā bhakti* also.⁴⁰⁵

Commenting on these verses, Viśvanātha talks about five types of practice in connection with the obtention of devotion in the mood of the *mañjarīs*. These are: (1) practices which are wholly identified with one's desired mood (*svābhīṣṭa-bhāva-maya-sādhana*), (2) those which are related to one's desired mood (*svābhīṣṭa-bhāva-sambandhī*), (3) those which are favourable to the development of one's desired mood (*svābhīṣṭa-bhāvānukūla*), (4) those which are not unfavourable to one's desired mood (*svābhīṣṭa-bhāvāviruddha*), and (5) those which are inimical to the desired mood (*svābhīṣṭa-bhāva-viruddha*). A description of these terms is given as follows:

10.41 Practices identified with the desired mood

It is said in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*:

ataeva madhura rasa kahi tāra nām |
svakīyā parakīyā bhede dvividha samsthān ||
parakīyā-bhāve ati rasera ullāsa |
vraja vinā ihāra anyatra nāhi vās ||

The name of this sacred rapture is *madhura*, “the sweet.” It has two divisions, *svakīyā* and *parakīyā*. Sacred rapture is more exciting in the mood of the paramour; this particular variety exists nowhere but in Vraja.⁴⁰⁶

All of the Lord's activities are eternal. After his activities in this world have been wound up, he continues to act as the *gopīs'* paramour in the eternal abode. Evidence for this is found in the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* (11.12.13). The love of the beauties of Vraj in this relation with Kṛṣṇa as a paramour is unequalled anywhere; another name given to it is “devotion in the form of desire.” This devotion in the form of desire, *kāmarūpā bhakti*, has a primary and secondary aspect: the love of Rādhā is primary, that of all the other *gopīs* is secondary.

As previously described in this book, the desire to follow this devotion in the form of desire is called *kāmānugā bhakti*. This is divided into devotion that “seeks erotic union” (*sambhogeccchāmayī*) and that which “approves the mood of the mistresses of Kṛṣṇa” (*tad-bhāvecchāmayī*). The former of these is the mood of Kṛṣṇa's mistresses, the latter that of the friends of the mistress.

⁴⁰⁵śravaṇotkīrtanādīni vaidha-bhakty-uditāni tu |
yāny aṅgāni ca tāny atra vijñeyāni maṇiṣibhiḥ ||

⁴⁰⁶ CC 1.4.46-7

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There are primary and secondary forms of this devotion also depending on which of Kṛṣṇa's mistresses is seen as the ideal. Those who are devoted to Rādhā, her friends, fall into five categories depending on their attitudes toward Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and their tendency to side with either one or the other. The *prāṇa-sakhīs* and *nitya-sakhīs* are also known as *mañjarīs*. When Viśvanātha talks about practices which are “identified with the desired mood” (*svābhīṣṭha-bhāvamāya-sādhana*) he is referring to the intense eagerness or thirst to follow in the footsteps of these friends of Rādhā who have been identified as *mañjarīs*.

This has been expressed in Raghunātha Dāsa's prayer:

*ābhīra-pallī-pati-putra-kāntā
dāsyābhilāṣātibālāśva-vāraḥ
śrī-rūpa-cintāmala-sapti-saṁstho
mat-svānta-durdānta-hayecchur āstām*

May my uncontrollable desires, which are like a wild horse, be reigned and subdued by the desire for service to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the beloved of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which rides like the jockey on the horse of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmin's mind. (i.e., May my mind be linked with the mind of Rūpa Gosvāmin in the desire for service to Rādhā.)⁴⁰⁷

10.42 Practices related to one's desired mood

Those practices which are material causes of the desired mood are called mood-related practices (*bhāva-sambandhī*). These include taking shelter of a guru who is engaged in the practice of devotion in that particular mood, meditating on and chanting Kṛṣṇa's or Rādhā's or the Divine Couple's ten or eighteen-syllable mantra. Rūpa Gosvāmin mentions in the *Rādhā-kṛṣṇa-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā* that just as certain names of Kṛṣṇa are great mantras, so too those of the eternal devotees who serve Kṛṣṇa in their eternal forms can be seen as mantras that bring about the desired mood.

For example: “O lover of the gopīs! Please take up residence in my heart and senses!” is a prayer with a name of Kṛṣṇa which has a relation to the desired mood and is thus a “great mantra” or *mahā-mantra*, one that is superior to any other. Hearing and remembering the names, forms, qualities and activities are material causes of the desired mood and so are to be considered obligatory activities on the path that follows passion. Though remembering is considered to be primary, it is understood to be dependent on chanting. By chanting is meant, according to the definition of the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, the loud utterance of the Lord's names, form, virtues and activities, etc.⁴⁰⁸ In this age of quarrel, kīrtana is the dominant form of devotional activity and has been described as such in all scriptures.

⁴⁰⁷ Source?

⁴⁰⁸ *nāma-rūpa-guṇādīnām uccair bhāṣā tu kīrtanam* | BRS 1.2.145

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The Lord says that any vow performed in his name is austerity. Vows such as fasting on *ekādaśī* and Kṛṣṇa's birth ceremony (Janmāṣṭamī) are considered to be the instrumental or efficient cause of *prema*.

10.43 Practices favourable to the development of one's desired mood

Wearing a necklace of tulasī beads, the tilaka markings of *gopī-candana*, stamping the body with the names of Kṛṣṇa and the imprints of his feet, etc., are all activities that are favorable to the development of one's desired mood, as are worship of the tulasī bush by circumambulation and prostrations, etc.

10.44 Practices not unfavourable to one's desired mood

Offering respects to the cows, the sacred fig tree, the myrobalan tree, brāhmaṇas can be considered helpful to the development of one's desired goal because they are not unfavourable to it. Service to the Vaiṣṇavas also has the same characteristics as these activities. All of these activities should be considered obligatory.

10.45 Practices inimical to the desired mood

Viśvanātha Cakravartin ends his discourse on the various types of devotional practice by clarifying the question of cause and effect in devotion. He explains that since bhakti is itself eternal, conscious and blissful, it is unchanging; therefore, whenever bhakti is called the cause of *prema* this is simply an effort to explain a difficult subject matter. By way of example, he compares the relation between bhakti and *prema* to the use of the words *vibhāva*, *anubhāva*, *sāttvika* and *sañcārī* to designate rasa in the writings on aesthetics. In fact these are ingredients that combine to become delight. Similarly, when bhakti interpenetrates the devotee, it becomes *prema*, they are in fact one and the same thing.

Chapter Eleven

The spiritual body

In the tenth section of the *Prīti-sandarbhā*, Jīva Gosvāmin writes: “In the spiritual world, the Supreme Lord has unlimited spiritual forms, all are expansions of himself illuminating that world. With each one of those forms, the Lord enjoys pastimes with a single individual liberated soul.”⁴⁰⁹ These liberated souls therefore have spiritual bodies like that of the Lord.

In the Lord’s abode, there are an unlimited number of forms, all suitable for rendering service to him. Every one of those forms is non-different from him, being expanded from his effulgence; each one is eternal, full of consciousness and bliss. They are the crowning, central jewels of the spiritual world—its very life. These unlimited spiritual bodies are the perfected forms of the liberated souls which are awarded to an individual, according to his taste, when he reaches the state of absolute liberation. This state is called attainment of the spiritual body. All these spiritual bodies are eternal for they exist even before the liberated souls enter them and will continue to exist ever afterward. However, prior to the entry of the liberated soul they are in an inactive state.

As all of the unlimited souls are servants of the Lord, each one of them has a spiritual body in the Lord’s abode just suitable for rendering service to the Lord. When an individual becomes qualified for direct service to the Lord by the grace of the Goddess of Devotion, then the Supreme Lord awards him that spiritual body.

The system of spiritual practices followed by the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava school call for the practitioner to receive *siddha-praṇālī* from his spiritual master. From this *siddha-praṇālī*, the disciple becomes aware of the nature of his spiritual body. Dhyāna-candra Gosvāmin writes in his *Paddhati* that the *siddha-praṇālī* has eleven aspects (*ekādaśa-bhāva*). These consist of the devotee’s (mañjarī’s) (1) name, (2) her bodily colour, (3) dress, (4) age, (5) relation, (6) the particular group to which she belongs, (7) orders, (8) service, (9) highest attainment, (10) situation as a protected handmaid, and finally (11) residence.⁴¹⁰

No one should think that this is nothing more than imagination; the spiritual body is eternal and true. The spiritual master knows his disciple’s transcendental identification through the power of his meditation and then reveals it to him as the form in which he will be accepted by the Lord. When the disciple meditates on the transcendental activities of the Lord through a sense of identification with that spiritual body, mentally serving the

⁴⁰⁹ *vaikuṅṭhasya bhagavato jyotir-amśa-bhūtā vaikuṅṭha-loka-śobha-rūpā yā anantā mūrtayas tatra vartante, tāsām ekayā saha muktasyaikasya mūrtir bhagavatā kriyata iti vaikuṅṭhasya mūrtir iva mūrtir yeṣām ity uktam | PrītiS 10*

⁴¹⁰ *nāma rūpam vayo veśo sambandho yūtha eva ca | ājñā sevā parākāṣṭhā pālya-dāśī nivāsakaḥ | (Dhyānacandra’s Paddhati, verse 93)*

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Holy Couple in that body, then gradually his absorption in identification with the material body is correspondingly reduced.

Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura has said, “That which you think of during your practice is the very thing that will be attained at the time of perfection. It is only a question of its ripening : when one’s desires have ripened he attains *prema-bhakti*, and for as long as they are unripe he remains on the platform of practice. This is the essence of understanding the truth about pure devotional service.”⁴¹¹

The Lord also states in the Bhagavad-gītā: “Whatever one happens to be thinking of at the time of departing from this body will determine the state to which he will attain in his next birth, for one’s desires do not leave him at that time, but remain and determine his future life.”⁴¹²

Until the disciple comes to the point of *prema*, he does not actually attain this *siddha-deha*, but has to take repeated births in the material world. Viśvanātha Cakravartin explains in his commentary on the *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*, “Those persons who are practicing *rāgānuga-bhakti* at the present time are on various stages of advancement such as *niṣṭhā*, *ruci*, *āsakti*, etc. If they should at any future lifetime attain to pure love (*prema*) then they will become fully qualified to serve the Lord. It is only then that they will receive a body appropriate for rendering such service and will become actual associates of the Lord.”⁴¹³

The process for achievement is as follows according to Viśvanātha: “Such a practitioner of *rāgānugā bhakti*, when he finally attains *prema* due to his dedicated performance of *sādhana* and is completely absorbed in the anxiety of desire, even though he has not attained the higher stages of love of God, such as *sneha*, etc. (which are actually impossible to attain in a material body), then the Lord himself appears along with his eternal associates and gives a direct vision of himself as well as the opportunity to engage in direct service—even if only once in a dream. Then he gives a spiritual body (in this case, the body of a *gopī*) just in the way one was given to Nārada Muni at the time of his death. After that, when the Lord makes his appearance in some material universe, his internal potency, *Yogamāyā*, causes that very body to be born in the womb of some *gopī* in the *Vṛndāvana* of that world. Then in that body, the higher stages of *prema* are

⁴¹¹*sādhane bhāvibe yāhā siddha-dehe pābe tāhā,*
pakvāpakva mātra se vicār |

pākile se prema-bhakti, apakve sādhan gati,
bhakti lakṣaṇa tattva-sār || Prema-bhakti-candrikā

⁴¹²*yaṁ yaṁ vāpi smaran bhāvaṁ tyajanty ante kalevaram |*

taṁ tam evāiti kaunteya sadā tad-bhāva-bhāvitaḥ || BG 8.6

⁴¹³*ye idānīntanā rāgānugīya-sādhanavanto niṣṭhā-rucy-āsakty-ādi-kaṣṣārūḍhatayā kasmimścij janmani yadi jāta-premaṇaḥ syus te tarhi bhagavat-sākṣāt-sevā-yogyās tad-dehānta-kṣaṇa eva... tat-parikara-pādavim prāpsyanti || Ānanda-candrika to UN 3.49 (Kāvya-mālā edition, p. 68)*

realizable by the devotee.”⁴¹⁴

Thus Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura prays, “When will I take birth as a daughter in the house of Ahira Gopa, and when will I be married in the village of Yāvaṭa?”⁴¹⁵ Whenever a practitioner of *rāgānuga-bhakti* attains *prema* (which causes the experience of internal and external full spiritual bliss, direct meeting with the Lord and the direct apprehension or appreciation of his all-attractive qualities) then he goes and takes birth in the womb of a *gopī* in some material universe where the Lord’s activities are being performed.

11.2 The spiritualization of the devotional aspirant’s body

In the meantime, the body of a devotee (whether male or female) engaged in chanting the Holy Names and other devotional practices becomes progressively free from the material qualities. I am explaining this with evidence from the scriptures for the ultimate and greatest benefit of the devotional aspirants. One who is aware of the spiritual nature of the devotee’s apparently material body will keep free from offences and will thus protect himself on his path to spiritual achievement. Thinking a devotee’s body to be material is the cause of unlimited offence, with the result that one falls deeper into material consciousness and loses all hope of attaining pure devotional service. Narottama Dās Ṭhākur sings in his *Prārthanā*, “An offence at the lotus feet of the Lord can be counteracted by chanting his Holy Names, but an offence at the feet of the devotee has no remedy.”⁴¹⁶ Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja also says, “If the mad elephant offence to the Vaiṣṇavas should chance into your garden, then your carefully nurtured seedling of devotion will be uprooted and all its leaves torn to shreds.”⁴¹⁷

In this Age of Quarrel, in which Caitanya Mahāprabhu himself has appeared, even the most sinful persons like drunkards, etc., in some birth attain purification and liberation, but one who is offensive to devotees will never have such fortune. The *Caitanya-bhāgavata* says, “Lord Gaurasundara delivers everyone except for the blasphemer who is the most heinous sinner of all.”⁴¹⁸ Blasphemy is specifically mentioned here, but it should be considered as an indicator of the six different types of offence to the devotees. “Even a

⁴¹⁴atra kramah rāgānurāgīya-samyak-sādhana-niratāyotpanna-premṇe bhaktāya cira-samaya-vidhṛta-sākṣāt-sevābhilāṣa-mahotkaṇṭhāya kṛpayā bhagavatā sa-parikara-sva-darśanaṁ sevā-prāpty-anubhāvakaṁ alabdha-snehādi-prema-bhedāyāpi sādḥaka-dehe’pi svapne’pi sākṣād api sakṛd diyata eva | tataś ca śrī-nāradāyeva cid-ānanda-mayī gopikākāra-tad-bhāva-vibhāvitā tanuś ca diyate | tataś ca vṛndāvaniya-prakāṣa-prakāṣe kṛṣṇa-parikara-prādurbhāva-samaye saiva tanur yoga-māyayā gopikā-garbhād udbhāvayate ukta-nyāyena snehādi-prema-bheda-siddhy-artham || (ibid., p. 69)

⁴¹⁵kabe vṛṣabhānu pure, āhīra-gopera ghare, tanayā haṅyā janamiba |
yāvaṭe āmāra kabe, e pāṇi-grahaṇa habe | *Prārthanā*

⁴¹⁶hari-sthāne aparādhe tāre hari-nām |
tomā-sthāne aparādhe nahika eḍān || *Prārthanā*

⁴¹⁷yadi vaiṣṇava-aparādha uṭhe hāti mātā |
upāde vā chidī yā sukhi yāy pātā || CC 2.19.156

⁴¹⁸sabhāre karibe gaurasundara uddhār |
vyatirikta vaiṣṇava-ninduk durācār || CBh

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drunkard will sooner or later attain the Lord's mercy, but one who spends his time criticizing others is not destined for such good fortune. The blasphemer of the devotee will have to suffer the torment of a thousand hells over and over again."⁴¹⁹

Here the following question arises: When a devotee attains *prema* and enters the eternal pastimes of the Lord then his body composed of the five elements "dies." This is seen practically and is mentioned also in connection with the story of Nārada. Still some knowledgeable Vaiṣṇavas say that this death of the devotees is false, how is this possible? How can one deny the death of the material body?

The answer is that factually the devotee has no material body. As Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu himself says in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*:

A devotee's body should never be thought of as material. It is transcendental and made of spiritual substance. At the time of initiation, when the devotee offers himself up to the Lord, then the Lord makes him equal to himself. He makes the devotee's body spiritual like his own so that the devotee can engage in the service of his lotus feet [otherwise, how can he serve him?]⁴²⁰

In the *Bṛhad-Bhāgavatāmṛta* also, Maheśa says to Nārada,

O Nārada! I consider that wherever there are devotees, that is Vaikuṅṭha. Even if they are in the material world, it is not to be considered inferior to Vaikuṅṭha. This is my own realization from direct experience and I don't feel it necessary to offer proofs from scripture. My experience is sufficient evidence. Due to drinking the nectar of devotion to Kṛṣṇa they have completely forgotten the material body and everything connected with it and thus that body becomes transformed into something other-worldly or spiritual, just as took place in the case of Dhruva Mahārāja. It is just as with the drinking of certain potions—the body becomes transformed.⁴²¹

⁴¹⁹ madyapera gatio āche kona kāle |
para-carcakera gati dekhi nāi bhāle || CBh
sahasra saṁkhyaka yama yātanā yateke |
punaḥ punaḥ kari bhuñje vaiṣṇava-nindake || CB
⁴²⁰ prabhu kahe vaiṣṇavera deha prakṛta kabhu nay |
aprākṛta deha bhaktera cid-ānanda-may ||
dikṣā-kāle bhakta kare ātma-samarpaṇ |
dei kāle kṛṣṇa tāre kare ātma-sam ||
sei deha tānr kare cid-ānanda-may |
aprākṛta dehe tār caraṇa bhajay || CC 3.4.191-193
⁴²¹ nāradaḥam idam manye tādr̥śānām yataḥ sthitiḥ |
bhavet sa eva vaikuṅṭho loko nātra vicāranā ||
kṛṣṇa-bhakti-sudhā-pānād deha-daihika-vismṛteḥ |
teṣāṁ bhautika-dehe'pi sac-cid-ānanda-rūpatā || BBhA 1.3.60-61.

