

Śrī-Śrī Prema Bhakti Candrikā

By Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura Mahāśaya

Translation based on the commentaries of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartipāda
and Śrī Ananta dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja.

Śrī Śrī Narottama Carita

A concise biography of Śrīla Narottama dās "Ṭhākura Mahāśay".

His advent:

In the Garer Hāṭ subdivision of the district of Rāja śāhī, about 12 miles from Rāmpura Voyāliyā, is the village of **Kheturi**. In the book Prema Vilāsa it is mentioned – One day Śrīman Mahāprabhu performed *kīrtana* in the village of Kānāi Nāṭśālā when He turned His face towards the Kheturi village and exclaimed the name **Narottama** again and again. The Lord's mind became unsteady of ecstasy. When Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, Haridāsa, Vakraśvara and other associates saw Śrīman Mahāprabhu's ecstatic feelings, they thought with hearts shivering of ecstasy: "There a person named Narottama, whom Mahāprabhu greatly loves, will manifest, and the Lord will accomplish many things through him!" Śrīman Mahāprabhu told Śrī Nityānanda:

*prabhu kohe – śrīpāda bujhi koroho bhāvanā; āpanāra guṇa tumi nā jāno āpanā
nīlācala jāite yoto kāndiyācho tumi; sei premā dine dine bāndhiyāchi āmi
se prema rākhībo āmi padmāvati tīre; narottama nāme pātra dībo āmi tāre
preme janma hobe tāra āmā vidyamāne; ekhone rākhīyā jābo padmāvati sthāne*

"The Lord said: "Śrīpāda! Listen and consider duly: "You don't know Your own glories! You have wept so much back in Nīlācala, and every day I have saved that love of Yours. Now I am placing that love of Yours on the bank of the Padmāvati in a receptacle named **Narottama**. He will take birth in *prema* in My presence. For now I will keep this *prema* in the Padmāvati." (Prema Vilāsa)

After that Śrīman Mahāprabhu came to the village of Kutub Pura and took a bath in the Padmāvati while His associates commenced a *kīrtana* on the bank. The Lord then roared loudly and His body began to shiver vehemently out of ecstatic love. After that the Lord called the Padmāvati river and said:

*prabhu kohe – padmāvati! dhoro prema loho; narottama nāme pātra prema tāre diho
nityānanda saha prema rākhīlo tomā sthāne; yatna kori ihā tumi rākhībā gopane*

"The Lord said: "Padmāvati! Take this *prema* and keep it for Me. Give it later to the receptacle named Narottama! I have placed this *prema* in you and in Nityānanda. Keep it with care and discretion!" Then Padmāvati replied:

padmāvati bole prabhu koroṅ nivedana; kemone jānibo kāra nāma narottama?

Padmāvati replied: "Master, I pray to You: How will I know who is named Narottama?" Śrīman Mahāprabhu replied:

yāhāra paraśe tumi adhika uchalibā; sei narottama, prema tāre tumi dibā

"He whose touch will make higher waves on you— that is Narottama! Give this *prema* to him!"

Almost at the same time as Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu's disappearance, around the years 1531-1532, on the full moon day of the month of Māgha (February) in the afternoon (called *godhūli*, which is considered an auspicious time) Śrīla Narottama Thākura appeared from the womb of Nārāyaṇī Devī, the wife of Rājā Kṛṣṇānanda Datta, in the village of Kheturī.

Childhood:

Like the phases of the moon, Śrīla Narottama grew day by day. In a great festival Rājā Kṛṣṇānanda performed the *anna prāśana* ceremony (when a child eats its first grains) for his son. However, when the grains were placed at his mouth, the child turned his face away. Everyone became worried, but an astrologer made calculations and said: "This child will never eat anything else but Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *prasāda*." According to family tradition the deity of Śrī Kṛṣṇa was worshipped in the house of Rājā Śrī Kṛṣṇānanda, and when *prasāda* was brought from this deity Narottama blissfully began to eat it. From this day on Kṛṣṇānanda forbade everyone to give his son anything else but Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *prasāda*.

Śrī Narottama's extraordinary bodily luster, sharp intelligence and sweet words attracted everyone's heart. At the age of five Śrī Narottama received the chalk in the hand and began his studies. From his childhood Narottama showed an extraordinary capacity in learning Sanskrit scriptures like Vyākaraṇa, and he mastered all these scriptures in a very short time. From his very childhood the princely Narottama had an extraordinary love for Śrī Harināma, Śrīmad Bhāgavata, the devotees of the Lord and the deity of the Lord, and, seeing his disinterest in sense gratification, his loving father Kṛṣṇānanda and his dedicated mother Nārāyaṇī became worried, while the devotees became astonished and ecstatic.

There was a very saintly *brāhmaṇa* in Kheturi named Śrī Kṛṣṇa dās, from whom Śrī Narottama heard about Śrī Gaurahari and His loving associates every day. This made him weep and cry out 'hā Gaurāṅga!' One day Narottama had a dream in which he saw Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu telling him to go and bathe in the Padmāvati river to accept the jewel of *prema* that Śrīman Mahāprabhu had deposited there. Śrī Narottama got up early in the morning and when he began to go down into the water of the Padmāvati river her waves began to swell. Recognising Narottama, Padmāvati gave him the jewels of *prema* that Śrīman Mahāprabhu had deposited in her. When Narottama received this *prema* his complexion changed and he became overwhelmed with great feelings of ecstatic love. Bathing in his own

tears he danced around frantically. When they saw their son seized by the disease of madness his mother and father became worried.

Vision in a dream and pilgrimage to Vṛndāvana :

Śrīla Narottama's heart broke because he had not been able to see Śrī Gaurasundara's manifest pastimes, so he wept day and night in great anguish. One day Śrī Gaurasundara revealed Himself to Śrī Narottama in a dream and told him in a voice sprinkled with compassion: "O Narottama! Quickly go to Śrī Vṛndāvana and accept the discipleship of Śrī Lokanātha there!" When the dream was over Narottama fainted, for the Lord had vanished from him. By the Lord's wish Śrī Narottama had another dream-vision, in which Śrīman Mahāprabhu showed him His Navadvīpa-pastimes with His associates. Seeing the wonderful pastimes of love of the Lord and His devotees, who were singing and dancing, Śrī Narottama bathed in his own tears and fell at the Lord's feet. Śrī Gaurasundara then placed His lotus feet on Śrī Narottama's head, affectionately lifted him up from the ground and placed him in the hands of Śrī Nityānanda and Śrī Advaita. Śrīman Nityānanda Prabhu stretched out His arms and embraced him, gave him His vast treasure of *prema* and then ordered him to go to Śrī Vṛndāvana. Śrī Advaita Prabhu also offered Śrī Narottama at the lotus feet of Śrī Gaura and ordered him to go to Śrī Vṛndāvana. When Śrī Narottama woke up he remembered the mercy the three Lords had bestowed upon him and floated in his own tears.

Kheturi village was under the rule of a Muslim ruler called a Jāygirdār. Hearing of the qualities of Śrī Kṛṣṇānanda's son this Jāygirdār wanted to see Śrī Narottama. Narottama considered the invitation of the Jāygirdār to be Mahāprabhu's mercy and took leave from his mother and father. Thus he responded to the Jāy Girdār's invitation, surrounded by his father's guards. At a certain place, at night, the guards all fell asleep and Śrī Narottama thus fled to Vraja over the forest path. After walking for fifteen days he became somewhat carefree. Thus he continued over the royal road and gradually he arrived at Mathurā's Viśrāma Ghāt.

Seeing Vraja Maṇḍala and the Gosvāmīs :

At Mathurā, Śrī Narottama heard from a Vaiṣṇava Brāhmaṇa that Śrī-Śrī Rūpa Sanātana had passed away. This made him roll over the ground and weep "*hā rūpa! hā sanātana!*" Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana then appeared to Ṭhākura Mahāśaya in a dream and consoled him. The next morning Śrī Narottama proceeded to Śrī Vṛndāvana with an anxious heart. At that time Śrīnivāsācārya was already residing in Śrī Vṛndāvana. In a dream Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda had informed Śrī Jīva and Śrīnivāsa of the imminent arrival of Śrī Narottama. Śrī Narottama entered Śrī Vṛndāvana and went to see Śrī Govinda Mandira. While he was having *darśana* of Śrī Govinda in great ecstatic love, Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda and Śrīnivāsācārya also arrived there. Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmī took Śrīla Narottama along to the *kūṭir* of Śrī Lokanātha Gosvāmī, an associate of Gaura who was renowned as the crown jewel of renunciants. He introduced Narottama to Lokanātha Gosvāmī and requested Lokanātha to bestow his mercy upon Narottama. Previously Śrīman Mahāprabhu had told Śrīla Lokanātha Gosvāmī in a dream that 'after a while a prince named **Śrī Narottama** will become your disciple.' Remembering this, Śrīla Lokanātha Gosvāmī's heart melted with

compassionate affection and he instructed him in the 32-syllable Śrī Harināma¹. After this Śrī Jīva took Śrī Narottama along to see Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, Śrī Madhu Paṇḍita, Śrī Bhūgarbha Gosvāmī and others.

Śrī Guru's service and initiation :

To attain the special mercy of Śrīpāda Lokanātha Śrī Narottama rendered one service to him at the end of the night. With a broom Śrī Narottama would sweep the place where Śrī Lokanātha Prabhu went to evacuate. Then he would embrace the broom and lovingly weep: *hā prabhu lokanātha! kṛpā koro!* "O my master Lokanātha! Be merciful to me!" Before Śrī Lokanātha went outside Śrī Narottama had completed his work of cleaning the place and had hidden the broom. Wondering who was rendering such menial service at the end of the night, and considering it a great offence on his part to accept such service from a resident of Vṛndāvana, Prabhu Lokanātha went out a little later at night on the other day and saw from a distance that Śrī Narottama cleaned his place for evacuation with a broom. Standing silently behind Narottama, Prabhu Lokanātha saw how Narottama embraced the broom to his chest and anxiously wept. Then Śrī Narottama saw Prabhu Lokanātha and offered prostrated obeisances in front of him. Due to the menial service of Śrī Narottama, the heart of Śrī Lokanātha melted and he told Śrī Narottama to take a bath in the Yamunā and to come to him. Following Śrī Gurudeva's order, Śrī Narottama took a bath in the Yamunā and Śrī Lokanātha took Narottama inside a grove to give him initiation in the *śrī kiśora gopāla mantra* on the full moon day of the month of Śrāvaṇa (August). Then he told Narottama to inform Śrī Jīva Gosvāmīpāda of the same. Śrī Narottama thus went to Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda and told him the auspicious news. Śrī Lokanātha Prabhu then gradually taught Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya the means of *rāgānugā bhajana*.

bhajana siddhi, studying the scriptures and attaining a title:

While Śrīla Narottama thus studied the science of devotion from his Śrī Gurudeva, he was once absorbed in *bhajana* in a grove in Śrī Vṛndāvana, when Śrī Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī Personally arrived and ordered him – 'Narottama! Your eternal service will be to stir milk for My Prāṇaballabha when He comes in My *kuñja* at midday. This service is also rendered by My dear *sakhī* Campakalatā, hence I will call you '**Campaka Mañjarī**'.

Receiving this order to serve, Śrī Narottama attained external consciousness, went to Śrī Lokanātha Prabhu and told him with stuttering voice and a heart filled with ecstatic love what had happened. When Śrīla Gosvāmīpāda heard of Śrī Narottama's fortune he became most ecstatic and gave his personal confirmation of this service. One day Narottama was mentally stirring milk and was at the same time in beholding the transcendental pastimes of the Divine Pair so that the hot milk boiled over and burned his hand, something which he could see and feel also in the external world!

Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda was most happy when he saw Śrī Narottama achieving *bhajana siddhi* and the other Gosvāmīs, headed by Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, bestowed great mercy upon Śrī Narottama. For a while Śrī Narottama studied Śrīmad Bhāgavata from his Śrī Gurudeva, and the Six Sandarbhas, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī's dramas and other of his books, Śrī

¹ hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare / hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

Sanātana Gosvāmī's Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta and other *rasa-* and *siddhānta-*scriptures from Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda. Seeing that the grave purports of the scriptures were easily understood by Śrī Narottama, who was after all the object of the personal grace of Śrīman Mahāprabhu and Śrī Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī, Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda was very happy and, after due deliberation with the Vaiṣṇavas, granted Śrī Narottama the title of **Ṭhākura Mahāśaya**.

Vraja Parikramā, going to Bengal, the theft of the books and the recovery of the books:

Following the order of Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda Śrī Narottama Ṭhākura Mahāśaya performed the 84 *kroś parikramā* (complete circumambulation) of Vraja Maṇḍala with Śrīnivāsācārya and Śrīla Rāghava Paṇḍita, the associate of Lord Gaura who lived in a cave in Govardhana Hill. This is described very elaborately in the Fifth Wave of the scripture Bhakti Ratnākara. Shortly after that Duḥkhī Kṛṣṇa dās, who had taken initiation from Śrīla Hṛdaya Caitanya, who had in turn taken shelter of the lotus feet of Śrī-Śrī Gaurī dās Paṇḍit, came to Śrī Vṛndāvana from the village of Daṇḍakeśvara in Orissa. He had become most learned by studying Śrīmad Bhāgavata from Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda. One day he was sweeping the groves of Śrī Vṛndāvana when he found an anklebell of Śrī Rādhārāṇī, and by Śrī Lalitājī's grace he was allowed to personally put this anklebell on Śrī Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī's lotus feet. Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda gave him the name **Śyāmānanda**. Śrīnivāsācārya, Śrī Narottama and Śrī Śyāmānanda resided in Śrī Vṛndāvana as the pupils in knowledge of Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda, and they were each other's heart's friends, as if they were one soul. The three were learned in the flavours of Vraja, expert in Vaiṣṇava philosophy and in the art of music.

The residents of Śrī Vṛndāvana, headed by Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda, thought of having the many large jewel-like books written by Śrī Rūpa, Sanātana and Śrī Jīva, preached in Bengal by Śrī Jīva's qualified pupils Śrīnivāsa, Narottama and Śyāmānanda. By the desire of everyone, Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda had the huge treasury of jewel-like books packed in huge crates and loaded on four bullock carts, guarded by ten men of armed infantry. In this way he dispatched Śrīnivāsa, Narottama and Śyāmānanda to Bengal. The books reached Bengal safely, but at the journey's end, when they reached Vana Viṣṇupura, the soldiers of King Birhambīr of Van Viṣṇupura, who was then endowed with a bandit-mentality, were ordered to seize the cases at night, as he thought they contained jewels. When Śrīnivāsa, Narottama and Śyāmānanda woke up the next morning and found the cases with the books had disappeared they rolled over the ground and wept of anguish. Finally they heard a divine voice saying: "You will get the books at the court of the king of Viṣṇupura". Meanwhile King Birhambīr had been purified by seeing the books in the crates. Simply by seeing the wonderful books after emptying the crates in private, he became repentant and eager to meet the authors of the books. In a dream Śrī Gaurasundara consoled the King. Śrīnivāsācārya Prabhu bestowed his mercy on Śrī Kṛṣṇaballabh of Viṣṇupura and entered the royal assembly in his company. When King Birhambīr heard the wonderful explanation of the Bhramara Gīta² from the mouth of Śrīla Ācārya Prabhu he was overwhelmed and surrendered himself at his lotus feet. Śrī Ācārya Prabhu made the king his disciple, took the jewel-like books back and arrived in Yājñgrāma and sent the good news to Śrī Vṛndāvana.

² Episode in Śrīmad Bhāgavata (10.47.12-21), dealing with Śrī Rādhikā's ravings to a stray bumblebee.

Returning to Kheturī after seeing Bengal and Puri:

Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura Mahāśaya saw the playground of Śrī Gaura, Śrī Navadvīpa Maṇḍala and the playgrounds of Śrī Gaura's associates, circumambulated them and had the *darśana* of those associates of Śrī Gaura who were still manifest at the time. After that he proceeded to Śrī Nīlācala where he saw Śrī Gaurāṅga's playground in Śrī Kṣetra Maṇḍala and the playgrounds of the Lord's associates before returning to Kheturī.

The return of Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya, who is the embodiment of *prema*, to Śrīpāṭha Kheturī sparked off a sweet and loud *saṅkīrtana* with *mṛdaṅgas* and *karatālas*. Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya then promulgated the musical mode named **garāṇa hāṭī**. His newly composed *saṅkīrtana* songs had new *rāgas* and *rāginīs*, the feelings they incited were new and the sweet sound of his voice, that was sweeter than the voices of the Gandharva-angels, caused a wonderful deluge of sweet *rasa* to flow. It was as if the flavours of Śrī Śrī Gaura-Kṛṣṇa *nāma saṅkīrtana* arose in a personified form!! Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya's contemporary song writer Śrīla Govinda Dās Kavirāja Mahāśaya has sung:

<i>jaya re jaya re jaya,</i>	<i>ṭhākura narottama,</i>	<i>prema bhakati mahārāja</i>
<i>yākara mantri,</i>	<i>abhinna kalevara,</i>	<i>rāmacandra kavirāja</i>
<i>prema mukuṭa maṇi,</i>	<i>bhūṣaṇa bhāvāvali,</i>	<i>aṅgahi aṅga virāja</i>
<i>nṛpa āsana,</i>	<i>kheturī māha baiṭhato,</i>	<i>saṅgahi bhakata samāja</i>

"All glories all glories to Ṭhākura Narottama, the great king of loving devotion, whose counsellor was Rāmacandra Kavirāja, who was non different from him! His *prema* was the crown jewel of all the ornamental symptoms of ecstasy he showed on his body. He sat on the throne of the kingdom of Kheturī in the company of his assembled devotees."

<i>sanātana rūpa kṛta,</i>	<i>grantha bhāgavata,</i>	<i>anudina koroto vicāra</i>
<i>rādhā mādhaba,</i>	<i>yugala ujvala rasa,</i>	<i>paramānanda sukha sāra</i>
<i>śrī saṅkīrtana,</i>	<i>viṣaya rase unamata,</i>	<i>dharmādharma nāhi jāno</i>
<i>yoga dāna vrata,</i>	<i>ādi bhaye bhāgato,</i>	<i>royato karama geyāna</i>

"Every day he discussed the theistic scriptures compiled by Śrī Sanātana and Rūpa Gosvāmī, that contain the splendid amorous flavours of Śrī Rādhā and Mādhaba and that are the essence of topmost ecstasy. In the ecstasy of *śrī saṅkīrtana* he did not know what was pious and what was impious. Yoga, charity, vows and other kinds of piety fled far away, while fruitive activities and non-dualistic knowledge were weeping."

<i>bhāgavata śāstra gaṇa,</i>	<i>yo dei bhakati dhana,</i>	<i>tāko gaurava koru āpa</i>
<i>sāṅkhyā mīmāṃsaka,</i>	<i>tarkādika joto,</i>	<i>kampita dekhi paratāpa</i>
<i>abhakata caura,</i>	<i>dūrahi bhāgi rohu,</i>	<i>niyaṛe nāhi parakāśa</i>
<i>dāna hīna jane,</i>	<i>deyalo bhakati dhane,</i>	<i>vañcita govinda dāsa</i>

"He upheld the honour of those theistic scriptures that bestow the treasure of devotion and when they saw his might, *sāṅkhyā*, *mīmāṃsaka*, *tarka* and other speculative philosophies trembled. The thief-like non devotees fled far away, unable to shine their light

in his vicinity. He gave the treasure of devotion to lowly and fallen fellows, and Govinda dāsa covets the same."

The great festival at Kheturī and the establishment of six deities:

When Śrī Narottama returned from Śrī Vṛndāvana to Kheturī, Śrī Lokanātha Gosvāmīpāda has ordered him to preach the glorification of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, to establish deity service and to serve the Vaiṣṇavas there. Following Śrī Gurudeva's order Śrī Narottama came to Kheturī and began to think of means to establish the deity service. In a dream Śrī Gaurasundara told Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya: "In the past I assumed the metal form of a deity and it is right in your sight in the paddy barn of the householder named Śrī Vipra dās. No one dares to go there out of fear of snakes. Just go there and bring Me from there to reveal My service." After saying this the Lord ordered him also to have five more deities manufactured and Their services revealed. Then he embraced Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya and vanished.

Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya woke up and spent the rest of the night doing *saṅkīrtana* in great ecstatic love. Then, after performing his morning duties, he took everyone along to the paddy barn. As soon as Ṭhākura Mahāśaya went there the snakes disappeared. Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya opened the gate of the paddy barn and when he saw the Supreme Lord there he stretched out his hand, and Śrī Gaurasundara, along with His Priyājī (Viṣṇupriyā devī) jumped into his lap with the speed of lightning. Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya came to his own house, seated Śrī Gaurasundara with His Priyājī on a throne and began to glorify Śrī Gaura with his wonderful, self-composed songs. On Śrī Gaurasundara's order he had five more deities manufactured, along with Their consorts, and had set the date for the installation of the six deities on the next full moon in Phālguna (March). This installation became famous as the historical and unrivalled **Kheturī Mahotsava**. From the fifth day of the light quarter of Phālguna all directions were filled with the *saṅkīrtana* songs that invoked auspiciousness for the great Mahotsava. At that time all the great associates of Śrī-Śrī Gaura Nityānanda and Advaita, along with all the other great Vaiṣṇavas arrived from Bengal, on the invitation of Śrīnivāsācārya and Śrīla Narottama, to attend the great Mahotsava. This is known from scriptures like Bhakti Ratnākara and Śrī Narottama Vilāsa.

On the day preceding the full moon day, known as the *ādhivāsa* day, Śrī Śrī Jāhnavā Mātā Ṭhākuraṇī, the consort of Śrī Śrī Nityānanda, made her auspicious arrival in Kheturī, in the company of all her associates. In allegiance to Śrī Śrī Mātā the Śrī Kholā Maṅgala and a wonderful *ādhivāsa kīrtana* were performed. On the full moon day of Phālguna Śrīnivāsācārya Prabhu performed the great *abhiṣeka* of the six deities, on the order of Śrī Śrī Jāhnavā Mātā, and conform the rules laid down in the Gosvāmīs' books. The names that Śrīman Mahāprabhu had given to the deities in Narottama's dream were revealed during the *abhiṣeka* –

***gaurāṅga, ballabhī kānta, śrī vraja mohana;
śrī kṛṣṇa, śrī rādhākānta, śrī rādhā ramaṇa***

At the end of the *abhiṣeka* the six deities with Their consorts were decorated with different ornaments and then placed on a throne. After the assembled associates of Śrī Gaura were decorated with the *prasādi* garlands and sandalwood pulp, Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya

began the *sankīrtana* of his own compositions, with the permission of everyone. Thus a current of ambrosial *sankīrtana* flavours was being showered with *rāgas* and *rāgiṇīs* played by Vaiṣṇavas such as Devī dāsa, Gokula, Gaurāṅga and Govinda, and which inundated everyone's hearts with a flood of *rasa*. The three Lords Śrī Gaurāṅga, Nityānanda, Advaita, along with Śrīvāsa, Gadādhara and others appeared before everyone and began to dance. Everyone's hearts and minds were immersed in an ocean of *prema rasa*. After that Śrīman Mahāprabhu and His associates vanished and everyone rolled over the ground, weeping and falling into a swoon. When their swoon broke Śrīnivāsācārya Prabhu, Śrīla Narottama and Śrī Śyāmānanda began to sing Holi songs and throw colored powder with everyone. In this way they passed the day until evening time when the *abhiṣeka* for Śrī Gaurāṅga's advent was performed. They spent the night in the rapture of *sankīrtana* and the following day Śrī Śrī Jāhnava Mātā personally began to cook for the newly installed deities and later distributed the *prasāda* to the assembled Vaiṣṇavas. The following day there was a great festival in the abode of each *mahānta* (Vaiṣṇava group leader) and *prasāda* was distributed to everyone, down to the dog eaters. Śrīla Narottama's nephew and disciple *rājā* Śrīla Santoṣa Datta bore the expenses for the entire festival upon himself. When the festival was over all the *mahāntas* gradually took leave, while Śrī Jāhnava Ṭhākuraṇī informed Śrīnivāsa, Narottama and the others of the fact that she was leaving on a pilgrimage to Śrī Vṛndāvana. Śrīnivāsācārya's disciple Śrīla Rāmacandra Kavirāja, who was non different in heart with Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya, offered consolation to Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya, who had become very upset due to becoming separated from all these *mahāntas*.

How he preached devotion and felt pangs of separation :

Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya redeemed many atheists and heretics. Seeing the symptoms of his extraordinary loving devotion and his special learning, and hearing his sweet singing, that incited feelings of ecstatic love, many *rājās*, *mahārājās*, *brāhmaṇas*, *paṇḍits* gave up their pride, money and family ties and became disciples of Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya.

One day Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya and Śrī Rāmacandra Kavirāja went to bathe while the two brothers Śrī Harirāma and Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Ācārya passed by. When these two brahmins entered a discussion with Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya and Śrī Rāmacandra Kavirāja they became captivated and surrendered unto their lotus feet. Considering the two brahmins to be qualified for worshipping Śrī Kṛṣṇa, they went home, and after taking their bath Śrī Rāmacandra Kavirāja gave initiation to Harirāma Ācārya and Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya gave initiation to Rāmakṛṣṇa Ācārya, and both men were instructed in the philosophy of devotion.

Seeing the novel divine power and learning of Śrī Harirāma and Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa, Paṇḍit Śrī Gaṅgā Nārāyaṇa Cakravartī, who was a resident of Gambhīlā, also surrendered unto the lotus feet of Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya. Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya, who was the embodiment of *prema*, gave Śrī Gaṅgā Nārāyaṇa *mantra dikṣā* and empowered him by offering him unto the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. When Paṇḍit Śrī Gaṅgā Nārāyaṇa Cakravartī thus attained the grace of Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya he became rich with the wealth of devotion and became famous as a scholar of the Gosvāmīs' books as well.

The fact that Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya had taken *brāhmaṇa*-disciples became a cause for consideration for many brahmins and pundits like Śākta-rāja³ Narasiṃha Rāy, who ruled the province of Pakkapalli (Pāik pāṛā), Rūpa-Cāṇḍ and others. However, they were defeated in argument by Śrī Rāmacandra Kavirāja and Śrī Gaṅgā Nārāyaṇa Cakravartī. Then the offensive Rāja Narasiṃha had a dream in which Devī Bhagavatī appeared to him, frightening him with a sword in her hand and ordering him to surrender at the lotus feet of Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura. The king then surrendered to the lotus feet of Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura along with the other brahmins and pundits, and was blessed by him with the attainment of devotional initiation and education.

After this Śrīnivāsācārya Prabhu took his disciple Śrī Rāmacandra Kavirāja along to Śrī Vṛndāvana, which increased the pangs of separation suffered by Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya. He fell down in his place of worship named **Prema Sthali** and wept there day and night. A few days after that he went to the house of Śrī Gaṅgā Nārāyaṇa in Gambhīlā, accompanied by his disciples. Suddenly fever appeared in his body and he ordered his disciples to build a pyre for him, before entering into *samādhi*. The disciples became deeply distressed. After staying in this condition for three days, Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya was placed on the pyre, decorated by garlands previously offered to the Lord, according to his order. Seeing this, some brahmin- pundits exclaimed: "Just see! Narottama was stifled and killed as a result of his giving initiation to brahmins while he himself is a *śūdra*!" Then they also insulted Gaṅgā Nārāyaṇa in various manners. This caused the greatly merciful Śrīla Gaṅgā Nārāyaṇa Cakravartī Mahāśaya to pray to the lotus feet of Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya, with the great wish to redeem them and wash the stain of the offences to the great souls they committed off them—'O Master! Please be so kind to redeem these heretics, otherwise they will fall into a foul hell!" Responding to his devotee's anxious prayers, Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya exclaimed the holy names 'Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya' and 'Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa', and rose from the pyre, bearing a halo that defeated the divine luster of the sun. Seeing this greatly amazing event, everyone chanted the names of Hari and the demigods showered flowers. The offensive brahmins shivered of fear as they thought of the insults they had uttered and fell at the lotus feet of Śrī Gaṅgā Nārāyaṇa, all the time hitting themselves on the head. On the plea of Gaṅgā Nārāyaṇa, Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya embraced the brahmins and gave them the jewels of *bhakti*. Then, after ordering them to study the *bhakti* scriptures from Gaṅgā Nārāyaṇa, he returned to Kheturī.

When Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya returned to Kheturī, the fire of his feelings of separation from Śrī Gaurāṅga and Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa was kindled. He constantly conversed about Kṛṣṇa with the *rasika bhaktas* and rolled over the ground in great lamentation, sometimes exclaiming 'Ha Kṛṣṇa Caitanya' and sometimes 'Hā Rādhē Kṛṣṇa!' The verses and songs he uttered and wept in great humility, eagerness and anxiety, and that showed the feelings in his heart, are now manifest in the world in the form of his songbooks 'Prema Bhakti Candrikā' and 'Prārthanā Gīti'. These heart's utterances are full of eagerness and anxiety and cause feelings of separation in the hearts of the great devotees, since they are so sweet and heartrending.

Entering into the eternal pastimes :

³ A king who worships Durgā or Kālī

Thus Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya's pangs of separation increased more and more. The devotees became apprehensive that he would soon complete his manifest pastimes. First Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya appeared on the courtyard of Śrī Gaurāṅga and then he took leave and anxiously proceeded to the village of Budharī with his devotees, headed by Śrī Govinda. There he spent day and night doing *śrī nāma saṅkīrtana*, giving everyone devotional instructions before coming to the bank of the Gaṅgā at Gāmbhīlā. Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya took a bath in the Gaṅgā and then sat down in the water near the bank, ordering Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Ācārya and Gaṅgā Nārāyaṇa Cakravartī to massage his body. As soon as they both touched the body of Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya this love-filled body melted with the Gaṅgā-water, that had sprung from Lord Viṣṇu's lotus feet, like milk. Everyone was greatly astonished to see Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya wind up his manifest pastimes in such an incredible way. Even stones melted by seeing this disappearance. All directions were filled with loud chanting of the holy names of Lord Hari and the demigods were showering flowers from heaven.

*mūrtaiḥ bhaktiḥ kim ayaṁ kim eṣa vairāgya sāras tanumān ṅloke
saṁbhāvyaḥ yaḥ kṛtibhiḥ sadaiva tasmai namaḥ śrīla narottamāya*

***ajñāna timirāndhasya jñānāñjana śalākayā
cakṣur unmilitam yena tasmai śrī gurave namaḥ (1)***

"I offer my obeisances unto my Guru, who opened my eyes with the ointment pencil of divine knowledge and who dispelled the darkness of my ignorance."

ṭikā –

***advaita prakāṭikṛto narahari preṣṭhaḥ svarūpa priyo
nityānanda sakhaḥ sanātana gatiḥ śrī rūpa hṛt ketanaḥ
lakṣmī prāṇa patir gadādhara rasollāsī jagannātha-bhūḥ
sāṅgopāṅga sapārśadaḥ sa dayatām devaḥ śacīnandanah***

tasmai śrī gurave namaḥ śrī guruṁ prati namo'stu. kimbhūtāyam? yena guruṇā mama cakṣuḥ netram unmilitam. mama kimbhūtasya ajñāna timirāndhasya ajñānam eva timiram akṣi rogas tenāndhasya dṛṣṭi śakti rahitasya. kimvā ajñānam avidyā tad eva timiram andhakāras tena andhasya. ajñāna tamaso nāma kaitavaṁ, yathā śrī caitanya caritāmṛte— 'ajñāna tamera nāma kohiye kaitava; dharma artha kāma vāñchā ādi ei sab. tāra madhye mokṣa vāñchā kaitava pradhāna; yāhā hoite kṛṣṇa bhakti hoy antardhāna. kṛṣṇa bhakti bādhaka joto śubhāśubha karma; sei eka jīvera ajñāna tamo dharma. kayā unmilitam jñānāñjana śalākayā – īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac cidānanda vīgrahaḥ anādir ādir govindah sarva kāraṇa kāraṇam ityanena. 'kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam ityanena' ca kṛṣṇa bhagavattā jñānam evāñjana śalākā tayā. 'kṛṣṇe bhagavattā jñāna samvidera sāra' iti śrī caitanya caritāmṛtokteḥ (1) ⁴

⁴ The Sanskrit text of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī's comments will remain largely untranslated throughout this book since they are usually integrated with the English text of the Sudhā-kaṇikā vyākhyā below.

Auspicious glorification :

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – "May that Śrī Śacinandana, who was revealed by Advaita Prabhu, who is very dear to Narahari, who is Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara's dearmost, who is Nityānanda's friend, who is the shelter and goal for Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmīpāda, who is the heart's banner of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, who is the Lord of Lakṣmī-devī's heart, who enjoys blissful mellows with Gadādhara Paṇḍita, who is the son of Śrī Jagannātha Mīśra, and who is of divine golden complexion, along with His associates, be kind to me." The name of this book, composed by Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura Mahāśaya, is **Prema Bhakti Candrikā**. The ambrosial rays of the moon of love that rises within the heart of Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya, who is the embodiment of Śrīla Nitāi-cānd's *prema*, is manifest within the world in the form of this book and will bless the people of the world, who are covered over by the deep darkness of worldly ignorance, by distributing its light of loving devotion to their hearts.

The essence of the Lord's intrinsic potencies *hlādinī* and *samvit* is called *bhakti*. The three faculties of the Lord's internal potency *hlādinī*, *sandhinī* and *samvit* reside within Him; they cannot be found within the living beings (His marginal potency) or in the external potency *māyā*. By the Lord's grace the *hlādinī* and *samvit* faculties of the Lord's internal potency enter into the heart of the conditioned soul, and become one with it when the *sādhana bhajana* of the individual soul has matured. Then he has attained the state known as **prema**. Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has written— *tasyā hlādinyā eva kvāpi sarvānandātiśayinī vṛttir nityam bhakta-vṛndeṣveva niṣīpyamāṇā bhagavat prītyākhyayā vartate. atas tadanubhavana śrī bhagavān api śrīmad bhakteṣu prīyatiśayam bhajata iti.* (Prīti Sandarbha—Paragraph 65) "This pleasure potency eternally resides within the Lord. When this eternal and ever-blissful faculty is thrust within the hearts of the devotees it becomes known as 'love of God'. Therefore the Lord Himself can also experience this love within His beautiful devotees and attain great love from it Himself." For instance, mercury does not mix with sulphur powder when thrown in it, but their specific forms as mercury and sulphur also disappear and create a new substance called mercury sulphate, which is an amalgamate of mercury and sulphur. In the same way, as the result of the process of hearing and chanting, the mind and heart of the practitioner meet with the transcendental form of devotion and automatically become spiritual. When the mental faculties of the practitioner meet with the faculty of *hlādinī*, it is called *prema*. In this book the clear light of loving practice shines, hence it is justly called Prema Bhakti Candrikā (the moonlight of loving devotion). On the one hand the greatly realised words of Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya in this Prema Bhakti Candrikā contain the unfailing power of *sādhana bhajana* that will cause *prema* to arise promptly. Such wonderful ambrosial instructions to enhance one's expertise in *bhajana* are given in this book, that their light will instantly erase the darkness of ignorance from the heart of the practitioner of the process of hearing and chanting and will swiftly infuse loving devotion into it, taking him by the hand and bringing him to the lotus feet of his beloved Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Just as the moonlight will show the way to a traveller who is way-lost, and will bring him to his destination, similarly this Prema Bhakti Candrikā will soothe the affliction caused by the threefold material miseries to the conditioned souls who are wandering aimlessly in the desert of the material world, and show them the way of proper worship with its moonlight, awakening their (*mañjarī*) *svarūpa* and bringing them to the gate of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's *nikuñja*— thus the meaning of its name **Prema Bhakti Candrikā** is significant.

In this Prema Bhakti Candrikā the words of Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya, that carry matchless realisations and that are filled with great secrets about the *sādhana bhajana* of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas and difficult philosophical points, are revealed in very simple and concise Bengali language. Hence the most valuable and essential instructions that lie at the root of the kingdom of *gauḍīya bhajana* truly truly reside here, but one must try to understand these greatly realised teachings with the support of the grace of the great saints, and as far as possible with the aid of one's own realisations on *bhajana*. Its purport is hard to gauge with the aid of mundane knowledge or intelligence. In this connection a true story is mentioned. In the past one highly educated person came from Bengal to spend his retired age in Vraja, so he came to Vṛndāvana and took shelter of a *mahātma*. The *mahātma* gave him a copy of Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya's 'Prema Bhakti Candrikā' and told him to always read it. Occasionally this *mahātmā* asked this person whether he was always reading Prema Bhakti Candrikā or not and whether he was able to understand it. When he was asked this, the educated person thought: "Perhaps Śrī Gurudeva is so absorbed in *bhajana* that he has forgotten that I am a highly educated person. Why wouldn't I be able to understand such a simple Bengali songbook?" Thinking like this he said: "Yes, I can understand it all". One day the *mahātma* recited one *tripadi* (couplet) and asked the gentleman if he could explain it. Then the gentleman explained the couplet according to his material, intellectual understanding. Hearing this explanation the *mahānubhava* (greatly realized Guru) slightly smiled and said: "No my dear, this is not the meaning of all these *tripadis*." And then he explained the *tripadis* in such a wonderful way that it transcended the gentleman's wildest imagination. From then onwards he considered the whole Prema Bhakti Candrikā to be very grave and difficult and he made a deep study of the *tripadis* under the guidance of Śrī Gurudeva.⁵ Taking shelter at the lotus feet of the blessed author Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya, and of Śrī Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas, and taking support from their grace we will try to understand the purport of these songs as far as we can.

In order to accomplish this book unhindered Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya praises Śrī Gurudeva in his auspicious invocation, thus properly following the Vaiṣṇava-custom. *granthera ārambhe kori maṅgalācaraṇa; guru vaiṣṇava bhagavān tinera smaraṇa. tinera smaraṇe hoy vighna vināśana; anāyāse hoy nija vāñchita pūraṇa. se maṅgalācaraṇa hoy trividha prakāra; vastu nirdeśa āśīrvāda āra namaskāra* (C.C.) "At the beginning of this book I make an auspicious invocation, remembering the Guru, the Vaiṣṇavas and the Lord— these three. All obstacles are destroyed and all desires are easily conquered by remembering these three. There are three kinds of auspicious invocation – indication of the essence (target), blessing and obeisance." Although Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya is the embodiment of *prema* he very humbly considers himself to be an ordinary soul conditioned by *māyā*. Remembering the boundless grace of Śrī Gurudeva he offers obeisances to him with great devotion in the part of the auspicious invocation called 'obeisance'. "I offer my obeisances unto the lotus feet of Śrī Gurudeva, who opened my eyes with the pencil that was anointed with the ointment of spiritual knowledge." Here the 'darkness of ignorance' means the deceit of the conditioned soul – desires for religious merit, economic profits, sense enjoyment and ultimate liberation. In Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta it is seen – *ajñāna tamera nāma kohiye kaitava; dharma artha kāma vāñchā ādi se sab. tāra madhye mokṣa vāñchā kaitava pradhāna; yāhā hoite kṣṣṇa bhakti hoy*

⁵ Heard from the divine mouth of my most worshipable Śrī-Śrī Guru Mahārāja.

antardhāna. The darkness of ignorance is called 'deceitfulness', which includes desires for religious merit, economic profits, sense enjoyment and ultimate liberation. Amongst them, the desire for liberation is the greatest kind of cheating, for through it, devotion to Kṛṣṇa disappears." The darkness of ignorance means: 'cheating' or 'duplicity', and cheating means the desires for religiosity, economic profits, sense enjoyment and liberation. But the synonym for 'the darkness of ignorance' is not 'duplicity' or 'cheating', nor is the synonym for 'cheating' 'the desires for religiosity, economic profits, sense enjoyment and liberation'. Still these unconnected synonyms have been linked to each other in Caitanya Caritāmṛta. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda has explained why in his comment on this verse: *kṛṣṇa nitya dāsasya jīvasya tad dāsatvaṁ vinā nija sukhārtham anyam sarvaṁ kaitavam iti bhāvaḥ* "The living entity is by nature the eternal servant of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and the duty of an eternal servant is to serve his lord. When the eternal servant, the living entity, has forgotten Śrī Kṛṣṇa's service he fell into the darkness of ignorance, forgetting his real nature and, becoming engrossed within bodily affairs, he seeks different kinds of personal pleasure. When we scientifically divide these different pursuits for personal happiness we come to see they are nothing else but the desires for religiosity, economic profits, sense enjoyment and liberation. Here 'religiosity' means sacrifices, donations, compassion and other regular religious practices practised by *karmīs* who desire to be rewarded in heaven in the next life. The happiness in that heaven, earned through such piety, is temporary though, as the Vedas tell us – *tad yattheha karmarjito lokaḥ kṣiyate, evam evātra puṇya jito lokaḥ kṣiyate*. Therefore the conditioned and deluded souls enjoy in heaven and after their pious merit, earned through the performance of sacrifices, is depleted, they once more plunge into a terrible repetition of birth and death. Particularly *māyā*'s ignorance will make the deluded souls enjoy heaven as a punishment for their fault of being averse to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This is one of her expert tricks. Śrīla Kavirāja Gosvāmīpāda has written –

*kṛṣṇa bhūli sei jīva– anādi bahirmukha; ataeva māyā tāre deya saṁsāra duḥkha
kabhu svarge uṭhāy, kabhu narake ḍubāy; daṇḍya jana rājā jeno nadite cubāy*

"Forgetting Kṛṣṇa, that conditioned soul is averse to Him since beginningless time. Hence *māyā* gives him a hard time in material life. Sometimes he ascends to heaven, and sometimes he plunges into hell, like a prisoner keelhailed by a king."

In olden days it was a custom that a person who was punishable by the king was tied to a long rod and inundated into a deep lake or river. If he would be close to death due to suffocation he would be lifted up again. Then, when he emerged above the surface he would exclaim: "Aho! I have survived!" and feel very happy. But this happiness is actually due to the cessation of suffering, since he is being repeatedly inundated and lifted out again. Similarly, *māyā* sometimes lifts the conditioned souls, who have forgotten Śrī Kṛṣṇa since beginningless time, up to heaven, and then plunges them back into hell for punishment. Therefore the practice of sacrificial piety to transport one to heaven is to be understood as deep darkness of ignorance.

artha here means the mundane sense objects such as sound, form, flavour, scent and touch that are enjoyed by the ears, eyes, nose, tongue, and skin. It can also mean lush royal wealth. *kāma* means lust after the enjoying sense objects like form and flavour through one's

senses, without distinguishing between sin and virtue. The conditioned soul who has forgotten that he is Kṛṣṇa's eternal servant considers this false body to be 'myself' and all its enjoyable objects to be 'my own'. Thus he is bound to material conditioning and remains fixed in that birth after birth. As a result of his sensual enjoyments he suffers hellish pains in birth and in death, time and again. By the Lord's wish some may attain a human body, which is endowed with discriminative intelligence, but still this intelligence remains polluted and concealed by sensual desires and he remains constantly absorbed in bodily enjoyment. Therefore this *artha* and *kāma* are the conditioned souls' deep darkness of ignorance or its duplicity.

Pursuing *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma* is certainly duplicitous, but the main kind of deceit the conditioned soul can perform is endeavouring for liberation, merging with the non-personal *brahman* by destroying the bondage of ignorance. The conditioned soul who is yearning for *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma* and who thus wanders through different species of life with a lust-stained consciousness, is still able to attain the association and the grace of a saint who will awaken the self esteem of 'servant of Kṛṣṇa' in them and thus grant them devotion. In Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta it is seen—

*nitya baddha—kṛṣṇa hoite nitya bahirmukha; nitya sāmsārī bhuñje narakādi dukha
sei doṣe māyā piśācī daṇḍa kore tāre; ādhyātmikādi tāpa traya jāri tāre māre
kāma krodhera dāsa hoyā tāra lāthi khāy; bhramite bhramite yadi sādhu vaidya pāy
tāra upadeśa mantrē piśācī pālāy; kṛṣṇa bhakti pāy tabe kṛṣṇa nikaṭa jāy (C.C.)*

"The eternally fettered soul is eternally averse to Kṛṣṇa. He eternally dwells in the mundane world, suffering in hell and elsewhere. The witch of *māyā* punishes him for this fault and strikes him with the three kinds of suffering, like *ādhyātmika kleśa*. Being a servant of lust and anger, he gets beaten up by *māyā*. If he meets a doctor-like saint as he wanders through this mundane hell and takes his prescription, the witch named *māyā* will flee. Once he attains devotion to Kṛṣṇa he will go to Kṛṣṇa."

But as a result of thinking himself non different from *brahma* the person who desires liberation will lose his esteem of a relationship with Kṛṣṇa as 'the Lord of the living beings' and 'the Lord's eternal servant' forever. The great devotee of Śrī Kṛṣṇa also cast the company of the persons who desire liberation far away, so that they will be deprived of the grace of the devotee, which lies root at the attainment of devotion. By finally attaining oneness with *brahma* the possibility of awakening a relationship with Śrī Kṛṣṇa or attaining devotion to Him will be lost forever. For this reason the desire for liberation has been called the greatest type of duplicity and the greatest darkness of ignorance. Śrīla Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya was a preacher of liberation, but by the grace of Śrīman Mahāprabhu he attained the relish of *bhajana* and said:

*kṛṣṇera vigraha yei satya nāhi māne; yei nindā yuddhādika kore tāra sane
sei duiyer daṇḍa hoy - brahma sāyujya mukti; tāra mukti phala nohe - yei kore bhakti
.....
mukti śabda kohite mone hoy gḥṛṇā trāsa; bhakti śabda kohite mone hoyto ullāsa (C.C.)*

"Those who do not believe in the reality of Kṛṣṇa's form and who either blaspheme Him or combat Him will be punished with *brahma sāyujya mukti*. But those who practice *bhakti* will not attain such liberation.....When saying the word 'liberation' the mind feels disgust and fear, but when it says the word 'devotion' it rejoices!"

Śrī Gurudeva has destroyed all the conditioned souls' eye-diseases in the form of blindness caused by ignorance with the ointment-pencil of knowledge, and thus opened their eyes. On the ointment-pencil of divine knowledge Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartipāda has written the following comment: *kayā unmīlitam jñānāñjana śalākayā – īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac cidānanda vigrahaḥ anādir ādir govindaḥ sarva kāraṇa kāraṇam ityanena*. 'kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam ityanena' ca kṛṣṇa bhagavattā jñānam evāñjana śalākā tayā. 'kṛṣṇe bhagavattā jñāna samvidera sāra' iti śrī caitanya caritāmṛtokteḥ— Here the word *jñāna* means the knowledge that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Original Personality of Godhead. This is as an ointment pencil to destroy the eye-disease of ignorance. In the opening of the Brahma Samhitā it is seen – "The Supreme Master Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the transcendental form of Śrī Govinda. He is beginningless, is Himself the beginning of everything and He is the cause of all causes." This means that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the original Personality of Godhead. In Śrīmad Bhāgavata it is written – *ete cāmśa kalāḥ puṁsaḥ kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam* "Of the different forms of Godhead some are particles and others expansions, but Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Original Personality of Godhead". ***svayaṁ bhagavān*** are the Bhāgavata's own words. This word has never been used in any other scripture nor for any other form of Godhead but Śrī Kṛṣṇa. With the help of that verse the greatly realised *ācāryas* have considered the truth of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In their opinion this is the root *paribhāṣā* or technical term of Śrīmad Bhāgavata. *anīyame niyama kāriṇī paribhāṣā* – That sentence which enshrines a subject matter which was described in an irregular way into some kind of rule is called *paribhāṣā*, that which is read only once in the scriptures and through which millions upon millions of other sentences are regulated. The verse *kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam* is found only once in the entire Bhāgavata. This *mahā-vākya* (great sentence or slogan) is like a great king who proudly and independently flies his banner of victory over the heads of all scriptural sayings. This knowledge of Śrī Kṛṣṇa being the Original Personality of Godhead is like an ointment pencil that cures the conditioned souls' eye-disease of ignorance. Śrīla Kavirāja Gosvāmī has also written: *kṛṣṇe bhagavattā jñāna - samvitera sāra; brahma jñānādi sab tāra paribāra* (C.C.) "The essence of knowledge is the knowledge that Kṛṣṇa is the greatest Godhead. All other branches of knowledge, such as *brahma jñāna*, are simply related to this."