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The transformation of the devotee's body is a gradual process. In his commentary on the words "they gave up their bodies of material elements" in *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* (10.29.10), Viśvanātha presents the following argument:

Other than a devotee surrendered to the Lord, no one, not the jñānin, nor the yogin, nor any other transcendentalist is actually completely free from the material qualities. This was stated by the Lord to Uddhava (BhP 11.25.26). One should understand this in the following way: the devotee's body is considered to be *nirguṇa* because, on the order of his spiritual master, all of his senses are engaged in the transcendental service of the Lord his ears in hearing about Kṛṣṇa, his tongue in chanting the Lord's names and glories, his mind in remembering Kṛṣṇa, his entire body in prostrating himself in supplication to the Deity and his hands in various types of service. Thus, because all his senses are engaged in receiving transcendental materials connected with the Supreme Lord, they also become transcendental. On the other hand, as much as the senses receive non-spiritual data, they will be influenced by material qualities. As a result, from the beginning of the devotional process, the devotee's body is partly material and partly spiritual. According to the indications of the Bhāgavata verse (11.2.40) which compares advancement in devotional service to the satisfaction felt by a hungry man while eating, his gaining of strength and relief from the discomforts of hunger, one can understand that the process is progressive, for as much as one has eaten, that is the proportion to which he will feel these beneficial effects. Thus, as one progresses in spiritual life, the spiritualized portion of his body increases and the material portion is gradually reduced. When one reaches the stage of *prema* then his body is completely spiritualized and there is no mundane portion left. Thus the death of a devotee that is seen by all is to be known as nothing more than a kind of illusion and not at all real. The non-devotees consider that the devotee's body must also die. This false doctrine is maintained by the Lord just to keep devotional service closed to atheistic and self-interested persons. An example of this is the so-called "Club Pastime" of the Lord in which he created the illusion of the demise of the Yadu dynasty. One should know that this too is non-factual. On some occasions, the Lord does not make such an illusory show but rather seeks to illustrate the glories of devotional service, as in the case of Dhruva. Dhruva went to Vaikuṅṭha in the selfsame body, thus it is to be concluded that the apparent death of Nārada was also an illusion created by the Lord.⁴²²

Translation in pursuance of Sanātana Gosvāmin's commentary.

⁴²² *ayam atra vivekaḥ | gurūpadiṣṭa-bhakti-ārambha-daśāta eva bhaktānām śravaṇa-kīrtana-smaraṇa-daṇḍavat-praṇāti-paricaryādi-mayyām śuddha-bhaktāu śrotrādiṣu praviṣṭāyām satyām nirguṇo mad-apāsraya iti bhagavad-ukter bhaktāḥ sva-śrotrādibhir bhagavad-guṇādikām viśayī-kurvan nirguṇo bhavati vyavahārika-*

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The next question then is, what is to be gained by thinking that a devotee's body is beyond the material qualities? And conversely, what is lost by thinking it to be material? Why do disease, etc., manifest in a devotee's body if it is transcendental?

The response to these questions is as follows: By thinking a devotee's body to be transcendental, one's material existence comes to an end. To think it material results in increasing material entanglement and hellish suffering. Evidence is the *Padma-purāna* verse beginning with *vaiṣṇave jāti-buddhiḥ*. The Lord allows the appearance of death and diseases in a devotee's body just to increase the materialists' entanglement: it should be considered a test of faith. Caitanya Mahāprabhu said the very same thing in connection with the appearance of sores on Sanātana Gosvāmin's body: "The Lord Kṛṣṇa made these pus-filled sores appear on Sanātana's body just to test me. If I had not embraced him due to disgust at seeing them, I would have committed an offence and been punishable by the Lord."⁴²³

Anyone, whether male, female, boy or girl, brāhmaṇa or any other caste or nationality, immediately rises above the material qualities when he engages in the service of the Lord. For this reason, all devotees should be treated with the greatest affection and reverence; not doing so will result in hellish existence, even if one performs one's devotional activities most perfectly. This is the conclusion of the devotional scriptures.

The Lord said, "If I hear the Holy Name coming from the lips of any person at all, I consider him to be worshipable, for he is far better than the rest of the people. Whoever utters the Holy Name even once is to be considered a Vaiṣṇava and I offer him the greatest respect."⁴²⁴

From this statement of the Lord, it is evident that any person, whoever he may be, if he says the Lord's name even once, is worshipable and the best among men. This shows the glory of the Holy Name and devotional practice more than anything else.

śabdādīkam api viṣayī-kurvan guṇamayo'pi bhavatīti bhakta-dehasyāmsena nirguṇatvaṃ guṇamayatvaṃ ca syāt | tataś ca bhaktiḥ pareśānubhavo vivraktir iti tuṣṭiḥ puṣṭiḥ kṣud-apāyo'nughāsam iti nyāyena nirguṇa-dehāmsānām ādhikya-tāratamyāṃ syāt | tena ca guṇamaya-dehāmsānām kṣīnatva-tāratamyāṃ syāt sampūrṇa-premny utpanne tu guṇamaya-dehāmsēṣu naṣṭeṣu samyak-nirguṇa eva dehaḥ syāt tad api sthūla-deha-pātas tu bahirmukha-matokhātābhāvārtham bhakti-yogasya rahasyatva-rakṣanārtham ca bhagavataiva māyayā pradarśyate yathā mauṣala-līlāyām yādavānām | kvacit tu bhakti-yogotkarṣa-jñāpanārtham na darśyate yathā dhruvādīnām | atra pramāṇam ekādaśe pañcaviṃśatitāmādhyaḃe śraddhādayo nirguṇā guṇamayāś ceti pradarśayatā yeneme nirjitāḥ saumya guṇa jīvena cittajāḥ | bhakti-yogena man-niṣṭo mad-bhāvāya prapadyate || ity anena bhaktyaiva guṇa-mayādi-vastūnām nirjayo nāśa evokto bhagavatā |

⁴²³sanātanera dehe kṛṣṇa kaṇḍu upajāñā | āmā parikṣite ihāñ dilā pathāiyā || ghṛṇā kari āliṅgana nā karitāñ yabe | kṛṣṇa-ṭhāñi aparādha-daṇḍa pāitāñ tabe || CC 3.4.195-6

⁴²⁴prabhu kahe yāra mukhe śuni ekabār |

kṛṣṇa-nāma pūjya sei śreṣṭha sabākār ||

ateva yāra mukhe eka kṛṣṇa-nām |

sei vaiṣṇava kari tāra parama sammāñ || CC 2.15.110-111

Manjari svarupa nirupana

In the *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, Vṛndāvana Dāsa writes,

If someone does not worship the devotee but approaches the Lord with obeisances, the Lord does not forgive his offences. The Lord will deliver everyone except the rascal who blasphemes the devotees. 84,000 gods of death wait to punish the blasphemer again and again. The Lord says, “If someone speaks ill of my devotees, even if they chant my name that is like a desire-tree, that Name will be the cause of his demise.”⁴²⁵

Thus the conclusion is that because the body of a devotee is not material, to blaspheme him is a greatly punishable offence. Jīva Gosvāmin says in his comments on the verse *etān nirvidya-mānānām* (BhP 2.1.11) in which the Holy Name is glorified as the best process of spiritual realization that even a great devotee if he commits offences to the Holy Name can be relegated to a hellish existence. Therefore one should engage in devotional life avoiding the ten offences to the Holy Name amongst which the six types of offences to the Vaiṣṇavas are included.

11.3 The spiritual nature of Kṛṣṇa’s body and activities

Someone might think that Kṛṣṇa’s own body is not entirely spiritual. After all, he is enjoying intercourse with Rādhā and the other gopīs, which is not generally considered to be a spiritual activity. Śrīdhara Svāmin writes in his commentary on the Bhāgavata that the Lord lost no semen in his affairs with the gopīs, but enjoyed intercourse while retaining the semen.⁴²⁶ On the other hand, in Dvārakā, Kṛṣṇa had many offspring by his wives as is the rule in the material universe. It is said in many places that the gopīs were overcome by lusty feelings when separated from Kṛṣṇa and that he also becomes afflicted by such feelings in their absence. It is also said in the *Govinda-līlāmṛta* that he may attract the whole universe including Cupid, but when separated from Rādhā, he himself becomes bewildered by Cupid’s darts.⁴²⁷ Hundreds of other similar statements can be found throughout the Vaiṣṇava literature.

⁴²⁵ vaiṣṇava nā pūje yei namaskāra kari |
tāra pāpa kadāca nā kṣamā kare hari ||
sabhāre karibe gaurasundara uddhār |
vyatirikta vaiṣṇava-ninduka durācār ||
caurāśi sahasra yama yātanā yateke |
punaḥ punaḥ kari bhuñje vaiṣṇava ninduke ||
mora dāsere ye sakṛt nindā kare |
mora nāma kalpa-taru tāhāre saṁhāre || CBh

⁴²⁶ 10.33.26. Comments on the words baddha-sauratāḥ

⁴²⁷ rādhā-saṅge yadā bhāti tadā madana-mohanaḥ |
anyathā viśva-moho’pi svayaṁ madana-mohitaḥ || GLA 13.32

Manjari svarupa nirupana

Many texts using the word *kāma* have been quoted in this book as well, including one from Sanātana’s commentary on *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* where it was said that lust is well known to be the cause of the destruction of all kinds of auspicious enterprises and was also the cause of the destruction of the gopīs’ material lives.⁴²⁸ Following the lines of this argument, one comes to the conclusion that what is called lust in the material world in the affairs of men and women is called *prema* in Vṛndāvana, that the distinction is only semantic. Moreover, the scripture tells us to imitate those Vṛndāvana pastimes.⁴²⁹ From this evidence, we can understand that Kṛṣṇa and his amorous activities with the gopīs are all material, for the sexual act is a purely mundane thing.

In response to this argument, it must be said that to think of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes as material is a sure way of falling into a hellish existence. In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* it is stated that there is no greater offence than thinking of the Lord’s body as mundane. One should avoid this dangerous type of blasphemy. “Whoever thinks that Kṛṣṇa’s body is a creation of this illusory material world has committed a great offence, this is the teaching of Caitanya Mahāprabhu.”⁴³⁰

Viśvanātha Cakravartin also comments in the *Bhāgavata* that anyone who thinks of the Lord’s body as material is a diseased soul.⁴³¹ Those persons who debate the Lord’s carnal knowledge of women, whether or not he lost semen, how he produced so many children, etc., are not devotees. They are not even philosophers. Whether or not they carry the external signs of a devotee or philosopher, they should be known as diseased souls.

Some point to the fact that wise Vaiṣṇavas say that sexual activity takes place where there is love or *prema*, and that when they hear about these activities they display ecstatic reactions and then say that they are not at fault if they do not understand this sexual love. In answer to this we say that if they do not understand it, then why do they contemplate and meditate on the transcendental forms and activities? Those whose intelligence is very impure have been forbidden to even meditate on the four-armed form of the Lord. Different types of meditation are prescribed

for persons on different levels of purification: “Those whose intelligence is very impure have no authority to meditate even on the four-armed form of the Lord but should meditate on the universal form.”⁴³² If this is the case, then how could such impure-minded persons possibly have any right or ability to conceive of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa’s intimate

⁴²⁸Above, page xx

⁴²⁹BhP 10.33.37. This statement is based on the Sahajiyās’ interpretation of the verse. The orthodox interpretation is given below

⁴³⁰cidānanda vighraha kṛṣṇera māyika kari māni |
ei baḍa pāpa satya caitanyera vāṇi || CC 2.25

⁴³¹viṣṇor dehe māyikatva-buddhimanto durātmana eva jñeyāḥ |
commentary on BhP 2.2.18

Viśvanātha’s

⁴³²citta-śuddhi-tāratamyenaiva dhyāna-tāratamym uktam tenāyantāsuddha-cittasya nātrādhikārah kintu vairāja-dhāraṇyām eveti vyañjitaḥ || Viśvanātha’s commentary to BhP 2.2.13

affairs? Because such transcendental pastimes are not manifested in the hearts of such impure persons, they think of them as mundane and go to ruin.

Sanātana Gosvāmin in his *Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī* commentary on the Bhāgavata's tenth book, has explained the word *saurata* (glossed as “semen” by Śrīdhara) as meaning the different attractive movements and gestures of the gopīs. This meaning of the word is actually more widely used than its meaning as “final element” or semen. Śrīdhara Svāmin himself explains the same word in another context as having the sense of “romantic conversation and joking.” Therefore, the meaning of *saurata* as semen is not really acceptable. The question may be then raised why did Śrīdhara give an unacceptable definition of a word? Sanātana himself answers that Śrīdhara simply wanted to prove that the Lord is not subject to material lust. Thus the definition has been rejected as completely illogical.

In the *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.29) it has been shown that the gopīs have forms made of spiritual emotion. Kṛṣṇa is the greatest of the self-satisfied souls he needs nothing and no one for his pleasure; yet, being attracted by the gopīs' *bhāva*, he enjoys his līlā with them. Similarly, the queens of Dvārakā are all parts of his internal pleasure-giving potency and because they are thus a part of him, he accepts subservience to them and enjoys with them. Śukadeva and other great sages who are beyond the touch of material attractions glorify these amorous affairs of the Supreme Lord and become overwhelmed with transcendental symptoms of ecstasy. To think these affairs to be material is a symptom of ignorance and greatly offensive. The Bhāgavata states that hearing and chanting about the romantic pastimes of the Lord results in the quick uprooting of all material lusty desires that are described as the disease of the soul. If they were mundane activities of lust, then how could such an effect take place? Uddhava and other great devotees and sages beyond the bondage of material life all desire to attain the loving fervor felt by the gopīs for Kṛṣṇa. How can this most highly elevated platform of transcendental love be compared to mundane eros? As soon as a devotional practitioner develops attachment for Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet he immediately becomes free from all concupiscence, then how can the Lord's eternal associates be said to have any trace of material lust? Just as some persons have two names, so also the love of the gopīs sometimes goes by the name of lust as a result of its external similarity to the erotic activities of this world: “The spontaneous love of the gopīs should never be considered mundane lust, even though it has been given the name *kāma* due to its similarity to mundane eros.”⁴³³

From the philosophical point of view, the two are produced from entirely different sources: *Kāma* is the product of the external energy of the Lord, whereas the loving sentiment of the gopīs is produced from the Lord's personal, internal potency. “Therefore, there is a wide gap of difference between “love” and “lust.” Lust (*kāma*) is the deepest

⁴³³sahaja gopī a prema nahe prakṛta kām |
kāma-kṛīḍāra sāmye tāre kahi kām || CC 2.8.215

darkness of ignorance while love (*prema*) is like the luminous sun.”⁴³⁴

Kāma and *prema* are not of the same nature, nor do they have the same effects. The amorous dealings of the gopīs with Kṛṣṇa are like the sun without any cloud covering, whereas the conjugal relations of men and women in this world is comparable to dense darkness. By meditating on such mundane erotic affairs, a person becomes internally and externally covered by that darkness. For this reason, it is not recommended for those on the path of saintly life. How can the natures of lust and love be one and the same? Those persons who say that the process of *rāgānuga-bhakti* is to engage in extramarital sexual adventures without ejaculation of semen are advising a despicable path of so-called spiritual practice that has no basis in any scripture. The words in the Bhāgavata, *yā śrutvā tat-paro bhavet* do not mean imitating Kṛṣṇa’s activities. The purport is that one should become absorbed in hearing, chanting and remembering that līlā. Imitating the līlā of the Lord for one who is not the Supreme Controller is a sure cause of degradation. Even mental imitation results in inevitable falldown, what to speak of gross physical acts. Kṛṣṇa’s form is solidified or embodied existence, consciousness and bliss. He is the personification of all ecstatic emotions; the gopīs are similarly transcendental and thus their pastimes together are supramundane. As long as one has any erogenous sensation or transformation in the genital organs, i.e., even without direct female association, those whose genitals are given to transformations while awake or asleep due to subconscious lusty desires are advised not to meditate on the Lord’s *raho-līlā* or most intimate erotic pastimes. For such devotees these transcendental pastimes will produce a material reaction due to his deep conditioning. That those who associate with women constantly will be unable to appreciate its transcendental nature goes without saying.

That lust causes the ruin of all one’s efforts in life is a well-known adage. The meaning of this is: “Kāma or lust means the desire for the gratification of one’s own senses whereas *prema* or love means the desire for gratification of Kṛṣṇa’s senses.” Desire for sense gratification is lust when the senses are those of this body; when the senses are Kṛṣṇa’s then it is *prema*. The results of *kāma* are self-destruction and finally residence in hell. The results of *prema* are that one’s material existence comes to an end and the Lord himself feels obligated to such a devotee. Sense gratification is not bad in itself—it is only bad when it is selfish. The feelings that Rādhā and the gopīs have for Kṛṣṇa are all pure love or *prema* and any words indicating lust, eros, Cupid, etc., are all to be taken as synonyms of *prema*. The arrows of Cupid and other such expressions indicate only that the Lord becomes agitated and helpless in separation from Rādhā. This is a symptom of *prema* called *viraha* or “separation.” The words *kāma* (*madana*, etc.) also indicate a great indomitable desire, i.e. Kṛṣṇa and the gopīs have such an intense desire for the sight and service of one another that this desire has been given the name of lust. Nevertheless, it should be understood that all such desires are born of pure love.