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Original Personality of Godhead, the all-worshipable principle – as soon as this knowledge awakens and the *sambandha* (relational-) awareness of 'He is my eternal Lord and I am His eternal servant' awakens, then the *abhidheya* (means)-awareness of 'devotional service or *bhajana* is my only duty' will awaken and the *prayojana* (goal)-awareness of 'Love for His lotus feet is my only desire, for service cannot yield any happiness without love' will also awaken. Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya is saying: "To that Śrī Gurudeva, who destroyed my eye-disease of ignorance with the ointment-pencil of divine knowledge, and opened my eyes to divine knowledge that distinguishes between knowledge of relationship (*sambandha*), means (*abhidheya*) and goal (*prayojana*) – to that **Śrī Gurudeva** I offer my humble obeisances." (1)

***śrī caitanya mano'bhīṣṭaṁ sthāpitaṁ yena bhūtale
so'yaṁ rūpa kadā mahyaṁ dadāti sva padāntikam (2)***

"When will Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, who established the wish on Śrī Caitanya's mind on the surface of the earth, give me a place at his lotus feet?"

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *tīkā*: *śrī caitanya mahāprabhor mano'bhīṣṭaṁ mano'bhīṣṭaṁ śrīmad bhagavad bhakti rasa śāstraṁ bhūtale yeno rūpeṇa sthāpitaṁ nirūpitaṁ. sa svayaṁ rūpaḥ svapadāntikaṁ nija caraṇa nikaṭaṁ kadā bhāgya vaśena mahyaṁ dadāti. śrī rūpasya kṛpayā nijānucarātvena tat sevana karma karavāṇīti bhāvaḥ*

Auspicious invocation :

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – In the first verse Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya praised Śrī Guru in his auspicious invocation, and in this second verse he cleverly accomplishes both *vastu nirdeśa* (ascertainment of the principle) and *āśīrvāda rūpa* (preliminary blessing) in his auspicious invocation by remembering both his most beloved Śrī-Śrī Caitanya deva and Śrī Caitanya's dear associate Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda, who is the crownjewel of Vaiṣṇavas.

In order to fulfill some special desires in *Vraja-līlā*, the Original Personality of Godhead Śrī Vrajendra nandana, Who is the abode of matchless beauty and sweetness, has become Gaura, accepting Śrī Rādhā's feelings and complexion. He had two desires on His mind – one for Himself and one for the world. His own desire is primary and His desire for the world is secondary or auxiliary. Śrīla Rāmānanda Rāya has told Śrīman Mahāprabhu – *nija gūḍha kārya tomāra prema āsvādana; ānusaṅge premodoy koile tribhuvana* (C.C.) "Your own secret agenda is to relish Your own love, and as a concomitant factor You filled the three worlds with *prema*." *kaichana rādhā premā kaichana (mora) madhurimā, kaichana bhāve tiho bhora* ("How is Rādhā's love for Me? How is My sweetness, and how is She absorbed in this?"). Accepting Rādhā's feelings, Śrī Caitanya Deva fulfilled these three desires in so many ways. While relishing this mental desire after the sweetness of Rādhā's love Himself, He had it established and preached to the world by His own dear associate Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda, in whom the desire had arisen to make the people of the world also relish it in the form of a maidservant of Śrī Rādhā.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda has written in his commentary on this verse: *śrī caitanya mahāprabhor mano'bhīṣṭaṁ mano'bhīṣṭaṁ śrīmad bhagavad bhakti rasa śāstraṁ bhūtale yeno rūpeṇa sthāpitaṁ nirūpitaṁ*: "Śrī Rūpa established this desire of Śrī Caitanya on the surface of the earth in the form of his *bhagavad-bhakti rasa-śāstras*." The purport of this is that, although in the pre-Caitanya era different *bhakti rasa śāstras* were written, the special gift of Śrīman Mahāprabhu in the form of brilliant amorous devotion in allegiance to the beautiful girls of Vraja is now being preached to the world by Śrīmad Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda in his books *Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu*, *Ujjvala Nīlamaṇi*, *Vidagdha Mādhava*, *Lalita Mādhava Nāṭaka*, *Stavamālā* and so. That amorous mellow of Vraja that was previously inaccessible to Brahmā, Śiva, Uddhava and others, is now, by Śrīman Mahāprabhu's grace, described by the *mantra-draṣṭā ṛṣi* (wise seer) of *vraja rasa*, Śrīmad Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda, in his *rasika* books and dramas, made relishable for all ordinary persons in the age of Kali. No one other than the proprietor is able to give one's own property to others. *rasa* is the very essence of

Godhead, if He does not appear in the world in the form of the deeply compassionate Śrī Gaurāṅga to distribute this, it would never be attainable to the ordinary people. That Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda was inspired by Śrīman Mahāprabhu Himself to preach the principles of *rasa* was described by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda himself in the opening of his book 'Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu' –

*hṛdi yasya prerāṇayā pravartito'ham varāka rūpo'pi
tasya hareḥ padakamalaṁ vande caitanya devasya*

"I praise Lord Caitanya's lotus feet. Although I am an insignificant soul I have begun the undertaking of composing *bhakti rasa* scriptures because of the inspiration offered by Him." Śrīman Mahāprabhu inspired His beloved associate Śrīmad Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda to preach books on *vraja rasa*, which was His desire, to the world. Therefore those who exclusively desire to relish sweet *vraja rasa*, which is the highest class of transcendental *bhāgavad rasa*, should definitely take shelter of the lotus feet of Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda, the dear associate of Śrī Gaurasundara, who is filled with blissful pastimes and who distributed this *rasika* subject to all and everyone, and study his *rasika* books.

A luminous example of how successful Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī was in establishing the desire on Śrīman Mahāprabhu's mind, by the Lord's own grace, is given in the discussion between the Lord and Śrī Rāmānanda after Śrīman Mahāprabhu and His associates heard Rūpa's dramas in the cottage of *nāmācārya* Śrī Haridāsa in Nīlācala (Puri)–

*eto śuni rāya kohe prabhura caraṇe; rūpera kavitva praśaṁsi sahasra vadane
kavitva nā hoy ei amṛtera dhāra; nāṭaka lakṣaṇa sab siddhāntera sāra
prema paripāṭi ei adbhuta varṇana; śuni citta karṇera hoy ānanda ghūrṇana
kiṁ kāvyena kaves tasya kiṁ kāṇḍena dhanuṣmataḥ
parasya hṛdaye lagnaṁ na ghūrṇayati yac chiraḥ*

"Hearing all this, Rāmānanda Rāy submitted to the Lord's feet, praising Rūpa Gosvāmī's poetry with a thousand mouths: "This is not poetry – it is a stream of nectar! It carries all the hallmarks of drama and the essence of our philosophy. These wonderful narrations show the expertise of love. When hearing this, the ears and the heart whirl of ecstasy!" "What is the use of this poet composing poetry if it does not make the heads of others whirl after it sticks to the heart? What is the use of an archer firing an arrow if the arrow does not hit another person's heart and make his head whirl of intense pain?"

*tomāra śakti vinu ei jīve nahe vāñi; tumi śakti diyā kohāo heno anumāni
prabhu kohe – prayāge ihāra hoilo milana; ihāra guṇe ihāte āmāra tuṣṭa hoilo mana
madhura prasanna ihāra kāvyā sālaṅkāra; aiche kavitva vinu nahe rasera pracāra
sabe kṛpā kori ihāre deho ei vara; vraja līlā prema rasa varṇe nirantara*

"This individual soul can never speak like that without being empowered by You. Hence I suppose that he speaks with Your power." The Lord said: "When I met him at Prayāga (Allahabad) My mind was pleased with his qualities. I am very pleased with his sweet poetry with all its embellishments; **without such poetry there can be no**

preaching of rasa. Everyone should be merciful to him and bless him with this boon - let him always describe **the loving flavours of Vraja-līlā!**" (Cait. Car. Antya Ch.1)

When one hears, sings and remembers the loving *rasika* poetry of Śrī Rūpa, that was revealed to him by Śrīman Mahāprabhu's grace, material love appears to be very disgusting and the hearer and chanter of this transcendental relish will be swiftly blessed. This is learned from the *mahājana*-teachings below:

*pīyūṣa sāra śīsīrān api candrapādān; dhīrān madhurāmś ca madhoḥ samīrān
vāñchanti ke bhuvi tathāmṛta sindhu pūrān śrī rūpa pāda kavītā surasaṁ nipīya (1)
paśyanti ke suravali ramaṇīyatām tān mandākinī vikaca kāñcana padma lakṣmīm
sampūrṇa sārada sudhākara maṇḍalaṁ vā śrī rūpa pāda kavītā surasaṁ nipīya (2)
ke vā rasāla mukuleṣvali jhañkṛtāni śṛṅvanti kinnara vadhū kalakaṅṭhī nādam
kuñjeṣu mañju kala kokila kūjitaṁ vā śrī rūpa pāda kavītā surasaṁ nipīya (3)*

There is a very *rasika* Bengali *padyānuvāda* (song translation) of the above three Sanskrit texts –

*hṛdaya kandare yāra, jhariyāche eka bāra
śrī rūpera kavītāra rasera nirjhara
amṛtera pārvāra, tāra kāche kon chār,
sudhāmśura sudhā-sāra sumadhura koro
sudhīra vasanta vāyu makaranda hara*

"How trivial is an ocean of nectar to he who even once felt the waterfall of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī's *rasika* poetry run through the cave of his heart? It makes the essence of lunar nectar even more sweet and destroys the pride of vernal breezes and honey."

*mānasa sarase yāra, phuṭiyāche eka bāra,
śrī rūpera kavītāra bhāva śata dala
tuccha kore sei jana, praphulla nandana vana,
vikaśita mandākinī kanaka kamala
śaratera paripūrṇa śaśāṅka maṇḍala (2)*

"When the lotus flower of Śrī Rūpa's emotional poetry once blossoms within the Mānasa lake of one's mind it makes the blossoming golden lotus flowers in heaven's Nandana gardens, the celestial Gaṅgā and the full moon in autumn seem trifle."

*karṇa kuhare yāra, barjiyāche eka bāra
śrī rūpera kavītāra sumadhura tāra
se nāhi śunibe āra, mañju kuñje kokilāra,
rasāla mukula mūle alira jhañkāra
kinnarīra kalakaṅṭha sudhāra ādhāra (3)*

"When the very sweet poetry of Śrī Rūpa once enters the earholes no one cares to listen anymore to the sweet singing of the cuckoos and buzzing of bees at the bases of mango trees within the arbours, or at the nectarean singing of Kinnara-goddesses."

Apart from that, when Śrīmat Sanātana Gosvāmī came from Vṛndāvana to Nīlācala, through the Jhārikhaṇḍa forest, to see Śrīman Mahāprabhu, his body got infected with sores with pus on the way. The fact that Mahāprabhu would get contaminated and infected by embracing him, made him very sad and he wanted to commit suicide by throwing himself before the wheels of Lord Jagannātha's chariot. Mahāprabhu, however, forbade him to do so since He wanted His preferred religion to be preached through Śrī Sanātana. These are also understood to be the desires on Śrīman Mahāprabhu's mind.

*bhakta bhakti kṛṣṇa prema tattvera nirdhāra; vaiṣṇavera kṛtya āra vaiṣṇava ācāra
kṛṣṇa bhakti kṛṣṇa prema sevā pravartana; lupta tīrtha uddhāra āra vairāgya śikṣaṇa*

"(Śrīman Mahāprabhu told Sanātana Gosvāmī in C.C. Antya Ch.4: "I want you to:) Define the principles of the devotee, devotion, love for Kṛṣṇa, the duties and standard customs of the Vaiṣṇava, I want you to promulgate devotion to Kṛṣṇa and loving devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, unearth the lost holy places in Vraja and teach renunciation."

Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda also became a bonafide *ācārya* of the path preached by Śrīman Mahāprabhu by composing different books and establishing devotion to Kṛṣṇa, the principles of love for Kṛṣṇa, the devotee and Vaiṣṇava-conduct, teaching them through his own example. He revealed the deities of Śrī Śrī Govinda and Dāmodara, promulgated Their service, he wandered all over Vraja to unearth the lost holy places, eating dry *ruṭis* and chickpeas and wearing only torn old clothes. Thus giving the example of renunciation he established the wish on Śrīman Mahāprabhu's mind in the world.

Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: *so'yaṁ rūpaḥ kadā mahyaṁ dadāti sva padāntikam* – When will Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda bring me close to his lotus feet?" Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda has written the following comment on this line: *sa svayaṁ rūpaḥ sva padāntikaṁ nija caraṇa nikaṭaṁ kadā bhāgya vaśena mahyaṁ dadāti. śrī rūpasya kṛpayā nijānucarātvena tat sevana karma karavān iti bhāvaḥ* "When will that Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda make me so fortunate that I can live close to his lotus feet? When will I be blessed to be engaged in Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's loving service as a follower of Śrī Rūpa, by his grace and on his order?"

In Vraja-*līlā* Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda is the leader of all *mañjarīs*, Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī. She has descended as Śrīman Mahāprabhu's beloved associate to preach the confidential truths of *mañjarī bhāva* practice, that are so dear to and desired for by Śrīman Mahāprabhu, in this world, and to bless everyone by taking them along to the secret bower-palaces of Vraja and granting them Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's loving service. Hence the *sādhakas* that wish to attain the loving service of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava in *mañjarī bhāva* on the path of *rāgānugā*, follow the Gosvāmīs like Śrī Rūpa-Sanātana in their present practitioner's bodies and render service in their mentally conceived *siddha dehas* in allegiance to Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī and others. By constantly staying with them, even in the stage of perfection, and rendering service to their chosen deities according to their orders they will become blessed. In his Prārthanā pada Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has shed clear light on this matter –

prabhu lokanātha kobe saṅge loyā jābe; śrī rūpera pāda-padme more samarpibe

"When will my master Lokanātha Gosvāmī take me along and submit me to Śrī Rūpa (Gosvāmī or mañjarī)'s lotus feet?"

*ei nava dāsī boli śrī rūpa cāhibe; heno śubha kṣaṇa mora koto dine hobe
 śighra ājñā koriben - dāsī hethā āya! sevāra susajjā kārya koroho tvarāya
 ānandita hoiyā hiyā tāra ājñā bole; pavitra monete kārya koribo tatkāle
 sevāra sāmāgrī ratna thālete koriyā; suvāsita vāri svarṇa jhārite pūriyā
 doṅhāra sammukhe lo'ye dibo śighragati; narottamera daśā kobe hoibe emati
 śrī rūpa paścāte āmi rohibo bhūta hoiyā; donhe puna kohiben āmā pāne cāiyā
 sadaya hṛdaye donhe kohiben hāsi; kothāy pāile rūpa ei nava dāsī?
 śrī rūpa mañjarī tabe donha vākya śuni; mañjulālī dilo more ei dāsī āni!
 ati namra citta āmi ihāra jānilo; sevā kārya diyā tabe hethāya rākhilo
 heno tattva doṅhākāra sākṣāte kohiyā; narottame sevāya dibe niyukta koriyā*

"When will that blessed moment come when Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī will look at me and call me 'this new maidservant', quickly ordering me: "O *dāsī!* Come here! Quickly get the paraphernalia of your service!"? My heart will be filled with joy when she orders me like this, and I will do my service with a pure heart. I will keep my paraphernalia for service on a jewelled plate, fill up a golden pitcher with scented water and quickly come before Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. When will Narottama Dāsa attain that state? I will shyly stand behind Śrī Rūpa as Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa look at me again, smile and ask Rūpa with kind hearts: "O Rūpa! Where did you get this new maidservant?" Hearing Their inquiry, Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī then tells Them: 'Mañjulālī Mañjarī (the spiritual name of Śrīla Lokanātha Gosvāmī) has given me this maidservant to bring her before You!' Knowing her to be very humble I kept her to serve You!" While she told Them this personally she will engage Narottama in Their service."

To attain such heart's service of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya yearns to be close to Śrī Rūpa's lotus feet, and to indicate that this is the most coveted thing for the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, that this is blissfully attained by the people of the world through Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, and that everyone may be blessed with this relish, this auspicious invocation is accomplished in the form of a confidential blessing. (2)

*śrī guru caraṇa padma, kevala bhakati sadma
 bandoṅ mui sābadhāna sane
 yāhāra prasāde bhāi, ei bhava tariyā jāy
 kṛṣṇa prāpti hoy yāhā hoite (3)*

"Carefully I praise the lotus feet of my Śrī Guru, that are the only abodes of pure devotion. O brother (mind), by his grace you will cross the ocean of material existence and attain Kṛṣṇa."

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī's *ṭikā* – *bhāi* – *he bhrātāḥ!* *manaḥ.*

The abode of pure devotion:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – In the beginning of this book Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya glorified the principle of Śrī Guru, who is the root cause of all accomplishment of *sādhana*. Now again he praises the lotus feet of Śrī Guru in a more specific way. In all scriptures devotion to the Personality of Godhead is said to be the ultimate goal and main purpose of human life, and the scriptures and great saints are similarly of the opinion that devotional practice cannot be commenced without taking shelter at the feet of a bona fide Guru. In his book Śrī Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu Śrīpāda Rūpa Gosvāmī has described 64 items of devotion, and has added that ten of these items form the gateway into the temple of devotion. The first ones are *guru pādāśraya tasmāt kṛṣṇa dīkṣādi śikṣaṇam. viśrambhena guroḥ sevā* "Taking shelter at the feet of Śrī Guru, taking initiation from him in Śrī Kṛṣṇa-mantra, receiving instructions in the service of the Lord and faithfully serving Śrī Guru. These three are the first and foremost gateways to the path of devotion. Therefore as one enters the gate of the temple of devotion one must first of all take shelter of the feet of Śrī Guru, for one who is not devoted to the feet of Śrī Guru is deprived of devotion or attaining the Lord's grace. Just as water turns into ice when it is frozen, and thus increases its quality of coldness, similarly when the grace of the Lord becomes dense it becomes manifest before the devotee in the form of Śrī Guru to cool the heart of the devotee, which is afflicted by the threefold material misery, with a stream of *bhajana rasa* and bless him with the relish of loving the Lord's lotus feet.

By first saying the word **Śrī Guru** Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya indicates the Guru-principle. The word *śrī* means the treasure of *prema* – anyone who has this treasure, he is Śrī Guru. Śrīmad Bhāgavata says: *tasmād guruṃ prapadyeta jijñāsuḥ śreya uttamam. śābde pare ca niṣṇātam brahmaṇyupaśamāśrayam* (11.3.21) *uttamaṃ śreya jñātumicchuh. śābde brahmaṇi vedākhye nyāyato vyākhyānato niṣṇātam anyathā bodha sañcārāyogāt. para brahma niṣṇātatva dyotakamāha upaśamāśrayam iti* (Śrīdhara Ṭikā) "He who desires to learn about the most auspicious devotional principles, should take shelter of the feet of Śrī Guru, who knows the scriptures and who has practical experience of God through his practice of devotion. If Śrī Gurudeva does not know the truth, he cannot erase the student's doubts about *bhajana*-matters, and if he is not devoted he cannot infuse *bhajana*-experiences into his student." One may ask here: "We can understand whether Śrī Guru knows the truth when we see his scholarship. But devotion is a certain mentality– how can a *sādhaka* learn whether Śrī Guru has devotion or not?" The answer to this is: *upaśamāśrayam* – He has fully subdued the six enemies of devotion – lust, anger, greed etc. In this way Śrī Guru will be able to destroy different vices of his surrendered disciple, that are unfavorable to his *bhajana*, bless him with the gift of *prema* and bring him near the lotus feet of the Lord.

Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: *śrī guru caraṇa padma, kevala bhakti sadma*. Here the word **carāṇa** is used in a devotional manner, to worship someone, just like titles as '*svāmīcaraṇa*' or '*gosvāmī-caraṇa*'. Actually Śrī Guru-caraṇa means Śrī Gurudeva. The word **padma** indicates that just as the lotus is the abode of honey, Śrī Gurudeva is similarly the supreme shelter of *kevala* or pure devotion – *kevala bhakti sadma*. Defining the hallmarks of *kevala* or pure devotion, Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has written – *anyābhilāṣita śūnya jñāna karmādyanāvṛtam. ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānuśīlanam bhaktir uttamā* "The definition of devotion is that it is free from ulterior desires, like reaping the fruits of fruitive activities and nondualistic knowledge, and is solely performed for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure." The word *anuśīlana* is derived from the root verb *śīl* or *śīlana*, and there are two kinds of *śīlana* or practice: *pravṛtti* (rules)

and *nivṛtti* (prohibitions). The first one consists of physical and verbal activities and a loving mentality. In other words, practical service conducted with the body, glorifications of the Lord's activities and attributes conducted with the voice, hearing conducted with the ears, meditation on the Lord's forms, attributes and pastimes conducted with the mind and maintaining a loving attitude is conducted with the heart. The prohibitions are endeavours to avoid offences during formal worship or offences to the holy name. When these endeavours are conducted without desires for enjoyment or liberation and are merely filled with absorption in hearing and chanting for the love of the Lord, then that is called pure devotion. This is also designated with different words like *uttamā* (paramount), *nirguṇā* (transcendental), *kevalā* (pure), *mukhyā* (main or chief), *ananyā* (exclusive) and *svarūpa siddhā* (accomplishment of one's genuine form).

Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya calls Śrī Gurudeva ***kevala bhakati sadma***, and thus defines the constitution of Śrī Guru, while at the same time glorifying him. Śrī Gurucaraṇa is a wonderful devotional combination of Godhead and devotee, and thus he is the vessel of pure devotion, both of devotion in practice and perfect loving devotion. From the lotus feet of Śrī Guru, that are the abode of pure devotion, the Lord attains the pure devotional nectar of the living beings' *bhajana*. By the grace of the devotional lotus feet of Śrī Guru the practitioner erases all his vices and easily accomplishes a loving attainment of the Lord. On the other hand when one has no faith in the lotus feet of Śrī Guru or if one commits the fault of being ungrateful to him, the seed of offence is sown and *bhakti* or *bhajana* becomes dry and dead-like. Therefore Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya continues by saying: ***bandoṅ mui sābadhāna sane***⁶.

The practitioner should carefully render service to that Śrī Guru, for by doing so all his spiritual pursuits are easily attained. *viśrambhena guroḥ sevā* (Śrī Rūpa) "Being aware of the principle of Śrī Guru, it is imperative to engage in his service after establishing unwavering faith in him." Śrī Kṛṣṇa has defined the Śrī Guru-principle from His own mouth to Śrī Uddhava –

*ācāryaṁ māṁ vijānīyān nāvamānyeta karhicit
na martya buddhyāsūyeta sarva devamayo guruḥ* (Bhāg. 11.17.27)

"You should know the *ācārya* to be Me, never slight or disrespect him or find faults in him, considering him to be an ordinary mortal, for Śrī Gurudeva is the aggregate of all the Gods." The practitioner must establish full faith in these principles of Śrī Guru and carefully engage in Śrī Gurudeva's service, so that no kind of human conception of the Guru can enter. Even after being engaged in Śrī Guru's service for a long time our minds, bodies and words are still engaged in so many uncontrolled activities, feelings and conduct, causing so many heavy offences to be committed that cause so many obstacles to (reaping) the results of devotional service. The cause of that is that we are not fully aware of the Śrī Guru-principle or the rules and prohibitions concerning the service of Śrī Guru given by the scriptures, so that we cannot engage in Śrī Guru's service with care. Hence Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: ***'bandoṅ mui sābadhāna sane'***.

⁶ In some editions the words *sābadhāna mane* can also be found. In this the editors argue that if *sābadhāna* (*sa* = with and *avadhāna*=attention) means 'with attention', the word 'sane' (with) is an unnecessary repetition. It is however not the custom to say '*avadhānera saṅge*'. The custom is to say '*sābadhānera sahita*'.

The rules of Guru-service are the following – The practitioner should personally bring water for bathing Śrī Guru and washing his feet, massage his feet, rub his body, bathe him, anoint him with sandal pulp and wash his clothes. When he sees Gurudeva coming he should come before him and offer him prostrated obeisances with eight limbs of the body. He should personally fetch the ingredients of Guru's daily *pūjā*, such as Tulasī-leaves and flowers. He should daily offer the Lord's *prasāda* of food and drink to Śrī Guru and then eat the remnants. When pronouncing the name of Śrī Gurudeva he should first lower the head, fold the hands and utter the title *aṣṭottara śata śrī śrī*, then utter the name of Śrī Guru and then end with the titles *prabhupāda* or *viṣṇupāda*. With body, words and mind he should satisfy the Guru with sincere and innocent conduct and a pleasant, loving attitude, with his own wealth, body, abode and life-air. ***bandoṅ mui sābadhāna sane.***

The prohibitions are the following: Do not step over the seat, garments, bed, shoes and other possessions of Śrī Gurudeva. Never imitate the gait, speech, voice or gestures of Śrī Guru. Do not spread the legs, place one leg over the other thigh before Śrī Guru or point the feet him. Do not yawn, laugh loudly, spread out the fingers, sway the body or make hands and feet or any other limb dance in front of the Guru. Do not sit close to the Guru or before him. Do not lie down on a bed in front of Śrī Guru. Do not lord it over others or chastise others in front of Śrī Guru. When staying in the presence of Śrī Guru, never go anywhere without his permission. Never explain the scriptures or give initiation without permission of the Guru. Do not use any language to the Guru that sounds like an order or give him any such indication with the finger or the hand. Never use disrespectful words like "Give me this" or "Take that". When something is required then pray for it humbly: "Please permit me to do such" and "Please permit me to say so". Never eat Śrī Guru's food or take his belongings without permission. Never go to any place where someone slanders Śrī Gurudeva or diminishes his glories. Do not look at the face of the slanderer of the Guru. Tolerate the rebukes and chastisements of Śrī Gurudeva, and never treat him in a hostile manner, even if he treats you in a hostile manner. In short, one should never act in such a way to the Guru that his glories are diminished or that he appears like an ordinary human being. He is Guru and Guru means heavy. He can never become light (in his glories). ***bandoṅ mui sābadhāna sane.***

There is another deep secret in Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya's use of the words '***bandoṅ mui sābadhāna sane***' – *sādhakasya gurau bhaktiṁ mandīkurvanti devatāḥ; yan no'titya vrajed viṣṇuṁ śiṣyo bhaktyā gurau dhruvam*. Often the demigods confuse the intelligence of the student who is surrendered to his Guru and try to diminish his devotion. The reason is that the demigods are thinking: 'On the strength of his extraordinary *guru bhakti* this *guru-niṣṭha sādha* tries to exceed us and will certainly attain the Lord's supreme abode! Therefore if we can lure him away from his devotion to his Guru he will not be able to exceed us!' Alas! If the demigods are so envious to try to dim a student's devotion to his Guru, then what doubt can there be that human beings, that are unable to tolerate another person's excellence, that are wicked natured and blinded by desires for trifle things like profit or fame, will try to do all kinds of things to diminish the student's devotion to his Guru? Therefore the student who is loyal to his Guru should take special care, and with the aid of the saints and the scriptures engage himself in the devotional worship of Śrī Guru's lotus feet. In that case neither the

demigods, nor human beings will be able to diminish the *Guru-bhakti* of such a well-supported student.

After this Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya said: *yāhāra prasāde bhāi, ei bhava toriyā jāy, kṛṣṇa prāpti hoy yāhā hone*. As a result of worshipping the lotus feet of Śrī Gurudeva, who is the incarnation of the Lord's deep compassion and the abode of pure devotion, the student will attain both devotion in practice and accomplished devotion. When Śrī Guru is pleased, attainment of the Lord and the supreme goal of his loving service are easily accomplished. Therefore the cessation of material suffering disappears for good, as a mere concomitant factor. The devotee need not bother at all about liberation from the material world, for when he takes shelter of the life-buoy of the Lord's lotus feet the ocean of material existence becomes as insignificant as the water in a cow's hoofprint. However, the *sādhaka* should be particularly concerned about personal vices that may injure his devotion. In the opinion of the devotional scriptures the attainment of God through the eradication of all vices has been defined as the supreme goal of human life. By Śrī Guru's grace these vices are easily destroyed and the practitioner will be blessed with the attainment of the Lord's greatest ambrosial grace. *tat prasādo hi sva sva nānā pratikāra dustyajyānartha hānau parama bhagavat prasāda siddhau ca mūlam* (Bhakti Sandarbhaḥ) "The only cause of the destruction of vices that are hard to conquer by the student's various own endeavours, and of the Lord's satisfaction, is the grace of Śrī Guru." Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda has written in his *Gurvaṣṭaka – yasya prasādāt bhagavat prasādo yasyāprasādān na gatiḥ kuto'pi* ("By Guru's grace the Lord's grace is attained, but when he is not pleased the supreme goal is never attained.") (3)

guru mukha padma vākya, hṛdi kori mahā śakya
āra nā koriho mane āśā
śrī guru caraṇe rati, ei se uttama gati,
ye prasāde pūre sarva āśā (4)

"The words that emanate from Guru's lotus mouth give the heart sufficient strength to attain Kṛṣṇa. Do not covet anything else. Attachment to Śrī Guru's lotus feet is the supreme goal and by his grace all desires are fulfilled"

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's **ṭikā**: *vākya – kṛṣṇabhakti premarasa tattvopadeśa rūpa vākyaṃ. mahāśakya – śrī kṛṣṇa prāpaṇa-śakti yogyam. uttama gati – uttamā cāsau gatiś ceti uttama gatiḥ. yad vā uttama gati - prāpya vastūnāṁ śreṣṭham; śrī rādhā prāṇa bandhoś caraṇa kamalayoh samvāhanādi rūpā prema sevā. ye prasāde pūre sarva āśā-śrī vṛndāvane maṇi nikuñja mandire śrī rādhā-kṛṣṇa-caraṇayoś cāmara vyajana pāda samvāhanādi rūpā āśā yasya prasādena pūrṇā syāt.*

The weight of Śrī Guru's words :

Sudhā-kaṇikā vyākhyā – After taking shelter at the lotus feet of the bonafide Guru, who knows the truth about Śrī Kṛṣṇa, meaning after taking initiation in *mantras* from him,

Śrī Gurudeva will instruct the student in *sādhana bhajana* and teach Him the truths on Śrī Kṛṣṇa, *prema*, and *rasa*. Just as the words that emanate from the divine mouth of Śrī Gurudeva are honey-sweet and are like elixir for the ears and the heart, similarly they are very powerful on the path of *bhajana*. In this *tripadī* Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya first indicates that by saying: *guru mukha padma vākya, hṛdi kori mahāśakya, āra nā koriho mane āsā* – Just as the words that emanate from the lotusmouth of Śrī Gurudeva, who is the embodiment of *bhagavad bhakti rasa*, are sweet and relishable as honey, similarly they are filled with intoxicating flavours of devotion. Nothing can compare with the instructions Śrī Gurudeva, whose heart melts with compassion and affection towards his students, extends. The disciple carries the very powerful words, words about the flavours of devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, that are powerful enough to make one attain the Lord, of Śrī Gurudeva, who is the embodiment of pure devotional service to God, and gives up all other aspirations than this. The purport of this is that when He sees the wretched situation of the human beings that are bound by *māyā*, the heart of the merciful Lord melts and He wishes to to bless them by making them relish the sweet flavours of His ecstatic worship. Then from the *samaṣṭi guru* form of the Lord (the Lord's form as the aggregate of all Gurus), the power to become Guru (*gurutva śakti*) manifests in a great soul, or *vyāṣṭi guru* (individual Guru), who is accomplished in devotion. He is qualified to take up the post of bonafide Guru. The instructive words of such a Śrī Guru, who is the embodiment of the Lord's deep compassion (*kāruṇya ghana vighraha*) are endowed with such great power, that there is no more room for doubts. Hence Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: "Those who are yearning to attain Śrī Kṛṣṇa, keep these powerful words of Śrī Guru within the heart and renounce all other aspirations."

Now the question may be– "If the instructions given by Śrī Gurudeva are not favorable to the teachings of the scriptures and the great souls, should the *sādhaka* still establish such faith in them?" To that it is answered– "The bonafide Guru can never give instructions that are unfavorable to the saints and the scriptures. If a Guru does give rejectable instructions, that contravene with the teachings of the scriptures and the saints to a disciple, the bonafide disciple does not accept them, but at the same time does not dishonour Śrī Guru in any way. He will discard such an instruction, taking himself to be unqualified to understand its purport. Hence Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says in the upcoming *tripadī* nr.22 – *sādhū sāstra guru vākya, hṛdaye koriyā aikya, satata bhāsibo prema mājhe* – "I unite **the words of the saints, the scriptures and the Guru** within my heart, and thus I will constantly float in *prema*."

After that Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: *śrī guru caraṇe rati, ei se uttama gati, ye prasāde pūre sarva āsā* – "Those who hold the instructions of Śrī Guru on the principles of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, devotion to Him, love for Him and His taste, in the heart and love Śrī Guru's lotus feet will easily be blessed with attaining the greatest treasures in the kingdom of *prema*, namely the paramount sorts of loving devotional service, like massaging the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā's heart's friend (Śrī Kṛṣṇa), on the strength of their unalloyed devotion to Śrī Guru's lotus feet. Now when *rati* awakens for the lotus feet of Śrī Guru's lotus feet, that is, if the *sādhaka*'s heart is colored by the dye of unalloyed devotion for Śrī Gurudeva's lotus feet, or if the heart of the *sādhaka* becomes filled with feelings for Śrī Guru, who is the embodiment of *bhajana*, he will easily attain the supreme goal. One may ask at this point: The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas say that the supreme goal is the loving service of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, but why has it been

said here then that the supreme goal is love for the lotus feet of Śrī Guru, *śrī guru caraṇe rati, ei se uttama gati*? The purport of this is that the *sādhaka* who is lovingly attached to the lotus feet of Śrī Guru will most certainly attain the supreme goal of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's *nikuñja sevā*, and hence the love for the lotus feet of Śrī Guru - the cause - and the attainment of the Lord - the result -has been used in a non-different way. Just as it is said *āyur ghr̥tam iti*, "ghee equals life span", but at the same time ghee is not the same thing as lifespan, it is simply that eating ghee increases one's lifespan, then certainly 'ghee' equals 'life span' since it is certain that eating ghee increases one's lifespan. Hence Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya shows that love for Śrī Guru's feet and the ultimate goal are one and the same and that love for Śrī Guru's feet is the only supreme means and goal. The gist of it all is that wherever there is loving devotion for Śrī Guru's feet, there the supreme goal is also present in an unalloyed way. *ye prasāde pūre sarva āśā* means that when Śrī Gurudeva is pleased all the aspirations of the *sādhaka*, such as fanning Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa with a yaktail fan in Śrī Vṛndāvana's jewelled temple, massaging Their lotus feet or rendering other loving services, are fulfilled. '*ye sab āśā*' or the constant hankering for Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's loving service that the *sādhaka* cherishes within his heart, is fulfilled by Śrī Gurudeva's grace. An example of such aspirations is given by the blessed author Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya in his Prārthanā-pada-

*kusumita vṛndāvane, nācata śikhigaṇe
pika kula bhramara jhaṅkāre
priya saha-carī saṅge, gāiyā jāibe raṅge
manohara nikuñja kuṭīre*

"The peacocks dance in flowery Vṛndāvana, the cuckoos sing and the bees buzz. Blissfully singing with His sweethearts, Kṛṣṇa moves into the enchanting grove cottage."

*hari hari manoratha phalibe āmāre?
duhuka manthara gati, kautuke herabo ati,
aṅge bhoṛi pulaka antare*

"Hari Hari! When will my desires be fulfilled? When will I have great fun in seeing Their slow paces and thus get goosebumps of ecstasy all over my body?"

*caudike sakhīra mājhe, rādhikāra iṅgite,
cīruṇī loiyā kore kori
kuṭīla kuntala sab, vithāriyā ānca-rab,
bonāibo vicitra kabārī*

"While we are surrounded by *sakhīs* Rādhikā gives me an indication to take a comb into my hand. I will then comb all of Kṛṣṇa's curly locks and make a wonderful braid ⁷ of it."

*mṛgamada malayaja, sab aṅge lepabo,
porāibo manohara hāra*

⁷ Dressing Him up as a girl for *viparīta vilāsa*, reverse pastimes, on Śrī Rādhikā's order.

candana kuṅkume, tilaka bonāibo,
herabo mukha sudhākara

"I will anoint Their entire bodies with musk and sandal and hang a captivating necklace around Their necks. I will design a *tilaka* of sandal and vermilion and behold Their moonlike faces."

nīla paṭṭāmbara, jatane porāibo,
pāye dibo ratana mañjire
bhṛṅgāreera jale rāṅgā, caraṇa dhowāibo
muchāibo āpana cikure

"Carefully I dress them in blue garments and place jewelled anklebells on Their feet. I will wash Their reddish lotus feet with water from a pitcher and wipe them with my own hair."

kusuma kamala dale, śeja bichāibo,
śayana korābo doṅhākāre
dhavala cāmara āni, mṛdu mṛdu bījabo,
charamita duhuka śarīre

"I will make a bed of lotus petals and make Them recline on it. Then I will bring a white yaktail fan and softly fan Them, thus soothing Their exhausted bodies."

kanaka sampuṭa kori, karpūra tāmbūla bhoṛi,
jogāibo doṅhāra vadane
adhara sudhārāse, tāmbūla suvāse,
bhokhabo adhika jatane

"I will fill a golden box with camphor-laced betelleaves and places these leaves at Their lips. Then I will relish the nectar-juice from Their lips, flavoured by betelleaves, with extra attention."

śrī guru karuṇā sindhu, lokanātha dīna bandhu,
mui dine koro avadhāna
rādhā-kṛṣṇa vṛndāvana, priya narma sakhīgaṇa,
narottama māge ei dāna

"O Lokanātha, my **guru!** You are an ocean of mercy and the friend of the fallen! Please hear me – Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, Vṛndāvana, the *priya narma sakhīs* – this is the gift Narottama asks for!" (4)

cakṣu dāna dilo yei, janme janme prabhu sei,
divya jñāna hṛde prokāsīto
prema bhakti yāhā hoite, avidyā vināśa yāte
vede gāy yāhāra carito (5)

"He who opened my eyes is my Lord, birth after birth. He revealed divine knowledge within my heart. From him ecstatic loving devotion emanates, he destroys all ignorance and his glories are sung by the Vedas."

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *ṭīkā* – *caṅṅu dāna ityādi saṁsārārṇava tāraṇa pūrvakarṁ carma caṅṅur mocayitvā para tattvāvalokana yogya divya caṅṅur yena dattam. divya jñāna ityādi – kṛṣṇa dikṣādi śikṣaṇa rūpaṁ divya jñānaṁ hṛdi prakāśitaṁ yeneṭi śeṣaḥ. vede gāya ityādi– veda kartṛka tac caritra gānam. yathā– sarva vedānta sāra śrī bhāgavata–'ācāryaṁ mām vijānīyād iti'. ācāryavān puruṣo vede'tyādi 'ācārya devo bhaved ityādyāś ca śrutau ca*

Divine knowledge :

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā– Although the living entity, who is Kṛṣṇa's eternal servant, consists of pure spirit he has forgotten his constitutional position and has been in the grip of the Lord's external, illusory energy since beginningless time. Thus he considers his gross material body to be himself 'I' and his relationships, like wife and children to be his 'mine'. Thus, according to his cravings and his conditionings, he wears different bodies and wanders around in the material world, suffering the intolerable pangs of birth, death, old age and disease. Worshipping Śrī Kṛṣṇa under the shelter of the lotus feet of Śrī Guru is the only means to become free from this misery. *kṛṣṇa nitya dāsa jīva tāhā bhūli gelo; sei doṣe māyā tara golāy bāndhilo. tāte kṛṣṇa bhaje kore gurura sevana; māyā jāla chute pāy kṛṣṇera caraṇa* (C.C. Madhya 22,24) "The living entity has forgotten that he is Kṛṣṇa's eternal servant and due to this fault *māyā* has bound him around the neck. If he worships Kṛṣṇa and **serves the Guru** the network of illusion will snap and he will attain Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet."

By giving initiation and instructions Śrī Gurudeva will save the student from the ocean of birth and death, opening his deluded physical eyes, that are unable to perceive Godhead, and making them qualified to perceive spiritual things, thus blessing the disciple with the ambrosial relish of *bhajana*. Here, along with the eyes, it is indicated that the other senses of the practitioner also become spiritualised and are made suitable for worshipping the Lord. The purport of this is that mundane senses and minds are unfit to worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa. When Śrī Gurudeva gives initiation-*mantra*, being subdued by feelings of causeless compassion, the disciple exclaims: *trāyasva bho jagannātha guro saṁsāra vahniṇā; dagdhaṁ mām kāla daṣṭam ca tvām ahaṁ śaraṇam gataḥ* – "O Śrī Guru! O embodiment of the Lord's deep compassion! Save me, who am scorched by the fire of material existence and grabbed by the force of time! O Lord! I am surrendered unto You!" When the disciple exclaims this and surrenders his body, mind and life-air to Śrī Gurudeva, then the Guru, with his touch of the power of the ambrosial principle of Godhead, anointed with his own compassion (which acts like a touchstone that turns iron into gold), along with the power of his own devotion, filled with his worship of the Lord, infuses devotion into the body, mind and life-air of the disciple, thus making the disciple's body and senses qualified for the transcendental devotional service of the Lord's lotus feet. The body, mind and senses of the *sādhaka* have thus become spiritualised and merged into worship of the Lord, and only by Guru's grace it can be accomplished that this stays in every limb of the body. In this way Guru's grace will make the body and mind of the disciple suitable for the worship of the lotus feet, offers them

to the Lord's lotus feet and establishes a specific relationship of the living entity with the Lord. Hence Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: *cakṣu dāna dilo yei, janme janme prabhu sei, divya jñāna hr̥de prokāśito* "He opened my physical eyes and enabled me to perceive the principle of Godhead by opening them and turning them into devotional eyes anointed with the ointment of love. When he is pleased and places the power of his grace in the heart, divine knowledge is revealed there through his instructions and initiation into *kṛṣṇa mantra*. This Śrī Guru, the bestower of love for Kṛṣṇa and knowledge about Him, is my lord and master, birth after birth, and I am his servant birth after birth." This statement shows the relationship between the Guru and the disciple and the eternity of that relationship also. In other words, a living entity wanders through different species of life, according to his previous activities and has relationships with different fathers, mothers, friends and relatives each time, but the relationship between the Guru and the disciple is not like that. Birth after birth the disciple stays with the same Śrī Guru according to the time, making him drink the sweet nectar of *bhajana*, blessing him with *prema*, taking him to the kingdom of *līlā* and ultimately blessing him by giving him the service of his beloved deity. Aho Guru-kṛpā! Nothing can equal this!

After this, Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: *prema bhakti yāhā hoite, avidyā vināśa jāte, vede gāy jāhāra carito* We have said that when the compassion of the Lord, who is an ocean of mercy, becomes very dense, it assumes a tangible form and appears as the Guru to benefit the conditioned souls. Through that Śrī Gurudeva, who is the incarnation of the Lord's grace, we can come to know the Lord's compassion. Śrī Gurudeva's heart is the jewelled throne where Queen Bhakti, who is the essence of the Lord's pleasure- and existence-potencies, sits. Sitting there she distributes her grace to the people of the world. Mounting Śrī Guru's grace, she pervades the heart of the student and blesses him with the gift of *prema*. When knowledge about the relationship with God is attained by Śrī Guru's grace, all possessiveness towards bodily things and matters that are not related to Kṛṣṇa is lost and, through the Śrī Guru-Praṇālī (*paramparā*), a deep possessiveness towards Śrī Kṛṣṇa descends to the heart of the practitioner, like the stream of the heavenly Gaṅgā, causing loving devotion to awaken within it. This confidential principle can be learned from Śrīmad Bhāgavata (10.2.31) –

*svayaṁ samuttīrya sudustaraṁ dyuman bhavārṇavaṁ bhīmamadabhra sauhr̥dāḥ
bhavat padāmbhoruha nāvam atra te nidhāya yātāḥ sad anugraho bhavān*

bhavat padāmbhoruha-rūpāṁ nāvam atraiva nidhāya bhakti mārga sampradāyaṁ pravartetyarthaḥ pāraṁ yātāḥ (Śrīdhara Svāmī's *ṭīkā*) Brahmā and other gods prayed to Śrī Kṛṣṇa while He was in Devakī-devī's womb: "O self-luminous One! Your grace towards the devotees is limitless! On the strength of Your grace the devotees take shelter of the boat of Your lotus feet and cross over the ocean of material existence, which is otherwise hard to cross. These devotees in their turn are so kind towards the conditioned souls that they keep this boat of Your lotus feet (in the form of the devotional tradition, read: the Śrī Guru *paramparā*-succession) in this material world for their redemption." From this it is clearly understood that there is no other means to cross over the ocean of material existence and to attain loving devotion then to take shelter of Śrī Guru's lotus feet. The main result of taking shelter of Śrī Guru's lotus feet is the attainment of *prema* and the service of the lotus feet of

the Lord, while a concomitant factor is the destruction of ignorance, which lies root at material existence. Hence Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: *avidyā vināśa yāte* "Through the Lord's external energy *māyā*, ignorance, the living entities have forgotten their own constitutional position, having been averse to the Lord since beginningless time. This ignorance is of five kinds— *tama*, *moha*, *mahā moha*, *tāmisra* and *andha tāmisra*. *tamaḥ* means ignorance in the sense that in deep darkness you cannot even see your own hand when you stretch it out, what to speak of anything else? Similarly if the conditioned soul cannot even understand his own constitutional position, then how can he ever see Śrī Kṛṣṇa as long as this ignorance or *tamaḥ* remains? *moha* means having no idea what to do and what not to do, *mahā moha* means desire for enjoyment, *tāmisra* means anger arising from thwarted enjoyment, and *andha tāmisra* means absorption in protecting one's enjoyment when it is under threat of extinction. These kinds of ignorance are the work of *māyā*. By the grace of Śrī Guru this ignorance is destroyed as a concomitant consequence.