⁴³⁴ataeva kāma premer bahuta antar |
kāma andha-tama prema nirmala bhāskar || CC 1.4.171

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The definition of lust given in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, namely that lust is the desire for one's own happiness, can be considered on both the spiritual as well as material planes. One's own happiness can be transcendental and spiritual and the result of contact with Kṛṣṇa's internal potency. Such spiritual "selfish desire" can be detected in the persons of the Dvārakā queens and Kubjā. Even though such a spiritual mood is desirable for the transcendentalists, it cannot fully influence the Lord. Mundane lust, the desire for material sense pleasure, is exceedingly impure and the root cause of all ruination. Materially attached persons take the Lord's affairs with the gopīs or the queens of Dvārakā or the goddesses of fortune to be the same as their self-centred, egoistic sensuality. Such conceptions are the results of offences to the Holy Name. In the *Mādhurya-kādambinī*, Viśvanātha quotes a verse from the purāṇas which states that the result of offences to the Holy Name are that one's auspicious activities are brought to nil and that one sees the Lord's name, form, pastimes, etc., as material. Kṛṣṇa's offspring are all eternally liberated souls. Like Kṛṣṇa, they manifest the bodily transformations of age in the course of pastimes that are undergone whenever they appear with him. Can the intercourse of the supramundane Lord and his queens be seen in the light of mundane speculation? The combination of ovum and spermatazoa causes the birth of a child, but here we are dealing with spiritual bodies, so where is the place for ova and sperm? The mundane and the impersonalists have no faith in the other-worldly nature of the Lord that is proclaimed in all the scriptures. Those who are devotees and *rasikas* will be able to appreciate these things, but those who are bewildered by Māyā and foolish will never be able to comprehend.

*yasya kṛpā-lavenāpi
janaḥ sarvajñatām vrajet |
tac chrī-kuṇḍasya tuṣṭy-artham
prabandho'yaṁ sadāstu me ||⁴³⁵*

May this essay be of pleasure
to Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kuṇḍa
by whose slightest mercy
anyone can attain omniscience.

⁴³⁵This is a Sanskrit verse written by the author himself.

Glossary and Index of Sanskrit Terms

abhimāna : “self-conception.” 25.

abhirūpatā : exquisiteness; “the unique quality which causes the beautiful properties of one's own body to be transmitted to other objects which are situated in proximity to it. 99-100.

adhirūḍha-mahā-bhāva : the highest perfection of devotional love, which exists in Rādhā alone. (Cf. UN 14.170). 87

ahamgrahopāsana : worship performed in a state of self-identification with a perfect devotee or the Lord himself. 172.

aiśvarya : supreme majesty, the qualities of īśvara. 19, 21.

ajāta-ruci : a person whose devotional taste has not developed. See *ruci*. 2.

ālabhana : prop, support. 16, 85.

alamkāra : lit. decoration, ornament; (1) a subgroup of *anubhāvas* (UN 15.2-5), 36; (2) in Sanskrit rhetoric, a figure of speech, 64.

ālasya : laziness; one of 33 vyabhicārins unsuitable to the erotic mood of sacred rapture. 76, 126; *ālasyanubhāva*, 106.

anubhāva : expressions of love. 16-17, 24, 36, 112, 136, 150, 157, 160, 163-5, 185.

ānukūlya : lit. “conduciveness”; favorable act, 168.

āsakti : “attachment”; the seventh stage of Rūpa Gosvāmin's progressive development of *prema* (BRS 1.4.15) ; 158, 188.

asama-snehā : those friends who do not treat Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa equally. Identified with *mañjarīs* by Narottama Dāsa. 75.

asaṅgati : “incongruity, improbability”; a figure of speech of that name. 64

āśraya : lit. “place of refuge, shelter”. 70, 136; *āśraya-vibhāva*: the resting place of the dominant emotion, i.e. the person who is experiencing the emotion. 16, 170.;

āśraya-tattva : the devotee of the Lord, 33.

aṣṭa-sakhī : Rādhā's eight principal girlfriends. See *parama-preṣṭha-sakhī*. 56, 74.

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augrya : “nastiness.” One of the 33 *vyabhicārins* not suitable to the erotic mood of sacred rapture. 76.

autsukya : “eagerness”; one of the 33 *vyabhicārins*. 127.

avahitthā : “concealment”; one of the 33 *vyabhicārins*. 128.

ayoga-rasa : the sentiment of separation as experienced in *dāsyā-rasa*. 131, 153.

bakula : a tree with small white, pungent flowers. 118.

bhagavān : The Supreme Lord, possessed of six opulences. 19-20.

bhakti : devotion. 185.

bhāva : “feeling”; the preliminary stage of love of God, preceding *prema*, 23, 66, 157-8, 168; “mood,” as in *sakhī-bhāva* (q.v.), *sakhya-bhāva* (q.v.), *dāsyā-bhāva* (q.v.), *gopī-bhāva* (q.v.), etc. 54, 196; “the first transformation symptomatic of the awakening of erotic love.” 36.

bhāvaka-bhakta : devotee in the process of becoming; syn. *sādhaka*. 152.

bhāvollāsā rati : “love which is enlivened by their feelings”. The dominant mood of the *mañjarīs*. 5, 8, 10, 70-80, 171, 175.

bhāvya-bhakta : ideal or future devotee. 152.

brahmacārin : celibate. 45.

brahman : The Supreme Truth, usually as experienced in his impersonal aspect. 180.

brahmānanda : the joy found in the transcendentalist's realization of universal spiritual identity, 1-2.

cakora, (fem. *cakorī*) : “the Greek partridge,” fabled to subsist upon moonbeams. 2, 109, 137, 148.

campaka (Beng. *cāmpā*) : a tree bearing a fragrant yellow flower with five large petals (*Michelia champaca*) = *plumeria*. 141

carita-uddīpana : “inspirators arising from the activities of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. 106.

cātaka : “sparrow,” fabled to drink only from the rainclouds. 2, 109.

caturvyūha : the first four manifestations of Viṣṇu for the creation of the world: Vāsudeva,

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Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. 28.

dāsikā : “maid-servant” = mañjarī

dāsyā-bhāva : “attitude of a servant.” 180.

dāsyā-rasa : “the pleasure of serving.” 131, 170.

deva : god, demigod. 27.

dhīra-lalita : “the charmer.” 22, 87.

dūtī : “messenger, go-between.” 44.

dvādaśābhūṣaṇa : “twelve ornaments' worn by Rādhā. 106.

ekādaśa-bhāva : The eleven characteristics of the aspiring mañjarī's *siddha-deha*: (1) name, (2) her bodily colour, (3) dress, (4) age, (5) relation, (6) the particular group to which she belongs, (7) orders, (8) service, (9) highest attainment, (10) situation as a protected handmaid, and finally (11) residence. 187.

ekādaśī : the holy day of the Vaiṣṇavas, held on the eleventh day of the moon's waxing or waning cycle. 184.

gāḍha-laulya : ardent longing; the qualification for access to the *rāgānugā bhakti* path = *lobha*. 175, 177.

garva : “pride”; one of the 33 *vyabhicārins*, 128.

gauṇa : secondary, peripheral; *gauṇa-kāmaika-rūpā*, 175.

gopī-bhāva : the mood of the cowherd girls, 4.

gopī-candana : a yellow coloured clay used in the making of sectarian markings, *tilaka*. 184.

guñja : the red or black berries of the *Abrus pectorius*. Necklaces of these berries are favoured by K.r.s.na. 141,

guru-rūpā sakhī : guru in the form of a girlfriend whom one follows in one's *mānasī sevā*, 137, 161.

harṣa : jubilation; one of the 33 *vyabhicārins*. 130, 163.

hlādinī-śakti : God's pleasure-giving potency. 3, 27, 168.

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jāti-buddhi : ascribing caste [to a Vaiṣṇava, who is beyond material classifications], one of the offences to the Holy Name, 192.

jīva : the living being, the individual soul, 92.

jñāna : knowledge, esp. that of brahman, 180-1.

jñāna-bhakta : “the devotee in knowledge,” e.g. Bharata, 4

jñānin : the seeker of knowledge, 181.

jyotis : light. 86.

kadamba : A large tree with yellow-orange blossoms (*Nauclea Cadamba*). 108.

kāma : desire, esp. erotic or sexual desire, eros. 4, 26-29, 39, 178, 194, 196-7.

kāma-deva : the god of love, Cupid, Eros, 19, 28.

Kāma-gāyatrī mantra : One of the main mantras used in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. Strangely, it uses no epithet usually attributable to Kṛṣṇa himself. The text is: *klīm kāmadevāya vidmahe, puṣpa-bāṇāya dhīmahi tan no' naṅgaḥ pracodayāt*, “I know the god of love; I meditate on him who shoots flower arrows; may the formless god [of love] inspire us.” 29, 146.

kāma-rūpā bhakti = *samarthā rati*. 3, 27, 34, 39-42, 62, 70, 183.

kāmānuṅgā bhakti : devotion in pursuit of erotic passion, 13, 27, 41-2, 178, 183.

kaniṣṭha : minor, smallest, inferior, least, 176.

karṇikāra : a yellow flower with long petals, Beng. *kanak champa*. 108.

khīr (Skt. *kṣīra*) : (Hin. & Beng.) sweet thickened milk or rice pudding, 6.

kīrtana : loud chanting of the Lord's names or qualities, 184. See also *samkīrtana*.

klīm : *kāma-bīja*, the sacred seed syllable of Vaiṣṇava mantras. 29.

kṛpāika-labhya : “only attainable through mercy.” 13.

kṛṣṇa-snehādhikā : those girlfriends of Rādhā who feel greater affection for Kṛṣṇa than for Rādhā. 57, 71.

kunda : a kind of jasmine. 139.

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kuñja : a forest bower. 128.

labdha-siddha : one who has attained perfection through practice.

lalita-māna : a division of *māna* (q.v.), one of the higher *sthāyi-bhāvas* unique to the erotic sentiment, in which the *nāyikā* displays her possessiveness through unpredictable actions (Cf. UN 14.103). 88.

lāvanya : “an indescribable aura which emanates from within every limb of a young woman in the way that a glow expands from a pearl.” 99, 100.

līlā : lit. “play, pastime.” 20, 35, 106, 196; one of the *anubhāvas*, in which the beloved imitates the activities of the lover (Cf. UN 11.29).

lobha : “greed.” 12, 175, 179.

madana : a name for Cupid. 198.

madhu-sneha : a division of *sneha* (q.v.), one of the higher *sthāyi-bhāvas* unique to the erotic sentiment, characterized by a strong sense of possessiveness (Cf. UN 14.93-4). 88.

madhurā rati : “the sweet affection,” the *sthāyi-bhāva* (q.v.) of erotic love. 3, 9, 34-7, 70, 160.

madhura-rasa : “the erotic sentiment, erotic sacred rapture.” 33, 43, 62, 71-3, 77, 86, 126, 131.

mādhurya : “sweetness” 19-22; “an inexpressible quality of all-pervading charm or sweetness in the body of a beautiful girl,” 99-101.

madīyatā : “possessiveness,” 88.

mahā-bhāva : “great feeling”; the highest state of love felt by Rādhā for Kṛṣṇa. See also *adhirūḍha-mahā-bhāva*. 23-4, 29, 65, 80-2, 97, 102, 168, 174.

mahāmantra : “great mantra or spell” usually in reference to Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, but also occasionally used for the eighteen syllable mantra. 184.

māna : the piques or bouderies of the beloved; one of the higher levels of *sthāyi-bhāva* found in erotic love. (Cf. UN 14.96). 23.

mānasī-sevā : mental service to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

maṇḍala : A circular or geometric drawing which is symbolically related to a mantra. 146.

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maṇḍana : “adorning, ornament, decoration.” 106.

manmatha : “mind-churner,” a name for Cupid. 28.

mantramayī-līlā : static pastimes which are based on scriptural descriptions; opp. *svārasikī-līlā* (q.v.). 143-4.

mañjarī : “flowerbud”; those girlfriends of Rādhā who feel greater affection for Rādhā than Kṛṣṇa.

mañjiṣṭha-rāga : A division of rāga, one of the higher levels of *sthāyi-bhāva* described in the *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* (14.139). 88.

mārdava : “delicacy” or “softness,” “the inability to tolerate the touch of any hard object.” 99, 101.

mati : “certainty”; one of the 33 vyabhicārins. 129, 163.

mīmāṃsakas : those who believe in the supreme power of Vedic ritualistic activities, from *Pūrva-mīmāṃsā*, the scripture which summarizes these practices. 181.

narma-sakhī : “pleasure companion” = *mañjarī*. 74-5.

nāyaka : “the leading man, hero.” 22, 55.

nāyikā : “the leading lady, heroine.” 41, 54-5, 57, 60-1, 112-3, 171.

nirguṇa : “without material qualities.” 191.

niṣka : a pendant. 103.

niṣṭhā : “steadiness”; the fifth stage in the development of love of God. (Cf. BRS 1.4.15). 188.

nitya-līlā : the perpetual pastimes of the Lord.

nitya-sakhī : “perpetual friend”; one of the five types of sakhī. A category of *mañjarī*, 56-61, 70, 77, 176, 183.

nitya-siddha : an eternally perfected soul, one who has never come under the influence of the external energy. 59.

pān : (Hin., Beng.) = Skt. *tāmbūla* a leaf used to make a mouth freshening preparation for chewing, usually made with betel nuts, lime and anise, etc. 114, 117, 120-1, 145.

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parakīyā : “belonging to another.” 42-3, 182. *parakīyatva*, “the state of belonging to another.” 179.

parama-praṇayī sakhī : “most loving friend” = mañjarī, 75.

parama-preṣṭha-sakhī : “supremely dear friend;” esp. Rādhā's eight principal friends: Lalitā, Viśākhā, Sudevī, Raṅgadevī, Campaka-latā, Citrā, Tuṅgavidyā and Indulekhā. 56, 58, 60.

phalgu-vairāgya : “false renunciation.” 181.

prāṇa-pati : “lord of my life.” 78.

prāṇa-sakhī : “life-friend;” one of the five types of *sakhī*. A category of mañjarī, 56-9, 70, 176, 183.

praṇaya : “love, attachment;” one of the higher levels of *sthāyi-bhāva* found in erotic love. (Cf. UN 14.108). 23.

prasāda (Hin. *prasād*) : the remnants (usually food) of an offering to the deity or a highly elevated spiritual individual. 6, 124.

prasādhana : “toilette.” Of three types in UN: clothing, decorations and ornaments (*maṇḍana*), 106.

prayojana-tattva : vedānta terminology for the supreme goal of life, 2.

prema : “divine love,” the ultimate goal of Caitanya Vaiṣṇavism. 2, 19, 27, 40-1, 63, 65, 82, 133, 138, 158, 167-8, 176, 184-5, 194-7.. *prema-bhakti*. 187.

prema-bhakta : “devotee in sacred love,” e.g. Hanumān (*BṛBhāg.*), 4.

prema-para-bhakta : “devotee entirely fixed in sacred love,” e.g. the five Pāṇḍava brothers (*BṛBhāg.*), 4.

premātura-bhakta : “devotee completely absorbed in and moved by sacred love” (*BṛBhāg.*), 4.

priya-narma-sakhā : those friends of Kṛṣṇa who have a role in his affairs with the *gopīs*, such as Subala and Ujjvala. 75, 170.

priya-narma-sakhī : “most dear pleasure companion” = mañjarī. 74.

priya-sakhī : dear friend. 56-8, 70.

priyatā : dearness. 35.

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prīti : Jīva Gosvāmin's preferred term for *prema*. 19, 168, 180.

pūrva-rāga : “falling in love”; the state of separation prior to the first meeting of the lovers. 13

Rādhā-snehādhikā : those girlfriends of Rādhā who feel greater affection for Rādhā than Kṛṣṇa; mañjarī. See also *sakhī-snehādhikā*. 5, 57-9.

rāga : “passionate attachment.” 98; One of the higher levels of *sthāyi-bhāva* found in erotic love. (Cf. UN 14.126). 23, 25.

rāgānugā bhakti : devotion in practice which is based on an attachment to one of the moods found in Vṛndāvana. Opp. *vaidhī bhakti*. 57, 153, 172, 179, 180, 182, 187-8, 197.

rāgātmikā bhakti : the ideal type of passionate devotion found in the residents of Vraja. 39-40, 152.

raho-līlā : secret or intimate pastimes. 197.

rasa : “taste, flavour, juice”; æsthetic experience; translated here as sacred rapture. 18, 140, 155.

rāsa-līlā : the circle dance described in Bhāgavata-purāṇa, 10.29-33. 29.

rasa-rāja : “the king of sacred rapture,” Kṛṣṇa. 65, 81.

rasālā : a drink made with yogurt and sugar = *lassi*. 17.

rasatva : 35.

rasika : someone who knows the sentiments, a connoisseur of *rasa*; a lover. 198.

rati : another term for *sthāyi-bhāva*. 18, 180.

rūpa : “form.” 97-100; “beauty.” 116.

sādhaka : the practitioner of devotional service, aspiring to perfection, 152;

sādhaka-deha : the external body of the aspirant to Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, 172.

sādhāraṇatā = *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*. 153, 157.

sādhāraṇī rati : “common affection”; the attitude of Kujā in Mathurā; 3, 38, 178.

sādhāraṇīkaraṇa = *sādhāraṇatā* : the generalization of emotions; audience identification.