Another meaning of *avidyā* is the different vices that form obstacles the practitioner faces in *bhajana*. There are four kinds of vice – 1) *duṣkṛtoṭtha*, or vices caused by past evil deeds, 2) *sukṛtoṭtha*, vices caused by past good deeds, 3) *aparādhotoṭtha*, vices caused by past offensive deeds, and 4) *bhaktiyutoṭtha*, vices caused in the course of one's devotional service. Vices caused by past evil deeds are counted amongst *kleśas*. There are five kinds of *kleśa* – *avidyā*, *asmitā*, *rāga*, *dveṣa* and *abhiniveśa*. Here *avidyā* means considering temporary things to be eternal, foul things to be pure, distress to be happiness and the inert to be sentient. *asmitā* means false ego, *rāga* means seeking pleasure, yearning for it or being attached to it, *dveṣa* means the desire to remove distress or its cause and *abhiniveśa* means fear of death. Some also count vices caused by good past acts in the form of absorption in enjoyment amongst the *kleśas*. By the grace of Śrī Guru all these vices are easily destroyed. Vices caused by offences are tenfold in the form of the ten offences to the chanting of the holy name, and vices caused in the course of devotion are desires for profit, adoration and distinction. By Śrī Guru's grace the practitioner becomes free from them also and becomes blessed with attaining the treasure of spotless worship.

vede gāy jāhāra carito – The Vedas and associated scriptures constantly glorify Śrī Guru. The Vedas constantly sing the glories of he by whose grace loving devotion is attained and ignorance is uprooted. *ācāryavān puruṣo veda* (Chāndogya Upaniṣad) "Transcendental principles are understood by he who has taken shelter of Śrī Guru's lotus feet and who is surrendered to his service." *yasya deve parābhaktir yathā deve tathā gurau; tasyaite kathitā hyarthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanaḥ* (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.23) "To those great souls who recite the Vedas with equal devotion to Guru and God, the purport of all this (Vedic) knowledge will be revealed". *tad vijñānārtham sa gurum evābhigacchet samit pāṇiḥ śrotriyaṁ brahma niṣṭham* (Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 1.12) ("For the sake of acquiring knowledge, approach a Guru who is learned in the scriptures and fixed in spiritual consciousness, with firewood in the hand") In Śrīmad Bhāgavata Śrī Kṛṣṇa has said: *ācāryaṁ mām vijānīyāt* "You should know Śrī Guru to be Me in truth."

In the Chāndogya Upaniṣad of the Sāma Veda the following narration of the glories of Śrī Guru can be found: Being sent by Jāvālā, Satyakāma Jābāl came to Mahārṣi Gautama to learn the science of *brahman* from him. The sage accepted him and engaged him in cow-protection. Being satisfied with Satyakāma's loyalty and service to his Guru, -ṣabha, Agni,

Haiṁsa and others bestowed knowledge of *brahman* upon him. Although Satyakāma had received knowledge from them he attained knowledge again by pleasing Gautama. Upakauśala came to Satyakāma to attain knowledge of *brahman* from him and Satyakāma engaged him in services like fetching fire and so. Being satisfied with Upakauśala's loyal service to his Guru, Agni bestowed knowledge of *brahman* upon him. Although he had already attained knowledge from Agni, Upakauśala still pleased Satyakāma and attained knowledge of *brahman* from him, and so forth. Such loyal service to the Guru is also often narrated in the Vedic appendix Mahābhārata, in the stories of Upamanyu, Uttanka, Uddālaka and others. *vede gāy jāhāra carito.* (5)

śrī guru karuṇā sindhu, adhama janāra bandhu,
lokanātha lokera jīvana
hā hā prabho! koro doyā, deho more pada-chāyā,
ebe yaśaḥ ghuṣuk tri-bhuvana (6)

"Śrī Guru is an ocean of mercy and the friend of the fallen. Lokanātha Gosvāmī is the life of the world. O Lord, be gracious to me and give me the shade of your lotus feet! Now let the three worlds proclaim your glories!"

Śrī Guru's attributes, like compassion:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – While glorifying Śrī-Śrī Gurudeva, Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya perceives some of the attributes of Śrī Guru like compassion, and very humbly desires Śrī Gurudeva's compassion, while describing this attribute. Śrī Gurudeva is a boundless ocean of compassion – *śrī guru karuṇā sindhu*. We have said that the personification of the Lord's deep compassion is *śrī gurudeva*. When the heart melts and the mind will remain agitated until and unless that suffering is mitigated – this is called *karuṇā* or compassion. When we wish to understand the speciality of Śrī Gurudeva's compassion, we must first know what is meant by the Lord's compassion, since Śrī Guru is the incarnation of the Lord's compassion. Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda wrote in his explanation of God's grace: *anukampā ca pūrṇe'pi svasmin sevādyabhilāṣaṁ sampādya sevakādiṣu sevādi saubhāgya sampādikā bhagavataś cittārdratāmayī tadupakārecchā* "Although God is self-fulfilled he creates a desire to serve in his servants. This wellwishing attitude of the Lord, that accomplishes the good fortune of devotional service and so, shows that His heart is melting and this is called compassion." The purport of this is that although God is Self-satisfied, Self-delighted and Self-fulfilled, He can never remain indifferent towards His devotees, who are surrendered to His lotus feet, because He delights in their love alone. First He awakens the desire to serve within His devotees' hearts, for without desiring to serve the devotee's mind cannot merge in the craving for the Lord's service. Such eagerness for service is called *bhakti* – *'bhaj ityeṣa vai dhātuḥ sevāyāṁ parikīrtitaḥ* Awakening the desire to serve within His devotee's hearts and granting him the favour of His direct service because His heart is melting out of compassion and helpfulness, this is called the Lord's compassion. Śrī

Gurudeva is the tangible embodiment of the compassion of the Lord, Who is engaged in awakening the desire to serve within the devotees heart and gradually giving them devotional service. In Śrī Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta (2.4.85 and 86) Śrīman Nārāyaṇa has told Gopa Kumāra:

*tat te mayyakṛpām vīkṣya vyagro'nugraha kātaraḥ
anādim setum ullaṅghya tvaj janmedam akārayam
śrīmad govardhane tasmin nija priyatamāspade
svayam evābhavaṁ tāta jayantākhyāḥ sa te guruḥ*

"O my child! I was agitated seeing you so indifferent towards Me, and, becoming overwhelmed by compassion for you, I transgressed the beginningless religious principles, that were established by Myself, and granted you birth in My own dear abode Govardhana, Myself descending there as your **Guru, named Jayanta.**" Seeing the miserable plight of the conditioned souls, the Lord assumes the form of the Guru and blesses them with the priceless gift of *prema*. Since the grace of the Lord in the form of the Guru is boundless, Śrī Guru is *karuṇā sindhu*, an ocean of compassion. And in another sense also, the speciality of Guru's grace can be understood. When Śrī Hari is angry, Śrī Guru can protect the devotee, but when the Guru is angry no one can save him; hence Śrī Guru must be pleased by all means. *harau ruṣṭe gurur trātā gurau ruṣṭe na kaścana; tasmāt sarva prayatnena gurum eva prasādayet.* In the prayers of Devahūti devī in the Padma Purāṇa it is seen: *bhaktir yathā harau me'sti tad variṣṭhā gurau yadi; mamāsti tena satyena sandarśayatu me hariḥ* "If I have more devotion for my Guru then for Śrī Hari, then on the strength of that truth Śrī Hari will grant me His audience." Just as the words *tad variṣṭhā* show that the glories of devotion to the Guru are greater than devotion to the Lord, similarly it is indicated that the grace of Śrī Guru-*svarūpa* is greater than the grace of the Bhagavata-*svarūpa*. Thus Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya calls Śrī Gurudeva ***karuṇā sindhu*** since he is most merciful of all.

Then he mentions another one of Śrī Gurudeva's attributes – ***adhama janāra bandhu***. Although Śrī Gurudeva is an ocean of compassion the devotees that surrender to his lotus feet must be low and fallen, since he is the friend of the fallen. He who feels himself *adhama* or fallen, is the natural receptacles of *sādhu guru*'s compassion. On the grace of the saints Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has written: *satām kṛpā ca duravasthādarśana mātrodभवā na svopāsanādyapekṣā, yathā śrī nāradasya nalakuvara maṇigrīvayoḥ* (Bhakti Sandarbha–Paragraph 193) "Seeing the miserable plight of the conditioned souls the saints shower them with their grace. This is not dependent on worship of the saints by the conditioned souls. For example, Śrī Nārada bestowed his grace on Maṇigrīva and Nalakubara as soon as he saw their miserable plight." The same thing counts for the grace of Śrī Guru. Some people are intoxicated by pride over their wealth, connections and family lineage and serve Śrī Gurudeva according to their means with money, and when they see the natural satisfaction of Śrī Guru, who is the embodiment of eternal joy, they think that they have been blessed with sufficient grace of the Guru. However intoxicated he may be by wealth and enjoyment, Guru's grace will one day bring him to the Lord's lotus feet. Such people should heed the great words of Ṭhākura Mahāśaya – Gurudeva is ***adhama janāra bandhu***. Such people, who always consider themselves to be low and fallen, are the impeccable objects of Śrī Gurudeva's compassion. Guru's grace will never allow the object of his compassion to rot in the stinking gutter of hellish sense gratification. A person who has attained real grace

becomes absorbed in exclaiming *hā hā guru kṛpā!* The grace awakens such humility in him that a stream of ambrosial *bhakti rasa* will shower him and always keep him immersed in Śrī Guru's lotus feet. Hence the blessed author says: *adhama janāra bandhu.*

Then he describes another attribute with the words ***lokanātha lokera jīvana.*** Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya's initiating Guru is Śrīpāda Lokanātha Gosvāmī, Śrīman Mahāprabhu's dear associate. By mentioning Śrī Gurudeva's holy name, the blessed author declares his gratitude to Śrī Guru's lotus feet for all the spiritual treasures he attained by Śrī Gurudeva's mercy, which he mentioned in the previous *tripadīs.* He also mentions in a hidden manner that what he has attained by the grace of the Guru cannot be repaid, although he is the servant of the Guru birth after birth, executing his order and serving him with body and mind. That Lokanātha Prabhu is *lokera jīvana*, which means that he has shown the paramount example of the path of *bhajana* and thus engaged the people of the world on that path of *bhajana.* The blessed author declares this because being on the path of devotion is life and not being on it is death.

Another meaning of *lokanātha lokera jīvana* is that Śrī Gurudeva is the lord of the whole world and the life of the whole world. In this respect he reveals two more confidential attributes of Śrī Gurudeva. This is said in regard to the *samaṣṭi guru.* In the form of the *samaṣṭi guru* the Lord is eternally present in His eternal abode. This *samaṣṭi guru* is the direct incarnation of the Lord. In order to free the conditioned souls, that are grasped by falsehood and ignorance, constantly scorching in the fire of the three material pangs, bound by the shackles of sensual attachments, the Lord, who is filled with boundless and causeless mercy, assumes the form of the *samaṣṭi guru* so that they can attain the Lord's lotus feet. From this most merciful *samaṣṭi guru* the *guru-śakti* appears in the great souls in this world, who are devotees absorbed in *bhajana*, entering into each one of them individually as the *vyāṣṭi guru.* Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has written: *ya eva bhagavān atra vyāṣṭi rūpatayā bhaktāvātāratvena śrī guru rūpo vartate, sa eva tatra samaṣṭi-rūpatayā sva vāma pradeśe sākṣād avatāratvenāpi tad rūpo vartate iti* (Bhakti Sandarbha, Paragraph 286) "This *samaṣṭi guru* is manifest in all the *vyāṣṭi gurus* in this world to rescue the people of the world from the grip of *māyā* and give them devotion to the Lord. Thus they remain *lokanātha lokera jīvana.*

While having such a great vision of the glories of the Guru, Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya most anxiously prays to Śrī Guru—*hā hā prabho koro doyā, deho more pada-chāyā, ebe yaśaḥ ghuṣuk tribhuvana*" With paramount humility Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya considers himself a conditioned soul and thinks: "Just see the unlimited compassion of the Lord in the form of the Guru! But alas! There is no limit to the misfortune of a *māyā*-bound soul like me; will He therefore shower me with His mercy?" Thinking like this he utters the words *hā hā*, that indicate anxiety, while at the same time he thinks: "Śrī Guru is most capable in saving the fallen souls; that is his mere play, therefore although I am wholly unqualified, by his competence everything is possible." Hence he uses the word *prabhu*, the Almighty one. "*hā hā prabhu!* Please give me shelter in the shade of your feet!" He prays for shelter in the cool shade of the wish-yielding tree of Śrī Guru's lotus feet, so that he will no longer be scorched by the threefold material misery. Great humility awakens within him as he says: *hā hā prabho!* If you grant an unworthy fellow like me shelter in the shade of your lotus feet, that are like wish-yielding trees, your fame of redeemer of the fallen will be announced throughout the three worlds! '*ebe yaśaḥ ghuṣuk tribhuvana*' (6)

vaiṣṇava caraṇa reṇu, *bhūṣaṇa koriyā tanu,*
yāhā hoite anubhava hoy
mārjana hoy bhajana, *sādhu saṅge anukṣaṇa,*
ajñāna avidyā parājaya (7)

"Adorn your bodies with the footdust of the Vaiṣṇavas, so you will gain transcendental experience. By constantly performing *bhajana* in the company of the saints you will be purified and ignorance will be destroyed."

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *ṭīkā* – *yāhā hoite– yasmāt vaiṣṇava caraṇa reṇu bhūṣaṇāt. ajñāna avidyā–ajñānaṁ catur varga vāñchā tad rūpāvidyā.*

The devotees' footdust and the company of the saints:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – In this *tripadī* Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya first glorifies the footdust of the Vaiṣṇavas: "*vaiṣṇava caraṇa reṇu, bhūṣaṇa koriyā tanu, yāhā hoite anubhava hoy*" – With one voice all the scriptures proclaim the extraordinary glories of the footdust of the Vaiṣṇavas, through which devotion and experience in *bhajana* is attained. In Śrīmad Bhāgavata, the essence of all the Vedānta, Brahmaṛṣi Jaḍa Bharata said to Mahārāja Rahūgaṇa -

rahūgaṇaitat tapasā na yāti na cejyayā nirvapaṇād grhād vā
na cchandasaṁ naiva jalāgni sūryair vinā mahat padarajo'bhīṣekam (5.19.12)

"O King Rahūgaṇa! Without being sprinkled by the footdust of the saints, penances, performance of Vedic duties, donations of food and so, charitable building of houses, studying the Vedas or worship of water, fire or the sun will not help to attain the truth about God." Śrīla Prahlāda Mahāśaya told his father Hiraṇyakaśipu (Bhāg. 7.5.32):

naiṣāṁ matis tāvad urukramāṅghriṁ sprśatyanarthāpagamo yad arthah
mahīyasāṁ padarajo'bhīṣekam niṣkiñcanānām na vṛṇīta yāvat

"As long as one is not showered by the footdust of the saints that are totally free from material identification, no one can become aware of the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. All personal faults and mischief will automatically dissipate by becoming fixed in these lotus feet." In order to test the mode of goodness in the three deities (Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva's *sattva parīkṣā*) Bhṛgu Muni kicked the chest of Lord Nārāyaṇa, causing Lord Nārāyaṇa to say (Bhāg 10.89.10-11):

puṇīhi sahalokaṁ māṁ lokapālāṁś ca mad gatān
pādodakena bhavatas tīrthānām tīrthakāriṇā
adyāham bhagavan lakṣmyā āsam ekānta bhājanam
vatsyaty urasi me bhūtīr bhavat pādahatāmhasaḥ

In his Śrī Caitanya Bhāgavata Śrīla Vṛndāvana Ṭhākura has made a very beautiful poetic translation of these two *ślokas*:

*ei ye tomāra pādodaka puṇya jala; tirthera koroye tirtha heno sunirmala
yoteko brahmāṇḍa boise āmāra dehete; yoto lokapāla sab āmāra sahite
pādodaka diyā āji korilā pavitra; akṣaya hoiyā rahu tomāra caritra
ei ye tomāra śrī caraṇa cihna dhūli; vakṣe rākhilām āmi hoi kutūholi
lakṣmī saṅge nija vakṣe dilo āmi sthāna; vede yeno śrī vatsa lāñchana bole nāma*

"Oh! Your footwater is sacred water, so sacred that it sanctifies even the holy waters of the places of pilgrimage (*tīrthas*). All the universes that reside within My body and all the planetary maintainers that are with Me have now been purified by this footwater! May your glories remain inexhaustible! O! I am eagerly holding the dust that displays your footmarks on My chest. I have given it a place on My chest along with the goddess of fortune, so that the Vedas call Me by the name Śrīvatsa Lāñchana."

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who is the Original Personality of Godhead Himself told Śrī Uddhava: *anuvrajāmyaham nityam pūyeyetyaṅghri reṇubhiḥ* (Bhāg. 11.14.16): "O Uddhava! Through the footdust of My devotees I am helping the universe getting purified by attaining *bhakti*, and therefore I am following My devotees." (Reading of Śrīdhara Svāmī). In this present age of Kali Śrīman Mahāprabhu, who is the combined form of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, takes the footdust of the Vaiṣṇavas because He yearns to relish the mellows of devotion - *sabāra caraṇa dhūli pāya viśvambhara* (Caitanya Bhāgavata). Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmīpāda has written: *bhakta pada-dhūli āra bhakta padajala; bhakta bhukta avaśeṣa - tin mahābala. ei tina sevā hoite kṛṣṇa premā hoy; punaḥ punaḥ sarva śāstre phukāriyā koy* (C.C.) "The footdust of a devotee, his footwater or the remnants of his food - these three are all very powerful. Service of these three yields love for Kṛṣṇa; this is what all the scriptures loudly proclaim."

Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya speaks of **decorating** the body with the Vaiṣṇavas' footdust - *vaiṣṇava caraṇa reṇu bhūṣaṇa koriyā tanu*. In other words, just as men and women of the world very carefully decorate their bodies with different ornaments, one should very carefully or devotionally serve the footdust of the Vaiṣṇavas to decorate the soul. Through this the advice is given to have the greatest devotion for the Vaiṣṇavas. *vaiṣṇavāṇām parābhaktiḥ* (Nārada Pañcarātra) "Be most devoted to the Vaiṣṇavas". For those who tread the path of devotion the Vaiṣṇavas are as worshipable as Viṣṇu: *vaiṣṇavo viṣṇuvat pūjyaḥ*. When the practising devotee has no respect for the Vaiṣṇavas the Lord will never be pleased with his *sādhana bhajana*.

*ye me bhakta-janāḥ pārtha na me bhaktās ca te janāḥ
mad bhaktānām ca ye bhaktās te me bhaktatamā matāḥ
tasmād viṣṇu prasādāya vaiṣṇavān paritoṣayet
prasāda sumukho viṣṇus tenaiva syān na saṁśayaḥ*

The Lord told Arjuna: "O Pārtha! Those who are only devoted to Me are not My real devotees, but those who are the devotees of My devotees, I count as My greatest devotees. Therefore by all means please the Vaiṣṇavas if you wish to please Viṣṇu. When the Vaiṣṇavas

are pleased Viṣṇu is pleased; of this there is not even the slightest doubt." On the other hand, if the Vaiṣṇavas are even slightly dishonored, Lord Viṣṇu, who is the soul of the Universe, will not be pleased even after being worshipped hundreds of times - *prasīdati na viśvātmā vaiṣṇave cāpamānīte*. Hence the Lord tells Śrī Uddhava with His own mouth - *mad bhakta pūjābhyaḍhikā* (Bhāg. 11.19.21), to which Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī comments: *abhyādhikā mat pūjato'pi tatra mama santoṣa viśeṣāt* "I am even more pleased with the worship of My devotee as with My own worship; hence you should worship My devotee more." Many scriptures and teachers proclaim that devotional service will certainly be attained by serving the great devotees. Hence Śrī Narottama has said: *yāhā hoite anubhava hoy* "By decorating the body with the footdust of the Vaiṣṇavas the devotee will develop all knowledge and understanding of the relationship, the means and the goal of spiritual life".

After this Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya says: *mārjana hoy bhajana, sādhu saṅge anukṣaṇa, ajñāna avidyā parājaya* "By decorating the body with the footdust of the Vaiṣṇavas, or by holding the Vaiṣṇavas' footdust on the body or the head, knowing that it will bring the topmost faith in *bhakti* along with all other perfections, one will attain the good fortune of constant *sādhu saṅga*. By constantly performing *bhajana* in the association of the *sādhus* one gets purified and as a concomitance all ignorance will be destroyed. In Śrīmad Bhāgavata (11.26.31) it is seen: *yathopaśrayamāṇasya bhagavantam vibhāvasum; śītam bhayam tamo'pyeti sādhuṃ saṃsevatas tathā* "Just as cold, fear and darkness disappear for a man who takes shelter of the firegod, so the fear of ignorance and rebirth due to fruitive activities disappears from a man who serves the saints." Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda has written the following commentary on this verse: *svīyaudana siddhyartham upāśrayamāṇasya apyeti naśyati. tathaiiva bhajana siddhyartham sādhuṃ saṃsevayamāṇasya karmādi jādyam saṃsāra bhayam bhajana vighnaś ca* "When one kindles the fire to cook food, then fear, cold and darkness disappear as a concomitance. Similarly, by serving the saints one attains the perfection of *prema*, and as a concomitant factor one easily becomes free from fear of *karma* and material existence, and conquers over all obstacles to spiritual advancement." What's more, association with saints is direct devotion, for it subdues the Lord Himself:

*athaitam paramam guhyam śṛṇvato yadunandana
sugopyam api vakṣyāmi tvam me bhṛtyaḥ suhṛt sakhā* (Bhāg. 11.11.49)
*na rodhayati mām yogo na saṅkhyam dharma eva ca
na svādhyāyas tapas tyāgo neṣṭāpūrtam na dakṣiṇā
vratāni yajñas chandāmsi tīrthāni niyamā yamaḥ
yathāvaruddhe sat saṅgaḥ sarva saṅgāpaho hi mām* (Bhāg. 11.12.1-2)

The Lord told Śrī Uddhava: "O Yadunandana! You are My dearest friend and servant, therefore I will tell you a great secret, listen! *aṣṭāṅga yoga, saṅkhyā* (discrimination of the truth), religious principles like non-violence or adherence to Varṇāśrama Dharma, recitation of the Vedas, penances, *sannyāsa*, performance of fire-sacrifices, making gardens, digging wells, giving charity, performing vows, worshipping the demigods, reciting *mantras*, visiting the holy places of pilgrimage, following regulative principles or performing Homa-sacrifices - all these things cannot subdue Me as much as associating with *sādhus*, giving up all other association!" Hence Śrīmad Bhāgavata says: *ayam hi paramo lābho nṛṇām sādhu samāgamaḥ* (Bhāg. 12.10.7) "Association with saints is the highest attainment for everyone".

In this way the indescribable glories of associating with saints is repeatedly described in the transcendental scriptures. *sādhu saṅga sādhu saṅga sarva śāstre koy; lava mātra sādhu saṅge sarva siddhi hoy* (C.C.) "Associate with the saints! Associate with the saints! This is what all the scriptures say. By associating with a saint for only a moment all perfection is attained!" (7)

jaya sanātana rūpa, prema bhakti rasa kūpa
yugala ujjvalamaya tanu
yāhāra prasāde loka, pāsarilo sab śoka,
prakaṭa kalapa taru janu (8)

"All glories to Sanātana and Rūpa Gosvāmī, the wells of the nectar of loving devotion! Their bodies are filled with the blazing flavours of the pastimes of the Divine Couple! By their grace a wishyielding tree was manifest to remove all the distress of the people!"

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *ṭikā*— *jaya— śānta dāsya sakhya vātsalya bhaktebhyaḥ sarvebhyaḥ utkarṣeṇa vartase kāvya prakāṣe jayatyarthena namaskāra ākṣipyate jaya tau prati mama namo'stvityarthaḥ. prema bhaktir eva rasas tasya kūpa rūpaḥ.*

Bodies filled with the blazing flavours of the Divine Pair:

Sudhākaṇikā vyākhyā— In this *tripadī* Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya proclaims the glories of the greatest Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava-*ācāryas*, Śrī-Śrī Rūpa Sanātana and mentions their extraordinary gift to humanity. First he says: *jaya sanātana rūpa*. The word *jaya* indicates Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana's supreme status. Of all the different gifts of Śrīman Mahāprabhu the elevated brilliant and unprecedented practice of *mañjarī bhāva* or the service of Rādhā is the greatest form of devotion, and Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana have practised and preached it to the utmost. Knowing them to be extraordinarily qualified for preaching devotion, He Personally gave elaborate instructions on devotional principles and the principles of transcendental flavours to Śrī Sanātana in Kāśī and to Śrī Rūpa in Prayāga, and then He kindly empowered or inspired them to preach and practice it. Śrīla Kavi Karṇapūra has written in Śrī Caitanya Candrodāya Nāṭaka (9.48) —

kālena vṛndāvana keli vārtā lupteti tām khyāpayitum viśiṣya
kṛpāmṛtenābhīṣeṣca devas tatraiva rūpaṁ ca sanātanaṁ ca

"In due course of time the holy places connected with Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in Vṛndāvana had become lost, but Śrīman Mahāprabhu had showered Śrī Rūpa Sanātana with His grace (power) so that they could reveal them to the world once more (for the sake of preaching those pastimes)." From this statement we can learn of Śrī Rūpa-Sanātana's elevated position within the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya.

Apart from that, in Śrī Vṛndāvana no one equals Śrī Rūpa-Sanātana. Their practice of *bhajana*, renunciation, dispassion and relishing of loving flavours all remain exemplary for

everyone, like the pole star. Śrīla Kavirāja Gosvāmīpāda has written about their exemplary *bhajana* –

*mahāprabhura joto boṛo boṛo bhakta mātra; rūpa sanātana sabāra kṛpā gaurava pātra
keho yadi deṣe jāy dekhi vṛndāvana; tāra praśna koren prabhur pāriṣada gaṇa
koho- tāhā koiche rohe rūpa sanātana? koiche rohe vairāgya, koiche vā bhajana?
koiche aṣṭa prahara koren śrī kṛṣṇa bhajana? tabe praśamśiyā kohe sei bhakta gaṇa
aniketana doṅhe rohe, joto vṛkṣagaṇa; ekeka vṛkṣera tale ekeka rātri śayana
vipra grhe sthūla bhikṣā kāhān mādhuakarī; śuṣka ruṭi cānā cābāy bhoga parihari
karowā mātra hāte kānthā chidā bahirvāsa; kṛṣṇa kothā kṛṣṇa nāma nartana ullāsa
aṣṭa prahara kṛṣṇa bhajan– cāri daṇḍa śayane; nāma saṅkīrtane seho nohe kon dine
kabhu bhakti rasa śāstra koroye likhan; caitanya kothā śune, kore caitanya cintana
ei kothā śuniyā mahāntera mahā sukha hoy; caitanyera kṛpā jāhā, tāhān ki bismoy?*

(C.C. Madhya Ch.19)

"All the great (*nitya siddha*) devotees of Mahāprabhu were very proud of Rūpa and Sanātana and bestowed their grace upon them. If someone travelled from his own country to see Vṛndāvana, he would ask the Lord's associates: "Tell me, how do Rūpa and Sanātana live? How renounced are they, how do they eat? How are they performing 24-hour worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa?" Then those devotees would glorify them as follows: "They have no fixed abodes, but rather they sleep under a different tree every night. They either beg raw food (like wheat or flour) from the brahmins' houses, or do *mādhuakarī* (eating whatever they get from a number of houses). They eat only dry *rotis*, renouncing the enjoyment of luxurious food. In their hands they carry only *karuas* (earthen pots) and on their bodies they only wear torn quilts and outer garments. They dance of joy when they speak of Kṛṣṇa and sing His name. They worship Kṛṣṇa 24 hours a day and recline for just an hour and a half, but, on days when they get deeply absorbed in singing Kṛṣṇa's names they do not even sleep at all. Sometimes they compose *rasika* scriptures and sometimes they hear topics on Śrī Caitanya or think of Him." Hearing this news, the leading devotees would be very happy. What is astonishing for one who has received Śrī Caitanya's grace?

From this we can learn of the special elevated status of Śrī Rūpa-Sanātana. Another meaning of *jaya* is 'obeisances'. Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya offers his humble obeisances to Śrī Rūpa-Sanātana's lotus feet to glorify them.

First of all he says that Śrī Rūpa-Sanātana are *prema bhakti rasa kūpa*, a well of tasty loving devotion. Earlier we have shown the renunciation, dispassion and exemplary *bhajana* of Śrī Rūpa-Sanātana. If someone then starts considering them to be ordinary practitioners, then it is said they were ***prema bhakti rasa kūpa***. Śrī Rūpa-Sanātana are the Lord's eternal associates in Vraja, named Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī and Labaṅga Mañjarī. Together with Śrīman Mahāprabhu they have descended to the earth as His associates to preach the practice of *rasika* Vraja-devotion. Just as Śrīman Mahāprabhu is constantly immersed in relishing the sweetness of Śrī Rādhā's *prema*, although He is Himself the joint *avatāra* of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and relishes the flavours of devotion-in-practice, thinking Himself to be an ordinary practitioner with strict precision, similarly Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana are relishing the mellows of *bhajana* just like practising devotees, although they are the Lord's eternal associates; actually they are *prema bhakti rasa kūpa*, wells with the flavour of loving devotion.

The question may be raised here, "We have heard of the boundless love that Śrī Rūpa-Sanātana had for the lotus feet of Śrīman Mahāprabhu and Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and we see the huge storehouse of books that they have written, each filled with loving syllables— it would be proper to call them 'oceans of loving devotional flavours'; why does Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya calls them just 'wells' instead?" The ocean is mixed with water from different incoming rivers, but well-water is not mixed with any other water; it remains always itself. In the same way the loving devotional flavours that are preached by Śrī Rūpa-Sanātana are most pure. They are not mixed with *jñāna* or *yoga* or so, nor with feelings of awe and reverence. It is most pure and completely sweet. Secondly, the water of the ocean is mixed with salt and is therefore unfit for drinking. The water of rivers and ponds are very hot in the summer and muddy as well, so they are also not nice to drink. Well-water, however, is both cool and tasty. In the same manner, *jñāna*, *yoga* etc. are never able to stop the suffering and lamentation of the conditioned souls that are constantly afflicted by the pangs of the Kali age; only loving devotion is able to soothe their life airs. Loving devotion soothes the burning pangs of the suffering and lamentation in material existence for the conditioned souls, and blesses them with the relish of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's nectarean sweetness. Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana are called *prema bhakti rasa kūpa*, since they are the shelter of this most sweet and cooling juice of loving devotion. Actually the extent of their loving devotion was not as small as the contents of a well— it is vast and deep as an ocean. The flavours of loving devotion that dwell in their hearts are manifest in the form of the books they composed, and even now thousands of people escape from the fire of the threefold material miseries by diving in the *rasa*-well of these books, become blessed with the relish of the flavours of loving devotion and will forever remain blessed— of this there is no doubt.

After this, Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya calls Śrī-Śrī Rūpa-Sanātana *yugala ujjvalamaya tanu*, which means that their bodies are made of the brilliant transcendental erotic mellows, or *yugala ujjvala rasa* that also form the bodies of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava. This *yugala ujjvala rasa* is the greatest of all *rasas*. There are five main *bhakti rasas* (devotional flavours) – tranquility, servanthood, friendship, parenthood and sweet, brilliant or erotic love. Since the attributes or feelings of the preceding four *rasas* are contained in it, the *madhura*, brilliant or erotic *rasa* is the greatest of them all. In this connection Śrīman Mahāprabhu's following words of instruction to Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda are found in Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta—

*kṛṣṇa niṣṭhā, tṛṣṇā tyāga— sāntera dui guṇe; ei dui guṇa vyāpe sab bhakta jane
 sāntera svabhāva kṛṣṇe mamatā gandha hīna; param brahma paramātmā jñāna pravīṇa
 kevala svarūpa jñāna hoy sānta rase; pūrṇaiśvarya prabhu jñāna adhika hoy dāsye
 īśvara jñāna sambhrama gaurava pracura; sevā kori kṛṣṇe sukha den nirantara
 sāntera guṇa dāsye āche adhika 'sevana'; ataeva dāsya rasera hoy dui guṇa
 sāntera guṇa dāsya sevana— sakhya dui roy;
 dāsye sambhrama gaurava sevā, sakhya viśvāsamoy
 kāndhe coṛe kāndhe coṛāy; kore kṛḍā raṇa; kṛṣṇe seve kṛṣṇe korāy āpana sevana
 viśrambha pradhāna sakhya— gaurava sambhrama hīna;
 ataeva sakhya rasera tina guṇa cin
 mamatā adhika kṛṣṇe ātma sama jñāna; ataeva sakhya rase vaśa bhagavān
 vātsalye sāntera guṇa, dāsya sevana; sei sei sevā ihā nāma 'pālana'*

*sakhyera guṇa asaṅkoca agaurava āra; mamatā ādhikye tārana bhartsana vyavahāra
āpanāke 'pālaka' jñāna kṛṣṇe 'pālyā' jñāna; cāri rasera guṇe vātsalya amṛta samāna*

"The two attributes of the tranquil flavour are 'loyalty to Kṛṣṇa' and 'renunciation of material desires'. These two attributes permeate all the devotees. The nature of the tranquil devotee is that he cherishes not the slightest feeling of possessiveness towards Kṛṣṇa. His knowledge is mainly centered around Kṛṣṇa's *paramātma* and *param brahma* features. In the mood of tranquility there is only knowledge of Kṛṣṇa's philosophical status, whereas in servant-hood there is more of an awareness of Kṛṣṇa being the Lord full in six opulences. In this awareness of Kṛṣṇa's Godhead there is an abundance of reverence and dignity, but the servant always gives great delight to Kṛṣṇa with his service.⁸ The mood of a servant has more of a service-attitude than the mode of tranquility, therefore the mode of servant-hood has two attributes. The tranquility's attribute and the service attitude of servant-hood are included in the mood of friendship; in servant-hood and friendship there is full faith and confidence (as an additional attribute). Kṛṣṇa climbs on His friends' shoulders and makes them mount His shoulders also, and they play combat tournaments. The friends not only serve Kṛṣṇa, they also make Him serve them. The mood of friendship is predominated by confidence and is devoid of awe and reverence. Therefore friendship is recognised with three attributes. Here the feeling of possessiveness is greater, the friends see Kṛṣṇa as their equal— hence the Lord is subdued by the mood of friendship. Parental love has the attribute of tranquility, the service attitude of servant-hood, and their service bears the name of 'rearing Kṛṣṇa'. It has the attributes of absence of reverence and hesitation that are inherent to the mood of friendship, but has more qualities of possessiveness, and the parent can even chastise and punish Kṛṣṇa. They consider Kṛṣṇa the reared and themselves the responsible protectors. Since parenthood has four attributes it is just like nectar....."

*madhura rase—kṛṣṇa niṣṭhā, sevā atiśaya; sakhyera asaṅkoca lālana mamatādhika hoy
kānta bhāve nijāṅga diyā korena sevana; ataeva madhura rase hoy pañca guṇa
ākāśādira guṇa yeno para para bhūte; eka dui tina krame pañca pṛthivite
ei mata madhure sab bhāva samāhāra; ataeva svādādhikye kore camatkāra (C.C. Madhya 19)*

"In the conjugal mellow there is great loyalty to Kṛṣṇa and service attitude, the lack of hesitation characteristic to the mellow of friendship and the feeling of possessiveness is also much more intense. In the mood of a lover the devotee serves Kṛṣṇa with her own body, therefore the conjugal mellow has five attributes. Just as the five gross elements are endowed with five progressive attributes, starting with sky having one attribute and ending with the earth having five attributes, similarly the conjugal mellow has the five attributes of all five mellows. Hence it is the most relishable and astonishing of all mellows."

When Vraja's conjugal mellow is linked to the great astonishment of extra-marital love, its tastiness attains an endless variety. Above all is the *yugala ujjvala rasa*, or the relish of the mellow of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's incomparably sweet meeting. The *sakhīs* in the *yūtha* or party of Śrī Rādhā are blessed with the relish of this matchless sweetness. Amongst

⁸ The servants in Vraja, like Raktaka and Patraaka, do not see Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the Lord, for it is said — *Kṛṣṇera īsvara nāhi jāne vraja jana* (C.C.)— "The people of Vraja do not see Kṛṣṇa as the Lord". Rather, they give Him due respect as a local prince.

them are again the maidservants of Śrī Rādhā, or *mañjarīs*, that are dedicated to the service of the Divine Pair while cherishing greater love for Rādhā than for Kṛṣṇa— their relish is the greatest and most astonishing, for they are able to witness the very confidential pastimes of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava that even the *sakhīs* cannot behold. Their fish-like eyes freely swim in the ocean of bliss of these relishable pastimes and at the same time they become more blessed than blessed with the good fortune of engaging in Their service according to the time. They are so united with Śrīmatī in feeling that Śrīmatī considers them as non-different from Her own divine form, therefore they show no sign of any hesitation in beholding the Divine Pair Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava at that time and engaging in Their private service. What's more, as a result of their very wonderful oneness in feeling with Śrīmatī the signs of Kṛṣṇa's enjoyment on Śrīmatī's body is exactly reflected on their bodies as well! Therefore the leaders of these eternally perfect *mañjarīs*, Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī and Labaṅga Mañjarī, who are Rūpa and Sanātana in Śrī Gaura's pastimes, are called **yugala ujjvalamaya tanu** the embodiments of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's brilliant amorous love.

The question may now be raised— 'Why would those who are Vraja's eternally perfect *mañjarīs*, now humbly and eagerly perform such *sādhana* as if they are ordinary practitioners?' The blessed author explains this by saying: *yāhāra prasāde loka, pāsariḷo sab śoka, prakāṭa kalapa taru janu*—"By their grace a wishyielding tree was manifest to remove all the distress of the people" Actually Vraja's *nitya siddha* Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī and Labaṅga Mañjarī have descended with Śrī Gaurāṅga, Who is Himself the joint form of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, to personally practise His beloved worship in the sweet loving mood of Vraja, and to preach it to the world as well, by writing a huge storehouse of sacred books on the subject. By their grace the people of the world attained the example of how to practise this Vraja-devotion, and through their books they attained knowledge on the principles of *sambandha* (the soul's relationship with God), *abhidheya* (the means to attain God) and *prayojana* (the ultimate goal of life, love of God), so that they can forever be saved from the grip of the threefold mundane miseries, the repetition of birth and death and the pangs of lamentation. However, the destruction of suffering and lamentation are only concomitant results of their preaching; actually the people of the world have been blessed with the attainment of the loving service of the lotus feet of their most beloved Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, and to reveal this the blessed author said: *prakāṭa kalapa taru janu*, meaning that Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana are like wishyielding trees, descending to bestow the fruits of *prema* in the form of *mañjarī bhāva* that is part of Vraja's conjugal mellows. In this world it is very rare to find a wishyielding tree, but Śrī Rūpa-Sanātana are *prakāṭa kalapa taru*, or manifest wishyielding trees, which means that they revealed themselves to all people of the world and blessed everyone who lived in their time, and blessed everyone else for the eternal future by promulgating the path of *prema* through their hand-written books, that are filled with syllables of love.

Another meaning of the word *prakāṭa* is 'the best'. Śrī Rūpa Sanātana are the best of all wishyielding trees of the world, for ordinary wishyielding trees can only give worldly objects to the petitioners, but they are unable to bestow *prema*. Śrī Rūpa-Sanātana are *prema kalpatarus*, who bless those who take their shelter by given them the highest love of Vraja, therefore they are the greatest or *prakāṭa kalpatarus*. Again, if someone out of ignorance asks something from a wishyielding tree which is not good for him, the tree will give it to him. The wishyielding tree does not distinguish between what is good and what is

not good for the applicant, but Rūpa-Sanātana, the greatest wish-yielding trees, will bless the applicant by giving him *prema*, even if he actually desires something else but Kṛṣṇa. For instance, in the village of Mānakara there was a poor brahmin who attained a vision of Kāśīśvara Śrī Viśvanātha (Śiva) in a dream. Lord Śiva ordered him to go to Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmīpāda to get a touchstone from him. However, when he attained the *darśana* and association of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmīpāda he gave up his desire for the touchstone and became blessed with the treasure of *prema*. This is a well-known story. That is the great difference between the best or *prakṛta* wish-yielding trees Śrī Rūpa-Sanātana and the wish-yielding trees of this world. (8)

prema bhakti rīti yoto, nija granthe suvekata
likhiyāchen dui mahāśaya
yāhāra śravaṇa hoite, premānande bhāse cite,
yugala madhura rasāśraya (9)

"These two saints have revealed all the ways of loving devotion by writing them down in their books. By hearing these topics the heart floats in ecstatic love and takes shelter of the *madhura rasa* (amorous mellow)".

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *ṭikā*: *dvābhyāṁ mahāśayābhyāṁ śrī rūpa sanātanaḥ sarva prema bhakti rītir vyaktaṁ yathā syāt tathā nija granthe likhitā. yat śravaṇāt bhaktānāṁ cittāṁ premānanda rūpa samudre plutāṁ syāt. śrī gaurāṅga prema samudram avagāhya tasmāt prema ratnam uddhṛtya yuvāṁ prakāśitavantau*: "They dive deep in the ocean of Gaurāṅga's *prema*, pick up the jewels of *prema* from the bottom, and reveal them to the world."

Shelter of the sweet flavours of the Divine Pair:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā– After this Śrīla Narottama Thākura Mahāśaya glorifies the books of Śrī-Śrī Rūpa Sanātana, that are filled with syllables of pure love. Revealing their great gift he sings: *prema bhakti rīti joto, nija granthe suvekata, likhiyāche dui mahāśaya* – "These two saints have revealed all the ways of loving devotion by writing them down in their books." Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana are both *mahāśaya*, which means they are generous and high-minded. Hence, although they are constantly floating in an ocean of *dhruvānusmṛti*, constant meditation, and are always immersed in the relishing of transcendental mellows, they are still very compassionate towards the conditioned souls, and have, out of their own generosity, recorded their transcendental experiences within their sacred books. Another meaning of *mahāśaya* is 'a bee-like relisher of devotional flavours'. They relished *bhakti rasa* by hearing, chanting and recollecting in exactly the same manner as they relished it in writing their sacred books. Those who are engaged in composing *bhakti* or *rasa*-scriptures can understand how much relish of wonderful *bhakti* or *bhājana rasa* is attained through that writing-work. Or Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya personally wants to reveal a very beautiful meaning of the word *mahāśaya*. – *rādhikā caraṇāśraya, ye kore se mahāśaya* "Whoever takes shelter of Rādhikā's

lotus feet is called a *mahāśaya*." Śrī Rūpa-Sanātana are themselves exclusively surrendered to Śrī Rādhā's lotus feet, since in reality they are Śrīmatī's loving maidservants, who are non-different from Her. This is only how they were able to compose such sacred scriptures, filled with loving syllables.

Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya describes how wonderful the books are that were composed by Śrī Rūpa-Sanātana – *prema bhakti rīti yoto, nija granthe suvekata, likhiyāchen dui mahāśaya* "These two saints have revealed all the ways of loving devotion by writing them down in their books." In the dictionary we can find different synonyms for the word *rīti*– 'order/succession, kind/sort, nature/disposition, rules/regulations, attribute, religion/virtue, etc.' Here all these meanings can apply. Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya is so wonderfully eloquent that from a small two-syllable word like *rīti* he can make a wide ranging implication of the subjects discussed in the huge pile of books that were composed by Śrīla Rūpa and Sanātana.

When the word *rīti* means 'successive order' – In his two books *Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu* and *Ujjvala Nīlamanī*, Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has wonderfully outlined the successive stages of attaining loving devotion, from faith and associating with saints to engagement in *bhajana*, then the successive stages of more advanced loving devotion, from *sneha* and *māna* up to *praṇaya* and *mahābhāva*, and finally the emotional depth of the various manifestations of *mahābhāva* – *rūḍha*, *adhirūḍha*, *modana*, *mohana* and *mādana*. In the first Canto of his Śrī Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta, Śrīmat Sanātana Gosvāmīpāda has given a wonderful description of the successive stages of devotion of the devotees who became the object of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's grace, and in the second Canto he has made a wonderful description of the succession of loving devotion in various transcendental abodes like *Vaikuṅṭha*, according to their *rasa*.

In the same manner the word *rīti* may mean 'kind' or 'sort' – the Gosvāmīs have expertly divided the five *prema bhakti rasas* into *sānta*, *dāsyā*, *sakhya*, *vātsalya* and *madhura* and have given nice examples of each of them. Similarly, when *rīti* is taken to mean 'nature' as in 'disposition'– their books also extensively describe how to become absorbed in Kṛṣṇa-consciousness after removing all other, non-Kṛṣṇa-conscious, absorptions. *rīti* can also mean *paddhati*, which means the rules and regulations of *sādhana bhakti*, *bhāva bhakti* and *prema bhakti*, which have also been elaborately described in their books, along with their wonderful qualities and virtues. Apart from this, Śrīmat Sanātana Gosvāmīpāda has revealed different rules and regulations in devotional practice, or devotional theologies in his books *Śrī Haribhakti Vilāsa*, *Līlāstava* or *Daśama Carita* and *Bṛhat Vaiṣṇava Toṣaṇī-ṭīkā*. Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has similarly described the secrets of loving devotion in books like *Laghu Bhāgavatāmṛta*, *Vidagdha Mādhava*, *Lalita Mādhava*, *Stavamālā* and *Dāna Keli Kaumudī*, in order to make those grave secrets of *bhakti rasa* easily understandable for the people of this world.

Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana have revealed the ways of loving devotion in their books. In other words, they have revealed the deep secrets of loving devotion by elaborately describing them. Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has written – *śrīmad prabhupadāmbhojaiḥ sarvā bhāgavatāmṛte; vyaktīkṛtāsti gūḍhāpi bhakti siddhānta mādhurī* (*Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu* 1.4.20) "My master Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmīpāda has clearly described all the sweetnesses of the devotional theology in his own book named *Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta*, although they are so confidential." This must also be understood of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda's own books. For the

benefit of the people of this world they have clearly revealed these devotional theologies, and the brightest example of this is the fact that Śrīmat Sanātana Gosvāmīpāda wrote a commentary on his own book Śrī Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta. This means that although he had quoted examples from the Purāṇas in Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta to elaborately describe the devotional theology, he still wrote a commentary on each of these verses to make this theology easily understandable for everyone. Therefore Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya justly says: *prema bhakti rīti joto, nija granthe subekata, likhiyāche dui mahāśaya*. – "These two great souls have **revealed** all the ways of loving devotion in their own books."

After that the blessed author says: *yāhāra śravaṇa hoite, premānande bhāse cite jugala madhura rasāśraya* – "Hearing (as well as broadcasting and recollecting) the books of Śrī Rūpa Sanātana inundates the heart and mind in a pool of ecstatic loving flavours." The purport of this is that in the words of the scriptures and the *mahājānas* the greatest means to attain love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa or to relish mellows is to associate with saints who are like minded, pleasant and more advanced than oneself, but such association is extremely rarely attained in this world. Śrī Rūpa-Sanātana have placed all their great and deep realisations about the treasure of their beloved devotional practice in their books. Secondly, each syllable of any of these books is filled with *prema*, therefore the best and most powerful means to attain *prema* and relish *rasa* is to hear and chant them. These books are especially *kaṇṭhahāras* (texts to be memorised) for the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas who worship Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, for they are the vessels filled with Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's *madhura rasa*. All the books of Śrī Rūpa Sanātana are filled with the flavours of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's forms, attributes and pastimes, the expertise of worshipping Them in order to attain *prema*, and theologies that are favorable to this aim. Thus the hearts of the worshippers of the Divine Pair are filled with the flavours of ecstatic love when they savour these sacred books. Sometimes we see the reading *parānanda hoy cite*, but that can have the same meaning as the above, for *premananda* is *parānanda* (the paramount bliss). There is no greater bliss than this anywhere in the world! On the other hand, without relishing these books there is no way in which one can take shelter of the sweet flavours of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, or have any experience of them – that is indicated here. (9)

yugala kiśora prema, lakṣa bāṇa yeno hema
heno dhana prakāśilo yārā
jaya rūpa sanātana, deho more prema dhana
se ratana more gole hārā (10)

"They revealed the treasure of love of the Adolescent Pair of Vṛndāvana, which is a hundred thousand times purer than gold. All glories to Rūpa and Sanātana! Give me this treasure! I will wear this gift like a jewel necklace around my neck!"