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153.

sajātīya-sādhana : practice with a similar basis, described in Rādhākṛṣṇa Gosvāmī's *Daśaślokiḥāṣya*. See section 9.32. 175, 178, 182.

sakhī : girlfriend.

sakhī-bhāva : the mood of friendship to Rādhā, 54-6.

sakhī-snehādhikā See *Rādhā-snehādhikā*.

sakhya-bhāva : the spirit of friendship, 169-70;

sakhya-rasa : the sacred rapture of friendship with Kṛṣṇa.

sama-snehā : those girlfriends of Rādhā who feel equal affection for both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. 57, 71, 75.

sāmānya : “undifferentiated,” 36.

samañjasā rati : “compromising affection' The dominant mood of the queens of Dvārakā. 3, 38, 48, 179.

samarthā rati : “competent affection”; the love of the gopīs. 3, 5, 34, 37-40, 47-8, 62, 87, 176, 178.

sambandhānugā bhakti : devotional practice in pursuance of perfection in *sakhya*, *vātsalya* or *dāsyā rasas*. 179

sambandhi-uddīpana : enkindlers of rasa which have a peripheral relation to the objects of love, 107.

sambhoga : “enjoyment, pleasure'; union; sexual union, 35, 41, 62, 131, 153.

sambhogeccāmayī : the division of *kāmātmikā bhakti* which is based on a desire for direct sexual relationship with Kṛṣṇa. 5, 10, 40-1, 43, 183.

saṅgati :

saṅkīrtana : loud singing or chanting of the worshipable object's name, form, pastimes, etc., 147.

samprayoga : sexual union, one of the five types of *sambhoga*

samsāra : the material world, material life, 27.

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saṁskāra : conditioning, 85.

samvit-śakti : God's consciousness energy

śānta-rasa : the peaceful sentiment, 170.

sañcāri-bhāva : (= *vyabhicārin*), 15, 160, 163-4, 185.

sattva : "state"; "goodness." 123.

sāttvika-bhāva : ecstatic responses, eight in number: (1) becoming stunned, (2) perspiring, (3) horripilation, (4) choking of the voice, (5) trembling, (6) discoloration, (7) tears and (8) fainting, 16-7, 122-3, 130, 136, 150, 157, 160, 163, 165, 185.

saubhāgya-mada : intoxication due to good fortune; one of the 33 *vyabhicārins*, 127.

saundarya : "beauty," "the perfect and charming arrangement of all the limbs of the body." 100.

saurata : (1) semen; (2) "romantic conversation and joking." 195.

sevā-parā sakhī : friends dedicated to service = *mañjarī*. 74.

siddha-deha : "the perfected body"; the eternal body in which one performs mental service to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. 172, 187.

siddha-praṇālī : the "perfect channel"; refers to the line of initiating spiritual masters, in particular as they are characterized as associates of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. 187.

siddhi : "accomplishment, perfection"; the attainment of the Lord after the *utkaṇṭhā* stage, i.e., the first meeting with the Lord directly. 136.

sindūra : the red mark placed by a married woman in the part of her hair. 118, 120.

smṛti : literature in pursuance of the Veda, the Purāṇas, Dharma-śāstra, etc. 179.

sneha : "affection," the second stage of love after *prema*. 23.

ṣoḍaśākalpa : the sixteen varieties of toilette. 108.

ṣoḍaśa-śṛṅgāra = *ṣoḍaśākalpa*

śṛṅgāra : (1) toilette, as in *ṣoḍaśa-śṛṅgāra* (q.v); (2) another synonym for *madhura-rasa*, 45n.

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śruti : the Vedic literature. 38, 179.

sthāyi-bhāva : the dominant emotion (see also *rati*). 16, 18, 23, 25, 55, 70-1, 77, 85, 126, 136, 149, 156, 158-60, 163-5.

sthiti : “security”; refers to constant abiding in the Lord's personal association. 136, 143.

śuci : “pure”; a synonym for *madhura-rasa*. 45n.

śuddha-bhakta : pure devotee, e.g., Ambarīṣa Mahārāja (BṛBhāg). 4.

suhṛt : “intimate friend,” 70;

suhṛd-rati : love for a friend (of Kṛṣṇa). 70-1.

svābhīṣṭa-bhāva-maya-sādhana : practices which are wholly identified with one's desired mood (see section 9.41). 182-3.

svābhīṣṭa-bhāva-sambandhī : those which are related to one's desired mood (see section 9.42). 182, 184.

svābhīṣṭa-bhāva-viruddha : those which are inimical to the desired mood (see section 9.45). 182.

svābhīṣṭa-bhāvānukūla : those which are favourable to the development of one's desired mood (see section 9.43). 182.

svābhīṣṭa-bhāvāvīruddha : those which are not unfavourable to one's desired mood (see section 9.44). 182.

svakīyā : “one's own,” (fem.) a married woman. 42-3, 182.

svārasikī-līlā : spontaneous pastimes which arise out of the personal preferences of the devotee; see also *mantramayī-līlā*. 143, 147.

svarūpa : formless aspect or essence. 19, 97-8.

svarūpānanda : the joy of experiencing God in his essence, or one's own essential spirituality. 19.

svataḥ siddha : perfected without outside help, suddenly, self-evident. 40.

svīya-sādhana : personal, individualized practice. Based on Rādhākṛṣṇa Gosvāmī's *Daśaślokiḥāṣya* (see section 9.31). 175, 176, 180.

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tad-bhāvecchātmikā bhakti : devotion arising out of a desire for the feelings of Rādhā, i.e. devotion which approves of and follows in the wake of the nāyikā's affairs with Kṛṣṇa; = *sakhī-bhāva*. 5, 10, 42, 54, 70, 150, 156, 165, 175, 183.

tamāla : a tree with a black bark to which Kṛṣṇa is often compared, 109-10, 138, 155.

taṭastha-sādhana : “neutral practice,” taken from Rādhākṛṣṇa Gosvāmī's *Daśaśloki bhāṣya* (see section 9.34). 175.

taṭastha-uddīpana : 109.

tilaka : clay markings on the forehead, usually a sectarian symbol, 106-7, 184.

tṛṣṇā : thirst, desire, 72.

tulasī : a sacred basil plant, the wood from which is used to make the neckbeads worn by Vaiṣṇavas as well as the *japa-mālā*, the rosary.

tuṣṭi : satisfaction; refers to reunion with the Lord after temporary disjunction, 136, 140.

udbhāsvara : a category of *anubhāva*, 112.

uddīpana : inspirators for love; 16, 85, 98, 108, 136, 150.

ugratā : “violence; acrimony, nastiness.” 126.

ujjvala : effulgent; a synonym for *madhura*. 45n.

uśīra : the fragrant root of *Andropogon Muricatus*, used as a coolant. 141.

utkaṅṭhā, *utkaṅṭhita* : eagerness; one aspect of *ayoga* (separation in *dāśya-rasa*); the situation which precedes meeting the object of love, 131, 136.

vaidha : “according to the rules.” 57.

vaidhī bhakti : devotion which is motivated by duty and allegiance to following the scriptural injunctions. 179-80, 182.

vāmā-madhyā : a personality type characteristic of a certain *nāyikā*, 87.

vasudeva : See *viśuddha-sattva*. 167.

vātsalya-rasa : the sacred rapture of parenthood to Kṛṣṇa, 170.

vayas : “age.” 99.

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vibhāva : the causes of sacred rapture, consisting of *ālabhanas* and *uddīpanas*. 15-16, 85, 136, 156, 159, 160, 163-4, 185.

viḡatīya-sādhana : practice with a different basis, taken from Rādhākṛṣṇa Gosvāmī's *Daśaślokībhāṣya* (see section 9.33). 175.

vīṇā : a lute, 106, 145.

vipralambha : the mood of separation in *madhura-rasa*. 131, 153, 157.

viraha : “separation.” 198.

viruddha-sādhana : detrimental practices; taken from Rādhākṛṣṇa Gosvāmī's *Daśaślokībhāṣya* (see section 9.35). 175, 180.

viṣaya-vibhāva : the object of emotion. 16, 85.

viśrambhā : “trust,” considered to be the essential element in the friendly relation. 54.

viśuddha-sattva : the state of absolute purity (= *vasudeva*). 167.

viyoga : one aspect of *ayoga*; disjunction; separation from the Lord after having enjoyed the happiness of service. 131, 133, 136.

vyabhicāri-bhāva : concomitant or secondary emotions which especially aid the dominant moods of love and are expressed by mental, verbal, and physical transformations = *sañcāri-bhāva*. 17, 126, 136, 150, 157, 165.

yoga-rasa : the pleasure of union; the equivalent of *sambhoga* in *dāsyā-rasa*. 131, 153.

yūtheśvarī : a group leader amongst Kṛṣṇa's girlfriends. 54, 57, 60, 61.

yūthī : a type of jasmine. 109-10.

yogapīṭha : the static scene of the *mantramayī-līlā*; the place where this scene takes place. In Vṛndāvana, at the site of the Govindajī temple.