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *ṭikā* – *se ratana mora gole hārā– tena prema ratnena kaṇṭhe hāraṁ karavāṇīti bhāvah.*

Gold molten a hundred thousand times:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā– In the previous *tripadī* Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura Mahāśaya mentioned that the books of Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana are the shelter of the sweet mellows of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and in this *tripadī* he explains that they have defined the highest purity of *prema* in their own scriptures, and that they have revealed this most confidential form of *prema* in all details to the world. First he says: *yugala kiśora prema, lakṣa bāna yeno hema* "They revealed the treasure of love of the Adolescent Pair of Vṛndāvana, which is a hundred thousand times purer than gold." The more often gold is kept in the fire, the purer it gets. No base metal can be imagined anymore in gold that is molten a hundred thousand times, and similarly there is not even an iota of personal interest in the mutual love of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, or *gopī prema*.

nā gaṇi āpana duḥkha, sabe vāñchi tāra sukha
tāra sukhe āmāra tātparya
more yadi dile duḥkha, tāra hoilo mahāsukha
sei duḥkha mora sukha varya (C.C.)

"I don't count My own unhappiness, I just want His happiness. His happiness is My purpose. If He feels very happy in giving Me pain, then that pain is My greatest happiness." These words can be spoken by the Vrajasundarīs – not by anyone else, for their love is called *samarthā*, or fully able. When the desire to enjoy remains able to follow *rati* or pure love then it is called *samarthā*. Just as iron becomes identical with fire when it is heated and fire removes the iron's coldness and darkness, making it hot and luminous, similarly *rati* or the pure passionate desire to make Śrī Kṛṣṇa happy becomes identical with the desire for enjoyment, only the deep darkness of selfish enjoyment is cast far away and the heart is dyed with the vermilion colour of pure love (*anurāga*). Here *rati*, with which it has become identical, is primary and the desire for enjoyment is secondary. The *gopīs* have reached accomplishment by serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa– personal happiness simply does not exist within their hearts – *ātma sukha duḥkha gopīra nāhiko vicāra; kṛṣṇa sukha hetu ceṣṭā mano vyavahāra. kṛṣṇa vinā āra sab kori parityāga; kṛṣṇa sukha hetu kore śuddha anurāga (C.C.)* "The *gopīs* do not think of their personal happiness. All their thoughts and activities are for Kṛṣṇa's happiness. They have given up everything else but Kṛṣṇa and their passions are purely for Kṛṣṇa's happiness." Therefore, *kānta seva sukha pūra, saṅgama hoite sumadhura* – "The service of my lover is full of happiness, and is much sweeter than the bliss of uniting with Him." – this is the heart's cry of the Vraja-*gopīs*.

It is described in scriptures like Śrīmad Bhāgavata that when Śrī Kṛṣṇa went to Mathurā in the manifest pastimes (*prakāṣa līlā*), the Vraja Sundarīs suffered severe pangs of separation from Him. No devotee was able to survive such pangs, but the girls of Vraja kept themselves alive. The only reason for that, though, was their desire to see their heart's lover Śrī Kṛṣṇa happy. If they died Śrī Kṛṣṇa would miss them and that would make Him unhappy. That is the only reason why they decided to stay alive. If they desired even a drop of personal happiness, it would have been impossible to survive such pangs of separation.

priyā priya saṅga hīnā, priya priyā saṅga vinā,

*nāhi jīye e satya pramāṇa
mora dasā śune jabe, tāra ei dasā hobe,
ei bhoye donhe rākhe prāṇa*

"It is proven to be true that a man cannot live without his ladylove and a lady cannot live without her lover. When He (Kṛṣṇa) hears of My condition He will attain that condition (He will die), and out of fear of that I keep Myself alive." (C.C.)

Above all of them is the *mādanākhyā mahābhāva* of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, in which even the most subtle selfish desires have vanished and which is even more pure than gold molten a hundred thousand times. In their books, Śrīla Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmī have elaborately described the love of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava with all detailed examples. The confidential love of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, which was previously hard to comprehend even by Lord Brahmā and Uddhava, has been revealed by Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana in their books in such a way that ordinary souls of the Kali age can easily comprehend as well as practise it. **heno prema prakāśilo yārā** – "They have revealed such a love."

Then again, *yugala kiśora prema, lakṣa bāna jeno hema* means that the love of Śrī Rādhā's girlfriends for the Adolescent Pair Śrī Śrī Rādhā Mādhava is even purer than gold molten a hundred thousand times. They are always happy when Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava are happy. The relish of the sweetness of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's purest love is their sole treasure. Śrīla Kavirāja Gosvāmīpāda has written–

*rādhā-kṛṣṇera līlā ei atī gūḍhatara; dāsya vātsalyādi bhāvera nā hoy gocara
sabe eka sakhīgaṇera ihā adhikāra; sakhī hoite hoy ei līlāra vistāra
sakhī vinu ei līlāra puṣṭi nāhi hoy; sakhī līlā vistāriyā sakhī āsvādoy
sakhī vinu ei līlāy anyera nāhi gati , etc. (C.C.)*

"Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's pastimes are very confidential; those in servant mood or parental mood cannot perceive them. Only the *sakhīs* are able to gauge them. From these *sakhīs* Their pastimes extend. Without the *sakhīs* these pastimes cannot be nourished; the *sakhīs* extend them and the *sakhīs* relish them. Without the *sakhīs* these pastimes have no goal...."

Amongst the *sakhīs* the *mañjarīs*, Śrī Rādhā's maidservants, who love Rādhā more than Kṛṣṇa have the purest love for the Divine Pair, for even though the *sakhīs* do not desire to amorously meet Śrī Kṛṣṇa either, by Śrī Rādhārāṇī's wish or efforts they may still meet with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. It is described in Caitanya Caritāmṛta (Madhya Ch.8)–

*sakhīra svabhāva eka akathya kathana; kṛṣṇa saha nija līlāya nāhi sakhīra mana
kṛṣṇa saha rādhikāra līlā ye korāy; nija keli hoite tāhe koṭi sukha pāy*

.....

*yadyapi sakhīra kṛṣṇa saṅgame nāhi mana; tathāpi rādhikā yatne korāya saṅgame
nānā chale kṛṣṇe preri saṅgame korāy; ātma kṛṣṇa saṅga hoite koṭi sukha pāy
anyonye viśuddha preme kore rasa puṣṭa; tā sabhāra prema dekhi kṛṣṇa hoy tuṣṭa*

"The nature of the *sakhīs* is indescribable. They do not covet personal pastimes with Kṛṣṇa. Rather, they are millions of times happier when Kṛṣṇa plays with Rādhikā than if He would enjoy with them.....Although the *sakhīs* do not think of enjoying with Kṛṣṇa, still

Rādhikā diligently endeavours to have them meet Him. She sends them to meet Kṛṣṇa under various pretexts, and that makes Her again millions of times happier than if She would personally meet Kṛṣṇa. In this way the purity of their mutual love nourishes the mellows and when Kṛṣṇa sees the love of all of them He is satisfied."

However, the maidservants who love Rādhā more than Kṛṣṇa, also known as *mañjarīs*, never desire to meet with Śrī Kṛṣṇa personally⁹. They are exclusively fixed in a service attitude, are totally surrendered to devotional service and their entire constitution consists of only the flavours of devotional service. This practice of *mañjarī bhāva* is the greatest desired goal of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, Śrīman Mahāprabhu's unprecedented merciful gift. Śrī Rūpa-Sanātana are the teachers of this *mañjarī bhāva*, and they have elaborately described the principles of this practice of *mañjarī bhāva* in their books. Aiming at this practice of *mañjarī bhāva* and wanting to establish this practice as the greatest of all, they have propounded different principles, philosophies and narratives. The best proof of that is Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmīpāda's scripture 'Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta'. In this way the *mañjarīs* most pure love for the Adolescent Pair has been revealed in all details by Śrī Rūpa-Sanātana in their books.

Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya prays: *jaya rūpa sanātana, deho more prema dhana, se ratana mora gole hārā* – "O merciful Śrī Rūpa-Sanātana! Please bestow upon me the love which focuses on *mañjarī bhāva*! May this ever beautify my soul like a necklace of love-jewels around my neck!" Here *prema* is called a treasure. Just as poverty is destroyed by gaining wealth, and enjoyment is concomitantly attained, similarly on the attainment of *prema* the miseries of material existence are concomitantly destroyed and the relish of loving transcendental flavours is attained. Then again, *prema* makes one relish Śrī Kṛṣṇa's boundless sweetness— *pañcama puruṣārtha sei prema mahādhana; kṛṣṇera mādhurya rasa korāy āsvādana* (C.C.) "This great treasure of *prema* is the fifth human pursuit, which causes one to relish the sweet mellows of Kṛṣṇa." In the *prema* of *mañjarī bhāva* one gains the relish of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's boundless sweetness along with this excellent loving flavour. It must be understood that Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya begs alms of grace from Śrī Rūpa-Sanātana, so that he can wear this necklace of love-gems around his neck and he can relish both kinds of flavours of love. (10)

bhāgavata śāstra marma, nava vidhā bhakti dharmā,
sadāi koribo susevana
anya devāśraya nāi, tomāre kohilo bhāi,
ei bhakti parama bhajana (11)

"The Bhāgavata Purāṇa teaches us nine kinds of devotional service, which I will always render nicely. I tell you, brother, I do not seek shelter of other gods. This devotion is the highest worship."

⁹ The topic of practising *mañjarī bhāva* will be analysed in more detail further on in this book.

The nine kinds of devotion:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā– Although Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has attained the title of **prema bhakti mahārāja**, he whose qualification for loving devotion is matchless, within the society of Vaiṣṇavas, still he humbly considers himself an ordinary aspirant by saying – *bhāgavata śāstra marma, nava vidhā bhakti dharma, sadāi koribo susevana*. "The Bhāgavata Purāṇa teaches us nine kinds of devotional service, which I will always render." This can be explained in two different ways. "The true purport of the Bhāgavata scripture is revealed in the commentaries of the Gosvāmīs, by Śrīman Mahāprabhu's grace. I will constantly study the commentaries on the Bhāgavata, like Vaiṣṇava Toṣaṇī and Krama Sandarbha, plus the series 'Six Sandarbhas', that explain the purport of the Bhāgavata, plus the commentaries by the Gosvāmīs' followers Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda and Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa Mahodoy, and I will always practise the nine kinds of devotion like hearing and chanting, which is the natural duty of the living entity, who is Kṛṣṇa's eternal servant."

Another meaning may be: "I will always nicely render **the nine kinds of devotion** that are the true purport of Śrīmad Bhāgavata." In Śrī Bhāgavata we can learn the following words of Śrīla Prahlāda Mahāśaya (7.5.23-24) – *śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ smaraṇam pāda sevnam arcanam vandanam dāsyam sakhyam ātma nivedanam. iti puṁsārpitā viṣṇau bhaktis cen nava lakṣaṇā kriyeta bhagavatyaaddhā tan mano'dhītam uttamam*. "Hearing, chanting and remembering Śrī Viṣṇu's glories, serving His feet, worshipping His image in the temple, praising Him, serving Him, making friends with Him and surrendering oneself to Him – by offering this nine-fold process of devotion directly to the Lord, a living entity performs, in my opinion, the greatest study." Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya vows to nicely practice the nine items of devotion as they are propounded by Śrīmad Bhāgavata, which is the essence of all the Vedānta, and encourages the assembled devotees also to practise these items to their level best. Here Śrīla Ṭhākura does not just say *sevana* but **susevana**, which means that the practitioner who desires his own welfare should practise these nine items so perfectly well that his heart, that is polluted by lusty desires, will swiftly become purified and he will soon develop *rati* or *prema*. How he has to practise these nine types of devotion, starting with hearing and chanting, nicely, we will try to discuss a little on the basis of the sacred words of the Gosvāmīs, for if the practising devotee fails to serve (practise) these items nicely, or he does not know how to practise them expertly, a big delay may arise in his attainment of *prema* as he progresses in his life of *bhajana*.

1) How the item of hearing can be best practised is described by Śrī Jīva Gosvāmīpāda – *tac ca nāma rūpa guṇa līlāmaya śabdānām śrotra sparśaḥ.....tatrāpi śravaṇe śrī bhāgavata śravaṇam tu parama śreṣṭham tasya tādrśa prabhāvamaya śabdātmakatvāt parama rasamayavāc ca tatra pūrvasmād yathā (Bhāg. 1.1.2) 'śrīmad bhāgavate mahāmuni kṛte kiṁ vāparair īśvaraḥ sadyo hr̥dyavarudhyate'tra kṛtibhiḥ śuśrūsubhis tat kṣaṇāt'. mahāmuniḥ sarva mahan mahaniya caraṇa paṅkajaḥ śrī bhagavān. atra kiṁ vāparair ityādinā śabda svābhāvika māhātmyam darśitam. uttarasmād yathā 'sarva vedānta sāram hi śrīmad bhāgavatam iṣyate. tad rasāmṛta tr̥ptasya nānyatra syād ratiḥ kvacit'. tad rasa evāmṛtam tena tr̥ptasya. atraiva vivecanīyam śrī bhagavan nāmādeḥ śravaṇam tāvat paramaḥ śreyāḥ, tatrāpi mahad āvirbhāvita prabandhādeḥ tatra mahat kīrtiyamānasya, tato'pi śrī bhāgavatasya. tatrāpi mahat kīrtiyamānasyeti. tatrāpi savāsana mahānubhava mukhāt sarvasya śrī kṛṣṇa nāmādi śravaṇam tu parama bhāgyād eva sampadyate tasya pūrṇa bhagavattvād iti (Bhakti Sandarbhaḥ)* "Hearing means the audial reception of the sound vibrations concerning the Lord's holy names, forms, attributes and

pastimes. Of all topics to hear again the best topic is Śrīmad Bhāgavata, for Śrīmad Bhāgavata's words are most powerful and tasty. It is explained in the beginning of Śrīmad Bhāgavata how each of its words are most powerful: "The great sage Śrīman Nārāyaṇa, whose lotus feet are worshipped by the great saints, has revealed this Śrīmad Bhāgavata. In it are such powerful words, that contain such a paramount relish, that the Lord at once becomes captured in the heart of even a person who simply desires to hear it. Is there any other kind of spiritual practice or hearing of a sacred book that promptly captures the Lord in the heart? Never! This shows the natural greatness of the words contained in Śrīmad Bhāgavata. Śrīmad Bhāgavata is most succulent, hence it is said: "Anyone who is satisfied with the nectar of Śrīmad Bhāgavata, which is the essence of all Vedānta scriptures, will not have taste for any other book or any other spiritual practice." This shows the deep relish that can be found in Śrīmad Bhāgavata."

Here we must consider first of all that the hearing of the Lord's holy names, forms, attributes and pastimes is most auspicious. Of them, the narrations (on the Lord) composed by great saints are even more auspicious, and then, if these narrations that are composed by great saints are also sung and recited by great saints, then that is even more glorious. Again even more auspicious than that is when the scripture Śrīmad Bhāgavata, which is composed by the greatest saints Śrī Vyāsa and Śuka, is sung by the great saints. Then again, if the holy names, attributes and pastimes of Śrī Hari, that form Śrīmad Bhāgavata, are heard from the mouth of a like-minded, deeply realised saint, then that will provide the greatest relish. Beyond that again, although the pastimes of many of the Lord's *avatāras* are narrated in Śrīmad Bhāgavata, the hearing of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's holy names, attributes and pastimes is most fortunate, for He is the Original Personality of Godhead and the embodiment of sweetness Himself."

From this teaching of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī we can conclude that hearing about Śrī Kṛṣṇa's holy names, attributes and pastimes as they are described in Śrīmad Bhāgavata from the mouth of a like minded saint, is very powerful and very tasty, and will make the practitioner's devotional item of hearing very successful. Taking Śrīmad Bhāgavata as the kernel, the Gosvāmīs have composed so many books about Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, both from the angle of *rasa* and *siddhānta* (philosophy), and all these books are also known under the heading of 'Bhāgavata'. The pastimes of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, who is the joint form of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are described in scriptures like Śrī Caitanya Bhāgavata and Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta, as well as this Prema Bhakti Candrikā and Prārthanā, and these books are similarly full of power and taste. Hearing all these scriptures from the mouths of like minded saints will swiftly cause unfavorable obstacles to nice devotional service to disappear, and the practitioner who has taste for hearing these topics will soon be blessed with the attainment of *prema*. This is called good practice of the item of hearing. 2) *kīrtana* means loudly singing of the glorious names, attributes and pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Particularly the singing of the Lord's holy names is the religious practice for this age of Kali. There is no practice greater than the chanting of the holy name of the Lord, as a means to attain *prema*. There is no restriction in time, place or circumstance, or who is qualified or unqualified, it is the greatest benefit for the living entities, it is endorsed and respected by all the saints and is practised by innumerable *sādhakas* and *siddhas*— *nāma saṅkīrtana* is defined as the best means of attaining *prema* by all the scriptures. *etan nirvidyamānānām icchatām akuto bhayam; yoginām nṛpa nirṇītaim harer nāmānukīrtanam* (Bhāg. 2.1.11) *sādhakānām siddhānām ca nātaḥ param anyat*

śreyo'stītyāha etad iti. icchatām kāmīnām tat tat phala sādhanam etad eva. yoginām jñānīnām phalaṁ caitad eva nirṇītam. nātra pramāṇam vyaktavyam ityārthaḥ (Śrīdhara Svāmī commentary) "There is no greater practice than this, either for practitioners or for accomplished devotees, for this reason it is said: "O King! This *nāma saṅkīrtana* is the greatest means for those who have material desires to have their desires fulfilled, and it is also the greatest practice for those who hanker for liberation. *nāma saṅkīrtan* is also the main result of the practices of the *yogīs* and the *jñānīs*."

In His 'Śikṣāṣṭakam', Śrīman Mahāprabhu Personally explained how this *nāma saṅkīrtana* can be nicely practised so that it will yield *prema* – *ye rūpe loile nāma prema upāya upajāya; tāhāra lakṣaṇa śuno svarūpa rāma rāya. tṛṇād api sunīcena tarora iva sahiṣṇunā; amānīnā mānadena kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ* (C.C.) "O Svarūpa and Rāma Rāya! Hear now from Me how the holy name can yield *prema*– "Think yourself to be as lowly as a blade of grass, be as tolerant as a tree, give all honour to others and never expect any honour for yourself." Mahāprabhu Personally explained His verse as follows–

*uttama hoiyā āpanāke māne tṛṇād dhama; dui prakāre sahiṣṇutā kore vṛkṣa sama
vṛkṣa yeno kāt-leo kichu nā boloy; śukhāiyā moile kāre pāni nā māgoy
yei ye māgoye tāre deya āpana dhana; gharma vṛṣṭi sohe, ānere koroye rakṣaṇa
uttama hoiyā vaiṣṇava hobe nirabhimāna; jīve sammāna dibe jāni kṛṣṇa adhiṣṭhāna
ei mata hoiyā yei kṛṣṇa nāma loy; śrī kṛṣṇa caraṇe tara prema upajoy*

"Although the devotee is the most elevated person, he considers himself to be lower than a blade of grass, and he tolerates everything in two ways, just like a tree. Even when a tree is cut, it does not say anything, and even when it dries up and dies, it does not ask anyone for water. But it gives its own wealth for free to anyone who may ask for it, protecting others while tolerating heat and rain. Although the Vaiṣṇava is the greatest personality, he is devoid of pride and he honours all living beings, knowing that Kṛṣṇa dwells in them. Whoever chants the name of Kṛṣṇa in this way will attain love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet."

Śrīla Kavirāja Gosvāmīpāda gives a warning label to this verse by writing–

*ūrdhva bāhu kori kochi śuno sarva loka; nāma sūtre gāṅṭhi poro kaṅṭhe ei śloka
prabhura ājñāya koro ei śloka ācaraṇa; avāśya pāibe tabe śrī kṛṣṇa caraṇa*

"Raising my arms I tell you: "Hear me, folks! String this verse on a necklace of *harināma* and hang it around your necks! Follow the teachings of this verse on the Lord's order and you will certainly attain Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet."

The purport of these words is that one must constantly remember this verse while chanting the holy name and always anxiously pray to the holy name for the attainment of this state of mind, and submit that eagerness of heart also. That is because unless and until that stage is attained, *prema*, which is the main result of taking the holy name, will not be attained. The proper implementation of this verse is the best means to chant the holy name without offences, since offences are the most powerful obstacles to the attainment of *prema* in this otherwise very powerful process of chanting the holy name. The holy name is not satisfied with an offender, and although an offender may perform *kīrtana* for a very long time, the holy name will not wish to bestow *prema* upon him. Anyone who wishes to swiftly

attain *prema* by nicely practising *harināma saṅkīrtana*, which is the religious practice for this age of Kali, must do so while avoiding ten offences to the holy name. The root word *rādh* means satisfaction. When there is *aparādha* (offence) then this satisfaction (*rādh*) is removed (*apa*) and the holy name conceals his great power, as a result of which the offender of the name is unable to nicely serve the holy name. What to speak of attaining nice devotional service, offences to the holy name have all kinds of poisonous fruits, such as faithlessness, crookedness, absorption in things other than Kṛṣṇa, desires for profit, adoration and distinction and slackness in chanting the holy name. Again, *aparādha* (which means taking away *apa*, satisfaction *rādh*) will take away the perfect fruits of chanting the holy name, for it will make all the *bhajana* practiced by the *sādhaka* futile. Spiritual things will appear mundane and mundane things will appear spiritual, desires for enjoyment will awaken within the heart and mind of the *sādhaka*, as a result of which the *sādhaka* will not be blessed by taking shelter of the holy name. We are briefly mentioning the ten offences to the chanting of the holy name here. 1) Blaspheming the *sādhus* 2) Seeing the names of Śrī Viṣṇu and Śrī Śiva as independent from each other 3) Disrespecting Śrī Guru, or considering him to be an ordinary mortal human being 4) Blaspheming the Vedas or related scriptures 5) Considering the glories of the holy name to be exaggerated 6) Speculating some ulterior meaning out of the holy name 7) Committing sins on strength of chanting the holy name 8) Considering the chanting of the holy name to be equal to mundane pious activities 9) Instructing the faithless in the glories of the holy name 10) Having no love for the holy name despite having heard its glorifications¹⁰. Avoiding these ten offences will result in a *susevana* (nice service) of the devotional practice of *nāma kīrtana*. 3) *smaraṇa*– Fixing one's mind on the Lord's holy names, attributes and pastimes is called *smaraṇa*. The remembrance of Śrī Hari is the very life force of all spiritual practice, but in the devotional practice of *smaraṇa* it is absolutely necessary to fix one's mind. When the mind is not pure it is not possible to concentrate. In other words, unless the dirt of other topics is removed the heart is not said to be purified and the practice of recollection will not be possible for anyone. Hence Śrī Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has written – *atha śaraṇāpattyādibhiḥ śuddhāntaḥ karaṇaś cet....nāma saṅkīrtanāparityāgena smaraṇam kuryāt* "When the mind is purified by the process of surrender, one should practise the devotional item of recollection along with the chanting of the holy name." The purport of this is that as the heart of the practitioner gets purified by practising devotional items like faith, surrender, rendering service to Śrī Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas and hearing and chanting, the devotional item of recollection must become blissful to practise accordingly. The practitioner who is engaged in the item of recollection will gradually be able to advance through different stages, if he ardently endeavours, and arrive in the kingdom of *bhāva siddhi*. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has mentioned these stages – *tad idaṁ smaraṇam pañca vidhaṁ yat kiñcid anusandhānam smaraṇam. sarvataś cittam ākṛṣya sāmānyākāreṇa mano dhāraṇam dhāraṇā. viśeṣato rūpādi cintanam dhyānam. amṛta dhāravad avichinnaṁ tat dhruvānusmṛtiḥ. dhyeya mātra sphuraṇam samādhir iti* (Bhakti Sandarbhaḥ– Paragraph 278) "The aforementioned item of recollection knows five stages. A slight seeking of Śrī Hari's names and forms is called *smaraṇa*, withdrawing the heart from all the sense objects and holding Śrī Hari's forms, attributes etc. within it, is called *dhāraṇa* (holding),

¹⁰ An elaborate explanation of these offences can be found in my book Śrī-Śrī Śikṣāṣṭakam.

specific meditations on the Lord's form and so is called **dhyāna**, uninterrupted recollection, which flows like a stream of nectar, is called **dhruvānusmṛti** and pure contemplation in meditation is called **samādhi**. As a result of *susevana* (nice practice) of the item of recollection the practitioner will gradually be blessed with *bhāva samādhi* (pure loving contemplation).

After this 4) **pāda sevana** – *pāda śabdo bhaktyaiva nirdiṣṭaḥ. tataḥ sevāyāḥ sādaratvaṁ vidhiyate. sevā ca kāla deśādy ucitā paricaryādi paryāyā. sā yathā– yat pāda sevābhirucis tapasvinām aśeṣa janmopacitaṁ malaṁ dhiyaḥ. sadyaḥ kṣiṇotyānvaha medhatī satī yathā padānguṣṭha viniṣṛtā sarit* "The word *pāda* of *pāda sevana*, indicates great devotion or respect. In other words it is not that we only have to serve the Lord's feet, but also His lotus-face, His lotus-hands and all His other limbs. This means we must render service with the greatest respect and attention. Service should be rendered according to time, place and circumstances. *sevā* means formal temple worship. In Śrīmad Bhāgavata (4.21.29) Śrīla Pṛthu Mahārāja has spoken to Śrī Viṣṇu about relishing this type of service – "O Lord! When taste awakens for the service of Your lotus feet, it will swiftly destroy mankind's pollution, that is sensual cravings, accrued over innumerable lifetimes of mundane life, just as the Gaṅgā, that emanates from Your big toe, sanctifies the three worlds". This is a description of the concomitant result of taste for the Lord's foot-service, or good devotional service. Actually the real result of the devotee's taste for the Lord's foot-service is the desire to serve these lotus feet, and nothing more. For Śrī Mucukunda Mahārāja told Śrī Bhagavān (Bhāg. verse 10.51.56)–

*na kāmāye'nyam tava pādasevanād akiñcana prārthyatamād varam vibho!
ārādhyā kas tvam hyapavargadam hare vṛṇīto āryo varam ātma bandhanam*

"O Lord! I do not wish for any other boon but the service of Your lotus feet, which is constantly prayed for by those who have given up all lusty desires. O Hari! Who would accept liberation when he is already engaged in worshipping You? I would rather pray for my own bondage than to accept liberation!" This devotional item of foot-service includes seeing and touching the deity, circumambulating and following the deity, going to the temple, and occasional holy dips in the Gaṅgā and sacred places like Puruṣottama (Purī), Dvārakā, Mathurā etc., since these sub-items are like associates of the main item of foot-service.

Now the nice service of 5) **arcana** is being described. All persons who are initiated in Viṣṇu *mantra* must always worship an image of their worshipable deity, otherwise there are severe reactions, so it is described. *dīkṣitānām tu sarveṣāṁ tad akaraṇe naraka pātaḥ śrūyate yathā viṣṇu dharmottare – eka kālam dvi kālam vā trikālam pūjayed dhārim apūjya bhojanam kurdhvan narakāṇi vrajen naraḥ* (Bhakti Sandarbhaḥ– Paragraph 283) "Those who are initiated in Viṣṇu *mantra*, whether they be householders or renunciates, celibate students or forest dwellers, any one of them will go to hell if they do not perform *pūjā* of their worshipable deity. So it is said in the scriptures. In the Viṣṇu Dharmottara it is written – "Those who are initiated into Viṣṇu *mantra* must perform *pūjā* of Śrī Hari once, twice or thrice. Anyone who eats a meal without having performed *pūjā* of Śrī Hari will go to different hells." This item of temple worship is especially prescribed as a main item for householder devotees – *ye tu sampattimanto grhasthās teṣāṁ tvarcana mārga eva mukhyaḥ.....tad akṛtvā hi niṣkiñcanavat kevala smaraṇādi niṣṭhatve vitta sāṅhya pratipattiḥ syāt. para dvārā tat sampādanam vyavahāra*

niṣṭhatvasyālasatvasya vā pratipādakam; tato'sraddhāmayatvād dhīnam eva tat (B.S.) "The path of temple worship is a main item especially for rich householders. If they do not worship the Lord lavishly, but only perform *smaraṇa* as if they are poor renunciants, then they are hypocritical about their wealth. Not personally worshipping but having the worship done by someone else is a sign of attachment to mundane life or of laziness. ***vigraha noho tumi-sākṣāt vrajendra nandana*** (C.C.) "You are not a statue, but Vrajendranandana Himself!" The deity must be served with this faith and that is considered good service on the path of deity worship. Hence it is said in Bhakti Sandarbha – *atha śrīmat pratimāyām tu tad ākāraika rūpatayaiva cintayanti, ākāraikyāt. śilā buddhiḥ kṛtā kiṁ vā pratimāyām harer mayā- iti bhāvanāntare doṣa śravaṇāc ca.....paramopāsakāś ca sākṣāt parameśvaratvenaiva tām paśyanti; bheda sphūrter bhakti vicchedakatvāt tathaiva hyucitam* "The great saints always consider the deity to be non different from their worshipable deity, like Śrī Kṛṣṇa. It is not proper to see any difference between the deity and the worshipable Godhead, for there is no difference between Their shapes at all. It is heard that a person who sees even the slightest difference between the deity and the worshipable Godhead, or who sees the deity as a piece of stone or metal is guilty of many material and spiritual faults. When King Daśaratha killed Sindhu, the son of Andha Muni, by piercing him with an arrow, mistaking him to be a deer, he took the corpse along to Andha Muni. The sage then took his dead son and lamented – "Have I once committed the offence of considering the deity of Śrī Hari to be a piece of stone, that I now have to lament over my dead son?" Actually *nāma vigraha svarūpa tina eka rūpa; tina bheda nāhi- tina cid-ānanda rūpa* (C.C.) "The holy name, the deity and the Lord's original form– all three are actually one form. There is no difference between the three, they are all equally transcendental." By placing one's firm faith into such statements by the scriptures and the *mahājanas* and considering the deity to be completely non different from the worshipable Godhead, it is possible to properly execute the path of temple worship as ***susevana*** or nice devotional service. Observance of vows like Śrī Janmāṣṭamī, Śrī Ekādaśī and Māgha Snāna are included in this item of deity worship.

About *vandana* (6), Śrī Jīvapāda has written (Bhakti Sandarbhaḥ Paragraph 303)– *atha vandanaṁ – tac ca yadyapyarccanāṅgatvenāpi vartate, tathāpi kīrtana smaraṇavat svātantryeṇāpītyabhipretya pṛthag vidhīyate.....vandanasya pṛthag vidhānaṁ cānanta guṇaiśvarya śravaṇāt tad guṇānusandhāna pāda sevātau vidhṛta dainyānām namaskāra mātṛe kṛtādhyavasāyānām arthe.....tad etad vandanaṁ yathā 'tat te nu'kampām susamīkṣyamāṇo bhujjāna evātma kṛtaṁ vipākam. hṛd vāg vapurbhir vidadhan namas te jiveta yo muktipade sa dāyabhāk* (*bhāg. 10.14.8*) "Now the devotional item of *vandana* or paying homage is being discussed. Although the devotional item of *vandana* is included in the item of *arcanā* (temple worship), still, like the limbs of *kīrtana* and *smaraṇa* (in other words, just as one remembers Śrī Hari by doing *kīrtana*, but still *smaraṇa* is counted as a separate item due to its separate importance), it is considered a separate item due to its independent importance. Some devotees hear about the Lord's limitless prowess and attributes and then, overcome by feelings of humility, mistakenly consider themselves unqualified to seek these attributes or to engage in the service of His lotus feet. Thinking in this manner they vow to only offer obeisances to the Lord, and nothing more. It is especially for their sake that this item of *vandana* is mentioned separately. In connection with this item of *vandana*, Brahmā has praised the Lord as follows in Śrīmad Bhāgavata: "O Lord! You are the embodiment of all divine attributes! No one is able to reach the end of all Your qualities. Therefore if someone

only seeks Your grace and accepts all happiness and distress, which are the results of his own previous activities, as merely Your grace, and offers obeisances to You with body, mind and words, staying alive with the mere hope of ever receiving a drop of Your mercy, just as the Cātaka bird continues to look out for a drop of water from a fresh raincloud, he will certainly become the heir of the service of Your lotus feet, just as brothers divide the heritage of their parents." In this verse is a description of nice rendering of the service of paying homage. If these six items of the ninefold devotional service can be rendered nicely, then it will become automatically possible to render the remaining three, namely servanthood, friendship and self-giving. On the other hand, if the heart is not purified by the process of hearing and chanting, it will not be possible to purposely render these three items of devotion nicely. For the readers' information we will briefly describe the remaining three items also, following the course of their descriptions. 7) *atha dāsyaṁ tac ca śrī viṣṇor dāsamanyatvam – janmāntara sahasreṣu yasya syān matir īdṛśī. dāso'haṁ vāsudevasya sarvān lokān samuddharet. ityukta lakṣaṇam. astu tāvad bhajana prayāsaḥ kevala tādṛśatvābhimānenāpi siddhir bhavati abhipretyaivottaratra nirdeśaś ca tasya.....tad etad dāsya sambandhenaiva sarvam api bhajanam mahattaram bhavatiyāha 'yan nāma śruti mātrena pumān bhavati nirmalaḥ. tasya tirthapadaḥ kiṁ vā dāsānām avaśiṣyate (bhāg. 9.5.16) yasya bhagavato nāma śravaṇa mātrena yathā kathaṅcicchravaṇena kiṁ punaḥ samyak tat tad bhajanenetyarthaḥ. tarhi dāso'smityābhimānena samyag eva bhajatām sarvatra sādhanē sādhye ca kim avaśiṣyate– tad adhikam anyat kim api nāstityarthaḥ* (Bhakti Sandarbhaḥ, Paragraph 304 and 305) "Here the item of servanthood is described. The type of worship characterised by the self-esteem of 'I am Śrī Viṣṇu's servant' is called '*dāsya bhakti*'. As a result of thousands of births of good fortune the self esteem of 'I am the servant of Vāsudeva' may awaken. Such a person can redeem all the people. What to speak of the endeavour placed in doing *bhajana*, if one simply considers oneself to be belonging to be the Lord's servant, that self esteem will yield perfection, or loving devotional service. For this purpose the item of servanthood has been mentioned after the other items of devotion. All other types of worship attain a supreme status due to being connected with the one of servanthood. Durvāsā Muni told King Ambariṣa: "An human being who even slightly hears of the holy names of the Lord, who is the aggregate of all holy places, becomes purified. In other words, as a result of relishing the Lord's sweetness he will consider all other things to be completely trivial. So it goes without saying that a person who fully surrenders to the Lord's worship is fully blessed. Then again, what means or goals remain to be attained for those who perform full worship with the self esteem of 'I am the servant of Śrī Hari'?"

8) *atha sakhyam– tac ca hitāsaṁsanamayam bandhu bhāva lakṣaṇam (bhāg. 10.14.32) yan mitram paramānandam' ityatra tathāiva mitrapada nyāsāt. yathā rāmārcana candrikāyām 'paricaryāparāḥ kecit prāsādādiṣu śerate. manuṣyam iva taṁ draṣṭuṁ vyavahartuṁ ca bandhuvat. iti asya cottaratra pāṭhaḥ prema viśrambhavad bhāvanāmayatvena dāsyaḍ apyuttamatvāpekṣayā. kiṁ ca parameśvare'pi yat sakhyam śāstre vidhiyate tannāścaryam–'nādevo devam arcayet' iti tad bhāvasyāpi vidhāna śravaṇāt. kintu tad bhāvas tat sevā viruddha iti śuddha bhaktair upekṣyate, sakhyam tu parama sevānukūlam ityupādīyata iti* (Bhakti Sandarbhaḥ– Paragraph 306)

"Now we will discuss friendship. A mood of friendship towards the Lord, in which one desires the Lord's welfare is called *sakhya* or friendship. In the Brahma Stuti, Śrī Brahmā praises Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the full *brahman* and the Original Personality of Godhead, as the *mitra* or friend of the Vrajavāsīs. In the Rāmārcana Candrikā it is seen: "In order to

see the Lord as a human being and to deal with Him as a friend some devotee with a great service attitude reclined in the temple." With this purpose *sakhya* has been mentioned after *dāsya* in the famous *śravaṇam kīrtana* verse. Although there is a treasure of service in *dāsya*, it also shows signs of awe and hesitation, but friendship is completely devoid of hesitation, rather it is dominated by loving trust and is therefore greater than servanthood. Again, it is not astonishing that the scriptures prescribe dealings with the Supreme Controller that are free from hesitation, for we also find statements in the scriptures like 'One must become a godhead in order to worship the Godhead'. However, when the practitioner considers himself a god it will contradict his service to his own Lord. For this reason the pure devotees have rejected the practice of considering oneself non-different from the worshipable Godhead. In *sakhya bhāva*, however, this is considered most favorable in one's service to the worshipable Godhead, and is respectfully accepted.

Finally there is *ātma nivedana* or self surrender (9). *tac ca dehādi śuddhātma paryantasya sarvatobhāvena tasminn evārpaṇam. tat kāryaṁ cātmārtha ceṣṭā śūnyatvaṁ tan nyastātma sādhana sādhyatvaṁ tad arthaika ceṣṭāmayatvaṁ ca. idaṁ hyātmārpaṇaṁ govikrayavat vikrītasya govartanārthaṁ vikrītavatā ceṣṭā na kriyate. tasya ca śreyaḥ sādhaḥ sa kṛitavān eva syāt. sa ca gaustatasyeva karma kuryāt na punar vikrītavato'pīti* (Bhakti Sandarbhaḥ – Paragraph 309) There are two kinds of self surrender (1) Offering one's body (2) Offering the pure soul. The word *samarpaṇa* means offering oneself to the Lord in all respects. This self-giving is completely devoid of endeavours for personal gratification. All the means and goals are dedicated to the Lord, with body, mind and words. Such self surrender can be compared to the sale of a cow. The seller of a cow need not worry about her maintenance anymore, but the buyer arranges for her welfare. The cow will now also work for the buyer, and no longer for the seller; similarly the practising devotee who surrenders himself to Śrī Hari will become free from worries over his physical life and will be blessed with the good fortune of attain a life of *bhajana* at every moment."

Thereafter Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya proclaims in the next half a *tripadī*– *anya devāśraya nāi, tomāre kohilo bhāi, ei bhakti parama bhajana* "O brother mind! Do not take shelter of other gods like Brahmā and Śiva.¹¹ Only the aforementioned shelter of the lotus feet of Śrī Govinda in the form of nice rendering of the nine types of devotional service is the greatest type of worship–*bhajanera madhye śreṣṭha nava vidhā bhakti* etc. (C.C.) (11)

*sādhu sāstra guru vākya, hṛdoye koriyā aikya,
satata bhāsibo prema mājhe
karmī jñānī bhakti hīna, ihāke koribo bhina,
narottama ei tattva gāje (12)*

"In my heart I will see the words of the saints, the scriptures and the Guru as one and the same. Thus I will always float in *prema*. I will keep away from fruitive

¹¹ For understanding how the worship of other gods harms the practise of exclusive devotion, see the part of the upcoming *tripadī* nr. 13, reading: *nā pūjibo devī devā*.

workers, mental speculators and other kinds of nondevotees. This truth is proclaimed by Narottama."

The words of *sādhū*, *sāstra* and *guru* :

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – Śrīla Narottama Thākura Mahāśaya has described the nice practice of the nine types of devotion. The saints and the scriptures have described these nine types of devotion in many different ways. For instance, Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has extended these nine types of devotion into sixty-four types in his book 'Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu'. Again, all the *sadācāra* (rules of devotional purity that must be followed by the *sādhakas*) and whatever relations they have with everyday bodily affairs must be followed according to the words of the *sādhū*, *sāstras* and *guru* by the *sādhakas* who desire their own welfare. This has been described in the first half of this *tripadī*. Previously, in the fourth *tripadī* it is written— *guru mukha padma vākya, hṛdi kori mahāśakya*. Through this couplet it is learned that Śrī Guru's words about rules and prohibitions must be firmly kept within the heart. Here one may ask: "What if Śrī Gurudeva gives an unjust order, which is not in accordance with the teachings of the saints and scriptures or which is not favorable to *bhajana*? Are such orders also to be followed without consideration?" To erase such doubts the blessed author says: *sādhū sāstra guru vākya, hṛdaye koriyā aikya*, When the words of Śrī Guru are compatible with the scriptures that help one to attain the Personality of Godhead and the words of the virtuous *sadācārī sādhū*, then they must be followed without consideration. When one has taken shelter of a bonafide Guru who follows the scriptures and the *sadācāra* then his orders can never be contrary to the words of the scriptures and the saints. Therefore scriptures like Śrīmad Bhāgavata have advised to take shelter of the lotus feet of a Śrī Guru who is *śabda brahma niṣṇāta*, learned in the Vedic scriptures and *para brahme niṣṇāta*, or devoted to the Personality of Godhead, so that such dilemmas can never take place in the spiritual life of a *sādhaka*.

Anyway, if Śrī Gurudeva gives some unfair order which is contrary to the words of the *sādhū* and the *sāstras*, the *sādhaka* should think he is testing him, wanting to know how loyal the *sādhaka* is to the *sādhū* and the *sāstras*. Thus he will discard that order and anxiously pray to the lotus feet of Śrī Guru. If Śrī Gurudeva still insists in his unfair order to the disciple, the disciple should know it as a hard test of Śrī Guru and, considering himself to be unable to understand such a test, should keep a distance and do *bhajana* in allegiance to the *sādhū* and the *sāstras*. He should still not act according to the Guru's instructions if they transgress the words of the scriptures and the saints, nor should he show disbelief or disrespect towards Śrī Guru.

There are many Vedic scriptures, some of them mainly describe fruitive activities or non-dualistic philosophies, and even in the devotional branches of the scriptures many different means are described to attain the Lord. It is impossible for a *sādhaka* to practise all these different ways, therefore whatever the saints of one's own tradition, who follow the scriptures of one's own tradition, say, must be accepted by a *sādhaka* who aspires for his own welfare, provided they are compatible with the words of the scriptures and the Guru. The purport of this is that whatever Śrī Gurudeva orders is to be accepted when it is in congruence with the scriptures and saints of one's own tradition. Again those scriptural injunctions are to be accepted that are in congruence with Śrī Gurudeva and the saints of

one's own tradition. And again, the words of the saints are to be accepted when they are in congruence with the words of Śrī Guru and the scriptures. If the words of one of them, either Guru, *sāstra* or *sādhu*, are not in line with the words of the other two, then they can not be accepted. When the three are inter-compatible they are to be accepted, hence the blessed author has said: *sādhu sāstra guru vākya, hṛdaye koriyā aikya, satata bhāsibo prema mājhe*—"All *bhajana*-instructions that are favorable to attaining love for Kṛṣṇa, should be firmly kept within the heart and will thus swiftly remove all obstacles to *bhajana* and cause *prema* to appear. When *prema* appears this essential ingredient of the Lord's existence- and pleasure-potency will become indescribably relishable. *prema* will then bless the loving devotee by making him relish the Lord's sweetness and always keep him floating in an ocean of relishing sweet *bhagavad rasa* – ***satata bhāsibo prema mājhe***.

After this the blessed author says: *karmī jñānī bhakti hīna, ihāke koribo bhina, narottama ei tattva gāje* Practitioners of *karma* and *jñāna* are devoid of devotion. Serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa and making Him happy is called *bhakti*. *karmīs* and *jñānīs* seek their own happiness, since *karmīs* wish to attain heaven and *jñānīs* yearn for liberation. In order to attain their goal they practise *bhajana* such as singing and hearing of Śrī Hari, along with their own *sādhana* of *karma* and *jñāna*, since it is said: *bhakti vinu kon sādhana dite nāre phal; sab phal dey bhakti svatantra prabal* (C.C.) "Without devotion no practice can yield fruit, whereas devotion itself independently bestows all fruits." Still, since they have personal desires they are considered bereft of devotion, because the desire to serve the Lord never awakens within their hearts– they only do *bhajana* to attain their own goals. Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: *ihāke koribo bhin* "I will stay away from them". While associating with the saints one must distinguish them from genuine devotees. In other words, they should never be associated with at all. Seeing their *bhajana* and associating with them may cause the heart of the *sādhaka*, who has already commenced pure *bhajana*, to become attracted to matters other than Kṛṣṇa. For in the Haribhakti Sudhodaya it is seen: *yasyo yat saṅgati puṁso maṇivat syāt sa tad guṇaḥ* – Just as a jewel attains the attributes of his environment, a person becomes influenced by the attributes of the people he associates with." Following this rule it is inevitable that the feelings of the people one associates with are injected within the heart. And even if these desires other than for Kṛṣṇa are not injected into the heart of a *sādhaka* who has firm faith, still it would be a heartache for him to associate with *karmīs* and *jñānīs*, who have separate desires, for they will try to play down the glories of devotion and establish the glories of *karma* and *jñāna* above those of *bhakti*. Therefore it is always the best for a *sādhaka* who desires his own benefit to stay far away from them. *narottama ei tattva gāje* – In this *tripadī* Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura Mahāśaya loudly proclaims this conclusion. (12)

anya abhilāṣa chāḍi, jñāna karma parihari,
kāya mane koribo bhajana
sādhu saṅga kṛṣṇa sevā, nā pūjibo anya devā
ei bhakti parama kāraṇa (13)

"I will give up all other desires, such as mental speculation and fruitive activities and I will worship with body and mind. I will associate with the *sādhus* and render service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa (the nine kinds of devotional service mentioned in Śrīmad Bhāgavata) and I will not worship other gods. This is the greatest cause of devotion."

The Supreme Cause:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā— In the previous *tripadī* Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya advised the practising devotee to give up the association of fruitive workers, non-dualist philosophers etc., and to engage in pure *bhajana*. In this *tripadī* the hallmarks of exclusive devotion, which is the only means to attain the highest human pursuit *prema*, are defined. *anya abhilāṣa chāḍi, jñāna karma parihari, kāyo mane koribo bhajana*. "I will give up other aspirations, along with *jñāna* and *karma*, and I will do *bhajana* with body and mind." Pure or unmotivated devotion is the cause of *prema* being infused within the heart of the practising devotee. Devotion has two (adulterous) motivations – 1) Ulterior desires 2) Mixture with other things. Ulterior desires means desires for sense gratification and liberation. Devotion endowed with desires for sense gratification is called *sakāmā* and devotion mixed with the desire for liberation is called *kaivalya kāmā*. 'Mixture with other things' refers to a covering of *karma*, *jñāna* and others. Here *karma* means the perpetual and occasional duties enjoined by the Smṛti Śāstras, such as offering donations and keeping vows, and *jñāna* refers to knowledge of the undifferentiated *brahma* or the one-ness of the individual souls with *brahma*. When devotion is totally devoid of such desires for liberation or sense gratification, from *jñāna* and *karma*, and consists merely of the process of hearing and chanting, then it is called pure devotion. It is also called 'exclusive' or 'self-perfect'.