APPENDIX 1:

About the author

The author of this book, Kuñja Bihārī Dās Bābājī, was a Tewari Brāhmaṇa from Meshya, a small village near Jhalda in the district of Purulia in northwestern Bengal.⁴³⁶ He was born Kunja Kishor Tewari on the Jhulan Purnima of 1896, the only son of Nilakamal Tewari and Muktamala Devi. He became interested in religious subject matters as a boy, learning the Bengali versions of *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa* from his uncle, Nilamadhab Tewari. It would appear that the

Caitanyaite religion was not well known in the area at the time and his first religious attraction was to the *Rām-carit Mānas* of Tulasi Das. It was only in the mid-1920's that he first encountered the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* with Rādhāvinoda Goswami's translation and commentary.

As is often the case in such circumstances, Kuñja Kishor's parents worried about their only son's religious interests and had him married at a young age in order to assure his commitment to the family.

Even though he had only limited formal education, Kunja Kishor opened a primary school in his village where he taught for twenty years. His primary interests continued to be religious, but at the same time, he engaged his students in the nationalist (Svadeshi) movement by growing cotton and spinning it for the purpose of making homespun cloth. He was particularly influenced by Nibaran Chandra Dasgupta, the publisher of Mukti magazine, which was the main organ of the Congress party in the district. Nibaran Chandra was also a Vaiṣṇava who saw independence as a means for improving the status of the Caitanyaite religion. Kunja Kishor was much influenced by his teaching, in particular, his attitude toward the proliferation of religious leaders in Bengal claiming to be incarnations of God. He was also introduced by him to some of the more subtle aspects of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* teachings.

In 1922, Nilakamal Tewari died. Kunja Kishor followed the obligatory mourning rituals ending with the śrāddha ceremony, but shortly thereafter he fell ill and for about eight months was repeatedly attacked by strong fevers. After this long illness, Kunja Kishor underwent a period, which lasted for about a month and a half during the rainy season of 1923,⁴³⁷ of what he himself described as *unmāda*, "insanity." He experienced this time as one of great joy and liberty, claiming to have had visions of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and hearing

⁴³⁶The biographical information presented here is based on the pamphlet "Paramārādhyā Śrī-Śrī-gurudev Om Viṣṇupād 108 Śrīmat Kuñja-bihārī Dās Bābājī Mahārājer Caritāvali o Sūcaka," written by Ananta Dās Bābājī (Vrindavan: Śrī-Keśava Dās, 1979).

⁴³⁷Śrāban and Bhādra months of Bengali year 1330.

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divine sounds, etc. In his later life looked

back on this period as a precursor of his experiences as a adept in Radha Kund.⁴³⁸

In spite of all these distractions, Kunja Kishor's school continued to be a success with many of its graduates going on to win scholarships for further study. Thus, though he tended to use the school as a platform for religious and political activity, there was little objection from the school inspectors. One of his stranger classroom practices was to keep a human skull, found in a field, on display in order to remind his students of the impermanence of life. Gradually, the school grew and a new building with the aspect of an ashram was erected in the middle of a field and was given the name Sevāśrama. A three-day Vaiṣṇava festival, which continues to be held there annually, was inaugurated by Kunja Kishor's uncle Subal Chandra Tewari.

In the early 1930's, the influence of Sahajiya and Baul teachings began to be felt in the district and some close friends of the Tewari family also became members of these sects. Kunja Kishor felt very fortunate to meet a Vrindavan Vaiṣṇava who was travelling in the area at the time. From him he learned about many aspects of Vaiṣṇava teaching as preserved in Vrindavan, including the disciplic succession and the importance of the siddha-praṇālī in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition.⁴³⁹ Kuṅja Kishor had been initiated by Gopal Chandra Thakur Goswami of Jhalda when only ten or

eleven years old. He now took steps to recover the knowledge of *siddha-praṇālī* which was the key to further advancement on the spiritual path. With renewed enthusiasm and armed with this deeper understanding of the orthodox tradition, he managed to convert several of his Sahajiya and Baul neighbours to the path of pure Vaiṣṇavism. This caused a stir and the

Bauls started in a campaign of criticism against Vaiṣṇava orthodoxy. A great assembly was called together at the Sevāśram in November, 1934, to establish the *supremacy* of the orthodox movement. Many guest speakers from all over the Vaiṣṇava world were invited, led by the scholar Vrajendranath Chakravarti of Jhalda. The result of the meeting was that the influence in the district of the various Tantric subsects of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism was seriously impaired.

Unfortunately, only a few weeks after this success, Kunja Kishor's wife died in childbirth. He continued his life as a teacher for several more years as he fulfilled his responsibilities towards his two daughters, Vinodinī Devī and Janakī Bālā, seeing to their education and marriage. During this time he continued to organize large assemblies in the name of the

⁴³⁸Unmāda is also a characteristic of religious ecstasy in much of Bengali religion. See June McDaniel's *Madness of the Saints* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

⁴³⁹See Jan Brzezinski, "The paramparā institution in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism" in *The Journal of Vaiṣṇava Studies*, 5,1 (Winter, 1996).

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Gauḍīya-Vaiṣṇava-Dharma-Saṁrakṣiṇī Sabhā (“Council for the protection of the Gauḍīya-Vaiṣṇava religion”). Those who had been initiated were encouraged to find out their *siddha-pranāli*, while those who were initiated in heterodox movements were encouraged to seek reinitiation. He collected money so that mṛdaṅga and kīrtana classes could be given at Sevāśram and formed a kīrtana group with the students who participated.

Word of Kuṅja Kishor's close adherence to the Vrindavan orthodoxy reached the ears of Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Dās Bābājī of Rādhā Kuṅḍ, also originally from Jhalda, who wrote to him saying that he felt that Kuṅja Kishor must have been a friend of his through many lives. The kindness of a great monk like Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Dāsī had a deep effect on Kuṅja Kishor and his interest in material life diminished further. In 1937, during the Kumbha period (mid-winter), he went to Radha Kund for a month's holiday and accepted Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Dāsī as his śikṣā-guru, taking the Pañca-tattva and other mantras from him, as well as instructions about worship. Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Dāsī died a year later.

In 1939, Kuṅja Kishor went back to Braj with his mother, this time for good. He was immediately initiated into the renounced order of life by the renowned scholar Advaita Dās Bābājī of Govardhan, receiving the name Kuṅja Bihārī Dās Bābājī. A few months later his mother also took the renounced order from Advaita Dāsī, receiving the name Mādhavī Dāsī. She continued to live in a room near the Gopa Kuwā at Shyam Kund before dying in 1944.

Kuṅja Bihārī Dāsī found a cottage at Brajānanda Gherā, and with the help of donations received from his countrymen, he was able to greatly improve the building. In it, he established a publishing house which he named the Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Śāstra Mandir after his śikṣā-guru. He published not only numerous books such as *Bhava-kūpe Jīver Gati*, *Paratattva Sammukhya*, *Bhakti-kalpa-latā*, *Bhakti-rasa-prasaṅga* and *Mañjarī-svarūpa-nirūpana*, but many paintings and charts as well. The well-known scholar of Vaiṣṇava history and Bengali literature, Biman Bihari Majumdar, used *Bhakti-rasa-prasaṅga* as a required text for his M.A. course at the University of Patna.

In his introduction to the *Mañjarī-svarūpa-nirūpana*, Kuṅjavihārī Dāsī writes that his first acquaintance with the mood of the mañjarī was through his renunciation guru, Śrī Advaita Dāsa Bābājī of Govardhana, whom he called the foremost scholar of the Vaiṣṇava world, especially in the matter of sacred aesthetics or rapture. From that time on he became especially interested in the subject and began collecting references to the mood of the mañjarī whenever he came across them, paying special attention to the different ingredients necessary to produce the experience of sacred rapture in that mood. Later on, he had the opportunity to live for a long time with another great scholar and resident of Rādhā Kuṅḍ, Dīnaśaraṇa Dāsa Bābājī, and was able to study thoroughly all the literature on the subject. During that time, most of the materials found in this book were compiled. Later, other residents of the Kuṅḍ gave their encouragement and through financial help received from a number of sources, these materials were published as “An inquiry into the nature of Rādhā's handmaids.”

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Kuñja Bihārī Dāsī made a great number of disciples, several of whom later became abbots of Radha Kund. His most celebrated disciple, Ananta Dās Bābājī, is a great scholar in his own right, who has published numerous works from the Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Śāstra Mandir. Kuñja Bihārī Dās's influence continues to be felt in his homeland which its inhabitants identify with Jharikhand, the wild jungle country through which Caitanya passed on his way from Puri to Vṛndāvana in 1513, avoiding the more frequented route along the Ganges. The proportion of bābājīs living in Rādhā Kund who come from the westernmost part of Bengal is well over 50%. Vaiṣṇavism in Puruliya district (where I had the opportunity to go in the winters of 1983 and 1984) continues to bear the strong stamp of the practices found in Radha Kund.

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