The activities (*karma*) of pure devotion, such as hearing and chanting and serving the deity of the Lord are also called *karma*, and the study of devotional theology and discussions on the principles of *bhajana* are also called *jñāna*, but this is not *karma* and *jñāna* in the abovementioned sense – these are direct items of pure devotion. These activities and philosophies that arise from devotional practices are workings of the Lord's innate potency, and therefore transcendental to the modes of nature. This transcendental innate potency appears itself within the body and the senses of the practising devotee, therefore there is a necessity for philosophical research into the worshipable principle, which can be called *jñāna*, and that *jñāna*, along with the practical service to be rendered to the Lord, which can be called *karma*, are specific items of devotional practice. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has written in his full definition of pure devotion, in accordance with the *śrutis* and *smṛtis* –

*anyābhlāṣitā śūnyam jñāna karmādyanāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānuśīlanam bhaktir uttamā*¹²

"Devotional practice which is free from ulterior desires, not covered by either *jñāna* or *karma*, and which is favorable to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is called **uttamā bhakti** or the topmost devotion." In his commentary on this verse Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmī basically says that the verb

¹² Some editions of this book quote this *śloka* from Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu before this *tripadī*.

anusīlana (constant practice) should only be understood in its verbal root, which has two meanings here, *pravṛtti* (rules) and *nivṛtti* (prohibitions). These two kinds of activities again show physical, vocal and mental forms. Here the verbal root *śīl* means that these activities are threefold – serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa with the body, singing His names, attributes and pastimes with the voice, and recollecting His forms, attributes and pastimes with the mind, keeping a loving feeling always within the heart. The prohibitions include avoiding offences to the holy name and the holy deity with body, words and mind. The word *ānukūlya* refers to activities that are pleasing Śrī Kṛṣṇa's taste. The word *ānukūlya* is used to perfect the status of devotion, for through unfavorable activities one can never perfect devotion." The resultant purport is that the threefold activities that are performed for Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pleasure with body mind and words, that are devoid of unfavorable factors and that are not covered over by *karma* like sacrifices, donations and so that may be propounded by the *smṛti*-scriptures, but that are not performed for Kṛṣṇa, or knowledge about the individual living entity and *brahma*, are called ***bhakti***. It is this that Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya reveals when he utters the words ***anya abhilāṣa chāri, jñāna karma parihari, kāyo mone koribo bhajana***.

After this the blessed author says: *sādhu saṅga kṛṣṇa sevā, nā pūjibo devī devā, ei bhakti parama kāraṇa* – "I will associate with the *sādhus* and render service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa (the nine kinds of devotional service mentioned in Śrīmad Bhāgavata) and I will not worship other gods. This is the greatest cause of devotion." The only means for the conditioned souls, that have been averse to Śrī Kṛṣṇa from beginningless time and that are suffering the pangs of mundane life due to this aversion to the Supreme Truth, to come close to God is to attain the association and the mercy of the great *sādhus*. There is no other means than association with the *sādhus* to become free from the poison of attachment and hatred, that has polluted the heart, which is rooted in beginningless fruitive activities. In this connection Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has revealed, through special deliberation, the following philosophy in his *Bhakti Sandarbha* (Paragraph 180), which basically says that the difference between the living entity and Śrī Bhagavān is that He is condensed paramount transcendental bliss and is never stained by sin. Just as not a spot of darkness can possibly stay on the sun, the great illuminator of the universe, who carries a boundless light, similarly it is impossible for the darkness of suffering to touch God, who is the embodiment of full bliss. The Śruti also say *āditya varṇam tamaśaḥ parastāt* ("His complexion resembles the sun and He is beyond darkness"). In this way the suffering of the conditioned souls cannot touch Him– He is filled with His own transcendental bliss. Hence, although there is full power of compassion within Him, it is completely impossible for Him to openly reveal this compassion for the living beings who are averse to Him, for when someone else's suffering touches the heart, compassion arises. Here one will automatically ask: "Then how will the fallen souls be saved?" To this question the answer is: "In the world there are some of the topmost compassionate *sādhus*, who are the greatest consolation for the conditioned souls who are suffering the pangs of illusory material life. Although the *sādhus* themselves are also always immersed in the flavours of paramount transcendental bliss, and they have fully woken up from the dream of delusion, they can remember the miserable conditions the conditioned souls are in and bestow their grace upon them, just as a person who wakes up can remember the happiness and sorrow of his last dream. Therefore the Lord's compassion dwells within the hearts of the *sādhus*, and through these saintly 'vehicles' He infuses it into the hearts of

the conditioned souls. It does not happen independently. Again, without associating with these *sādhu-mahātmās* this grace is not available.

The bodies of these *sādhu-mahātmās*, who are endowed with the Lord's powerful grace, are so pure that the diffusion of the light-rays of the devotion they carry within their hearts illuminates the hearts of all the people who surround them, and thus infuses purity within them. Such is the great power of the *sādhus'* association! The *sādhus* usually gather at holy places, and there it is easier to meet them. As the conditioned soul hears topics concerning Śrī Hari from the mouths of the *sādhu mahātmās*, faith in the Lord will awaken within his heart. As a result of this the shelter of the lotus feet of a bonafide Guru is attained and in the company of these *sādhus* the ninefold process, starting with hearing and chanting, is initiated. Then the practitioner gradually evolves through the stages of *niṣṭhā*, *ruci*, *āsakti* and *rati* and is blessed with the attainment of *prema*, which is the highest human pursuit. In this way *prema*, the highest attainment of an individual soul, is attained through the association and the grace of the *sādhus*. Hence it is said: *bhaktis tu bhagavad bhakta saṅgena pariṅyate. sat saṅgaḥ prāpyate puṁbhiḥ sukr̥taiḥ pūrva sañcitaiḥ* "When the association of devotees is attained, devotion to God arises. As a result of previously accumulated merit a person attains association with the saints. *sādhu saṅga sādhu saṅga sarva śāstre koy; lava mātra sādhu saṅga sarva siddhi hoy* (C.C.) "All the scriptures say: "Associate with *sādhus*, associate with *sādhus*! The slightest association with *sādhus* will yield all perfection!" Therefore nothing can compare to such saintly association, and it is seen in Śrīmad Bhāgavata (1.18.13) – *tulayāma laveṇāpi na svargaṁ nāpunarbhavam; bhagavat saṅgi saṅgasya martyānām kim utāśiṣaḥ* "The result of even the slightest association with a *sādhu* cannot be compared even to the attainment of heaven or liberation, what to speak of the insignificant enjoyments of mortal beings?"

After this Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya speaks about 'Kṛṣṇa's service'. Devotion means service. *bhaj ityeṣa vai dhātuḥ sevāyām parikīrtitaḥ* (Garuḍa Purāṇa) "The verbal root *bhaj* is used to indicate service and when the suffix *ktin* is added the word *bhaktipada* is created. Therefore the word 'Kṛṣṇa's service' refers to the nine kinds of devotion, such as hearing, chanting, remembering and temple worship etc. The best means to attain *prema* is to practise these nine kinds of devotion in the company of *sādhus*. In some editions of this book the reading '*sādhu saṅge kṛṣṇa sevā*' is found. This means that *prema* very swiftly arises while worshipping Kṛṣṇa in the company of the *sādhus*.

Thereafter the blessed author says: *nā pūjibo devī devā*. A devotee who exclusively worships his deity will damage his devotion when he worships other gods and goddesses. For trivial benefits, greedy and lusty persons worship different gods and goddesses. In the Gītā (9.23), Śrī Kṛṣṇa says Himself: *ye'pyanya devatā-bhaktā yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ; te'pi mām eva kaunteya yajantyavidhi pūrvakam* "O Son of Kunti, those who are devoted to other gods and worship them with faith, really also worship Me, since I am the aggregate of all the gods, but they don't worship according to the rules." Śrīla Viśvanātha writes in his commentary: *kintvavidhi pūrvakam-mat prāpakam vidhiṁ vinaiva yajantyataḥ punar āvartante*—"avidhi pūrvaka means that there is no rule found there to attain Me." Therefore the greedy worshippers of other gods may even attain the trivial gains of the world, still they will never attain the supreme goal of life, Śrī Govinda's lotus feet. On the other hand, the worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa

automatically accomplishes the worship of other gods and goddesses. Thus there is no need to worship them separately. In Śrīmad Bhāgavata (4.31.14) it is seen –

*yathā taror mūla niṣecanena tṛpyanti tat skandha bhujopasākhā
prāṇopahārāc ca yathendriyāṇāṃ tathaiwa sarvārhanam acyutejyā*

"Just as the trunk, branches, twigs and so of a tree are satisfied (begin to blossom) by watering its roots, and just as the senses are satisfied by eating, which nourishes the life airs, similarly everyone's worship is automatically accomplished when Śrī Kṛṣṇa is worshipped." The purport of this is that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Original Personality of Godhead and the root cause of everything. When the roots of a tree are sprinkled with water, the tree will suck up the water through its roots and thus nourish its own leaves, branches, twigs and sprouts; if the root were not sprinkled and the leaves and twigs would be sprinkled separately it would never be possible to nourish them. In the same way, the different gods and goddesses will automatically be happy when Śrī Kṛṣṇa is satisfied through worship, but that could never happen if the gods and goddesses were separately worshipped. Some may say that just as we see the tree's branches and leaves nourished when the tree's roots are sprinkled, similarly the different gods and goddesses may be served by serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Then why do we see Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya so intensely forbidding the worship of other gods and goddesses? These doubts may be eradicated through the example of the abovementioned half a verse. For instance, the life-airs are nourished by giving them food to eat, and then the senses like the eyes are also nourished, there is no need to separately feed the senses like the eyes and the ears. If the ears would be fed separately, deafness would follow and if the eyes were fed separately blindness would follow. In the same way the different gods and goddesses will be satisfied when Śrī Kṛṣṇa is worshipped, there is no need for separate worship of gods – it would harm the devotee's exclusive devotion.

Finally it is said: '*ei bhakti parama kāraṇa*'. Renouncing other desires, like *karma* and *jñāna*, the worship of other gods and goddesses and worshipping Śrī Kṛṣṇa with body, mind and words in the company of the *sādhus* should be known as the **greatest cause**, or the purest means of the living entities' attainment of the supreme human pursuit called *prema*. (13)

*mahājanera yei patha, tāte hobo anurata,
pūrvāpara koriyā vicāra
sādhana smaraṇa līlā, ihāte nā koro helā
kāya mane koriyā susāra (14)*

"I will remain dedicated to the path outlined by the *mahājanas*, the great authorities, distinguishing between the former and the later. Do not neglect the practice of *smaraṇa* and make this the perfection of your body and mind."

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *ṭīkā*: *daṇḍakāraṇya-vāsi munayo bṛhat vāmanokta śrutayaś ca candrakānti jayadeva vidyāpati caṇḍi dāsa bilvamaṅgalādayaś ca pūrva mahājanāḥ ṣaḍ gosvāmināḥ para mahājanāḥ. susāra–susiddham.*

Allegiance to the Mahājanas:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā– Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya mentioned the greatest cause or means of attaining *prema* is exclusive devotion, and in this *tripadī* he describes the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas' internal worship in allegiance to the *mahājanas*. The great sage Vedavyāsa has called allegiance to the *mahājanas* the unfailing and safe way to attaining the spiritual world – *tarko'pratiṣṭhaḥ śrutayo vibhinnā nāsāvṛṣir yasya mataṁ na bhinnam. dharmasya tattvaṁ nihitaṁ guhāyāṁ mahājano yena gataḥ sa panthāḥ* (Mahābhārata, Vanaparva 112) "Arguments have no basis, for what one man propounds with due consideration can be defeated by another learned pundit, who will then establish his own opinion. Such arguments never lead to a steady conclusion. Apart from that, there is no *ṛṣi* or sage who does not have another opinion from the other *ṛṣis*. Thus the real religious principles are very deep (hard to ascertain). Therefore the way of practice propounded by the *mahājanas*, through which they achieved their desired end, is the unfailing path to be followed to achieve one's desired end." Hence Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya said: *mahājanera yei patha, tāte hobo anurata* "I will become attached to the path that was practised and preached by the *mahājanas* and I will show attachment to that."

In the *rāga bhajana* of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas this attraction or attachment to the path shown by the *mahājanas* carries some speciality. They do not just maintain attraction to the path shown by the *mahājanas*, but they must practise *bhajana* in full allegiance to the *mahājanas* of their own *sampradāya* (tradition). Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has written: *sevā sādḥaka rūpeṇa siddha rūpeṇa cātra hi; tad bhāva lipsunā kāryā vraja lokānusārataḥ* "A person who desires loving attraction to His beloved deity Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Vraja must serve in allegiance to the people of Vraja, both in the current practitioner's body as well as in the spiritual, mentally conceived body, which is fit for serving the beloved deity. Mental service must be rendered in the spiritual body in allegiance to Śrī Rādhā, Lalitā and Rūpa Mañjarī and service in the current physical body must be rendered in allegiance to Vraja-people like Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana."

Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has said: *purvāpara koriyā vicāra*, meaning that there is a distinction between the *mahājanas* of yore and the current *mahājanas* and that the *sādḥaka* must, as far as fitting, do *bhajana* in allegiance to the current *mahājanas*, whose hearts are filled with the desired mood. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda has written in his comment on this part of the *tripadī*: *daṇḍakāraṇya-vāsi munayo bṛhat vāmanokta śrutayaś ca candrakānti jayadeva vidyāpati caṇḍi dāsa bilvamaṅgalādayaś ca pūrva mahājanāḥ ṣaḍ gosvāmināḥ para mahājanāḥ* "The former are the sages of Daṇḍakāraṇya that were mentioned in the Bṛhad Vāmana Purāṇa, the personified Vedas, Candrakānti, Jayadeva, Vidyāpati, Caṇḍi dāsa and Bilvamaṅgala. The latter are the Six Gosvāmīs." The purport of this is that by Śrīman Mahāprabhu's grace the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas in this current Kali age have attained the good fortune of worshipping Vraja's superexcellent *madhura rasa* (sweet mellows). Worshippers of this *madhura rasa* were the previous *mahājanas*, the sages of the Daṇḍaka forest, the Vedas mentioned in the Bṛhad Vāmana Purāṇa and lovers of Śrī Kṛṣṇa like Candrakānti, who

became greedy after Him as a lover and thus worshipped Him as lovers in allegiance of the eternally perfect *gopīs*. Then, when they attained *gopī*-bodies, they rendered loving service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa as ladyloves. About the sages of the Daṇḍaka-forest the following is written in the Padma Purāṇa—

*purā maharṣayaḥ sarve daṇḍakāraṇya vāsinah;
rāmaṁ dṛṣtvā hariṁ tatra bhoktum icchan suvigram
te sarve strītvam āpannāḥ samudbhutās ca gokule
hariṁ samprāpya kāmēna tato muktā bhavārṇavāt*

"In the days of yore there were some sages in the Daṇḍaka forest, who worshipped Śrī Kṛṣṇa. When Śrī Rāmacandra came to the Daṇḍaka forest with Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa in obedience to His father, and the sages saw Him, they became very greedy to taste their worshipable Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweetness as lovers. Although they were too shy to pray for such a boon from Śrī Rāmacandra, still they attained perfection in *rāga bhakti*-practice by the grace of Śrī Rāmacandra, who is like a wish-yielding tree, and they took birth in Gokula as *gopīs*, gaining the right to render loving service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa as lovers. How the presiding deities of the Vedas attained the status of the Lord's lovers is described in Bṛhad Vāmana Purāṇa –

*kandarpa koṭi lāvāṇye tvayi dṛṣṭe manāṁsi naḥ; kāmīni bhāvam āsādyā smara kṣubdhānya saṁśaya
yathā talloka vāsinyā kāma tattvena gopikā; bhajanti ramaṇaṁ matvā cikīrṣājani nas tathā*

"When the presiding deities of the Vedas, who resided at Brahma loka, beheld Śrī Kṛṣṇa, they prayed: "O Śrī Kṛṣṇa! When we see the luster of Your body, that defies millions of Cupids, our hearts become agitated by lusty desires and we desire to serve You as lovers! Just as the *gopikās* who live in Śrī Vṛndāvana serve You in a sweet and amorous manner as their heart's lover, we similarly have a strong desire to serve You!" They also attained *gopī*-bodies with the right to serve in Vraja as lovers.

In Padma Purāṇa it is written about a Gandharva-maiden named Candrakānti that she worshipped Śrī Kṛṣṇa and thus received the boon from Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pure devotee Brahmā to meet with Śrī Vṛṣabhānu's daughter. All of them attained Śrī Kṛṣṇa's service due to their desire to enjoy with Him as lady-lovers. Then also we know about the way devotees like Jayadeva, Vidyāpati, Caṇḍī dāsa and Bilvamaṅgala worshipped Kṛṣṇa in the mood of *sakhīs*. All these are *mahājanas* that preceded Śrīman Mahāprabhu. The Six Gosvāmīs, headed by Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana, are the current *mahājanas*. They are all eternally perfect *mañjarīs* of Vraja or Śrī Rādhā's eternal maidservants. They have descended along with Śrīman Mahāprabhu as His associates to preach **the practice of mañjarī bhāva** to the world and to take the practising devotees of this world into Vraja's *nikuñjas* to bless them with the gift of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's loving service.

When we consider the practices of the former and the latter *mahājanas* we can learn that those who relish Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweetness as His lovers, who wish to enjoy with Him in an erotic way, do not obtain the good fortune of fully relishing Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweetness, for in Śrī Rādhā's presence the ocean of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweetness surges up in a boundless manner! In Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta (Ādi ch.4) it is known in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's words –

yadyapi nirmala rādhāra sat prema darpaṇa; tathāpi svacchatā tāra bāṇe khone khon

*āmāra mādhubhuryera nāhi bāṛite avakāṣe; e darpaṇera āge nava nava rūpe bhāse
man mādhubhurya rādhā prema doṇhe hoṛa kori; khone khone bāṛe doṇhe keho nāhi hāri*

"Although the mirror of Rādhā's true love is spotless, still its clarity increases at every moment. There is no end to the increase of My sweetness and in front of that mirror it floats in ever new forms. My sweetness and Rādhā's love are constantly competing with each other. Each one is increasing and neither of the two accept defeat." Although those who worship the Adolescent Pair in the mood of Śrī Rādhā's girlfriend will attain the good fortune of experiencing the relish of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's matchless sweetness, those who worship in the mood of Śrī Rādhā's maidservants, or *mañjarī bhāva*, are blessed with the greatest relish of the Divine Pair's sweetness. That is because by the wish of Śrī Rādhārāṇī, the *sakhīs* may occasionally enjoy with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and since the *sakhīs* and Śrī Rādhā feel equal to each other the *sakhīs* feel some hesitation and thus they are also ineligible to go in and out of the secret and private playgrounds of the Adolescent Pair. The *mañjarīs* are Śrīmatī's maidservants, non-different from Her in body and in spirit, therefore they are blessed with attaining the good fortune of beholding the sweet and intimate pastimes of the Adolescent Couple and relishing the mellows of the services that are to be rendered at that time. Because of their matchless one-ness in feeling with Śrī Rādhārāṇī, even the signs of Kṛṣṇa's lovemaking on Śrī Rādhā's body become reflected and manifest on their own bodies. Therefore the greatest relish of the sweetness of the Divine Pair lies in the mood of the *kiṅkarīs*.

The current *mahājanas*, the six Gosvāmīs, headed by Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana, are the teachers and preachers of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's dearest practice of *mañjarī bhāva*, therefore the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas who have surrendered to Śrīman Mahāprabhu's lotus feet do not practise the worship of the previous *mahājanas*, who practised *sakhī bhāva*, but instead follow the current *mahājanas*, the six Gosvāmīs, in the practice of *mañjarī bhāva*.

After this the blessed author says: *sādhana smaraṇa līlā, ihāte nā koro helā, kāya mana koriyā susāra* "Do not neglect the practice of *smaraṇa* and make this the perfection of your body and mind." The main item of *rāganugā bhajana* is ***līlā smaraṇa*** for *rāga* is a mental religion, and that means *smaraṇa*. When the mind is joined with the Lord's holy names, attributes, form and pastimes then this is called *smaraṇa*. Here the instruction is given to perform *līlā smaraṇa*. Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has said: *yugala vilāsa smṛti sāra*. During his practice of recollecting Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's eight fold daily pastimes, the devotee has to identify himself with his *siddha svarūpa* or spiritual body in which he/she is rendering service to Them. The service that he meditates on during his practice, he will get when he attains perfection. *sādhane bhāvibo yāhā, siddha dehe pābo tāhā* "That what I meditate on during my practice I will attain in my spiritual body." There can be no taint in this transcendental psychology of Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya.

Since the practice of *smaraṇa* depends on purity of the heart, it may first seem difficult to accomplish for the practising devotee, therefore some slackening or neglect of this item of worship may occur. The practitioner must give up his own sense of 'doer-ship' and depend on the Lord's grace in this practice of *smaraṇa*. Then he will easily be able to purify his heart and gradually his recollection of *līlā* will become easily accessible and blissful. Although the practice of *smaraṇa* is dependent on the Lord's grace, still it is

absolutely necessary that the practitioner concentrates his mind, for it is the perseverance and enthusiasm in the devotee's practice that unleashes the Lord's grace. Hence the aspirant must commence the *smaraṇa* item of his *bhajana* by establishing his self esteem in the spiritual body given to him by Śrī Guru, with body, mind and words. "The item of *bhajana* named *smaraṇa* is wholly dependent on the Lord's grace and not on personal endeavour, therefore I will commence *bhajana* whenever the Lord's grace shines on me. Now there is no need for the *bhajana*-item of *smaraṇa*." – When such words of despair and pessimism dwell within the heart the Lord's grace will never descend. Hence Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has said: *sādhana smaraṇa līlā, ihāte nā koro helā, kāyo mane koriyā susāra* "Do not neglect the practice of *līlā smaraṇa*, but make it the essence of your life, with both body and mind." (14)

asat saṅgati sadā, tyāga koro anya gītā,
karmī jñānī parihari dūre
kevala bhakata saṅga, prema bhakti rasa raṅga,
līlā kathā vraja rasa pure (15)

"Give up all other company and all other forms of song (entertainment) and leave the company of fruitive workers and non-dualistic intellectuals far behind. Just stay with the pure devotees and enjoy the flavours of loving devotion with them. Stay in Vraja and enjoy the topics of the Lord's pastimes."

Discussing topics of Kṛṣṇa with devotees:

Sudhā kaṅkī vyākhyā– In the next few *tripadis* from this *tripadī* onwards, Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya will mention some rules and prohibitions that must certainly be followed by practising devotees. There are two kinds of practice – 1) *varjanātmaka* (prohibitions) and 2) *grahaṇātmaka* (rules). Also in the characteristics of surrender to the Lord instructions are given in which favorable things must be accepted for *bhajana* and which unfavorable things must be given up – *ānukūlyasya saṅkalpaḥ prātikūlyā vivarjanam* ("Accept favorable things and reject unfavorable things"). Here it is said: *asat saṅgati sadā, tyāga koro anya gītā, karmī jñānī parihari dūre* "Give up all other company and all other forms of song (entertainment) and leave the company of fruitive workers and non-dualistic intellectuals far behind." A practitioner who desires his own welfare should certainly give up bad company – *asat saṅga tyāga- ei vaiṣṇava ācāra; strī saṅgī – eka asādhu, kṛṣṇābhakta – āra* (C.C.) "The conduct of a Vaiṣṇava is that he gives up bad company. One kind of unsaintly person is he who is excessively attached to women and the other one is he who is not a devotee of Kṛṣṇa." The prohibition to the Vaiṣṇavas is to give up bad company --this must certainly be followed, for just as the greatest elevation of one's existence is inevitable when associating with saintly persons, similarly fall-down or moral ruination is certain on the strength of keeping bad company. Even if one is a saint himself one must beware of bad company, for just as a recently cured person must continue to refrain from taking unhealthy matters, lest he will increase his diseased state and destroy his body, similarly a saintly person who has built up a

little spiritual strength with his *sādhana* can still ultimately ruin himself by keeping bad company. That is why the scriptures have advised to run far away from bad company, which is like a black, adverse snake that carries lethal poison. There are two kinds of wrong people: Those who are not devotees of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and those who are excessively attached to women. On the strength of their association one becomes averse to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and attached to women, and devotion vanishes from the heart of the devotee.

Those who are not *sat* (real) are *asat* (unreal), meaning they are cruel to other creatures, liars, cheaters and thieves, and a human being who desires his own welfare keeps them far away. Still the prohibition for Vaiṣṇavas to associate with those who are averse to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and who are attached to women is being specially mentioned, because for a faithful Vaiṣṇava, who is fixed in *bhajana*, association with these two kinds of unsaintly persons is extremely harmful for development of Vaiṣṇava-hood. By great fortune and by the grace of the saints and the Guru the aspirant who is favorable to worshipping the Supreme Lord gains faith in the lotus feet of Śrī Hari, and thus draws the eligibility to worship the Lord towards him – *śraddhavan jan hoy bhakti adhikari* (C.C.) "A faithful person becomes eligible for devotion". In the company of persons who are disinclined towards Śrī Kṛṣṇa one also becomes disinclined towards Kṛṣṇa and faith in the saints, the Guru, the scriptures and the Lord vanishes. A person disinclined towards Śrī Kṛṣṇa awakens aversion towards Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the heart of the faithfully practising devotee, and thus triggers his destruction. In the same way a person who is excessively attached to women constantly speaks about the beauty and qualities of women and thus awakens an attachment to women in the hearts of his associates that women themselves cannot even awaken! In the same way the company of the Lord's devotees, that constantly speak of the Lord's form and qualities, awakens an attachment to the Lord that even Lord Hari Himself can never awaken. The company of women is so rejectable for a faithfully practising devotee, who is fixed in *bhajana*, that Śrīmad Bhāgavata says: *yopayāti sanair māyā yoṣid deva vinirmitā. tām ikṣatātmano mṛtyuṃ tṛṇaiḥ kūpam ivāvṛtam* (Bhāg. 3.31.40) "On the pretext of wanting to serve him, the Lord's *māyā*, in the form of a woman, is slowly coming up to a man. A person who is spiritually inclined will consider her to be like death, like a well covered over by grass." In his comment on the above verse, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda has written— *yā ca puruṣaṃ viraktaṃ jñātvā svīya niṣkāmatāṃ vyañjayanyī śusrūṣādi miṣeṇa upayāti sāpi anartha-kāriṇītyāha yopayātīti. atra tṛṇācchādita kūpasya mayi janaḥ patatviti bhāvanābhāvāt kasyacit pārśve'pyanāgamāt sarvatrodāsīnā vā bhakti jñāna vairāgyādi-matī vā unmādād acetanā nidrāṇā vā mṛtāpi vā stri sarvarthaiva dūre parityājyā iti vyañjitaṃ* "Women are a kind of illusion created by God, and it is very difficult to be released from the grip of this illusion. Hence a person who desires his own welfare should not associate with women. A woman may approach a man, only for the sake of rendering service to him, thinking him to be very renounced, and she may proclaim herself to be very renounced also, but still he should consider her to be his wholesale destruction – he should consider women to be death personified, like a well covered over by grass. Even if a woman is devoted, full of spiritual knowledge, renounced, in a swoon due to hysteria, sleeping, or even dead, still he should not come near her – he should always stay far away from her."

The practitioner must give up his attachment to all worldly music other than the songs that glorify Śrī Kṛṣṇa's attributes and pastimes – *tyāga koro anya gīta*. When the mind or consciousness becomes absorbed in or pleased by matters other than Kṛṣṇa, it will get attracted to worldly forms, flavours and sounds and thus an obstacle will arise to *bhajana*.

The Upaniṣads say: *yo vai bhūmā tat sukham nālpe sukham asti* – "Natural bliss exists in the lotus feet of Śrī Bhagavān, the embodiment of deep transcendental bliss, and not in the insignificant sounds and touches of the material world". How much do we hanker for such a drop, while we have an ocean of bliss at hand within us! The scriptures say: "Drops of bliss trickle from the centre of bliss, Śrī Bhagavān, and if the living entities fall away from the lotus feet of Śrī Govinda, the centre of bliss, they will suffer." When one loses the aim at this principle of supreme bliss and begins to desire the insignificant enjoyment of the external kingdom, running after dull and worldly forms and flavours, one will once again end up in the terrible grip of repeated birth and death. Therefore the endeavouring practising devotee will always take care that attachment to some external mundane sense object will not have the opportunity to enter into his heart. The practitioner should not only abandon contact with mundane sense objects like sounds, but also with practitioners of *karmīs* and *jñānīs* that endeavour for heavenly pleasures and liberation – *karmī jñānī parihari dūre*. Association with unfavorable persons like *karmīs*, *jñānīs* and others creates a great possibility that the practising devotee becomes absorbed in *karma* and *jñāna* and this will diminish his *bhajana*.

After this, in the next half a *tripadī*, the positive advise about confidential behaviour is given to the practitioners that are fixed in the flavours of Vraja – ***kevala bhakata saṅga, prema bhakti rasa raṅga, līlā kathā vraja rasa pure*** "Just stay with the pure devotees and enjoy the flavours of loving devotion with them. Stay in Vraja and enjoy the topics of the Lord's pastimes." Amongst the most confidential items of *bhajana* the item which is most powerful in swiftly nourishing the flavours of *bhajana* is constant association with like-minded devotees. Śrīmad Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has written: *sajātyāśāye snigdhe sādhanu saṅgaḥ svato vare* (B.R.S.) In the practice of devotion there are different varieties of moods, such as majesty, sweetness, servanthood, friendship, or conjugal devotion, and the aspirant must seek the association with the saint who is inclined towards the same kind of flavour as he is. In the religion of devotion the practising devotee must also keep the company of saints who are more advanced in *bhajana* than he himself and who is naturally gentle and affectionate in the sense that he is very compassionate. The adjective ***sajātyāśāya*** indicates that the company of such great saints causes a very nice relish of devotional flavours and the two adjectives ***sajātyāśāya*** and ***svato vara*** also indicate that the association of such great saints will cause the flavours of devotion to arise in the heart of the aspirant devotee. The adjective ***snigdha*** also indicates that **the grace of the saints**, which swiftly makes the heart of the aspirant qualified for these matters, also becomes easily attainable. When devotion, which has the devotee as subject and the Supreme Lord as object, attains the stage of *rati*, it becomes very palatable— such is the conclusion of the devotional scriptures. Therefore it is understood that through the gate of seeing, touching and conversing with such a *mahā bhāgavata* Vaiṣṇava, and associating with him by discussing topics of the Supreme Lord with him, *rati* (devotional love and attraction) swiftly arises within the heart of the practitioner and the flavours of devotion become relishable. Therefore it is said: *kevala bhakata saṅga, prema bhakti rasa raṅga*. Here the word *raṅga* indicates a special variety of relish of the flavours of devotion, and the reason for this is also mentioned – *līlā kothā vraja rasa pure* "This Vraja-pura is full of *rasa*, which means that this place causes the greatest incitement for remembering Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. Therefore if one attains the good fortune of gaining residence in Śrī-Śrī Vraja-*dhāma* and relishing the flavours of one's beloved Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's relishable

pastimes in the company of a great saint, then the wonderful relish of the flavours of *prema bhakti* becomes easily attainable. This is indicated here. It also serves as an advise to relish the *līlā*-topics filled with Vraja-flavours in the company of a like-minded saint. (15)

yogī nyāsī karmī jñānī, anya deva pūjaka dhyānī,
iha loka dūre parihari
dharmā karma duḥkha śoka, yebā thāke anya yoga,
chāḍi bhajo girivaradhārī (16)

"**Yogīs, sannyāsīs (māyāvādīs), fruitive workers, non-dualistic speculators, worshippers of other gods and those who meditate on the non-personal absolute - all these people I will leave far behind. Give up attachment to varṇāśrama dharmā, fruitive activities, misery, lamentations and other connections and worship Girivaradhārī!**"

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *tīkā*: *anya yoga - strī putra viṣayāsakti.*

The worship of Giridhārī:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā- In this *tripadī*, as in the previous *tripadī*, Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya defines some rules and prohibitions for the devotee. A devotee who desires his own welfare should cast the association of **yogīs, nyāsīs, karmīs, jñānīs**, and those who meditate on other gods far away, like any other kind of bad company. For the devotee who is exclusively fixed in *bhajana* and who strives for the attainment of *prema*, all people who are absorbed in things other than Kṛṣṇa are unwanted association. In their association a devotee will inevitably become absorbed in things that have nothing to do with Kṛṣṇa and that will cause the decline of his *bhajana*. **yogī** means those who practice the eightfold path of mystic *yoga* consisting of *yama, niyama, āsana, prāṇāyāma, pratyāhāra, dhāraṇā, dhyāna* and *samādhi*. In their opinion this eightfold path of *yoga* causes the heart to attain one-ness with the *param-ātma* or Supreme Self, or *asamprajñāta samādhi* (abstract spiritual trance), by blocking up obstacles like *pramāṇa* (documentation, authority), *viparyaya* (disorder), *vikalpa* (doubts, fancies), *nidrā* (sleep) and *smṛti* (recollection). **nyāsī** means a *māyāvādī sannyāsī*. Those who follow the school of non-difference propounded by Śaṅkarācārya and who can have one of ten titles (*vana, bhāratī, purī giri* etc, Ed.) are called *māyāvādī sannyāsīs*. In their opinion the undifferentiated *brahman* is beyond illusion, and the Personality of Godhead, who is endowed with attributes, is associated with *māyā*, His body and attributes all being designations of *māyā* or illusion. They think the transcendental Personality of Godhead, His abode, His devotion and His devotees are all *māyā*, and they say that the individual existence of the spirit soul is also false. The world is produced by *māyā* and hence false. In this way they take all true things to be false and their teaching is called *māyāvāda* or illusionism. In their opinion everything else but an undivided and non-dual *brahman* is false or illusory. *māyāvāda* is actually a concealed form of Buddhism and is untrue. This is clearly

mentioned in the Padma Purāṇa- *māyāvādam asacchāstram prachannaṁ bauddham ucyate; mayaiḥ vihitam devi kalau brāhmaṇa mūrtinā* Śrī Śaṅkara told Mahādevī: "O Devi! *māyāvāda* is a false authority and is covered Buddhism. In the age of Kali I have established this in the form of a *brāhmaṇa* named Śaṅkarācārya (in order to re-establish Vedic authority and to destroy Buddhist voidism)."

karmī means those who are attracted to performing eternal and occasional fruitive activities like Vedic sacrifices enjoined by the Smṛti scriptures, in the hope for rewards in a blissful heaven in the afterlife. The Śrutis say: '*kṣiṇe puṇye martyalokaṁ viśanti*', '*plavā hyete adṛḍhā yajña rūpā*' '*tad yattheha karma jito lokaḥ kṣiyate, evam evāmūtra puṇya jito lokaḥ kṣiyate*' and so on. "Even though he may attain heaven through the difficult performance of sacrifices and the following of harsh vows, when the fruitive worker's pious merit is exhausted he will have to leave his pleasurable heaven again and return to the mortal world of earth and suffer the pains of repeated birth and death again. Therefore the performance of sacrifices is no sure means to cross the ocean of birth and death. Just as in this world the wheat and other grains that are earned through hard agricultural work is ultimately exhausted, similarly the heavenly pleasures earned through the performance of pious works is exhaustible. Therefore those who are blinded by illusion are only attached to fruitive activities and thus create their own bondage, just as a spider gets trapped in his own network."

jñānī means *brahma jñānīs*, those who think that there is no difference between the living entity and *brahman*. Śaṅkarācārya has defied all attempts to emancipate *karma* and *jñāna* throughout his theses. In his opinion there is a complete contrast between *karma* and *jñāna* like the contrast between darkness and light. They cannot be practised simultaneously. Therefore, in his Śārīraka Bhaṣya, he defined what is eternal and what is temporary, what reactions are to be expected in the present and in the next life as a result of the six-fold wealth of renunciation, abstinence and equal-mindedness etc., and that for those who desire liberation inquiry is the cause of the attainment of *brahma*. Through all these practices the *brahma jñānīs* begin to consider the individual soul to be no different from *brahma*. Although this *brahma jñāna* is dear to those who desire liberation, it is extremely harmful for those who teach dualism, or devotion, and therefore the devotees consider this highly rejectable. Hence Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya tells the practising devotees to keep the association of *jñānīs* **far away**.

Then again there are those who worship other gods like Brahmā or Śiva as independent Lords or meditate on them as such. Their association must also be cast far away. Śrī Viṣṇu is the Lord of all and everyone else is His worshipper. *ekale īśvara kṛṣṇa āra sab bhṛtya* (C.C.). On the strength of worshipping Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Mahādeva and others are eternally masters. Therefore those who consider Brahma, Śiva and others to be equal to Śrī Nārāyaṇa are called **pāṣaṇḍīs** (heretics, atheists) by the scriptures. *yas tu nārāyaṇam devam brahma rudrādi daivataḥ. samatvenaiva vikṣeta sa pāṣaṇḍī bhaved dhruvam* (Vaiṣṇava Tantra) "Those who consider gods like Brahmā and Śiva equal to Śrī Nārāyaṇa are certainly atheists." It is forbidden to see or associate with atheists under all circumstances. One must worship Śrī Hari as the Lord of all and Brahmā and Śiva as the greatest Vaiṣṇavas. The scriptures consider it greatly wrong and faulty to give up Viṣṇu and take to the worship of other gods. In the Brahma-Nārada discussion in the Skanda Purāṇa it is seen – *vāsudevam parityajya ye'nya devam upāsate; sva mātaram parityajya śvapacim vandate hi sa* "Those persons who give up Vāsudeva and worship other gods are like persons who give up their own mother to praise

a *caṇḍālī* (dog-eating woman)." In Śrī Mahābhārata it is also said: *yas tu viṣṇuṃ parityajya mohād anyam upāsate; sa hema rāśim utsrjya pāṁsu rāśim jighṛkṣati* "Anyone who leaves Viṣṇu and is so deluded to worship another god, is giving up a heap of gold to seek a pile of dust." Not only that, the Skanda Purāṇa is also saying that given up Śrī Hari to worship another god is lethal, like giving up nectar to drink poison – *vāsudevaṃ parityajya ye'nya devam upāsate; tyaktvāmṛtaṃ sa mūḍhātmā bhūṅkte halāhalaṃ viṣam* A devotee who desires his own welfare should cast the association of all these people that are against the path of devotion far away.

Then it is said: *dharma karma duḥkha śoka, yebā thāke anya yoga, chāḍi bhajo girivaradhārī* "Give up attachment to *dharma*, fruitive activities, misery, lamentations and other connections and worship Girivaradhārī!" '*dharma*' means activities that are proper within *varṇāśrama dharma*, duties of the four castes *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* and *śūdra* and of the four *āśramas* (stages in life) *brahmacārī*, *gṛhastha*, *vānaprastha* and *sannyāsa*. *karma* means perpetual and occasional duties to be performed for creating pious merit. The pure devotees are advised to give up all this *dharma* and *karma* and just to do *bhajana*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa advised Śrī Uddhava Mahāśaya to give up *dharma*, saying– *ājñāyivam guṇān doṣān mayā diṣṭān api svakān; dharmān santyājya yaḥ sarvān mām bhajet sa tu sattamaḥ* (Ś.B. 11.11.32) "Anyone who worships Me, renouncing the religious principles propounded by Me in the Vedic scriptures, even though knowing the virtue in following them and the fault in not following them, is counted by Me amongst the greatest saints." *mayā veda rūpeṇādiṣṭānapi sva dharmān santyājya yo mām bhajeta so'pyevam pūrvoktavat sattamaḥ. kim ajñānāt nāstikyād vā? na, dharmācarane sattva suddhādin guṇān vipakṣe doṣāms ca ajñāya jñātvāpi mad dhyānavikṣepakatayā mad bhaktyaiva sarvaṃ bhaviṣyatīti dṛḍha niścayenaiva dharmān santyājya* (Comment by Śrīdhara Svāmī): Śrī Bhagavān said: "O Uddhava! Those who do *bhajana* after giving up their occupational duties, that have been enjoined by Me in the Vedas, are counted amongst the aforementioned *sādhus*. The question may be, 'Do they give up their occupational duties out of ignorance or out of atheism?' The answer to this is: "No, although they know that compliance with occupational duties purifies one's existence and non-compliance leads to troubles, they also are also firmly convinced that 'Compliance with the duties prescribed for me by the Vedas disturbs my meditation' and that 'everything will be accomplished by being Kṛṣṇa's devotee' and thus they fully give up their occupational duties." In the Gītā, the Lord told Arjuna: *sarva dharmān parityajya mām ekaṃ śaraṇaṃ vraja* – "O Arjuna! Give up all occupational duties and take exclusive shelter of Me."

About renunciation of fruitive activities there is another statement of Śrī Kṛṣṇa to Uddhava in the Eleventh Canto of Śrīmad Bhāgavata: *tāvāt karmāṇi kurvīta na nirvidyeta yāvataḥ; mat kathā śravaṇādau vā śraddhā yāvan na jāyate* (11.20.9) "As long as one is not bored with sense gratification or one has still no faith in topics about Me, one must follow all of one's perpetual and occasional duties." In his 'Sārārtha Darśinī'-comment on this verse Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda has written– *nirvede tu jāte nirviṇṇānām jñāna-yoga iti mad ukter jñāna evādhikāro na karmaṇīti bhāvah. tathā ākasmika mahat kṛpā janita śraddhā vā yāvad iti śraddhātaḥ pūrvam eva karmādhikārah śraddhāyām jāyām tu 'jāta śraddhas tu yaḥ pumān' iti mad ukter bhaktāv eva kevalāyām adhikāra na karmaṇīti bhāvah. śraddhā ceyam ātyantikyeva jñeyā sā ca bhagavat kathā śravaṇādibhir eva kṛtārthī bhaviṣyāmīti na tu karma jñānādibhir iti dṛḍhāvāstikya lakṣaṇaiva tādrśa suddha bhakta saṅgodbhutaiva jñeyā* The Lord says: "When fatigue sets in with fruitive activities one becomes eligible for practising *jñāna*, not *karma*, following My words *nirviṇṇānām jñāna yoga*. My words 'as long as faith does not arise by the grace of the

saints' show that before faith arises one should perform one's occupational duties, and when faith has arisen My words 'a person whose faith has awoken' indicate that a faithful person becomes qualified only for devotion, not for fruitive activities. This faith must be known as intense. In other words, "I will be blessed by hearing topics of the Supreme Lord, not through *karma* and *jñāna*.' This kind of firm theistic faith must be understood to be the result of association of pure devotees." Therefore those who have weak faith are said to be eligible for a little more fruitive activities – *mṛdu śraddhasya kathitā svalpā karmādhikāritā* (Bh.R.Si.1.2.186)

Those who give up *varṇāśrama dharma* and all their perpetual and occasional duties and accept the dress of *bhāgavata paramahaṁsa* (swan-like theistic saint) to commence Śrī Hari's *bhajana*, give up *varṇāśrama dharma* both internally and externally and become fully independent from *karma* and *jñāna*, but also those who remain in the *āśrama* of householders and yet attain firm faith and perform *bhajana* in full surrender to Śrī Hari's lotus feet, have automatically succeeded in renouncing *varṇāśrama dharma*, for they do not have this state of mind at all anymore.

In this way the devotees must give up mundane miseries and lamentations, for those whose hearts are agitated by suffering and lamentation can never become Kṛṣṇa-consciousness. The pure devotees know that all suffering and lamentation are the merciful gift of the Supreme Lord and accept them as such. They are never disturbed and remain patiently absorbed in *bhajana* at times of suffering and lamentation. Again *anya yoga* means that the devotee gives up his attachment to wife, children and the sense objects. The pure devotees' expertise in *bhajana* means that they are freeing the mind from attachments to all mundane sense objects and firmly establish it in the lotus feet of the Lord. Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: "In this way the practising devotees, whose hearts are fixed in the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, should worship Śrī-Śrī Giridhārī. (16)

tīrtha yātrā pariśrama, *kevala manera bhrama,*
sarva siddhi govinda caraṇa
sudṛḍha viśvāsa kori, *mada mātsarya parihari,*
sadā koro ananya bhajana (17)

"The great exhaustive labor of pilgrimage is simply an deception of the mind, for all perfections lie at the lotus feet of Govinda. Have firm faith, give up pride and envy and always practise exclusive *bhajana*."

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *ṭikā*: *mada* - *viveka hārī ullāsaḥ mātsarya - parotkarṣāśahanam*: *mada* is felicity that takes away one's intelligence (intoxication).

Exclusive worship :

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – In this *tripadī* Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya gives the advise to give up the coming from and going to different holy places, caused by a restless mind, and stay fixed in holy places like Śrī Vṛndāvana to engage in exclusive worship there in the

company of saints. *tīrtha yātrā pariśrama, kevala manera bhrama, sarva siddhi govinda caraṇa* Here the word *tīrtha yātrā* means travelling to holy places other than Śrī Vṛndāvana, Navadvīpa and Nīlācala, that are favorable to one's desired mood. For amongst the 64 items of *bhajana* there are five practices that excel in power to bestow *prema* on the devotee, and one of them is **vraja vāsa**. In Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta (Madhya līlā Chapter 22) it is seen:

*sādhu saṅga, nāma kīrtana, bhāgavata śravaṇa; mathurā vāsa śrī mūrtira śraddhāya sevana
sakala sādhana śreṣṭha ei pañca aṅga; kṛṣṇa prema janmāy ei pāñcera alpa saṅga*

"Association with saints, congregational chanting of the holy name, hearing the Bhāgavata, residing in Vraja and faithfully serving the deity— these are the five very best items of *sādhana*. Even a slight contact with one of these can awaken love for Kṛṣṇa." The purport of this is that the practitioner of *rāgānugā bhakti* who wishes to achieve love for the lotus feet of the Lord takes shelter of abodes like Śrī Vṛndāvana, Navadvīpa and Nīlācala, that incite the desired mood within his heart, and engages there in intimate worship in the form of hearing, chanting and remembering, with like-minded saints. He should not engage in the toil of coming and going to different places of pilgrimage, for it will simply confuse his mind and create obstacles to his confidential worship in the form of meditation. In the Vaiṣṇava toṣaṇī ṭīkā of the verse *jñāne prayāsam udapāsyā* etc. of the Brahma Stava (Bhāg. 10.14.3) it is written – *sthāne satām nivāsa evāvyaगतayā sthitāḥ na tu tīrtha paryāṭanādi kleśān kurvantaḥ* "One should remain fixed in one place like Vṛndāvana and reside there with naturally saintly persons, engaging with them in discussing topics of Hari. One should not take to the toil of many different pilgrimages."

Like the scriptural narrations, the experiences of the great saints are special authoritative narrations about the practice of *bhajana*. In the village of Ranabārī in Vraja there was a *siddha* saint named Śrī Kṛṣṇa dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, who once desired to see the four *dhāmas*. Śrī Rādhārāṇī, however, appeared to him in a dream and forbade him to go to other holy places than Vraja. Bābā thought it was just a dream and set out to the four *dhāmas* anyway. Thus he came to Dvārakā where he accepted *tapta mudrā*, a brand mark. On the night that he returned to Vraja Śrī Rādhārāṇī gave him another audience in a dream, in which She told him that by going to Dvārakā and accepting the brand mark, he had become a member of Satyabhāmā's entourage and that he should now leave Vraja and go to Dvārakā. Then Bābā understood that his previous dream had been real, and, greatly repentant, he begged other *siddha mahātmās* for (advice on) atonement. No one was able to advise him on any atonement after Śrī Rādhārāṇī had issued Her personal order, so Bābā's body was consumed by the fire of separation, and scorched to ashes like a dry piece of firewood¹³. Through Her own devotee Śrī Rādhārāṇī thus taught the *rāgānugā* practitioners that it is unfavorable to leave Vraja-dhāma, the abode which is favorable to the desired feelings of the practitioners of Vraja-rasa, to go to another place of worship.

Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has said: *tīrtha yātrā pariśrama, kevala monera bhrama* – this is nothing else but delusion. If the practising devotees think that coming and going to different holy places will bring them the perfection of devotion, then that is such a delusion, for if they

¹³ See Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jivāna (published by Sri Haridāsa dās from Haribol Kutir in Navadvīpa), volume 2, the hagiography of Ranabāḍī's Siddha Bābā.

come and go to different holy places they will not be able to steadily practise confidential items of worship such as hearing, chanting and remembering Śrī Hari, that will help them attain *prema*. It is inevitable that the mind will get very restless from this wandering to and from different people who have different inclinations. Therefore the practitioner will be blessed with the attainment of *prema siddhi* when he gives up these restless wanderings and remains fixed in a love-abode like Śrī Vṛndāvana and steadily worships Śrī Govinda's lotus feet there with body, mind and words. Hence it is said: *sarva siddhi govinda caraṇa*. (All perfections lie at Govinda's lotus feet) If persons who desire different pious results from their activities think that their desires will be fulfilled by going and coming to different holy places, then to them also it is said that this is just a delusion of the mind, for all pilgrimages reach perfection at Govinda's lotus feet. If they also give up their labor of pilgrimage for the fulfillment of their different desires and steadfastly worship Govinda's lotus feet, they will also easily attain them, and become blessed with an even greater, indescribable fortune. In other words, Śrī Kṛṣṇa will bless them with the attainment of *prema bhakti* through His own attribute of compassion.

anya kāmī kore yadi kṛṣṇera bhajana; nā māgileo kṛṣṇa tāre dena sva caraṇa
kṛṣṇa kohe – āmāy bhaje, māge biṣoy sukh; amṛta chāri biṣa māge eto boṛo mūrkhā
āmi vijña ei mūrkhē biṣoy kene dibo; sva caraṇāmṛta diyā biṣoy bhūlāibo

kāma lāgi kṛṣṇa bhaje pāy kṛṣṇa rase; kāma chāri dās hoite hoy abhilāṣe

(C.C. Madhya Ch.22)

"If persons with ulterior desires worship Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa will give them His lotus feet, even unasked for. Kṛṣṇa says: "Anyone who worships Me and simultaneously desires sense enjoyment is a big fool, who gives up nectar to drink poison. I am wise – why should I give such a fool sense enjoyment? I will make him forget sense enjoyment by giving him the nectar of My own lotus feet.....If a person with ulterior motives worships Kṛṣṇa he attains the taste of Kṛṣṇa and he gives up his desires to become Kṛṣṇa's servant."

After this the blessed author says: *sudṛḍha viśvāsa kori, mada mātsarya parihari, sadā koro ananya bhajana*– "Keeping firm faith and giving up pride and envy, always do **exclusive bhajana**." Practising Vaiṣṇavas must establish full faith in all the *bhajana* teachings that have been previously described and thus do *bhajana*. Faith is the main cause that brings the eligibility to do *bhakti sādhanā* or *bhajana* – *śraddhā śabde viśvāsa kohe sudṛḍha niścoy* (C.C.) Faith in the words of the *sādhus*, the scriptures and the Guru is called *śraddhā*. A person endowed with firm faith is the greatest and best candidate for *bhajana*. Then again, those who do *bhajana* must give up pride and envy, for they are the root obstacles to the development of devotion. For the attainment of spiritual life, pride and arrogance must certainly be given up. When we get right down to it we see that we consider inanimate things in relation to the body to be 'I' and 'mine'. This causes arrogance or pride. When actual knowledge is attained the illusion that 'we are doing things ourselves' is automatically dispersed. The living entity is by nature purely spiritual and therefore untainted by any mundane element. All actions in the world are actually accomplished by the modes of material nature– *prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ* (Gītā) By thinking like this,

surrender to the lotus feet of the Lord comes by itself and one automatically considers oneself unable to do anything on one's own accord. Then the root of false pride will be pulled out of the heart and humility will show its own honey-sweet form and beautify the heart.

If *mātsarya*, or envy, resides within the heart one is deprived of the right to worship the Lord. In the opening of Śrīmad Bhāgavata (1.1.2) it is seen – *nirmatsarāṇām satām* "Non-evil saints are eligible to perform this theistic religion." *parotkarṣāsahanam mātsaryam* "Not being able to tolerate another's superiority, not liking it and becoming morose over it—this kind of low, narrow-minded and disgusting mentality is called *mātsarya* or envy. An envious person will find faults in qualified persons who are superior to him, he will challenge those who are equal to him and will hate or despise those who are junior to him, whereas a non-evil person will be devoted to his superiors, love those who are equal to him and be very affectionate and compassionate to those who are junior to him. In the heart of the envious the desire for distinction and fame arises. From the sperm of the dog-eater named *mātsarya* the twins named 'faultfinding' and 'hostility' are born in the womb of his wife named 'desire for distinction'. Their dancing will destroy and crush all good qualities in the heart. Therefore the practitioner must always ward off pride and envy.

Thereafter the blessed author says: *sadā koro ananya bhajana* – always practise **exclusive worship**. In his commentary on Śrīmad Bhāgavata's statement (4.7.35) *ananya vṛttyā*, Śrīdhara Svāmī has written *ananya vṛttyā bhaktyā avyabhicārī bhaktyā* "Exclusive devotion means unadulterated devotion." All other desires than serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa is an adulteration of pure devotion, therefore *ananya bhajana* means giving up all past and present desires and worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa exclusively for His pleasure. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda has written in his commentary on the word *ananya-bhāk* in Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā (9.30) – *ananya bhāk matto'nya devatāntaram mad bhakter anyat karma jñānādikam mat kāmānāto'nyām rājyādi kāmānām na bhajate sa sādhuḥ* "Those who do not worship any other godhead but Me, who do not perform fruitive activities or engage in non-dualistic speculations, and who do not desire other things, like kingdoms, but My devotional service, are performing My exclusive *bhajana* and they are the real *sādhus*." After this Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya will say: *hṛṣike govinda sevā nā pūjibo devī devā, ei mata ananya bhakti kathā* – "I will serve Govinda with the senses and not worship other gods and goddesses. **This is exclusive devotion.**" (17)

kṛṣṇa bhakta aṅga heri, *kṛṣṇa bhakta saṅga kori*
śraddhānvita śravaṇa kīrtana
arcana smarāṇa dhyāna, *nava bhakti mahā-jñāna*
ei bhakti parama kāraṇa (18)

"I behold the transcendental forms of Kṛṣṇa's devotees, I associate with Kṛṣṇa's devotees and faithfully engage in nine kinds of devotional service, like hearing, chanting, worshipping the deity, remembering the Lord's pastimes and

meditating on them in their company. This is the greatest knowledge and the greatest cause of devotion."

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *tīkā* – *nāma līlā guṇādinām śrutiḥ śravaṇam. nāma līlā guṇādinām mukhena bhāṣaṇam kīrtanam. suddhi nyāsādi pūrvakopacārāṇām mantreṇopapādanam arcanam. yathā kathaṅcin mānasah sambandhaḥ smaraṇam. smaraṇa bheda viśeṣaḥ dhyānam. śraddhānvita iti sarvatrānvayaḥ* "Hearing means hearing Kṛṣṇa's holy name, pastimes and attributes with the ears, chanting means singing about Kṛṣṇa's holy names, pastimes and attributes with the mouth. Deity worship means using rituals like *nyāsa* and different *mantras* and offering different delicious articles to the deity. Recollecting (remembering) means to have a slight mental connection with the Lord and one kind of recollection is called meditation. Who is faithful is explained everywhere."

Worship endowed with faith:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā– In this *tripadī* it is described how to do *bhajana*, faithfully hearing and chanting in the company of Kṛṣṇa's devotees. *kṛṣṇa bhakta aṅga heri, kṛṣṇa bhakta saṅga kori, śraddhānvita śravaṇa kīrtana*. On the strength of associating with Kṛṣṇa's devotees, seeing their bodies, and so, even an ordinary person will gradually attain faith and taste, swiftly culminating into *rati* and *prema*. There is such a total purity emanating from the *sādhu*'s body, that even an ordinary person, who does not do any *bhajana*, who sees him will be affected by it and will be blessed with the gift of the extraordinary treasure of *bhajana*. In his comment on the Bhāgavata verse *śusrūṣu śraddhadhānasya* (1.2.16), Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has written (Bhakti Sandarbha, Paragraph 11): *kāryāntareṇāpi tīrthe bhramato mahatām prāyas tatra bhramatām tiṣṭhatām vā darśana sparśana sambhāṣaṇādi lakṣaṇā sevā svata eva sampadyate. tat prabhāvena tadīya caraṇe śraddhā bhavati. tadīya svābhāvika paraspara bhagavat kathāyām kim ete saṅkathayanti tat śṛṇomīti tad icchā jāyate. tac chravaṇena ca tasyām rucir jāyata iti. tathāca mahadbhya eva śrutvā jhaṭīti kārya karīti bhāvaḥ. athāca kapiladeva vākyam*–

*satām prasaṅgān mama virya saṁvido bhavanti hṛt karṇa rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ
taj joṣaṇād āśvapavarga vartmani śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramiṣyati* (Bhāg.3.25.25)

"Even if someone wanders through holy places like Śrī Vṛndāvana for other (mundane) reasons and meets the great souls who have taken up residence there or have come there with the specific purpose of rendering service to these holy places, serves them without any separate endeavour by seeing them, touching them or conversing with them. Otherwise it is impossible in all respects for non devotees to become inclined to seek out the company of the great souls and associate with them. On the strength of seeing and touching these deeply realised souls, faith will arise in their conduct. And after hearing the naturally perfect discussions of these deeply realised souls on the Personality of Godhead, they also awaken the desire to 'Let me hear what they have to say'. After hearing topics of Śrī Hari from the mouths of these deeply realised souls, taste for such topics on the Personality of Godhead will also arise. After hearing topics on Hari from the mouths of the great saints one very quickly becomes successful. Hence Lord Śrī Kapiladeva told His own mother Devahūti: "O Mother! Whoever attains the excellent company of the *sādhus* and hears from them about My glories is very fortunate. These topics serve like an elixir to the ears and the heart of the hearer, and as a result one becomes more and more interested, faithful, attracted and

devoted to Me. As a concomitant factor to all this, all ignorance is also destroyed." This loving devotion is the highest attainment for the individual soul and the supreme goal of life, which is only available by the association and the grace of the saints. When Śrī Viṣṇu wished to bestow a boon on Mahārāja Pṛthu, the king said (Bhāg. 4.20.25):

*sa uttama śloka mahān mukha cyuto bhavat padāmbhoja sudhā kaṇānilaḥ
smṛtīm punar vismṛta tattva vartmanām kuyoginām no vitaratyalaṁ varaiḥ*

"O Lord! We have forgotten about Your form as the Supreme Truth, but now even the air laden with drops of the nectar from Your lotus feet, emanating from the mouths of the great souls, is able to restore this knowledge to us, fallen *yogīs*. Therefore topics on Your pastimes emanating from the mouths of the great souls form the greatest means and the greatest goal. We require no benedictions other than this!" It is natural for such statements to be found in devotional scriptures like Śrīmad Bhāgavata, but such principles are promulgated even in the Upaniṣads! A lot of *jñāna*-topics are discussed in the Kaṭhapaniṣad, and in the end it establishes that *brahma* is hard to understand, since it cannot be perceived or expressed with the words or mind. How then can we know it? This question is answered as follows— *naiva vācā na manasā prāptuṁ śakyo na cakṣuṣā, astīti bruvate'nyatra katham tad upalabhyate* "*brahma* cannot be ascertained through words, the mind, the eyes or any of the other senses. Then how can we gain knowledge of it?" The Śruti answers to this: "The faithful theistic *mahā puruṣa* will come to know it." In his comment on this *mantra*, Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya has written *tasmād astīti bruva tā'stīva vādina āgamārthānusāriṇaḥ śraddhadhānād anyatra katham tat brahma upalabhyate na kathaṅcanopalabhyate ityārthaḥ* – "Without the association and the grace of the theistic *mahā puruṣas* there is no way to discover this *brahma*." So it is firmly ascertained by Śrī Śaṅkara in his comment. In the universal scripture Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā it is also said: *upadekṣyanti te jñānam jñāninas tattva darśinaḥ* (4.34) "O Arjuna! The *jñānīs* or knowers of scripture, and the *tattva darśīs* or the great souls that have experience with the intangible, can instruct you on spiritual matters." From all these scriptural statements it can easily be understood that one may study scripture as much as one likes, as long as the grace of a great soul, who perceives intangible transcendental principles, has not been attained through his powerful association, there is no way to attain devotion or freedom from vices. Hence Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has said: *kṛṣṇa bhakta saṅga kori, kṛṣṇa bhakta aṅga heri, śraddhānvita śravaṇa kīrtana* "I behold the transcendental forms of Kṛṣṇa's devotees, I associate with Kṛṣṇa's devotees and faithfully engage in hearing and chanting." As long as the association of such great devotees of Kṛṣṇa is not attained, one should study the sacred revealed scriptures and the comments on them by the great souls. This is also one kind of *sat saṅga* (sacred company). This should also be known in the course of discussion.

After this the blessed author says: *arcana smaraṇa dhyāna, nava bhakti mahā jñāna, ei bhakti parama kāraṇa* Here practices like hearing, chanting, deity worship, recollection and meditation are mentioned. Meditation is included in *smaraṇa* or recollection. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī teaches: *viśeṣato rūpādi cintanaṁ dhyānam* "When recollection ripens it culminates into meditation and one remembers detailed forms and so." So four of the nine famous kinds of devotion are mentioned in this *tripadī*. The words *nava bhakti mahā jñāna* indicate that we must learn all the details about all the nine forms of devotion. In the aforementioned *tripadī* number 11 it was said: *bhāgavata sāstra marma, nava vidha bhakti*

dharmā, sadāi koribo susevana. In our comment on this part we have discussed the nine types of devotion according to our capacity, one may consult that part of the book. '*ei bhakti parama kāraṇa*' means that these nine kinds of devotion are the greatest cause or means of the attainment of *prema*.

*bhajanera madhye śreṣṭha—nava vidha bhakti; kṛṣṇa prema kṛṣṇa dite dhare mahā śakti
tāra madhye sarva śreṣṭha—nāma saṅkīrtana; niraparādha nāma hoite hoy prema dhana*

"The best items of *bhajana* are the nine types of devotion, since they carry the power to bestow Kṛṣṇa and love of Kṛṣṇa. Amongst them, the greatest is *nāma saṅkīrtana*, for offenseless chanting of the holy name grants the treasure of *prema*." (18)

*hṛṣīke govinda sevā, nā pūjibo devī devā,
ei to ananya bhakti kathā
āra yoto upāmbha, viśeṣa sakali dambha,
dekhite lāgaye boḍo vyathā (19)*

"I will serve Govinda with all my senses and I will not worship other gods or goddesses. This is exclusive devotion. All other activities are simply a sign of pride, seeing which I feel great pain."

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *ṭīkā*: *devī - pārvatīdayaḥ; devā - rudrādayaḥ*
"Goddesses means Pārvatī and so, and gods means Śiva and so."

The service of Hṛṣīkeśa:

Sudhā Kaṇikā vyākhyā— Previously Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has spoken of exclusive worship, personally giving the definition of exclusive devotion, and in this *tripadī* he explains how all factors that may harm the devotee's *bhajana*, all that is not part of exclusive *bhajana*, must be given up. *hṛṣīke govinda sevā, nā pūjibo devī devā, ei to ananya bhakti kathā*. In Śrī Nārada Pañcarātra the following definition of pure devotion is given—

*sarvopādhi vinirmuktaṁ tat paratvena nirmalam
hṛṣīkeṇa hṛṣīkeśa sevanaṁ bhaktir ucyate*

"Giving up all designations, or all personal desires for both this lifetime and the next, *bhakti* is performed solely for the love of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and is thus spotless. Such service to Hṛṣīkeśa, the Lord of the senses, Śrī Govinda, performed through the senses, is called *bhakti*." One meaning of the name Govinda is 'regulator, or master of the senses'. *go* means the senses, and the master of the senses or Hṛṣīkeśa, is indicated with the name Govinda in this *tripadī*. The five knowledge-acquiring senses are the eyes, ears, tongue, nose and skin, and the five active senses are the speech, hands, feet, anus and genitals. Along with the

mind, which is the 'internal sense', there are eleven senses, and service rendered to Śrī Govinda with these senses is called *bhakti*. Seeing the deity of Śrī Govinda or the sacred body of the devotee through the eyes is a flawless means to attain *prema*. Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has written in *Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu* (1.2.239)–

*smerāṁ bhaṅgī traya paricitāṁ sāci vistīrṇa dṛṣṭīm
vaṁśī nyastādhara kiśalayāṁ ujjalāṁ candrakeṇa
govindākhyāṁ haritanumitaḥ keśitīrthopakāṅthe
mā prekṣiṣṭhās tava yadi sakhe bandhusaṅge'sti raṅgaḥ*

"O friend! If you want to enjoy fun in social life with your friends and relatives, then don't look at the smiling face of Śrī Govinda as He stands on the bank of the Yamunā at Keśi Ghāt in His threefold bending form, with His wide crooked eyes, His peacock feather crown and the holes of His flute placed at His flower-like lips." In the prohibition 'don't look at...', a great glorification of viewing Kṛṣṇa's form is suggested in a reverse manner. Simply by seeing His form the heart gives up all other attachments. It is indicated here that the mind and eyes are colored with attraction to Śrī Govinda. On the other hand, without viewing the divine form of the Lord, the sense of sight is greatly condemned. Śrīmad Bhāgavata says (2.3.22) – *barhāyite te nayane narāṇāṁ liṅgāni viṣṇor na nirīkṣate ye* "The human eyes which do not behold the form of Viṣṇu are like the eyes printed on the plumes of a peacock." The mere sight of a devotee infuses devotion within the heart; hence the Hari Bhakti Sudhodaya says that the sight of a devotee is the perfection for the eyes – *akṣnoḥ phalaṁ tvādrśa darśanaṁ hi* (The comment on this verse says:) *tvādrśānāṁ kathaṅcit tvad anukaraṇavatāṁ api darśanam evākṣnoḥ phalam* "What to speak of seeing a devotee, even seeing a person who imitates the feelings and the dress of a devotee grants perfection to the existence of the eyes."

Hearing topics of Śrī Govinda through the ears. That hearing of topics concerning Govinda has repeatedly been glorified as the best means to attain the supreme goal of *prema* in scriptures like Śrīmad Bhāgavata. When topics on Śrī Govinda somehow enter the ears, all vices are destroyed and love for the lotus feet of Śrī Govinda is attained. *yasyāṁ vai śrūyamāṇāyāṁ kṛṣṇe parama puruṣe; bhaktir upadyate puṁsaḥ śoka moha bhayāpahā* (Bhāg. 1.7.7) "Hearing this Śrīmad Bhāgavata, which is meant for swan-like saints, and which is filled with topics on Śrī Govinda, will generate devotion for the Supreme Personality Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which destroys sorrow, lamentation and fear." What to speak of directly hearing topics on Śrī Govinda, if one simply desires to hear this topics, Śrī Govinda will immediately be captured within the heart of he who desires to do so– so it is stated in the beginning (*upakrama vāṇī*) of Śrīmad Bhāgavata – *sadyo hṛdyavarudhyate'tra kṛtibhiḥ śuśrūṣubhis tat kṣaṇāt* (Bhāg. 1.1.2) *sadya eva hṛdi avarudhyate vaśīkriyata iti premā sūcitāḥ tasya premaika vaśyatvāt* (Sārārtha Darśinī *ṭīkā*) "Śrī Hari desires to hear topics on Himself, so He immediately becomes captured within the heart, or is subdued by the devotee. This indicates the awakening of *prema*, for He is subdued only by *prema*." On the other hand, when the ears do not hear topics on Śrī Govinda, they are useless like holes – *bile batorukrama vikramān ye na śṛṇvataḥ karṇapuṭe narasya* (Bhāg. 2.3.20) "When a man does not hear topics of Śrī Hari's pastimes, his ears are useless like holes."

The tongue must relish the remnants of Śrī Govinda's food. Śrī Govinda's lip-nectar will destroy the conditioned souls' desires for all other relish but Śrī Govinda – *itara rāga*

vismāraṇam nṛṇām (Bhāg. 10.31.14) In the words of Śrī Uddhava Mahāśaya, the service (eating) of Śrī Govinda's lip-nectar (*prasāda*) will result in victory over *māyā* –

*tvayopabhukta srag gandha vāso'laṅkāra carcitāḥ
ucchiṣṭa bhujino dāsās tava māyām jayama hi*

Śrī Uddhava told Śrī Kṛṣṇa– "O Lord! When we are dressed with the garlands, scents, garments and ornaments that have previously decorated You, we, Your servants, who eat the remnants of Your food, will be victorious over Your *māyā*!" Śrī Uddhava Mahāśaya was unable to give up Śrī Kṛṣṇa and was glorifying His *mahā prasāda*. Actually it is not so that the only result of eating *mahā prasāda* is victory over *māyā*, but beyond that the devotee practitioner is blessed with the attainment of *prema*. What's more, it is heard that even the *premi*ka devotees constantly bear a desire within their hearts to relish *mahāprasāda*. In the Uttara Khaṇḍa of the Brahma Purāṇa it is described that Devarṣi Nārada served Śrī Lakṣmī devī out of greed after the service of *mahā prasāda*. When Lakṣmī was satisfied she gave him the *prasāda* of Śrīman Nārāyaṇa. Attaining this *prasāda*, Śrī Nārada approached Maheśa (Śiva) and glorified the *prasāda* before him. When Śrīman Mahādeva tasted a minuscule grain of *prasāda* which had been stuck to a corner of Śrī Nārada's nail, great ecstatic love arose within him. Devī Pārvatī became very unhappy at not attaining this *prasāda* and performed penances to be able to distribute this *mahā prasāda*, that is rarely attained by the demigods, to all the fallen souls of the universe. To fulfill the prayers of Devī, the Lord eats huge amounts of food in Puruṣottama Kṣetra (Jagannātha Purī) in the form of Śrī Jagannātha, and always has the *prasāda* distributed. On the other hand, one who renounces *mahā prasāda* is deprived of Śrī Hari's grace. *ucchiṣṭera bole haridāsa bol dhare; prabhu vidyamāne, ucchiṣṭera puraskāre. heno mahā prasāda mui nā bhuñjīnu kabhu; antare jānilo more vañciyāche prabhu* (Śrī Caitanya Maṅgala) "The servants of Hari maintain their strength on the strength of the Lord's food-remnants, that are His manifest reward. I never enjoyed such *mahā prasāda* so I know within my heart that the Lord has deprived me."

With the nose the garlands offered at the lotus feet of the Śrī Govinda should be smelled. When they smelled the fragrance of the Tulasī-leaves that were stuck to the lotus feet of Vaikuṅṭhapati Śrīman Nārāyaṇa, even self-satisfied saints like Brahmā's mental sons Śrī Sanaka, Sanananda and others felt *prema* infused within their hearts, and loving transformations were revealed within their bodies and minds– so it is described in Śrīmad Bhāgavata (3.15.43)–

*tasyāravinda nayanasya padāravinda kiñjalka miśra tulasī makaranda vāyuh
antar gataḥ sva vivareṇa cakāra teṣāṁ saṁkṣobham akṣara juṣāṁ api citta tanvoḥ*

"When the wind, that carried the fragrance of Tulasī mixed with pollen that was stuck on the lotus feet of the lotus-eyed Lord, entered the hearts of *brahmānandīs* like Sanaka and Sanātana through their nostrils, ecstatic symptoms appeared all over their bodies. Their hearts rejoiced greatly and their bodies revealed goosepimples." This shows that the smell of Śrī Govinda's left-over flowers bring about *prema*. On the other hand, when this is not smelled a human being resembles a living corpse – *śrī viṣṇu padyā manujas tulasyaḥ svasañchavo yas tu na veda gandham* (Bhāg. 2.3.23) "A person who does not smell the Tulasī

leaves that are offered to Śrī Hari's lotus feet is certainly a corpse, though he may be breathing."

In the same way the skin touches the footdust of the Lord's devotees, without whose grace it is impossible to develop love for the Lord. Śrīmad Bhāgavata says: *mahīyasām pāda rajo'bhīsekaṁ niṣkiñcanānām na vṛṇīta yāvat* (Bhāg. 7.5.25). On the other hand, this body is completely useless if it does not touch the footdust of great devotees – *jīvañchavo bhāgavatāṅghri reṇuṁ na jātu martyo'bhilaṣeta yas tu* (Bhāg. 2.3.13) "That mortal human being who does not accept the footdust of the Lord's devotees is considered a living corpse."

Through the vocal sense the names, attributes and pastimes of Śrī Govinda are glorified. The Lord can never give up he who speaks about Him – *mat kathā vācakaḥ nityam mat kathā śravaṇe ratam. mat kathā prīta manasām nāham tyakṣāmi taṁ naram* (Viṣṇu Dharmottara) The Lord says: "I can never give up those who constantly speak about Me and hear these topics, or those whose minds are sprinkled with love for topics concerning Me. In the absence of this, the human tongue remains like the tongue of a frog– *jihvāsati dārdukireva sūta na copagāyatyurugāya-gāthāḥ* (Bhāg. 2.3.20) "That tongue that does not glorify the attributes of Śrī Hari is considered to be polluted like that of a frog." In the same way the hands must serve Śrī Govinda, otherwise they are useless. *sāvau karau no kuruta saparyām harer lasat kāñcana kañkaṇau vā* (Bhāg. 2.3.21) "Those human hands that do not serve Śrī Hari may be beautified with shimmering golden bracelets, still they resemble the hands of a corpse." The feet are useful when they go to the holy place where the Lord resides, otherwise they are just like trees– *pādaḥ nṛṇām tau druma janma bhājau kṣetrāṇi nānuvrajato harer yau* (Bhāg. 2.3.22) "Those human feet who do not move to Lord Hari's holy abode are like the roots of trees."

Although the anus and the genitals cannot be directly engaged in the Lord's service, even they can help in Śrī Govinda's service in a way – *utsargān mala mutrādeś citta svāsthyam yato bhavet. atopāyorupasthasya tad ārādhana sādhanam* "By passing stool and urine the anus and the genitals, the body and mind, that are the root instruments in spiritual practice, remain healthy and clear. In this way even the anus and the genitals serve as a means to worship the Lord."

The main instrument to serve the Lord is the mind, the inner sense, for even though the active senses and the knowledge-acquiring senses may be engaged in worship, if the mind is not at it, it will all be mechanical and the attainment of *prema* will remain far away. Therefore the diligent practitioner should be careful that the mind is fixed on the worship that is being performed with the active senses and the knowledge-acquiring senses. When the mind remembers Śrī Govinda, the Lord will give Himself to the person who thus meditates on Him. *smarataḥ pāda kamalam ātmānam api yacchati* (Bhāg. 10.80.8) "The universal teacher Śrī Kṛṣṇa gives Himself away to he who meditates on His lotus feet, by personally appearing to him. In other words, He is subdued by anyone who meditates on Him." For this reason the Padma Purāṇa says: *smartavyaḥ satatam viṣṇor vismartavyo na jātucit. sarve vidhi niṣedhāḥ syur etayor eva kiñkarāḥ* "One should always remember Viṣṇu and never forget Him. All the other scriptural rules and prohibitions are servants to this one rule and this one prohibition." In other words, all scriptural injunctions are being followed simply by remembering Śrī Viṣṇu and on the other hand all the scriptural prohibitions are violated by forgetting Him.

Thus serving Śrī Govinda, the Lord of the senses, through the senses, without worshipping other gods and goddesses is called ***ananya bhakti*** or **exclusive devotion**. Persons who wish different fruits may be worshipping different gods with faith, but they are actually worshipping Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the aggregate of all the gods. However, since there is no rule here in attaining *prema*, they are not worshipping according to the rules. *ye'pyanya devatā-bhaktā yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ; te'pi mām eva kaunteya yajantyavidhi pūrvakam* "O Son of Kunti, those who are devoted to other gods and worship them with faith, really also worship Me, but not according to the rules (that is, their rule is not to become free from material life or to attain the Supreme Lord)." (B. Gītā 9.23)

After this the blessed author says: *āra yoto upālabha, viśeṣa sakali dambha, dekhite lāgaye boro byathā* "All other activities are simply signs of pride, seeing which I feel great pain." All other activities developed by mankind within this world are a waste, as far as the soul is concerned. None of these activities belong to his constitutional duties, all are activities for the imaginary material body and are nothing else but deceptions for the spirit soul. They simply cause pride of one's bodily status. Seeing such false pride of the conditioned souls simply gives great pain to the heart." (19)

dehe boise ripu-gaṇa, yoteko indriya-gaṇa,
keho kāro bādhyā nāhi hoy
śunile nā śune kāna, jānile nā jāne prāṇa,
doṛāite nā pāre niścoy (20)

"The senses that dwell in our bodies are so many enemies. Nobody obeys anyone. My ears hear, but don't listen and my heart knows, but does not realize. They cannot become determined and fixed."

Obstacles to bhajana:

Sudhā Kaṇikā vyākhyā – In this *tripadī* Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya mentions the foremost obstacles that those who wish to commence *bhajana* face. Although mankind knows how beneficial *bhajana* is for the spiritual self, it is not able to proceed firmly on the path of devotion, due to these obstacles. Although mankind has heard and seen everything about *bhajana* it remains attached to sense objects and physical pleasures as if ignorant, and thus wastes its rare opportunity of human life, which is so suitable for *bhajana*. Discussing these obstacles the blessed author says: *dehe boise ripu gaṇa, joteko indriyagaṇa, keho kāro bādhyā nāhi hoy* "The senses that dwell in our bodies are so many enemies. Nobody obeys anyone." The six enemies lust, anger, greed, delusion, pride and envy always dwell in the human body. The human race, which has fallen in the ocean of birth and death, has fallen into the powerful grip of these six crocodile-like enemies and is being constantly chewed and munched by them. They are extremely powerful and stubborn. If the human senses become attracted to mundane sounds, flavours, forms etc, then the learning of the learned is lost and the intelligence of the intelligent is lost. Human kind can never save itself from its grip on its own strength. Śrī Arjuna asked Śrī Kṛṣṇa: *atha kena prayukto'yaṁ pāpaṁ carati puruṣaḥ;*

anicchan api vārṣṇeya balād iva niyojitaḥ (Gītā 3.36) "O Kṛṣṇa! Through what are people forcibly engaged in sin, even outside their own will?" To this Śrī Kṛṣṇa answered: *kāma eṣa krodha eṣa rajoguṇa samudbhavaḥ; mahāsano mahāpāpma viddhyenam iha vairiṇam* (Gītā 3.37) "O Arjuna! It is lust, it is anger! They spring forth from the mundane mode of passion, are very difficult to satisfy and extremely horrible. Know them to be the enemies of the world!" Some people take the word *kāma* or lust simply to mean the desire of men and women to meet each other, and although this narrow interpretation is certainly correct, in a broader sense *kāma* means desires for sense gratification. When these desires are obstructed or thwarted they turn into anger, therefore lust and anger are actually one. Therefore the abovementioned verse is in the single tense, although two things are mentioned in it. Not only anger, but also the other four enemies greed, delusion, pride and envy are different forms of lust. When that lust becomes attracted to the best enjoyable things and the greatest wealth it is called greed, and when lusty desires make mankind attached to perishable and temporary matters that stop them from realising their constitutional position, or if it covers over their spiritual knowledge, it is called *moha* or delusion. Then again if this delusion or ignorance assumes the form of self-esteem like 'I am a rich man' 'I am an honorable man', then this is called *mada* or pride. If this self esteem considers that the wealth and reputation of others crushes the pride of one's own, then that kind of agitation of the heart or intolerance is called *mātsarya*, *para-śrī kātaratā* or envy. This is an extremely vile and disgusting mentality and forms the greatest obstacle to *bhakti* or *bhajana*. That will become specifically clear later.

In this way the six enemies, that are such sturdy obstacles to the practice of *bhajana* and concomitant realisation of the constitutional self of the living entities, that are actually Śrī Kṛṣṇa's eternal servants, reside within the human body, particularly within the knowledge-acquiring senses and active senses. Service rendered to Hṛṣīkeśa, the Lord of the senses, is called devotion; that has been elaborately described in the commentary on the previous *tripadī*. The senses of the conditioned souls, that are averse to Śrī Kṛṣṇa since beginningless time, are naturally inclined towards the sense objects. The eyes are absorbed in seeing scenes of worldly beauty, the ears are thirsty to hear the world's greatest songs as well as nonsensical gossip, the tongue is greedy after the savour of the greatest sweets, the nose is eager to smell the most exquisite scents and the skin is very eager to touch the softest and most blissful objects. The active senses are as much absorbed in enjoying their favorite sense objects as the knowledge-acquiring senses are: the speech is engaged in speaking worldly topics and gossip, the hands and feet are expert in performing all kinds of worldly duties and the genitals are absorbed in enjoying sex. From beginningless time the senses of the conditioned souls, who are averse to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, have been floating on a current towards the sense objects, and the strikes of these enemies like lust, that reside within the body, has increased their speed and power. When the strikes of these enemies attract the human mind towards the field of sense objects, then even the mind of an intelligent, discriminating person will not be able to block this indomitable attraction. As a result: *keho kāro bādhyā nāhi hoy* – nobody obeys anyone. The enemies like lust do not obey the senses, the senses do not obey the mind of the discriminating person, and the mind also does not obey the intelligence. In this way the independent and unsubmitive enemies and the senses have been dancing within the consciousness of the conditioned soul!!

In Gītā Śāstra (3.42-43) the Lord has told Śrī Arjuna: *indriyāṇi parāṇyāhur indriyebhyaḥ paraṁ manaḥ; manasas tu parā buddhir buddher yaḥ paratas tu saḥ. evaṁ buddheḥ paraṁ buddhvā saṁstabhyātmānam ātmanā; jahi śatruṁ mahā bāho kāma rūpaṁ durāsadam* "O Arjuna! It is said that the senses are higher than the body, the mind is higher than the senses, the intelligence is higher than the mind and the soul is even higher than the intelligence. O mighty armed one, knowing thus that the soul exceeds the intelligence, ascertain yourself through yourself. In other words, realise that you are Kṛṣṇa's eternal servant and that your body and your senses are simply illusory designations. Thus you can conquer this indomitable enemy called lust." Such are the teachings of the scriptures and the great teachers – "The living entity is Kṛṣṇa's eternal servant whose only duty it is to serve Kṛṣṇa. The body and its belongings and relatives are the gift of *māyā*, that have nothing to do with the real identity of the soul. The establishment of self-identification with these false designations is the cause of bondage, and the renunciation of such self identifications are the cause of liberation." Although the ears hear these teachings hundreds of times they do not listen. Rather, they run after topics that are unrelated to Kṛṣṇa. The mind is constantly accepting and rejecting different mundane things. The heart is willingly and knowingly unmoved by all these teachings. The restless human mind will not firmly remember that the only supreme truth is God and the only means to attain Him is devotion – *śunīle nā śune kāṇa, jānīle nā jāne praṇa, dadhāte nā pāre niścoy*: My ears hear, but don't listen and my heart knows, but does not realize. They cannot become determined and fixed." (20)

***kāma krodha lobha mohwa, mada mātsarya dambha saha,
sthāne sthāne niyukta koribo.
ānanda kori hṛdoy, ripu kori parājoy,
anāyāse govinda bhajibo (21)***

"I will engage lust, anger, greed, illusion, envy and pride all in Kṛṣṇa's service. Thus I can defeat these enemies with a blissful heart and easily worship Govinda."

The means to defeat the enemy :

Sudhā-kaṇikā vyākhyā – Here Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya defines what is the best means to defeat enemies like lust, that form powerful obstacles to *bhajana*– '*kāma krodha lobha moha, mada mātsarya, dambha saha sthāne sthāne niyukta koribo*'. The best means to subdue the enemies that obstruct *śrī kṛṣṇa bhajana* is to engage each of these enemies in the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Practitioners of *jñāna* and *yoga* can never attain *siddhi* without first defeating enemies like lust, hence they try to destroy lust through harsh and ardent practices, endeavouring to control their senses by brute force. But the demigods that reside over each of the senses are fond of enjoyment, they do not like such harsh austerities meant to control the senses. Therefore when they see a strong gale of sense pleasure approaching, they forcibly throw open the gates of the senses. This strong gale of sensuality enters into the

heart of the *jñānī* and blows out the candle of his transcendental knowledge there. Then the *jñānī* rests no other choice than to enjoy material (household) life once more. *hari māyā* is very powerful, no one is able to transcend her power through his own means without taking shelter at Śrī Hari's lotus feet and attaining His grace. *daivī hyeṣā guṇamayī mama māyā duratyayā; mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etāṁ taranti te* (Gītā 7.14) The blessed Lord told Śrī Arjuna: "My illusory potency, that deludes all living beings, consists of three modes of psyche and is very difficult to transcend. However, those who surrender unto Me will be able to cross over this ocean of delusion." The devotees who surrender unto the Lord's lotus feet are very clever, they know – "Whoever likes flavour will desire flavour. All the senses yearn for sour sensual flavours; if they do not relish a higher taste they will never be able to renounce the disgusting taste of sense pleasure. Hence *tad eva ramyaṁ ruciraṁ navaṁ navaṁ tad eva śāśvan manaso mahotsavam* – the ever-fresh and delicious sweet flavours of Godhead will come to their minds and senses to give them great delight. Then the senses and the mind will renounce the disgusting taste of sense objects forever and be forever blessed by immersing within the ocean of sweet *bhagavat rasa*.

Hence the devotees who are surrendered to Śrī Hari's lotus feet are very expert in turning the enemies lust, anger etc. towards the Lord, so that these enemies will give up their natural hostility and will become transcendental by the grace of *bhakti devī*, just as dirty iron turns into gold through the touch of a touchstone. Thus they will become the devotees' greatest assistants and friends on the path of devotion. If some enemy gives up his hostility due to the quality of time, place or circumstance, and begins to act like a great friend, then which intelligent person will wish to destroy such an old enemy? On the strength of the qualities of a devotee who is surrendered to the Lord's lotus feet, or the quality of the devotion within his heart, these great enemies will also reverse their nature. *arer mitraṁ viṣaṁ pathyam adharmo dharmatām vrajet. suprasanne hṛṣikeṣe viparīte viparyayaḥ* "When Śrī Hari is pleased enemies become friends, poison will grant immortality as if it is nectar and vice will become virtue. All these things will be reversed and will start to engage in His service."

Hence Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: "We are the devotees surrendered to Śrī Hari's lotus feet. We don't endeavour to destroy lust, anger, greed, delusion, intoxication, envy and pride like the *jñānīs* or the *yogīs*. We simply engage them in the right place, that is in Śrī Govinda's service." In other words, we will engage them in whatever place suits them within the framework of worshipping Śrī Hari. When they are thus engaged in the proper places they will be skillfully subdued. Through this prowess the wicked enemies will be properly defeated.

In days of yore one powerful wicked king became filled with envy after he heard the glorification of a popular, virtuous king who was less powerful than he and whose kingdom bordered his. He defeated him and occupied his kingdom. This made the citizens even more disturbed with the wicked king and thus they began to glorify the virtuous king even more. The wicked king then became so agitated from the fire of envy that burned within him that he announced that anyone who would bring him the severed head of the deposed king would receive a reward of a hundred thousand gold coins. When the deposed king heard of this announcement he fled into the forest and disguised himself as an ascetic, growing a moustache and matted locks, in order to save his life.

One day a *brāhmaṇa* was hard-pressed for money he needed for his daughter's dowry, so he entered into the forest in search of the deposed king where he accidentally found him, in the disguise of an ascetic. He told the disguised king of his plight and the king replied: "O *brāhmaṇa*! Why are you searching out this unfortunate king in hope of money? He has himself become a beggar who has given up his kingdom. How can he give you any money?" The *brāhmaṇa* replied: "O great saint! Now that I know who you are, please tell me – it is my firm faith that meeting a greatly munificent person, in whatever condition he may be now, will certainly free me from my want!" Then the disguised king consoled the *brāhmaṇa* and took him along into the royal court of the wicked king, where he told the king: "O Mahārāja! You have announced that whoever would bring the severed head of the king would be rewarded with a hundred thousand coins. I am that king, so kindly chop off my head and give the hundred thousand coins to the *brāhmaṇa* in my company – he needs money for his daughter's dowry!" Observing the wonderful virtue and extraordinary munificence of the kind king, the wicked king became speechless and had a change of heart from the root up. He went down on his knees for the virtuous king and begged him forgiveness for his unfair behaviour. He returned him his kingdom and kept him ever-bound with the ties of friendship. Here the proper defeat of wickedness has been described.

In the same way all the enemies of the *sādhaka*, like lust and so, are acting to kill him. If the *sādhaka* employs them in worshipping Śrī Kṛṣṇa and gives them the fortunate opportunity to relish Śrī Kṛṣṇa's nectarean sweetness, then they will become speechless after seeing the wonderful virtue and extraordinary munificence of the *sādhaka* and become stunned of astonishment. The enemies will give up their hostility towards the *sādhaka* and start acting as his great friends. Hence Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says that he will properly engage these enemies like lust in the worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa – *ānanda kori hṛdoy, ripu kori parājoy, anāyāse govinda bhajibo*. The enemy will admit defeat and give great joy to the heart by acting as its great friend. Thus worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa will easily reach perfection. In other words, just as a sense enjoyer easily and naturally performs his sensual activities, in the same way worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa will then become natural and will easily reach perfection. (21)

kṛṣṇa sevā kāmārpaṇa, krodha bhakta-dveṣī jane,
lobha sādhu-saṅge hari-kathā.
moha iṣṭa lābha vine, mada kṛṣṇa guṇa gāne,
nīyukta koribo yathā tathā (22)

"I offer my lust to the service of Kṛṣṇa, my anger towards the enemies of His devotees and my greed towards association with saints and topics of Lord Hari. I am deluded without my beloved Lord, and I am proud when I sing Kṛṣṇa's glories. Thus I engage all the enemies in Kṛṣṇa's service!"

The service of Kṛṣṇa rendered by lust and others:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā- In this *tripadī* Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya defines in what proper places to engage the enemies like lust in the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. First he says, *kṛṣṇa*

sevā kāmārpaṇe "I will engage my lust in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's service". *ātmendriya prīti icchā– tāre boli kāma. kāmera tātparya– nija sambhoga kevala* (C.C.) "The desire to please one's own senses is called lust." "The main aim of lust is personal enjoyment." In such statements we learn that the desire to give pleasure to oneself is called lust. If that desire is directed towards giving happiness to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, then this lust will culminate into *prema* or pure love, which is considered the highest human pursuit. *kṛṣṇendriya prīti icchā– dhare prema nāma. kṛṣṇa sukha tātparya– hoy prema to prabal* (C.C.) From these statements we can learn that the desire to give pleasure to Śrī Kṛṣṇa is called *prema*. Adding the suffix *ghañ* to the verbal root *kam* makes the word *kāma* and adding the suffix *iman* to the verbal root *prī* makes the word *prema*. Both the verbal roots *kam* and *prī* indicate desire. Therefore although there is no difference between the verbal roots of the words *kāma* and *prema* there is an enormous difference between their objectives. *kāma* is disloyal, aiming at many sense objects and *prema* is one-pointed, going straight to Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the river Ganges flows straight to the ocean. If the rejectable part of *kāma*, that is the tendency to seek one's own happiness, is removed and it thus becomes possible to seek the pleasure of the Lord, then this lust culminates into the supreme human pursuit or *prema*, and thus becomes most praiseworthy. A ladder can be used to climb to a certain height, but he who descends on the ladder must look downwards and he who ascends on the ladder must look upwards. Similarly he whose desires are aimed at his own gratification is bound by sensual desires and must wander through various species and suffer pain in hell, and he who treads the path of *bhājana* engages his heart's desires for the pleasure of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and by the force of Bhakti devī he gradually becomes spiritualised. Finally his desires merge with the essence of the Lord's pleasure potency and become renowned as *prema*. In Śrīmad Bhāgavata (11.11.24) the Lord Personally tells Śrī Uddhava: *mad arthe dharma kāmārthān ācaran mad apāśrayaḥ; labhate niścalām bhaktim mayyuddhava sanātane* "O Uddhava! A person who surrenders unto Me will engage his occupational duties, his money and his desires in My service and thus becomes blessed with attaining *prema* for Me, the Eternal Man!" All sensual cravings will come to an end when one acts out of desire for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The Lord told Śrī Nārada: *mat kāmāḥ śanakaiḥ sādhu sarvān muñcati hṛcchayān* "Taking a desire for Me within the heart, the *sādhus* manage to discard all personal desires." Being free from all ulterior desires and filling the heart with desires for Kṛṣṇa is called **prema**.

After this the blessed author says: **krodha bhakta dveṣi jane** – "Anger must be directed at the enemies of the devotees." The great enemy of mankind anger, who is creating great havoc, can certainly not be engaged directly in any activity in Kṛṣṇa's devotional service, but if it is engaged against those who hate the devotees, it can nourish devotion. If the practising devotee tolerates the enemies of the devotees' blasphemy of the devotees and their engagement in activities of hatred towards them, and he does not become angry or intolerant of this, it is not shown that he has any love for Śrī Viṣṇu and the Vaiṣṇavas. During the sacrifice of progenitor Dakṣa, Śrī Satī devī saw that Śrī Mahādeva was being insulted, so she became very angry and said (Bhāg. 4.4.17)–

*karṇau pidhāya niriyād yad akalpa īse dharmāvityaśṛṅhibhir nṛbhir asyamāne
chindyāt prasahya ruṣatīm asatīm prabhuś cej jihvāmasūnapi tato viṣṛjet sa dharmāḥ*

"If someone hears a blasphemer insulting the master of religion and is not able to either kill the blasphemer or commit suicide, then he must at least cover his ears and angrily leave the assembly. If, however, he is able to do so, he should cut out the tongue of the blasphemer and then commit suicide. That is *dharma* or virtue." For the Vaiṣṇavas, committing suicide is considered improper, for the body is suitable for performing *bhajana*, and therefore they should instead cover the ears and angrily leave the assembly, remembering Śrī Viṣṇu. Therefore anger, or intolerance, which usually causes wholesale destruction, should be aimed at the enemies of the devotees; thus it can nourish the Vaiṣṇavas' *bhajana*.

Then it is said ***lobha sādhu saṅge harikathā*** "Greed should be after association with the devotees and discussing topics of Hari." *lobha* means greed, and although greed after material things is greatly troublesome for the conditioned souls and lies at the root of the material disease, if it is engaged in hearing topics of Hari in the company of the *sādhus* it will swiftly bless the students with the easy attainment of *prema*. As a concomitant result thirst, hunger, fear and illusion will also perish. It gives *prema* in the following way: *tam eva nityam śṛṇuyād abhikṣnam kṛṣṇe'malān bhaktim abhīpsamānaḥ* (Bhāg. 12.3.15) "Simply by hearing the great saints singing the glories of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, loving devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa is attained." Devarṣi Nārada said the following to Prācīnabarhi about the destruction of material miseries like hunger and thirst (Bhāg. 4.29.41)–

*tasmin mahan mukharitā madhubhic caritra pīyūṣa śeṣa saritaḥ paritaḥ sravanti
tā ye pibantyavitṛṣo nṛpa gādha karṇais tān na sprśantyaśana tṛṇ bhaya śoka mohāḥ*

"O King! Some people think that loving devotion for the Supreme Lord is automatically achieved by personally thinking and talking about Hari, without doing so in the company of the *sādhus*. However, this is completely impossible. The assembly of *sādhus* is like a nectar-river of topics of Hari, where no other topic is discussed but the nectar-topics of Hari. Hunger, thirst, fear, lamentation and delusion can not touch those who are seated in such an assembly, where these topics are constantly billowing in all directions, and drink the nectar of topics of Hari there through attentive ears, without wasting any efforts (this indicates sacred greed)." What's more, sacred greed after topics of Hari in the assembly of *sādhus* is the supreme goal of human life; when the Supreme Lord wanted to give a benediction to Pṛthu Mahārāja, the king replied (Bhāg. 4.20.24):

*na kāmāye nātha tad apyahaṁ kvacin na yatra yuṣmac caraṇāmbujāsavaḥ
mahantamāntar hṛdayān mukha cyuto vidhatsva karṇāyutam eṣa me varaḥ*

"O Lord! I do not require liberation, through which one cannot attain the honey from Your lotus feet in the form of the glorification of You by the great saints, from whose mouths and hearts these topics emanate. May You bestow upon me ten thousand, or innumerable ears so that I can hear the glorification of You to my heart's content– this is the greatest benediction You can bestow upon me!" Through this statement we can understand that sacred greed after topics of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the assembly of *sādhus* is the highest human pursuit.

After this the blessed author says: ***moha iṣṭa lābha vine***. When a man is so attached to his desires for sense enjoyment and to bodily things and this covers over his knowledge of

the Self, not allowing him to understand the truth, then this is called *moha* or delusion. The practising devotee who knows the spiritual truth engages this in *bhajana* by being deluded or by fainting when he is deprived of the attainment of the Lord or His Personal service. The purport of this is that any practitioner who experiences transcendental bliss from hearing, chanting and thinking of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, should also feel that the direct attainment of the Lord is missing and some eagerness born of separation should awake within him. If not, a condition of self-delight will arise which will cause delay in the attainment of the Lord's personal service. Just as a child is born as the result of the meeting of a husband and wife, similarly if *prema* meets with eagerness, the vision of the Lord will become possible. Although the six Gosvāmīs like Śrī Rūpa, Sanātana, Raghunātha etc. are direct associates of Śrīman Mahāprabhu they showed such an extraordinary agitation and eagerness out of separation from their beloved deities— this is learned from their biographies. They are constantly deluded out of great agitation of love in separation from their beloved deities, that their fainting etc. will forever remain the greatest example for all the practising devotees of the world, like the peak of the Sumeru Mountain. If diligent practitioners accept this delusion, which is originally one of the six enemies, as the ninth stage (swoon) of love-in-separation from the beloved deity, then they could swiftly be blessed with the attainment of the *darśana* or the direct service of their beloved deity.

Finally it is said: ***mada kṛṣṇa guṇa gāne***. The word *mada* means pride or arrogance, and this is a formidable obstacle to devotion. The proud person is far removed from the Personality of Godhead. *ahaṅkāra nivr̥ttānām keśava nahi dūragah; ahaṅkāra yutānām madhye parvata rāsayaḥ*. "Keśava is very close to those who have given up their false pride, while for the proud person He is as far away as chains of mountains!" An intelligent student of devotion, however, does not destroy this pride but engages it in glorification of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's attributes (another meaning of the word *mada* is intoxication). In other words, the devotee becomes intoxicated by singing Śrī Kṛṣṇa's glories and will then swiftly be blessed by attaining *prema siddhi*. Being intoxicated by glorifying Śrī Kṛṣṇa's attributes is also described as the highest human pursuit in Śrīmad Bhāgavata (8.3.20)–

*ekāntinā yasya na kañcanārthaṁ vāñchanti ye vai bhagavat prapannāḥ
atyadbhutaṁ yac caritaṁ sumāṅgalaṁ gāyanta ānanda samudra magnāḥ*

Śrī Gajendra praised the Supreme Lord as follows: "O Lord! The devotees that are exclusively surrendered to Your lotus feet do not desire anything. They are simply intoxicated by singing of Śrī Hari's auspicious and wonderful activities, and thus they drown in an ocean of transcendental bliss."

Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: "I will engage these enemies like lust, that are great obstacles to devotional practice, in their own individual places in my worship of the Lord, thus turning them into friends of my devotional practice." In the previous *tripadī* Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has vowed to engage the six enemies in his *bhajana* and in which places they should be engaged, in a truly wonderful way. But amongst them, we cannot find the enemy called 'envy'. Not being able to tolerate someone else's superiority and becoming displeased about that, is called *mātsarya* or envy. Although Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has vowed to give the six enemies a place in his practice of worship, he remains silent when it comes to *mātsarya*. From this we must understand that unless the enemy of envy is destroyed one can

never become qualified for *bhajana*. Only non-envious saints are qualified for *bhāgavata dharma*. In the opening of Śrīmad Bhāgavata it is seen – *nirmatsarāṇāṃ satām* (Bhāg. 1.1.2) If even a semblance of envy gets a place in the heart one is deprived from the right to devotion. Therefore the practising devotee has no other choice than to kick envy out of the heart. There is only one means to remove envy from the heart and that is to love everyone with generosity and with a simple and sincere heart. All living beings must be given due respect with the understanding that Kṛṣṇa dwells in them all— *jīve sammāna dibe jāni kṛṣṇa adhiṣṭhāna* (C.C.) (22)

anyathā svatantra kāma, anarthādi yāra dhāma,
bhakti pathe sadā deya bhaṅga
kibā se korite pāre, kāma krodha sādhakere,
yadi hoy sādhu janāra saṅga? (23)

"Otherwise, if these desires are used for selfish purposes, they become the abodes of evil, that constantly sabotage the path of devotion. What can lust and anger do to a practising devotee when he is in the company of saints?"

Independent lust and how to appease it:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā— In the preceding two *tripadis* Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has allotted places to the enemies like lust and greed in the worship of Hari. The practising devotees engage lust and so in the proper ways, so that they turn into the greatest friends and assist them in attaining *prema*. If the practising devotees do not engage them in their proper places, they become independent and give trouble to *bhajana*. Hence it is said – *anyathā svatantra kāma, anarthādi yāra nāma, bhakti pathe sadā dey bhaṅga*. Desires for different sense objects for the enjoyment of material, bodily life, that are not required for the Lord's service are called *svatantra kāma*, independent desires. These independent desires arise due to thoughts of the sense objects. From them anger, delusion and so arise, that drag the soul down to hell. The Lord explained to Arjuna:

dhyāyato viṣayān puṁsaḥ saṅgas teṣūpajāyate
saṅgāt sañjayate kāmaḥ kāmāt krodho'bhijayate
krodhād bhavati sammohaḥ sammohāt smṛti vibhramaḥ
smṛti bhraṁśād buddhi nāśo buddhi nāśāt praṇaśyati (Gītā 2|62|63)

"If a person persistently meditates on sense objects, he will become attached to them. From attachment, lust arises and when lust is obstructed or frustrated, anger arises. From anger comes delusion, from delusion loss of memory, from loss of memory loss of intelligence and when intelligence is lost, everything is lost – in other words, the living entity will continue to rotate in material existence, again and again."

If those who have taken shelter of the path of *bhajana*, do not engage their lust in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's service, that lust will remain free and independent and cause havoc in *bhajana*.

There are four kinds of vices – vices arising from sin, vices arising from virtue, vices arising from offences and vices arising from devotion. After due consideration we can understand that the root cause of all these four vices is **independent desires**. The vices arising from sin are fivefold – *avidyā*, *asmitā*, *rāga*, *dveṣa* and *abhiniveśa*¹⁴. The sins, like *prārabdha* (fructifying), *aprārabdha* (not yet fructifying), *kūṭa* (the aggregate of sin) and *bīja* (the seed of sin) are included in these five kinds of vices arising from sin. It can easily be understood that they arise from independent lusty desires. The vices arising from virtue are absorption in different kinds of enjoyments, while some also include the abovementioned fivefold suffering in vices arising from virtue. Therefore, here also independent desires lie at the root. *nāmāparādhas* are amongst the vices arising from offences, and they too are independent desires, that lie at the root of the practitioner being absorbed in different mundane sense objects and him failing to realise the glories of Śrī Guru and Vaiṣṇavas, causing him to commit offences by considering them ordinary human beings. Vices arising from devotion are desires for profit, adoration and distinction, and these are also caused by the practitioner harbouring independent desires. For when the practitioner's heart is filled with desires other than Kṛṣṇa and he has no taste for the nectar of *bhajana* he will develop desires for profit, adoration and distinction. Hence Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: *anyathā svatantra kāma, anarthādi yāra nāma* – These independent desires spell mischief and are the root causes of all the vices of the practising devotee. There is also a version *anarthādi yāra dhāma*, meaning that vices are the abode or manifestations of these independent desires. Their fountainhead is independent desire.

After this the blessed author says: *bhakti pathe sadā dei bhaṅga*. These independent desires create different vices that constantly destroy *bhajana*, creating so many obstacles in its way. The only obstacle in the progressive life of *bhajana* is vice, when vice is destroyed the practitioner will gradually ascend to the stages of *niṣṭhā*, *ruci*, *āsakti* and *bhāva* or *rati*, and easily become blessed with the attainment of *prema*.

Here the question may be – These independent desires have been in the human heart since beginningless time, and they are very powerful and hard to stop. Will the practitioner be able to engage these powerful desires, that always turn towards the sense objects in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's service on his own strength or not? The answer to this is– *kibā se korite pāre, kāma krodha sādhakere, yadi hoy sādhu janāra saṅga*? "What can lust and anger do to the practitioner when he is in the company of the *sādhus*?" If even a little association of *sādhus* who are constantly immersed in the flavours of *bhajana*, free from sensual cravings, ever pure and naturally liberated and pure hearted, is attained, then the enemies like lust will be unable to extend their might. Even if by chance they may sometimes arise, they will be swiftly wiped out on the strength of saintly association. Vices will no longer be able to arise independently. Particularly it is said: *sādhnoti sādhatīti sādhu*–"Those who are practising *bhajana* themselves and also make others do *bhajana* are called **sādhus**." On the strength of their association even ordinary human beings will be able to gain the power to do *bhajana*, defeat all the enemies like lust and destroy all vices. What to speak of associating with them, the mere sight of the *sādhus* is greatly beneficial to the living beings. In Śrīmad Bhāgavata (10.10.41 and 10.84.11) it is seen –

¹⁴ For a definition, see the comment on *tripadī* nr.91.

*sādhunām sama cittānām sutarām mat kṛtātmanām
darśanān no bhaved bandhaḥ puṁso'kṣnoḥ savitur yathā
na hyasmayāni tīrthāni na devā mṛcchilāmayāḥ
te punanty uru kālena darśanād eva sādhaḥ*

Śrī Bhagavān told Nalakuvara and Maṇigrīva– 'Just as there are no obstacles for the eyes to see when the sun rises, similarly there can be no more material bondage for mankind when they simply see the *sādhus* who are equipoised and whose hearts are surrendered unto Me." "Liquid holy places or stone images of gods cannot purify mankind as much as the *sādhus* can, for the former purify only after a long delay, or in the next life even, whereas the mere sight of the *sādhus* sanctifies at once."

The engagement of the aforementioned enemies like lust in the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is only possible by associating with saints and receiving their grace. In the comment on the previous *tripadī* we have quoted the Lord's teaching to Śrī Uddhava "The devotee who surrenders his religious principles, money and lusty desires to Me will attain loving devotion unto Me." In the very next verse the Lord has said: *sat saṅga labdhayā bhaktyā mayi mām sa upāsītā; sa vai me darśitaṁ sadbhir aṅjasā vindate padam* (Ś.B. 11.11.25) *nanvevambhūta bhakti mārga pravṛttir niṣṭhā vā katham syād ityāsaṅkya tatra hetum āha sat saṅgeti* (Krama Sandarbha *ṭikā*) One may ask: "How will engagement in such devotion, in which the surrendered devotee offers his lusty desires to the Lord, come about?" To this the answer is: "Through the devotion attained by associating with the *sādhus* the devotees will be able to worship Me and they will easily attain My abode, which is exhibited by these saints." Therefore in the association of *sādhus* lust and other vices won't be able to create independent obstacles to *bhajana* anymore. (23)

*krodha vā nā kore kibā, krodha tyāga sadā dibā
lobha moha ei to kathana
chaya ripu sadā hīna, koribo manera bhina,
kṛṣṇacandra koriyā smaraṇa (24)*

"What can anger not do? Always give up anger, and that also goes for greed and delusion. These six enemies are always mean and I will cast them out of the mind by remembering Kṛṣṇacandra."

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's ṭikā: *mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etān taranti te ityanusāreṇa kṛṣṇaṁ smṛtvā ripuṁ vāse nayet* The enemy of lust is to be conquered following the formula given in Bhagavad Gītā (7.14): *mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etān taranti* "Anyone who surrenders unto Me will cross over *māyā*."

The workings of anger and the remedy :

Sudhā-kaṇikā vyākhyā - In this *tripadī* the faults of anger, greed and delusion and their remedies are discussed - *krodha vā nā kore kibā, krodha tyāga sadā dibā*. In the previous *tripadī* the faults of lust were described, and now faults like anger are described. Anger is the great enemy of mankind, there is no misdeed in the world that is committed without anger. In the Mahābhārata Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira describes the evil results of anger to Draupadī –

*krodha mūlo vināśo hi prajānām iha dṛśyate;
kruddhaḥ pāpaṁ naraḥ kuryāt kruddho hanyāt gurūn api
kruddhaḥ paruṣayā vācā śreyaso'pyavamānyate;
vācyāvācye hi kupito na prajānāti karhicit
nākāryam asti kruddhasya nāvācyaṁ vidyate tathā;
hiṁsāt krodhād avadhyāṁs tu vadhyān sampūjayeta ca
ātmanam api ca kruddhaḥ preṣayed yama sādhanam
kruddho hi kāryaṁ suśroṇi na yathāvat prapaśyati
nā kāryaṁ na ca maryādāṁ naraḥ kruddho'nupaśyati (Vanaparva)*

"O nicely thighed one! In this world anger is the cause of human destruction. An angry person performs sinful activities, to the extent that he may even kill his own *guru*. When an angry person speaks words that are actually beneficial to the world, they will still be seen as insults. A person who is overcome by anger does not know what to say and what not to say. There is no misdeed in the world that an angry person cannot perform and there is also nothing that he cannot say. Out of anger *avadhyas* (creatures that should not be killed such as cows, *brāhmaṇas* and women) are being killed, and *vadhyas* (harmful creatures that should be destroyed, like snakes, murderers etc.) are being worshipped. An angry person despatches himself to Yama's abode (hell). The results of anger are inconceivable. An angry person cannot understand what should be done and how his manners are to be maintained."

Apart from that, in some of the medical scriptures anger is said to be the cause of diseases like epilepsy, hysteria, swoon, blood-nose, a heart-attack, ulcer or throwing up of blood. Sometimes the excitement of anger may even cause death. Therefore it is said: *krodha vā nā kore kibā, krodha tyāga sadā dibā*. One must always protect oneself from the hands of anger. *yas tu krodhaṁ samutpannaṁ prajñayā pratibādhate; tejasvinaṁ taṁ vidvāṁso manyate tattva darśinaḥ* (Mahābhārata Vanaparva) "He who subdues arising anger with wisdom is called a powerful man by the learned." Kṛṣṇa's devotees are adorned with humility and thus permanently give up this great enemy. They only allow anger towards the Vaiṣṇava-haters within their protective circle, and thus keep anger as a mere assistant in their *bhājana*.

After that the blessed author said: *lobha, moha ei to kathan*, "Greed and delusion should be seen in the aforesaid manner". Just like anger these should be known as the great evil-doers to mankind and one must try to save oneself from their grip. The scriptures show what an evil-monger greed is:

*lobhaḥ prajānāmāhanti prajā hanti hatā hriyam
hrīr hatā bādhate dharmāṁ dharmo hanti hataḥ śriyam*

"Greed destroys wisdom. When wisdom is destroyed shame is destroyed. In other words, the greedy person gives up all shame and starts to seize other men's property. When shame is

destroyed virtue is destroyed and when virtue is destroyed all that is auspicious is destroyed." In the Hitopadeśa it is seen –

*lobhāt krodhaḥ prabhavati lobhāt kāmaḥ prajāyate
lobhān mohaś ca nāśaś ca lobhaḥ pāpasya kāraṇam
lobhena buddhiś calati lobho janayate tṛṣṇā
tṛṣṇāto duḥkham āpnoti paratreha ca mānavaḥ*

"From greed comes anger, from greed comes lust, from greed comes delusion and destruction. Greed is the sole cause of sin. Greed twitches the intelligence, greed causes thirst and a thirsty person finds misery in both this world and the next."

This greed is extremely hard to control –If all the wheat, barley, gold, cattle and women on the earth are given to a greedy person, it will not satisfy his greed – *yat pṛthivyām brīhi yavaṁ hiraṇyāṁ paśavaḥ striyaḥ; na duhyanti mama pṛtiṁ puṁsaḥ kāma hatasya te* (Ś.B. 9.19.11) This indomitable greed can never be satiated through enjoyment, hence the Lord has said in Śrī Gītā: *vihāya kāmān yaḥ sarvān puṁsāṁś carati nisprahaḥ; nirmamo nirahankāraḥ sa śāntim adhigacchati* (2.71) "He who gives up all desires and becomes free from greed, false ego and feelings of possessiveness towards all material objects can truly find peace." Nothing can compare to the treasure that can be attained by mankind through resignation of all greed and desire. Although Mahārāja Bhartṛhari was a great king he attained a greater happiness through the life of renunciation than through his royal opulence. Thus he said (in Vairāgya Śatakam):

*bhū paryaṅko nija bhujalatā kandukaṁ khaṁ vitānaṁ
dīpaś candro virati vanitā labdha saṅga pramodaḥ
dikāntābhiḥ pavana camarair vījyamānaḥ samantāt
bhikṣuḥ śete nṛpa iva bhuvi tyakta sarva sprho'pi*

"By giving up all greed and other desires the mendicant reclines like a king. The huge planet earth is his bedstead, his own hands are his pillows, the sky spreads out above his head like a canopy, the moon provides soothing light just like a jewelled chandelier, his detachment from the world is his eternal companion, just like a wife and the directions are like his maidservants, that fan his body with a yaktail fan." In this way the devotees attain the supreme peace, being satisfied with whatever comes to them, engaging in *hari-kathā* in the company of saints and abandoning their desires for material objects forever. In the same way the *sādhaka* gives up delusion, knowing it to be a great obstacle to *bhajana* because it covers over one's spiritual knowledge. *mama pitā mama mātā mameyaṁ gr̥hṇī gr̥ham; evam vidhaṁ mamatvaṁ yat sa moha iti kīrtitaḥ* (Padma Purāṇa) – "This is my father, this is my mother, this is my wife and house – this kind of possessiveness is known as **delusion**." This delusion is the sole cause for attachment to all perishable objects. If there were no illusion no one would be so attached to or greedy after useless, temporary objects that are related to the body. If everyone would seek after spiritual self realisation or spiritual knowledge everyone could attain the supreme benefit and be blessed with everlasting spiritual bliss.

*kā tava kāntā kaś te putraḥ saṁsāro'yam atīva vicitraḥ
kasya tvaṁ vā kuta āyātas tvaṁ cintaya tad idaṁ bhrātāḥ*

from the hearts of the practicing devotees – *āpani pālābe sab, śuniyā govinda rab, simha-rabe jeno karigaṇa* Just as the mad elephants flee when they hear the roaring of a lion, similarly the practitioner's enemies like lust and anger flee automatically from the heart upon hearing the sound of Śrī Govinda's holy names, attributes and pastimes, which resembles the roar of a lion.

Sound means *dhvani*. Sound has the power to make something understandable. In the material world sounds also have a certain power to express something. Water comes to the mouth when we hear the word 'tamarind', and when we hear the word 'ghost' we become filled with fear. If we can experience these things even by hearing material sounds, then is it astonishing that the enemies like lust will automatically and forever flee from the heart of the practitioner who hears the supremely powerful sacred syllables that contain the holy names, attributes and pastimes of Śrī Govinda, in which He Himself has invested His full, eternal transcendental power? Actually we should know that the main result of hearing Śrī Govinda's holy names, attributes and so is the attainment of love for His divine feet, and that the concomitant result is the fleeing of enemies like lust. And when the word *rab* is translated as sound, it means that even when hears someone calling a worldly person named Govinda, all the enemies like lust also automatically flee from the heart. In the Skanda Purāṇa it is written: *govinda nāmnā yaḥ kaścin naro bhavati bhūtale; kīrtanād eva tasyāpi pāpaṃ yāti sahasradhā* "Even if one utters the name of any earthly person named Govinda, thousands upon thousands of sins are being removed." This is called *nāmābhāsa*, or a reflection of the holy name. *yadyapi anyatra saṅketa hoy nāmābhāsa; tathāpi nāmera teja nā hoy vināśa* (C.C.) "Even if one indicates something else, that reflection of the holy name will still not destroy the power of the holy name." Since the holy names of the Lord are wholly non-different from the Lord Himself, the reflection of the holy name also manifests its own special glories. *ābhāsa* means reflection. It is natural for the reflection of the sun to be milder than the sun in the sky itself, in the same way, although the power of *nāmābhāsa* is less, it still enables one to attain the four human pursuits, including the highest, liberation. In this case, what question is there still of destroying sin, suffering or the enemies?

Then the blessed author says: *sakala vipatti jābe, mahānanda sukha pābe, yāra hoy ekānta bhajana* –When the enemies have fled the practitioner becomes free from danger. This means that as the practitioner conquers his bad habits, his heart gradually becomes fixed in *bhajana* (*niṣṭhā*), gets taste (*ruci*) and becomes attached (*āsakti*) to the Lord. Then the practitioner can become blessed with incessant bliss of *bhajana* and the attainment of the bliss of the Lord's personal loving service. Then *ekānta bhajana* or selfless, desireless and unadulterated *bhajana* is accomplished. The purport of this is that as long as the enemies like lust reside in the heart of the practitioner, that long his heart will continue to billow on the waves of different gross and subtle desires, such as profit, adoration and distinction. Therefore, although he did take shelter of the path of exclusive worship, since his heart is still billowing on the waves of subtle and gross desires, he cannot reach genuine, exclusive and unadulterated *bhajana*. For instance the mind of a chaste woman, who is fully surrendered to her husband, does not waver from her husband and never becomes attached to others, but the minds of those women who have not yet attained such loyalty to the husband, will still be moved when they see another nice man. Thus it should be understood.

In his Govinda Bhāṣya (3.3.9), Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa has written: "Those who are dedicated to worshipping Śrī Hari are superior to those who desire the fruits of their

devotion. They are called *ekāntī* for they are fixed in spiritual matters. Then again, amongst these *ekāntī* devotees those whose hearts are attached to Śrī Hari's form of Śrī Vrajendranandana are the greatest. Śrī Hari is wholly subdued by their exclusive attachment to Him." Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has also written: *tatrāpyekāntinām śreṣṭhā govinda hṛta mānasāḥ; yeṣāṃ śrīśa prasādo'pi mano hartuṃ na śaknuyāt* "Amongst the *ekāntī* or exclusive devotees those devotees whose hearts were stolen by Śrī Govinda are the greatest, for even Śrī Vaikuṅṭhanātha (Viṣṇu) cannot steal their minds away." It is needless to say that other matters are even less likely to steal away their minds. There are four kinds of full independence in this exclusivity – 1) Disinterest in *varṇāśrama dharma* 2) Independence from fruitive activities or non-dualistic knowledge 3) Complete attraction to the Lord even in adverse times, and 4) Exclusive dedication to the cause of *prema*. In this way the exclusive devotees become the objects of Śrī Hari's exclusive grace and by this grace they will swiftly be able to remove all their old bad habits and attain the treasure of pure devotion. As they thus relish devotion they will be blessed with genuine bliss – this is the essential purport of this *tripadī*. (25)

nā koriho asat ceṣṭā, lābha pūjā pratiṣṭhā,
sadā cinta govinda caraṇa
sakala vipatti yābe, mahānanda sukha pābe,
prema bhakti parama kāraṇa (26)

"Do not endeavour for the false, like profit, adoration and distinction. Instead, always think of Govinda's lotus feet! All calamities will then go and you will become very happy. This is the greatest cause for loving devotion!"

Renunciation of false endeavours and the aspiration for distinction:

Sudhā Kaṇikā vyākhyā – In this *tripadī* Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya discusses obstacles to *bhajana* like false endeavours and the desire for profit, adoration and distinction and their remedies, by saying: *nā koriho asat ceṣṭā, lābha pūjā pratiṣṭhā* False endeavours means all endeavours whose results are not everlasting, that are short-lived. In other words, all worldly endeavours that are not in connection with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, His devotees or His devotion, that are only related to the body and other perishable matters are called *asacceṣṭā*. The devotee who desires the highest welfare gives up all these false endeavours and constantly engages his body and senses in genuine endeavours, for the sake of Bhagavān, Śrī Guru, the Vaiṣṇavas and devotion itself. The question may be, all these householder devotees who have taken shelter of the lotus feet of a bonafide Guru and who are following the path of *bhajana*, have to go to work, do business or keep a farm in order to maintain their families. Is this all false endeavour? The answer to this is: "No, this is all genuine work, for the devotees who have taken shelter of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet are all members of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's family. Their houses, wives, friends and money are all offered unto Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. They perform all their domestic duties, for Śrī Kṛṣṇa's service, not for nourishing their independent lives. Therefore, this is counted amongst the items of *bhajana*. Actually all the activities of a

devotee who is surrendered to Śrī Kṛṣṇa are engaged in His service, and all worldly business-activities that has been offered for Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pleasure are aids to attaining *prema*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa personally told Uddhava – *mad arthe dharma kāmārthān ācaran mad apāśrayaḥ. labhate niścalāṁ bhaktim mayyuddhava sanātana* (Bhāg. 11.11.24) "O Uddhava! The devotee who surrenders unto Me and who performs all his activities, whether it be religiosity or economic development, for My love, will attain unwavering devotion to Me, the Eternal One." From this statement from the Lord's own divine mouth it is clearly understood that if the devotee's domestic duties for economic prosperity and the maintenance of his family, along with all his other different subtle and gross desires, are performed for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, then they aid his attainment of *prema*. Thus the practitioner must take care that ***bhāvera ghare curi nā thāke***, he does not just verbally profess that everything is for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but actually he is doing it all for his own sake. When everything is done for personal happiness then the desires for mundane sensuality will be the cause of bondage to the material world. For this reason the scriptures and the great *mahājana* teachers order us to give up all false endeavours.

Like these false endeavours, the devotees must also give up the powerful obstacles of desires for profit, adoration and distinction. These vices are called 'vices that arise from devotion', for when the devotee assesses himself in connection with his *bhajana* this works like a band of thieves that drag the boat of his *bhajana* down to hell. Śrīmat Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmīpāda has compared the desire for distinction with a shameless dog-eating woman. *pratiṣṭhāsā dhrṣṭā śvapaca ramaṇī me hr̥di naṭet, katham sādhu premā spr̥ṣati śucir etan nanu manaḥ* (Manaḥ Śikṣā) "O Mind! The desire for distinction is like a shameless dog-eating woman that dances in my heart. How then can beautiful *prema* touch it?" *dhrṣṭā* means shameless– it just doesn't want to leave the heart of the practitioner. At the end of Śrī Haribhakti Vilāsa (20.370) it is written –

*sarva tyāge'pyaheyāyāḥ sarvānārtha bhuvāś ca ye
kuryuḥ pratiṣṭhā viṣṭhāyā yatnam asparśane varam*

"Even those who are able to renounce everything are not able to give up the desire for distinction, which is the root cause of all vice. Therefore the practitioner must be especially careful not to touch this stool-like distinction." In Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta the desires for profit, adoration and distinction have been compared to weeds. When the vine of devotion is sprinkled with the water of the process of hearing and chanting, the weeds also grow and will suffocate the vine of devotion, so that she cannot grow any further. *seka jala pāiyā upasākhā bādhi jāy; stabdha hoiyā mūla sākḥā bādHITE nā pāy. prathamei upasākhāra koriye chedana; tabe mūla sākḥā bādhi jāy vṛndāvana* (C.C.) "First these weeds must be cut (uprooted), and then the main trunk can grow towards Vṛndāvana." The desire for profit, adoration and distinction shows its ugly force in the heart of a practitioner who has no taste for the holy names, attributes and pastimes of Śrī Hari. Those pure-hearted souls who only aim at love of God and those practitioners who are fixed in *bhajana* will be accordingly decorated with attributes like satisfaction, humility, modesty etc. and will easily be able to cast away all these vicious desires.

After this the blessed author proclaims: *sadā cinto govinda caraṇa*. The devotee who desires his own welfare gives up all these destructive obstacles to *bhajana* and always meditates on Govinda's lotus feet. Here the word ***carāṇa*** is written in great devotional

absorption. What is actually described here is the remembrance of the greatly sweet names, forms, attributes and pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Through recollection of Śrī Govinda, the heart of the person who meditates becomes immersed in Govinda, just as the heart of the person who continuously thinks of sensual objects becomes immersed in sensuality. *viṣayān dhyāyataś cittaṁ viṣayeṣu viṣajjate. māṁ anusmarataś cittaṁ mayyeva pravīḷyate* (Bhāg. 11.14.27) *viṣaya dhyānāsaktaṁ cittaṁ yathā viṣaya mādhurya nimagnaṁ dṛṣṭaṁ tathaiḥvā mādiya dhyānāsaktaṁ man mādhurya mātra nimagnaṁ syāt* (Sārārtha Darśinī commentary, Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī) "Just as the mind of a sensual person is immersed in the sweetness of sense objects and he is no longer able to think of God, similarly a mind which is attached to meditating on Me, will no longer endeavour in thinking of or getting to know any sensual thought."

After this the blessed author says: *sakala vipatti jāy, mahānanda sukha pāy, prema bhakti parama kāraṇa* If one is able to give up all false endeavours for profit, adoration and distinction, and continuously thinks of Śrī Govinda's lotus feet, then all disaster will dissipate from the practitioner, he will gain the treasure of great bliss and it is also the greatest means to attain loving devotion. Another meaning is that loving devotion, which is the primary cause for attaining Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is also the cause for attaining loving devotion itself. Therefore each and every aspirant who wishes to attain *prema* should give up false endeavours for profit, adoration and distinction and should continuously think of Śrī Govinda's lotus feet. Śrī Sūta Muni told the sages like Śaunaka about the result of thinking of the Lord's lotus feet (Bhāg. 11.11.50) – *avismṛtiḥ kṛṣṇa padāravindayoḥ kṣiṇotyabhadrāṇi ca śaṁ tanoti. sattvasya śuddhiṁ paramātmā bhaktiṁ jñānaṁ ca vijñāna virāga yuktam* "The constant recollection of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet destroys all inauspiciousness, extends the utmost auspiciousness, purifies the consciousness, awakens devotion to the Lord's lotus feet and bestows transcendental realisations and knowledge endowed with dispassion." (26)

asat kriyā kuṭināṭī, chādo anya paripāṭī
anya deve nā koriho rati
āpana āpana sthāne, pīriti sabhāya ṭāne,
bhakti pathe paḍaye vigati (27)

"Give up false activities such as lying, cheating and committing cruel and violent deeds. Give up all other skills and do not become attached to other gods. Love for any individual will pull you to the abode of that individual (demigod) and will cause you to fall from the path of pure devotion."

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *ṭikā* – *asat kriyā– duṣṭa kriyām adharmam tyaja. bhaktipathe calitum na samarthaḥ syāt sabhāya-sarva janān ityarthah*

Deviations from the path of *bhakti* :

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – In this *tripadī* Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya mentions some obstacles to the path of *bhakti* or *bhajana*, that are not easily understood by the *sādhaka* but

that are practically blocking the path to devotional advancement. First of all he says: *asat kriyā kuṭināṭī, chāḍo anya paripāṭī – bhakti sādhakas* who wish to attain *prema* must give up all conniving such as *asat kriyā* and *kuṭināṭī*. Lying, acting cruelly, stealing and committing violence are called *asat kriyā*. We will try to discuss here to some extent how the life of a *sādhaka* gets involved with *asat kriyās* and culminates into powerful obstacles in the form of *aparādhas*. The main result of *bhagavad bhakti* is *bhagavat prema*, which arises in the heart of the devotee after removing the contamination of ignorance from the heart through the pure devotional process of hearing and chanting etc. – this is the conclusion of the *bhakti* scriptures. The most terrible obstacle to the attainment of that *prema* is ***aparādha***. The *bhakti* scriptures repeatedly tell us that *prema* cannot be attained as long as this obstacle is still present, even if the devotional limbs like hearing and chanting are being performed. Hence *aparādha* is a strong consideration amongst Vaiṣṇavas. Generally the scriptures describe offences as the 32 *sevāparādhas* and the ten *nāmāparādhas*, but apart from this there are many ordinary sins that are condemned by the scriptures and that result in grave offences to the holy name or to the deities, and which block the attainment of *prema*. Offences committed while having discussions, dealing in buying and selling or joking, offences committed by relentlessly speaking lies, taking others' property (scriptures and so) without telling, or not returning properties even if they are taken in knowledge, thinking: "He has forgotten that I have taken it, so I won't return it", relentlessly killing flies, mosquitos, ants and mice, speaking harsh words while dealing in giving and taking, acting cruelly – all these things are called *asat kriyā*. These are tiny sins for the ordinary people, but for the *sādhakas* they result into grave offences, that will be powerful obstacles to obtaining *prema*. Therefore the diligent *bhakta sādhakas* must be vigilant about them and proceed on the path of *bhakti* by giving them up.

In the same way *kuṭi nāṭi* must be given up. *kuṭi nāṭi* means deceitfulness and absorption in other things. Externally commencing the worship of the *sādhus*, *guru*, *vaiṣṇavas* and Śrī Bhagavān, without having internal faith in them is called *kapaṭatā* or deceitfulness. In his *Bhakti Sandarbha* Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has written that this deceitfulness is generated by *Vaiṣṇava-aparādhas* committed both in this life and in previous lives. This duplicity is a powerful obstacle to *bhakti*. This duplicity must be given up by taking shelter of the saints and by acting in an attractive way to the Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas, so that their grace is attained. Synonyms of duplicity are: *chala*, *cāturī*, *pratāraṇā*, *vañcanā*, *śaṭhatā*, *dhūrtatā* and more. When these are applied to Śrī Guru and Vaiṣṇavas, it culminates into a terrible offence. Still repentance never comes to the heart of such a person, rather he is very satisfied with himself, thinking: "Well done so". As a result of this the path to removal of this vice is also blocked. Therefore the *sādhaka* should always beware that these faults will be not be able to find some slit to enter into his heart. Ulterior desires also cause the practitioner's mind to become absorbed in different mundane things that have nothing to do with Kṛṣṇa. The minds of those who are thus disturbed by sensual thoughts can never meditate on God. The practitioner should know all worldly, material objects to be perishable and temporary and he should give up his absorption in these disgusting and trifle mundane objects to try to delight his mind with the flavour of the Supreme Lord's holy names, attributes and pastimes. Another meaning is that the practitioner should give up false activities, such as duplicity– this can be another explanation.

In the same way the practitioner also has to give up other habits. It is absolutely necessary for the practitioner to give up all pursuits of personal, bodily happiness other than the worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, for when there is absorption in bodily happiness the absorption in *bhajana* will gradually diminish. The practitioner should eat, sleep and seek shelter only in as far as it is favorable for *bhajana*, both in quality and quantity. If a practitioner takes more than necessary he will become attached to and immersed in these things and his *bhajana* will be diminished. And if he takes less than required, the body and mind will dry up and that may also harm his *bhajana*. It is seen in a verse from the Nāradiya Purāṇa, quoted in Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu: *yāvataḥ syāt sva nirvāhaḥ svīkuryāt tāvad arthavit; ādhikye nyūnatāyāṁ ca cyavate paramārthataḥ* "The knower of necessities accepts only enough bodily sustenance to be able to continue his *bhajana*. Spiritual life is diminished by taking either too much or too little." Many times we imagine missing some bodily facility – "I cannot live without this, I cannot do without that, if I don't get this I won't manage". Speaking in this way and running around preaching the surrender-principle of *ānukūlyasya saṅkalpa* (accepting what is favorable) I am busy collecting all kinds of unnecessary facilities for my bodily comfort and pleasure on the pretext of maintaining this body for *bhajana*. Actually this eagerness for bodily comforts creates a mundane consciousness that diminishes *bhajana* and that will halt progress on the path of *bhajana*.

After this the blessed author said – *anya deve nā koriho rati* "Do not love gods like Brahmā and Śiva, thinking them to be separate Supreme Lords" Some people may worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa and at the same time love other gods. Again others may take shelter of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, calling Him the *kula devatā*, the family-godhead, but are still not able to give up the worship of different gods and goddesses. Again others may have heard of exclusive devotion from the mouths of the saints or may have read about it in holy scriptures and think it will not harm their exclusive devotion to Kṛṣṇa if they offer His *prasāda* to other gods and goddesses. Again others may worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa while being overwhelmed with love for other gods, but – *ye'pyanya devatā-bhaktā yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ; te'pi mām eva kaunteya yajantyavidhi pūrvakam* "O Son of Kunti, those who are devoted to other gods and worship them with faith, really also worship Me, but not according to the rules (that is, their rule is not to become free from material life or to attain the Supreme Lord)." (B. Gītā 9.23) Hearing this from the Lord's own sacred mouth in the Gītā they worship other gods and goddesses 'according to the rules' so that they pray to these gods and goddesses for devotion to Kṛṣṇa. In this way those who worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa also love other gods and goddesses in different ways. In this *tripadī* Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya aims at those who love other gods and goddesses in the different ways that were described above by saying – *āpana āpana sthāne, pīriti sabhāy tāne, bhakti pathe poḍoye vigati* "Love for any individual will pull you to the abode of that individual (demigod) and will cause you to fall from the path of pure devotion." In any case mentioned, those who surrender to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet should not love other gods, for the nature of love is that it will attract the lover to the abode of the beloved. When a person loves other gods his love will attract the heart to that particular Godhead. This will cause the *sādhaka* trouble on the path of devotion, resulting in loss of exclusive loyalty and the path of progress in *bhajana sādhana* being blocked. The heart's love must be offered fully to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, sharing with others will not work. If some devotee of Kṛṣṇa develops love for other gods and goddesses, he must still exclusively worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa. These other gods

and goddesses will never be so satisfied with their separate worship as they would be with worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. (27)

*āpana āpana patha, tāte hobo anurata,
iṣṭadeva sthāne līlā gāna
naiṣṭhika bhajana ei, tomāre kohilo bhāi
hanumān tāhāte pramāṇa (28)*

"I will remain attached to my own path of worship and sing the glories of my own beloved deity in His sacred abode. O brother, I tell you, this is exclusive worship, and the example is given by Hanumān."

Fixation in *bhajana* :

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā– Here Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya mentions fixation in *bhajana*. Fixation both in his worship and in his worshipable deity – both these loyalties of the devotee are shown in this *tripadī*. First the blessed author mentions fixation in *bhajana*: *āpana āpana patha, tāte hobo anurata, iṣṭadeva sthāne līlā gāna* "I will always remain attached to my own path of worship." *niṣṭhā* means motionless, and when *niṣṭhā* awakens one remains motionlessly fixed in *bhajana*. Hearing topics of Śrī Hari from the mouths of the *sādhus* all vices disappear and fixation in *bhajana* awakens. In Śrīmad Bhāgavata it is described –

*śṛṇvataḥ sva kathā kṛṣṇaḥ puṇya śravaṇa kīrtanaḥ
hṛdyantaḥ stho hyabhadraṇi vidhunoti suhṛt satām
naṣṭa prāyeṣvabhadreṣu nityam bhāgavata sevayā
bhagavaty uttama śloke bhaktir bhavati naiṣṭhikī*

"When he engages in the pious hearing and chanting of the glories of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord travels on the path of the practitioner's recollection and destroys all inauspicious sensual desires from his heart. In the same way all inauspiciousness is practically destroyed by constantly serving the Bhāgavata (the book or the saint) and **naiṣṭhikī bhakti** for Lord Uttamaśloka or Śrī Kṛṣṇa arises.." The five vices *laya*, *vikṣepa*, *apratipatti*, *kaṣāya* and *rasāsvāda* that cause obstacles in advancement do not appear anymore when one becomes fixed in *bhajana*. Drowsiness during the practice of hearing and chanting is called **laya**, relating to mundane things during *bhajana* is called **vikṣepa**, inability to do *bhajana* even in the absence of *laya* and *vikṣepa* is called **apratipatti**, inclination towards being angry, greedy or proud is called **kaṣāya** and losing concentration on *bhajana* when sensual happiness arises is called **rasāsvāda**. If these obstacles no longer occur during *bhajana* then that is the hallmark of *niṣṭhā*. When *niṣṭhā* awakens the practitioner will not feel exhausted from doing *bhajana*, even if he constantly engages in hearing and chanting. Therefore being attached to one's own form of worship and constantly remaining attracted to this is called *naiṣṭhika bhajana*.

One of the items of this *naiṣṭhika bhajana* is singing the glories of **the *iṣṭa-deva* in his place**. The *iṣṭa deva* is the worshipable deity in the temple, or Śrī Guru or similar great Vaiṣṇavas who are as worshipable as Śrī Hari Himself. To sing the pastimes of the Lord to them is the unadulterated means to attain *prema*. The Lord Himself becomes very happy when He hears about His own pastimes. When Śrī Kṛṣṇa heard His glorification through the mouth of Śrīla Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura, He became most happy and personally called his poetry 'Śrī Kṛṣṇa Karṇāmṛtam'. It is also a special service to Śrī Gurudeva and the greatly realised devotees to sing about Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes to them. Through these items of worship the grace of Śrī Guru, Vaiṣṇavas and the Supreme Lord is attained, and then nothing remains unattainable for the practitioner.

Another meaning of *iṣṭadeva sthāne* is that to live in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's playground Śrī Vṛndāvana or other such places and to sing of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's exploits there is one of the greatest items of worship. Śrī Vṛndāvana Dhāma is the place which greatly reminds one of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, and no place like this can create visions of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *līlā rasa* in the heart of the singer or speaker. And again, singing of such pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Vraja dhāma is such a great service of the great saints that reside in Vraja that as a result the practitioner becomes blessed with the attainment of the most incredible human perfection. My most worshipable Śrī Śrīla Guru Mahārāja one said: "When you serve the Vaiṣṇavas that reside in Śrī Vṛndāvana by speaking topics of Śrī Hari to them, you will achieve a greater treasure even than the attainment of the Lord." The purport of this is that the mere attainment of the Lord does not guarantee the relish of Him. Just look at the demons. But the hearing and chanting of topics of Śrī Hari in the company of the great saints who reside in Śrī Vṛndāvana will certainly yield a delicious taste of the flavours of God. Hence Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has said: – ***iṣṭa deva sthāne līlā gāna***.

After this the blessed author says: *naiṣṭhika bhajana ei, tomāre kohilo bhāi, hanumān tāhāte pramāṇa* – Now the example of Hanumān is given in how to be fixed in one's worship and in one's worshipable deity. On Śrī Hanumān's loyalty to his chosen deity Śrīmat Sanātana Gosvāmīpāda has written in his commentary on verse 1.4.107 of Śrī Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta "One day in Dvārakā City Śrī Dvārakānātha thought of a joke to break the pride of Śrī Garuḍa and other devotees, and to show them how to be fixed in the lotus feet of the Lord. He ordered Garuḍa: "Ohe Garuḍa! Go to Kimpuruṣa Varṣa and announce My order there that Hanumān should be brought to Me!" Śrī Garuḍa thus flew to Kimpuruṣa Varṣa and told Hanumān: "Hey Hanumate! Lord Yādavendra, the master of Dvārakā, is calling you! Quickly go to see Him!" Śrī Hanumān, though, was exclusively fixed in the lotus feet of Śrī Raghunātha (Rāma) and engaged in His service, so, afraid to break his loyalty to the lotus feet of Raghunātha he did not heed Garuḍa's call. This made Śrī Garuḍa angry and he tried to take Hanumān to Dvārakānātha's palace by force. Śrī Hanumān, though, just casually whisked the end of his tail and thus threw Garuḍa far away back to Dvārakā. When Garuḍa thus crash-landed in Dvārakā and the Lord saw him all upset, the Lord smiled and asked him: "O Garuḍa! Go back to Hanumān now and tell him: "Śrī Raghunātha is calling you!" After saying this Śrī Kṛṣṇa became Śrī Rāmacandra, Śrī Balarāma became Lakṣmaṇa and the Lord told Śrī Satyabhāmā to become Sītā, but she could not assume the form of Sītā, so the Lord mocked her and told Śrī Rukmiṇī instead to assume the form of Sītā. Thus Śrī

Rukmiṇī-devī sat on the left side of the Lord on the throne of Dvārakā, assuming the form of Sītā¹⁵. Meanwhile Śrī Garuḍa had gone again to Śrī Hanumān and had relayed to him the Lord's message. As soon as Śrī Hanumān had heard the message he became overwhelmed of ecstasy and jumped at once to Dvārakā, where he saw the Lord as his beloved Raghunātha and satisfied Him with his service. The Lord saw his loyalty to his beloved deity and gave him his desired boon with paramount love." After this a verse will be quoted which was spoken by Śrī Hanumān himself. (28)

***śrī-nāthe janakī nāthe cābhedaḥ paramātmaniḥ
tathāpi mama sarvasvaṁ rāmaḥ kamala-locanaḥ (29)***

(Śrī Hanumān says:) "Although there is no difference between Śrīnātha (Viṣṇu) and Janakī-nātha (Rāma), since They are both the Supreme Self, still the lotus-eyed Rāma is everything to me."

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *ṭīkā* – *śrī nāthe lakṣmīpatau śrī nārāyaṇe, jānakī nāthe sītāpatau śrī rāmacandre ca abhedaḥ svarūpato bhedo nāsti. yataḥ paramātmani- dvau eva paramātmanau ityārthaḥ. tathāpi kamala locano rāmo mama sarvasvaṁ śrī rāmacandraṁ vinā mama kim api dhanam nāstītyārthaḥ. anena svābhīṣṭa niṣṭhāyāḥ parāvadhītvam darśitam.*

Fixation in one's own Godhead:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā- To show a devotee's loyalty to his beloved deity this verse, spoken by Śrī Hanumān, is quoted. When a devotee is exclusively fixed in his particular worshipable form of Godhead, from amongst all other forms of Godhead, he is praiseworthy, for that shows his special deep attention and affection for that particular form within his heart. That does not mean that he disrespects other forms of the Lord, though, for when one has deep affection for one particular form of the Lord, then all the other forms are automatically respected – *ananta rūpe eka rūpa nāhi kona bheda* (C.C.) "There is no difference between one single form of the Lord and His innumerable other forms." All these forms are strung on the same string. Rather, when They see a devotee's deep affection for and loyalty to one particular form of the Lord, all the other forms of the Lord are most satisfied with him. In the explanation of the previous verse the example of Garuḍa and Hanumān was quoted from Śrī Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta, that has firmly proven this point.

Śrī Hanumān has attained exclusive loyalty to Śrī Rāghavendra (Rāma). In this verse he says: "There is no difference between Lakṣmīpati Śrī Nārāyaṇa and Sītāpati Raghavendra at all, for in principle They are both the Supreme Self; still Śrī Rāghavendra is my all-in-all!" Śrī Rāghavendra dwells in his heart and he does not know anyone else but Śrī Rāmacandra, either in sleep, dreams, meditation, pondering, hearing or chanting. This loyalty makes Śrī Hari most satisfied with him, and this loyalty is altogether greatly praiseworthy. In Nīlācala

¹⁵ The fact that Śrī Satyabhāmā devī was unable to assume the form of Sītā does not make her inferior, rather it makes her superior. Sītādevī's mood is more like that of Śrī Rukmiṇī, whereas Satyabhāmā has a mood of opposition and loving anger towards Śrī Kṛṣṇa that Sītā can never assume.

Śrīmat Sanātana Gosvāmīpāda told Śrīman Mahāprabhu about his younger brother Śrī Anupama's firm fixation in Śrī Rāmacandra –

*sei anupama bhāi bālaka kāla hoite; raghunātha upāsanā kore ḍḍha-citte
rātri dine raghunāthera nāma āra dhyāna; rāmāyaṇa niravadhi śune kore gāna
āmi āra rūpa tāra jyaiṣṭha sahodara; āmā doṅhā saṅge seho rohe nirantara
āmā sabhā saṅge kṛṣṇa kothā bhāgavata śune; tāhāra parīkṣā āmi koilo dui jane
śunoho ballabha! kṛṣṇa parama madhura; saundarya mādhyaya prema vilāsa pracura
kṛṣṇa bhajana koro tumi āmā doṅhāra saṅge; tina bhāi ekatra rahibo kṛṣṇa kathā raṅge
ei mata bāra bāra kohi dui jana; āmā doṅhāra gaurave kichu phiri gelo mana
tomā doṅhāra ājñā āmi koteko laṅghibo; dikṣā mantra deho kṛṣṇa bhajana koribo
eto kohi rātri kāle kore vicāraṇa; kemone chāḍibo raghunāthera caraṇa
saba rātri krandana kori koilo jāgaraṇa; prātaḥ kāle āmā doṅhe koilo nivedana-
raghunāthera pade mui veciyāchoṅ māthā; kāḍhite nā pāroṅ māthā pāo boro byathā
kṛpā kori more ājñā deho dui jana; janme janme sevoṅ raghunāthera caraṇa
raghunāthera pāda padma chāraṇa nā jāy; chāribāra mana hoile prāṇa phāṭi bāhirāy
tabe āmi doṅhe tāre āliṅgana koilo; 'sādhu ḍḍha bhakti tomāra' kohi praśaṅsilo*

"This Anupama was fixed in worshipping Raghunātha from his childhood. Day and night he chanted Raghunātha's name and meditated on Him. He also constantly heard and sang the Rāmāyaṇa. Me and Rūpa are his elder brothers and he always associated with us, hearing topics of Kṛṣṇa from the Bhāgavata with us. One day we tested him by saying: "Listen O Ballabha! Kṛṣṇa is the sweetest – His beauty, sweetness, love and playfulness is enormous! Worship Kṛṣṇa with the both of us and we will always remain blissfully speaking of Kṛṣṇa as three brothers!" We would both repeatedly say this, so due to our superior position his mind slightly changed. "How can I ignore your order? Give me initiation in Kṛṣṇa-mantra and I will worship Kṛṣṇa!" After saying this he spent the night pondering: "How can I give up the lotus feet of Raghunātha?" He was up the whole night weeping and the next morning he told us: "I have sold my head to Raghunātha's lotus feet. I cannot withdraw my head – it would give me a great headache! Please both of you, order me to serve the lotus feet of Raghunātha, birth after birth! I cannot give up Raghunātha's lotus feet – the mere thought of it breaks my heart and kills me!" Then we both embraced him and praised him, saying: "Blessed is your firm devotion!"

*gosāi kohen – ei mata murāri gupate; pūrve āmi parīkṣilo tāra ei mate
sei bhakta dhanya ye nā chāre prabhura caraṇa; sei prabhu dhanya, ye nā chāre nija jana*

The Lord replied: "I have similarly tested Murāri Gupta in the past. Blessed is that devotee who does not leave the lotus feet of his Lord and blessed is that Lord who does not abandon His own devotee."

When the devotee has thus become fixed in one particular form of the Lord, the Lord also shows special mercy on such an exclusively surrendered soul. It must also be known in this framework that although the loyalty of the devotees for a particular deity (like Hanumān) is praiseworthy, those people who primarily aim in their practice of devotion at relishing sweet *rasa* should know that this cannot be attained in any greater way than by the worshippers of *rasa ghana vighraha* (the embodiment of deep taste), *mādhyaya murati* (the

embodiment of sweetness), *rasānām rasatamaḥ* (the greatest of all flavours), *svayaṁ bhagavān* (the Original Personality of Godhead) Śrī Vrajendra nandana. No other worshipper of any other form of Godhead can experience this. Particularly Śrī Kṛṣṇa's adolescent form reveals a greater sweetness, and the girls of Vraja relish that unrivalled sweetness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa through their matchless wealth of feelings called *mahābhāva*. Amongst these girls of Vraja Śrī Rādhārāṇī is the greatest – Her five senses, like the eyes and the ears, are the enjoyers of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's form etc., and Her love is the gate to that relish. Just as Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweetness is complete and limitless, similarly Śrī Rādhā's love is complete and limitless; therefore Śrī Rādhā alone is able to relish Śrī Kṛṣṇa's limitless sweetness through Her complete *mahā bhāva* known as *mādana*. In Śrī Kṛṣṇa's own words :

ei prema dvāre nitya rādhikā ekali; āmāra mādhyamṛta āsvāde sakali (C.C.)

"Through such love only Rādhikā can relish all of My nectarean sweetness." Although the individual souls cannot relish this like Śrī Rādhā, a fortunate soul can be blessed by the attainment of that relish by following Śrī Rādhā and becoming eager for Her service. In this particular Kali age Śrīman Mahāprabhu and the *ācāryas* like Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana, who have taken shelter at His lotus feet, have preached the dual worship of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā Mādhava in the mood of Śrī Rādhā's maidservants or *mañjarī bhāva*. In this the limit of relish of the Lord's sweetness is found. In this Prema Bhakti Candrikā Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya will elaborate on that later. Here we have just mentioned this point slightly, since it came across our line of discussion. (29)

*deva-loka, pitṛ-loka, pāya tārā mahā-sukha,
sādhu sādhu bole anukṣaṇa
yugala bhajana yārā, premānande bhāse tārā,
tāhāra nichani tribhuvana (30)*

"The demigods and the forefathers are all very happy with such pure devotion and they constantly say: "Bravo! Ditto!" Anyone who worships the Divine Couple, Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, floats in ecstatic love and the three worlds worships him."

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *ṭikā*: *nṛtyanti pitarāḥ sarve nṛtyanti ca pitāmahāḥ;
mad vaṁśe vaiṣṇavo jātaḥ sa me trātā bhaviṣyati.*

The bliss of worshipping Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā– The devotees who are exclusively dedicated to the Personality of Godhead are always absorbed in meditation on their worshipable God. They never worship other gods, for that would damage their one-pointed devotional loyalty. This has been described before. Now the question may be put: We have heard that demigods and

forefathers are worshipped to repay the demigods and forefathers. How can the devotees clear such debts? After all, the forefathers are the creators of our bodies and the demigods preserve our bodies by providing rain and so. Therefore the scriptures have prescribed worship of the forefathers in the form of offering oblations called *piṇḍa*, as well as worship of the demigods through sacrifices and offerings of enjoyables. Now how can those who do not worship other gods, but are exclusively dedicated to the worship and service of the Supreme Lord, clear their debts to the forefathers and the demigods?" The answer to this question is given here— *devaloka pitṛloka, pāy tārā mahāsukha, sādhu sādhu bole anukṣaṇa* "The demigods and the forefathers are all very happy with such pure devotion and they constantly say: "Bravo! Ditto!" Just as the branches and twigs of a tree are all greatly nurtured and delighted when the roots of the tree are sprinkled, similarly when Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the fountainhead of all the demigods and forefathers, is worshipped, all the gods, goddesses, forefathers and -mothers attain the greatest happiness. Hence it is said: *kāma tyāgi kṛṣṇa bhaje śāstra ājñā māni; deva ṛṣi pitṛādikera kabhu nahe ṛṇi* (C.C.) "A person who gives up lusty desires and worships Kṛṣṇa will obey the orders of the scriptures. He is never indebted to the sages, demigods or forefathers." In Śrīmad Bhāgavata (11.5.41) Mahārṣi Karabhājana told King Nimi—

*devarṣi bhūtāpta nṛṇāṃ pitṛṇāṃ na kiṅkaro nāyam ṛṇi ca rājan
sarvātmanāḥ yaḥ śaraṇaṃ śaraṇyaṃ gato mukundaṃ parihṛtya kartam*

"O King! He who has given up all ritualistic obligations and takes shelter of Śrī Mukunda, the protector of the surrendered souls, in all respects, has no more obligations towards the demigods, sages, his dependent family-members or his forefathers, and thus he is neither their servant." In his comment on this verse Śrīdhara Svāmī has written— *bhaktasya vidhi niṣedha nivṛteḥ kṛtakṛtyatām āha devarṣiti. āptāḥ poṣyāḥ kuṭumbinaḥ itare devādayaḥ pañca yajña devatāḥ eteṣāṃ yathā abhakta ṛṇi ataeva teṣāṃ kiṅkaras tad arthaṃ nityaṃ pañca yajñādi kartā.....ayam tu na tathā. ko'sau yaḥ sarva bhāvena śrī mukundaṃ śaraṇaṃ gataḥ. kartam kṛtyaṃ parityajya. yad vā kartam bhedaṃ parihṛtya kṛti chedana ityasmāt. vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti buddhyetyarthaḥ.* "All rules and prohibitions automatically cease for a devotee and he becomes blessed and fulfilled. The word *āptā* refers to family members that must be maintained. Ordinary human beings, who are not devoted to Viṣṇu, are indebted to the various demigods, or the five gods of sacrifice, and are their servants as well, therefore they always offer them five kinds of sacrifice. Those who are surrendered to Śrī Mukunda in all respects are not like such persons, though. How have they become surrendered? They have given up all distinction between different rules and prohibitions; in other words they have developed the awareness that all this is Śrī Vāsudeva¹⁶." When the fountainhead of everything, Śrī Vāsudeva, is satisfied (as the branches and twigs of a tree are nurtured when the roots are sprinkled), the demigods, forefathers, ghosts and everyone else are automatically a thousand times more pleased than if they would themselves be served. Hence the forefathers in the next existence dance in ecstasy when a Vaiṣṇava is born in their family, thinking: "He will become the saviour of my dynasty." *nṛtyanti pitarāḥ sarve nṛtyanti ca pitāmahaḥ; mad vaṃśe vaiṣṇavo jātaḥ sa me trātā bhaviṣyati.* Being very satisfied with a devotee

¹⁶ vāsudeva sarvam iti sa mahātma sudurlabhaḥ (Gītā 7.19)

who worships Śrī Kṛṣṇa, all the demigods will say 'Bravo, bravo', thus constantly praising him.

After this the blessed author is saying: *yugala bhajana yārā, premānande bhāse tārā, tāhāra nichani tribhuvana* – "Those who worship Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa float in an ocean of *rasa* and ecstatic love and all the people from the three worlds worship them with the greatest devotion."¹⁷ This worship of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa is very confidential, even for the Vedas, but in this particular age of Kali it has become Śrīman Mahāprabhu's unprecedented great gift of mercy, that has been practised and preached in all detail for the world at large by the *ācāryas* who have surrendered at His lotus feet. The dual form of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā Mādhava is the Supreme Truth and the summit of all *sambandha tattva* (relational principles). This relational principle has been defined in the Tattva-, Paramātmā-, Bhagavat- and Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Sandarbhas by Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda, where he has finally said: *tad evaṁ sandarbha catuṣṭayena sambandho vyākhyātaḥ. tasminn api sambandhe śrī rādhā-mādhava rūpeṇaiva prādurbhāvas tasya sambandhinaḥ paramaḥ prakaraṣaḥ. tad uktam śrutya 'rādhayā mādhavo deva' iti. etad artham eva vyatāniṣam imāḥ sarvā api paripāṭi riti pūrṇaḥ sambandhaḥ* (Śrī Kṛṣṇa Sandarbhaḥ Paragraph 189) "In this four discourses (*sandarbhas*) of the Bhagavat Sandarbha the principle of relationship or the object of worship is discussed. God is manifest in many kinds of relational principles, but amongst them the manifestation of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava is supreme. The reason for this is that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Original Personality of Godhead, the fountainhead of all Personalities of Godhead. Although the most complete principle of Divinity is prowess, He is the embodiment of divine sweetness. Such sweet cherry-lips, lovely tender smiles, glances and sounds that are cooler than nectar, and flute-songs are not found in any other major Personality of Godhead. Then again, high waves are created on the ocean of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweetness when Śrī Rādhārāṇī, who is endowed with *mādanākhyā mahābhāva*, is present!! Hence the Vedas said: "Mādhava is illuminated by Rādhā", etc. All preceding discussions have been submitted to proclaim the supremacy of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, here Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, Who have been united (in *kuñja vihāra*) in Śrī Vṛndāvana, have been ascertained as the Supreme Truth and the Supreme Personalities of Godhead, and thus this discussion of relational principles has become complete."

Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya is saying: "Those who worship Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa float in ecstatic love." The more a Personality of Godhead is a part of the Original Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the more signs of *prema* the devotees of that Personality of Godhead show. Since Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Original Personality of Godhead and the Lord to His utmost extent, the devotees who surrender unto Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet also show the utmost manifestation of *prema*. The devotees who worship Vraja's pure sweetness in the mood of a friend or a parent show great signs of *prema rasa*, but still, within the girlfriends and maidservants of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, Who are the summit of the Supreme Truth, or the matchless oceans of sweetness and beauty, *prema* is manifest to the utmost. Above all, the relish of loving mellows of Śrī Rādhā's maidservants or *kinīkarīs* is again the greatest. This practice of *mañjarī bhāva* is the goal of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas who have surrendered to the lotus feet of

¹⁷ *tāhāra nichani tribhuvana* is comparable to the *mañcāḥ krośhāntīti nyāya*, meaning 'the tribunes are applauding', which means, of course, that the audience on the tribunes are applauding, for no tribune can applaud. Similarly it is not possible for three worlds to worship, but the people of the three worlds are worshipping.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu in this present age. Hence it is said that the worshippers of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are floating on billowing waves of the flavours of ecstatic love and thus meet with the ocean of *rasa* named Śyāma and the ocean of *prema* named Rādhā. In other words, they go down to the groves of Vraja and become more blessed than blessed there. The people of the three worlds are worshipping them in *ārati* and thus also consider themselves blessed. (30)

prthak āvāsa yoga, duḥkhamaya viṣaya bhoga,
vrajavāsa govinda sevana
kṛṣṇa kathā kṛṣṇa nāma, satya satya rasa dhāma
vraja janera saṅga anukṣaṇa (31)

"To live anywhere else (but in Vraja) is just a form of miserable sense gratification, but residence (also mental residence) in Vraja and service to Govinda, speaking of Kṛṣṇa and chanting His holy name in the constant company of the people of Vraja is truly the abode of transcendental flavours!"

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's ṭīkā: *vraja bhinna deśe vāso duḥkharūpa viṣaya bhoga eva syāt; vrajavāsas tu śrī govindasya sukhamaya bhajanam syāt. tad abhāve manasā vāso'pi tad eva. śrī govinda bhajanam vinā vraja-bhūmāv api sukham nāsti. yathā śrī kṛṣṇadāsa kavirājoktau—*

*vṛndāvane kim athavā nija mandire vā; kārāgrhe kim athavā kanakāsane vā
aindraṁ bhaje kim athavā narakam bhajāmi; śrī kṛṣṇa sevnam ṛte na sukham kadāpi
anukṣaṇam vrajavāsi bhakta janaiḥ saha śrutāḥ kīrtitā vā kṛṣṇa kathā, taiḥ saha śrutam kīrtitam vā
kṛṣṇa nāma satyam satyam rasadhāma syāt.*

Serving Govinda while residing in Vraja:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā— In this *tripadī* Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya glorifies the worship of Śrī Govinda and residence in Vraja by saying: *prthak āvāsa yoga, duḥkhamaya viṣaya bhoga, vrajavāsa govinda sevana*. If one takes up residence outside of Vraja, within the mundane world, miserable sensual enjoyment will become one's lot. Outside of the transcendental abode of Vraja the whole world is an illusory creation, therefore all the objects in this mundane creation are also made of false ingredients, enjoying which will result in the miseries of birth, death, the threefold miseries, wandering through different species of life and suffering in different successive hells. Hence the advise is given to the practitioners to always live in Vraja – *kuryād vāsam vraje sadā*. Those who are unable to physically live in Vraja, can also attain the fruits of living in Vraja, that is, the bliss of worshipping Śrī Kṛṣṇa, by living there mentally. Still the diligent practitioners, who desires to achieve *prema*, take the physical residence in Vraja as one of their main rules, and hence it is said that living in this false mundane world is full of misery. Especially **residing in Vraja** is one of the most powerful means to attain *prema*. *sādhu saṅga nāma kīrtana, bhāgavata śravaṇa. mathurā vāsa, śrī mūrtira śraddhāya sevana. sakala sādhana śreṣṭha ei pañca aṅga;*

kṛṣṇa prema janmāya ei pāñcera alpa saṅga (C.C.) "1) Associating with *sādhus* 2) Chanting the holy name of the Lord 3) Hearing Śrīmad Bhāgavata 4) **Residing in the district of Mathurā** 5) Faithfully serving the deity. These five are **the best means to attain love for Kṛṣṇa**. Even a slight contact with any of these five items can yield the desired result." *durūhādbhuta vīrye'smin śraddhā dūre'stu pañcake; yatra svalpo'pi sambandhaḥ saddhiyān bhāve janmane* (B.R.S.) "The power of these five items of worship are hard to fathom and most astonishing. Even without faith, the slightest contact with these items will suddenly cause love for Kṛṣṇa to arise in the heart of an offenseless person." Out of great compassion for the worldly people, Śrī Kṛṣṇa's eternal transcendental playground of Vraja has descended to the material world and always remains there. In the Skanda Purāṇa it is described: *yā yathā bhūvi vartante pūryo bhagavataḥ priyāḥ; tās tathā santi vaikuṅṭhe tat tal līlārtham āḍṛtā* "All the abodes of the Supreme Lord that can be found on the surface of the earth are also present in the spiritual sky of Vaikuṅṭha, for the convenience of the Lord's pastimes." The purport of this is that in the material universes there are fourteen planetary systems, seven heavens and seven hells. Beyond that are eight layers of mundane elements, and beyond that is the causal ocean or Virajā. Above that is Siddhaloka, which is the abode of *sāyujya mukti*, nondualistic liberation; this is the non-differentiated light of *brahma*. Beyond Siddhaloka or Muktiloka is the Paravyoma, or the innumerable different Vaikuṅṭha planets, where innumerable Personalities of Godhead reside. When one of these Personalities of Godhead wish to perform some pastimes in the phenomenal world, then His abode and its inhabitants, the Lord's associates, descend and appear in the world. Hence it is described in the Skanda Purāṇa that the abodes of the Lord are present simultaneously in Vaikuṅṭha and on earth. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Original Personality of Godhead—the cause of all causes, and similarly His abode is stationed at the summit of the spiritual sky. This abode of Vṛndāvana, which is situated at the summit, is also present on earth by its inconceivable potency. Thus one abode is simultaneously present at both places. In Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta (Ādi Ch.5) it is written-

*prakṛtira pāra --paravyoma nāme dhāma; kṛṣṇa vighraha yaiche – vibhutvādi guṇavān
sarvaga ananta vibhu vaikuṅṭhādi dhāma; kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa avatārera tāhāi viśrāma
tāhāra upari bhāge– kṛṣṇaloka khyāti; dvārakā mathurā gokula– trividhatve sthiti
sarvopari śrī gokula vrajaloka dhāma; śrī goloka śvetadvīpa vṛndāvana nāma
sarvaga ananta vibhu kṛṣṇa tanu sama; uparyadho vyāpi āche– nāhika niyama
brahmāṅde prakāśa tāra kṛṣṇera icchāya; ekai svarūpa tāra nāhi dui kāy
cintāmaṇi bhūmi, kalpavṛkṣamaya vana; carma cakṣe dekhe tāre prapañcera sama
prema netre dekhe tāra svarūpa prakāśa; gopa gopī saṅge jāhān kṛṣṇera vilāsa*

"Beyond the material world is the abode named Paravyoma, which is qualified and opulent as Śrī Kṛṣṇa's own form. Kṛṣṇa and His *avatāras* recline in the innumerable Vaikuṅṭha-abodes, that are all-pervading and innumerable. Beyond even that is the place called Kṛṣṇaloka, which is divided in three stations -- Dvārakā, Mathurā and Gokula. Beyond them all is the abode of Vraja-loka, or Śrī Gokula, which is also known by the names of Śrī Goloka, Śvetadvīpa and Vṛndāvana. This abode is all-pervading and unlimited like Kṛṣṇa's body; it spreads above and below without any restriction. By Kṛṣṇa's wish it becomes manifest in the mundane universes, but it has only one basic form, and not two separate ones. The soil consists of thought gems and the forests consist of wish-yielding trees, but the

physical eyes perceive it as a mundane place. Its actual form, though, is manifest to the eyes of love divine— here the cowherds and cowherd girls play with Kṛṣṇa."

For the sake of the worldly people this transcendental abode of Vraja has assumed a worldly form, which is called the visible form of the Holy *dhāma*. Conditioned human beings cannot live in or come to any other holy abode than this. The most compassionate supernatural holy *dhāma* has assumed a material form and dwells in the material world so that the practitioners can live in this Vraja-*dhāma*, which is a great incitement for their *bhajana* and can swiftly be blessed with the attainment of *prema*. Which practitioner who wishes for his own benefit would not want to live in this Vraja-*dhāma*, where the means and the goal meet each other, and thus be blessed with the attainment of *prema*?

The practitioners live in Vraja-*dhāma* with their present bodies and worship Śrī Govinda there – *vraja vāsa govinda sevana*. If one does not attain the good fortune of worship of Śrī Govinda, even though one lives in Vraja, then even such direct residence in Vraja will not be blissful. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāja Gosvāmīpāda has written:

*vṛndāvane kim athavā nija mandire vā; kārāgrhe kim athavā kanakāsane vā
aindraṁ bhaje kim athavā narakāṁ bhajāmi; śrī kṛṣṇa sevanaṁ ṛte na sukhāṁ kadāpi*

"Whether in Vṛndāvana or in one's own home, whether in prison or on a golden throne, whether in heaven or in hell, there can be no happiness without serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa." Residence in Vraja is for blessing one's own life by worshipping Śrī Govinda. Those who live a mundane life in Vraja, which is the greatest field to be in for practising *bhajana* or relishing the transcendental flavours of Vraja, and are immersed in the gross happiness of eating and sleeping, are certainly deplorable. For such unfortunate souls it seems that one day this great sound emanated from Mithilā's *kavi kuñja*¹⁸— *sindhu nikāṭe yadi kaṅṭha śukhāyabo, ko dūra korobo piyāse?* (Vidyāpati) "Who will go far away to quench the thirst of one's parched throat when the ocean is so close by?" If thirst is not quenched even by coming to the ocean of nectar, then what in the world will be able to quench that thirst?

Now it is being established that Vraja-*dhāma* is the best place to relish the flavours of *bhajana* – *kṛṣṇa kathā kṛṣṇa nāma, satya satya vraja dhāma, vraja janera saṅga anukṣaṇa*. The *rasa dhāma* or paramount sweet relish that arises by living in Vṛndāvana and constantly discussing topics of Kṛṣṇa in the company of the residents of Vraja, should be known as truer than true, or the paramount truth. To start with, one very swiftly develops love for the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, by hearing about the forms, pastimes and attributes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, that are an elixir for the heart and the ears, from the mouths of the great saints, and above and beyond that one experiences the greatest nectar or *rasa dhāma* by hearing that the greatest field for remembering the Lord's pastimes is in this Vraja-*dhāma*, which is the Lord's very own playground. Then again, there can be no place like Vraja where topics of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes can be perceived as they are heard from the mouths of the resident great saints there, and nowhere they are so supremely tasty to the audience as there. Then again, by constantly associating with the great saints that reside in Vraja, their hearts' attributes of humility, simplicity, modesty and purity will become infused in those who associate with

¹⁸ Garden of poets of Mithilā, the abode of the poet Vidyāpati in Bihar.

them, as a concomitant factor, thus swiftly making their hearts and minds qualified for relishing *rasa*!

The principles of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His holy name are non-different, therefore the endless relish of the mellows of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is an ocean of sweetness, are all invested within Śrī Kṛṣṇa's holy name. However, just as a tongue that is afflicted with the disease of jaundice cannot experience the sweetness of rock candy, similarly the tongue which is polluted by offences, or the heart that is polluted by ignorance can not experience any relish of the holy name. The more the heart gets purified and offences disappear by practising *bhajana*-items like hearing, chanting etc. in the company of saints, the more the self-manifest holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa manifests its own relishable sweetness within the heart of the practitioner. By living in Vraja and associating with the devotees of Vraja, obstacles like offences very swiftly disappear from the heart and the practising soul will be blessed with the sweet flavours of the holy name. In his 'Upadeśāmṛta' Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has revealed this as the essence of all the Vedic teachings and all the great sayings of the Mahājanas—

*tan nāma rūpa caritādi sukīrtanānu smṛtyoḥ krameṇa rasanā manasī nityojya
tiṣṭhan vraje tad anurāga janānugāmī kālaṁ nayed akhilam ityupadeśa sāram*

"Engaging the tongue and the mind respectively in glorifying and recollecting the holy names, forms, attributes and pastimes of Vrajendranandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the greatest possible way, one should live one's whole life in Vraja, following in the footsteps of the devotees of Vraja, who are very attached to Śrī Kṛṣṇa— this is the essence of all instructions."
(31)

*sadā sevā abhilāṣa, mane kori viśoyāsa,
sarovathāi hoiyā nirbhaya
narottame dāse bole, paḍilu asat bhole,
paritrāṇa koro mahāśaya (32)*

"I always desire devotional service and I have great faith, in this way I am always free from fear. Narottama dāsa says: "I have fallen in a pit of false desires. O Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, please save me!"

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *ṭikā*— *viśoyāsa – viśvāsaḥ. mahāśaya— he śrī kṛṣṇa!*

Yearning for devotional service:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā— In the previous *tripadī* it was described how to give up mundane sense gratification, which always results into misery, how to worship Śrī Govinda by living in Vraja, how always to talk of Śrī Kṛṣṇa with great saints who have taken shelter of Vraja and how to become blessed with the relish of the sweet mellows of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's holy names, forms, attributes and pastimes by hearing and chanting them. In this *tripadī* it is

discussed that the practitioner who establishes firm faith in the abovementioned matters within his mind and gives up alternative desires within the heart and thus constantly cherishes the desire for devotional service within the heart, being fully surrendered to the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, will always live in Vraja free from fear.

That faith which brings eligibility for devotion or *bhajana*; *śraddhāvān jan hoy bhakti adhikārī* (C.C.), that faith lies root at firm religious belief with concomitant realisations (*viśvāsa*)— *śraddhā śabde viśvāsa kōhi sudṛḍha niścoy* (C.C.). Although the words *śraddhā* and *viśvāsa* belong to the same order, *śraddhā* indicates the first stage and *viśvāsa* the later stage. Therefore, although it is indicated that mere *śraddhā* makes one eligible to enter into worship of the Personality of Godhead, still it bears *viśvāsa*, which means faith endowed with realisations about Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which is attained through *bhajana*, as a limb. Also, along with *śraddhā* or *viśvāsa* surrender arises, for *śraddhā* and surrender have the same meaning. Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has written in his *Bhakti Sandarbha* (Paragraph nr.174)— *śraddhā śaraṇāpattyor aikārthyam labhyate tac ca yuktam. śraddhā hi śāstrārtha viśvāsaḥ. śāstram ca tad aśaraṇasya bhayam tac caraṇasyābhayam vadati. tato jātāyāḥ śraddhāyās tac charaṇāpattir eva liṅgam iti.* "It is truly proper to give the same meaning to the words *śraddhā* and *śaraṇāgati*, for the scriptural meaning of firm faith is called *śraddhā*. The scriptures also frighten those who do not surrender to the Supreme Person and have bestowed fearlessness to those who do surrender unto Him. Therefore whether or not *śraddhā* in the scriptural meaning of firm faith arises, is shown through surrender. In other words, surrender is the sign of faith." In Śrīmad Bhāgavata (10.3.27), in the prayers of Śrī Devakī-devī, we can see that surrendered souls are fearless –

*martyo mṛtyu vyāla bhītaḥ palāyan lokān sarvān nirbhayaṁ nādhyagacchat
tvat pādābjaṁ prāpya yad ṛccayādya svasthaḥ śete mṛtyur asmād apaiti*

"O Original Person! Mortal human beings flee everywhere, dreading the snake of death, but they cannot find fearlessness anywhere, for everyone, from Brahmā down to the inert germ, is devoured by time. If, by the great fortune of attaining the company and the mercy of the saintly devotees, someone attains the shelter of Your lotus feet, he can recline in peace, for death will flee from him forever!" From this it is understood that a surrendered practitioner will always be free from fear, due to practising *bhajana* with faith. But the devotee of Kṛṣṇa does not desire fearlessness, this is just a concomitant result of *bhajana*—the actual goal of *bhajana* is the attainment of the devotional service of the beloved deity. Hence it is said: *sadā sevā abhilāṣa*. The desire to attain the direct service of the beloved deity should always be awake within the heart of the practising devotee. The meaning of the word *bhakti* is devotional service— *bhaj ityēṣa vai dhātuḥ sevāyām parikirtitaḥ* "The verbal root *bhaj* means devotional service. From the verbal root *bhaj* the word *bhakti* is derived. Therefore the service of the Supreme Lord is called *bhakti*." Śrī Bhagavān also desires that the desire to render devotional service always remains awake within the heart of a devotee. When the desire to render devotional service awakens within the heart of the devotee, the Lord will ultimately bless him by bestowing His personal service on him— *anukampā ca pūrṇe'pi svamin nija sevādyabhilāṣam sampādya sevakādiṣu sevādi saubhāgya sampādikā bhagavataś cittārdratāmāyī tad upakāreccā* (Pṛīti Sandarbha, Paragraph 84) "Although God is Self-fulfilled, Self-delighted and Self-satisfied, He still kindles the desire to serve Him within

His servants. That He bestows such fortune on His servants shows how the Lord's heart is melting with compassion and a desire to benefit His devotees." Now we learned that the Lord and *bhakti* are actively engaged in kindling a desire within the aspirant's heart to serve the Lord. The aspirant himself must constantly endeavour to control his heart and mind, that are always inclined towards sense gratification and always try to remove desires for other matters than Kṛṣṇa, so that the desire to serve the Lord will remain awake. As a culmination of the practice of *bhajana* this desire to serve will awaken a strong eagerness within the heart of the practitioner to attain the direct service of the Lord, and thus he will become blessed with the direct service of the Lord and the gift of *prema*. This is the inner meaning of the words *sadā sevābhilāṣa*.

After this, Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: *narottama dāse bole, porinu asat bhole, paritrāṇa koro mahāśaya*. Although Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya is himself the embodiment of *prema*, he humbly considers himself an ordinary practitioner with so many bad habits, so he says he has fallen into a ditch of *asat bhole*, or false desires, and cannot keep the desire for devotional service awake within his heart. Whatever is not *sat* or real is *asat* or false. Whatever is always real and true is *sat*. That which does not have this eternal reality or truth, in other words perishable physical matters, is called *asat*. Although the living entity is Kṛṣṇa's eternal servant, he has now fallen into ditch of false desires and has forgotten the service of Śrī Govinda's lotus feet, that are eternally real and filled with paramount condensed transcendental bliss. The desires after temporary matters of this phenomenal world are not slight either. Big, big scholars, wise, qualified and learned personalities are unable to escape from their grasp and are floating in a current of desires for false matters, heading towards an ocean of suffering. How much scriptural study, how much hearing of good advise has all not gone in vain before these false desires!! They arise from the Lord's powerful illusory potency, that consists of three modes of material nature, therefore the personal endeavours of the insignificant living entity will not be sufficient to be saved from the grip of these desires. Hence it is said *paritrāṇa koro mahāśoy!* "O Master! Save me!" Here the word *mahāśaya* means, according to Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda: "O Kṛṣṇa!" *mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etāṁ taranti te* (Gītā) No one has the power to escape from these sensual, false, material desires other than through the grace of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, hence the prayer to become free from these sensual *asat bhola* material desires has been directed to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

The use of the word *mahāśaya* indicates that Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *āśaya* or heart is very great or generous. He knows that the insignificant living entities have fallen into the trap of the powerful external illusory energy and they have become mad about mundane flavours, bereft of any energy to perform spiritual practices. If He does not save the conditioned souls with His causeless mercy, bestowing some of the relish of His own worship on them, and if He does not save them from the *asat bhola* of mundane flavours, there will be no way for them to find redemption. And then the most generous '*mahāśaya*' Śrī Kṛṣṇa is no scrooge in the distribution of His grace either – *guru rūpe ghare ghare dikṣā dey sabhākāre, vaiṣṇava rūpete dey śikṣā. śāstra rūpe kohe jñāna, ātmā rūpe adhiṣṭhāna, dekho tāra kāre vā upekṣā* "In the form of the Guru He goes from house to house to give initiation to everyone, in the form of the Vaiṣṇava He instructs everyone, in the form of the scriptures He speaks transcendental knowledge, in the form of the Supersoul He resides in everyone's heart – just see! Who is left out by

Him?" *dadāmi buddhi yogam taṁ yena mām upayānti te* (Gītā) – "I will give him the divine intelligence through which the devotee can come to Me." (32)

*tumi to dayāra sindhu, adhama janāra bandhu,
mohe prabho! koro avadhāna
poḍimu asat bhole, kāma timingile gile,
ohe nātha! koro paritrāṇa! (33)*

"You are the ocean of mercy and the friend of the fallen. O Lord, please notice me! I have fallen in a ditch of false desires and I am swallowed by the whale of lust. O Lord! Save me!"

Mercy on the fallen :

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā- In *sādhakāveśa* Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has called Śrī Kṛṣṇa *mahāśaya*, or the magnanimous, compassionate one, and aspires for His mercy, so that he may be freed from mundane sensual engagement. After calling Śrī Kṛṣṇa '*mahāśaya*', the blessed author makes sure no one will think anyone to be more generous than Him by saying: *tumi to dayāra sindhu* ("You are the ocean of compassion"). Just as the ocean is boundless, bottomless and hard to cross, similarly Śrī Kṛṣṇa's compassion is endless and boundless. What to speak of the ordinary creatures, even Brahma, Śiva and Ananta cannot find the end to His attributes like compassion. For the living entities there is no other way to touch even a drop of this boundless ocean of compassion. Here we are mentioning some aspects of this ocean of compassion. Śrī Kṛṣṇa showers the living entities with His compassion in two ways– 1) *māyāmayī* and 2) *svarūpa śaktimayī*. Compassion that is shown through the gate of the illusory energy is called *māyāmayī karuṇā*. This *māyāmayī karuṇā* is not even slightly inferior. There are two kinds of spirit souls, that are countless and that belong to His marginal potency– 1) *nitya mukta* (eternally liberated) and 2) *nitya baddha* (eternally conditioned). From beginningless time the aggregate of living entities have been divided into these two classes. Those who are eternally liberated are eternally absorbed in the bliss of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's devotional service and will remain so forever. The aggregate of eternally conditioned souls are averse to Kṛṣṇa from beginningless time, and as a result of that they have forgotten His service, although they are His eternal servants, and desire independent enjoyment. Through the agency of His illusory potency, the Lord is so kind to provide an abode of enjoyment for these hankering souls, that are averse to Him, in the form of material bodies and material worlds. Although desires for enjoyment are never fulfilled by actual enjoyment, still as a result of hellish suffering caused by the 'enjoyment', the living entity becomes distressed and remorseful, and, by the grace of the *sādhus* and the Guru he becomes inclined towards Kṛṣṇa. Then, as the result of his *bhajana* he will be blessed forever with the attainment of loving devotional service. If Śrī Kṛṣṇa had not created this cosmic field of enjoyment for them through His illusory potency, they would remain averse to Him forever. Through His illusory potency He has again created this huge universe, with water,

wind, the sun, the moon, the planets, the stars and different pleasurable ingredients for the maintenance of the living entities, and that is not less compassionate, but through this the living entities cannot become liberated from the material world. In this way the living entity, who is constitutionally the eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa, cannot find his real self and become blessed with the loving service of his eternal Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Hence through the intrinsic potency and with the aid of Śrī Guru and Vaiṣṇavas' grace, the Lord bestows devotion, which is a vehicle of His pleasure potency and existence potency, on them. Personally descending within the material world He displays His transcendental pastimes, including His names and attributes, that are all ingredients for the conditioned souls' *bhajana*, and thus He blesses them by giving them the gift of *prema* and His personal loving service. That all this mercy of His is all-pervading and immense is merely indicated in the words *doyāra sindhu*. Actually the immensity of His compassion makes millions upon millions of oceans seem insignificant.

Although Śrī Kṛṣṇa's great mercy is like an ocean, this compassion, that consists of His innate potency, never takes a seat in the hearts of those who are proud of their wealth, connections or birth. Hence Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: *adhama janāra bandhu! mohe prabhu koro avadhāna!* "O Lord! You are the friend of the fallen and I am also very fallen, hence I am worthy of receiving Your compassion! Please think of me once!" From these prayers of Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya the practitioner can learn that those who are on the path of devotion must give up all pride of their physical condition and become (consider themselves) **fallen** if they wish to receive the mercy of Śrī Guru, Vaiṣṇavas and the Supreme Lord. Low, fallen, wretched, despicable, insignificant are some synonyms for the word *adhama*. Although the devotee is the vessel of all good qualities he thinks himself to be very fallen and low. This becomes manifest through *bhagavad bhakti*, which is the mine of all good qualities. The reason for this is that by nature the individual soul is not an independent principle – it is dependent on the Supreme Soul, and subdued by time, activities and attributes of the false, phenomenal world. When, by the grace of the saints, the conditioned soul takes shelter of the path of devotion, he becomes aware of this secret in their company. When spiritual knowledge awakens he thinks himself to be unqualified and unable to perform any activity, since he has lost the false sense of 'doer'-ship. Then he experiences the powerful management of the Lord and surrenders to His lotus feet in all respects, considering himself to be very low and fallen. This is called *dainya* and is the treasure of all the devotees' practice, that will swiftly attract the Lord's mercy on them. In the definition of the *jāta rati sādhakas* (practising devotees that have awakened their dormant love for Kṛṣṇa) it is said: *sarvottama āpanāke hīna kori māne* (C.C.) – "Although he is the greatest, he considers himself to be low."

Śrī Narottama Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: "O Lord! Please remember once how low and fallen I am!" If Śrī Kṛṣṇa says: "Oh, should I remember you for some reason?", then he will answer: *poṛinu asat bhole kāma timiṅgile gile, ohe nātha! koro paritrāṇa!* "I have fallen in a ditch of false desires and I am swallowed by the whale of lust. O Lord! Save me!" Just as in the previous *tripadī*, Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has now again spoken of *asat bhola*. When we study the order of the different parts of the word we may think considering *asat*, meaning false, perishable bodily objects to be *sat* or real, and thus being deluded, fall into a ditch of delusion. From such delusion comes the idea that physical conditions are real, which makes the people who have forgotten their intrinsic position yearn for money and other things.

They become so obsessed with this that they cannot understand that these things are temporary and miserable, even if they heard hundreds of instructions on that. Thus they spend their whole lives serving their lusty desires. When we consider the actual form of this body, which is the object of our lusty desires, we see –

*amedhya pūrṇe kṛmi jāla saṅkule svabhāva durgandhi vininditāntare
kalevare mūtra purīṣa bhāvite ramanti mūdhā viramanti paṇḍitāḥ* (Yogopaniṣad)

"Fools yearn to enjoy a body which is filled with foul things like stool, urine and worms and which naturally stinks, but the wise men are not attached to such a repulsive body." There is also the following description –

*braṇa mukham iva dehaṁ pūti carmāvanaddhaṁ kṛmi kula śata pūrṇaṁ mūtra viṣṭhānulepam
vigata bahula rūpaṁ sarva bhogādivāsaṁ dhruva maraṇa nimittaṁ kintu moha prasaktyā*

"This body is full of sores, enveloped by a stinking skin, filled with hundreds of worms and smeared with stool and urine. It assumes different forms according to the different ages (stages of life) and will certainly perish, sooner or later, but still due to attachment to delusion, this body is the cause of all kinds of yearnings for sense enjoyments." Despite all these straight-forward true instructions we consider this body to be 'me'. – this is called *asat bhola* or considering false things to be true. The root cause of this is our strong conditioning to the life of lusty desires. Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: ' These strong lusty desires are swallowing me like Timiṅgila-whales! The whale is the ocean's largest aquatic being, but an aquatic being who could even swallow the whale (Timi) is called Timiṅgila – it is lusty desires that swallow me like a Timiṅgila-whale! This shows the power and dread caused by lust. An insignificant human being is unable to defend himself against its grip, hence it is said: *ohe nātha! koro paritrāṇa!* "O Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa! You alone are strong enough to protect me from the grip of this powerful lust, therefore please save me!" (33)

*yāvat janama mora, aparādhe hoinu bhora,
niṣkaṭe nā bhajinu tomā
tathāpi tumi se gati, nā chāḍiho prāṇapati
āmā sama nāhika adhamā (34)*

"I have been absorbed in committing offenses since my very birth and I did not worship you seriously and honestly. Still You are my goal, so please don't let me down, O Lord of my life! There is no one more fallen than me!"

Sincere worship:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā– Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya's humility gradually increases. Considering himself to be very offensive and fallen and bereft of all *sādhana*, he says: *yāvat janama mora, aparādhe hoinu bhora, niṣkaṭe nā bhajinu tomā*. "I have been absorbed in committing offenses since my very birth and I did not worship you seriously and honestly."

Although he is the embodiment of *prema*, Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya still speaks these words of humility in this *tripadī*, which is like a most beneficial reviving elixir for the practising devotees. Of all the obstacles that lie in the way in the life of progressive devotion, offences are the most powerful. In Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta (Ādi Ch.8) it is seen:

*eka kṛṣṇa nāme kore sarva pāpa nāśa; premera kāraṇa bhakti korena prakāśa
premera udoye hoy premera vikāra; sveda kampa pulakādi gadgadāśru dhāra
anāyāse bhava kṣaya, kṛṣṇera sevana; eka kṛṣṇa nāmera phale pāi eto dhana
heno kṛṣṇa nāma yadi loy bahubār; tabu yadi prema nahe nahe āśru dhāra
tabe jāni aparādha tāhāte pracura; kṛṣṇa nāma bīja tāte nā hoy āṅkura*

"One single name of Kṛṣṇa destroys all sins, causes *prema* to appear and also reveals loving devotion. When *prema* arises loving symptoms like perspiration, shivering, goosepimples, stuttering and the shedding of tears become manifest. The cycle of transmigration is easily breached and devotional service is attained. All these treasures are attained by the utterance of a single name of Kṛṣṇa. (However) One may chant this name of Kṛṣṇa many times, but if *prema* still does not appear and no tears are shed, then I know that many offences must be committed, so that the seed of Kṛṣṇa's holy name does not sprout."

Just as a powerful seed will sprout when it falls into fertile soil and is showered by rains, and in time becomes a tree as long as it is carefully fenced and sprinkled, similarly the seed of Kṛṣṇa's holy name falls into the soil of the devotee's heart and is sprinkled by the water of hearing and chanting to grow into a wishyielding vine of devotion, and in due course of time certainly yields flowers of *bhāva* and fruits of *prema*. However, if that seed is thrown on a stone ground it is impossible for it to sprout in any way. Similarly the heart of an offender is like a stone ground where the seed of devotion, deduced from the holy name, cannot sprout. This is why there is such a powerful consideration of offences within the Vaiṣṇava tradition. A little after the previously quoted verses, Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta continues: *caitanya nityānande nāhi e sab vicāra; nāma hoite prema den, bohe āśru dhāra* (C.C.) "In Caitanya and Nityānanda there is no such consideration. Their names instantly yield *prema* and tears begin to flow." These words may make one think that Śrī Caitanya Deva and Śrī Nityānanda do not consider any offences and the mere utterance of Their holy names will give *prema* to the chanter. However, in Śrīman Mahāprabhu's Navadvīpa pastimes we can see that the scholars, blasphemers and heretics were vilifying the Lord, and that the Lord saw no other means to redeem the blasphemers by giving them *prema* than to accept the order of *sannyāsa*. After He had accepted the *sannyāsa* order the blasphemers offered obeisances unto His lotus feet and would become freed from their offences. Thus the Lord would bestow *prema* upon them. So it is described in Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta. Again one time Gopāla Cāpāla committed an offence to Śrīvāsa and the Lord gave him *prema* after making him apologise to Śrīvāsa first. It is even mentioned that His own mother Śacī committed an offence to Śrī Advaitācārya and that the Lord bestowed *prema* upon her after she had taken Advaita's footdust on her head. Therefore it is not so that Śrī Caitanya and Nityānanda do not consider offences, but that They did not consider who was qualified for receiving *prema* or not, and that they first destroyed the offensive attitude of the offenders before bestowing *prema* upon Them. From all this it can be understood that offences form the most powerful obstacles in the practice of devotion. Śrī Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: *yāvat*

janama mora, aparādha hoinu bhora "I have been committing offences ever since I was born, so I have been stuck in the muck of offensiveness, completely covered over. In other words, because of my constant engagement in offensive activities I have lost the ability to be cautious about committing offences. Verbally we constantly warn about 'offences, offensive!' but actually we cannot take care about offences. We are not just fixed in committing offences, we are **bhora**, absorbed in offences. The practitioner who desires his own welfare always carefully gives up all offences that obstruct his worship, such as *nāmāparādha* (offences to the chanting of the holy name) and *sevāparādha* (offences in temple worship) and constantly tries to worship in an inoffensive manner. If not an offensive worshipper will remain deprived of the real fruits of his worship, which is the attainment of *prema*.

After this, the blessed author says: *niṣkapaṭe nā bhajinu tomā*!. Śrīla Narottama Thākura Mahāśaya humbly speaks about himself in this way to give the practising devotees a valuable lesson – *niṣkapaṭe nā bhajinu tomā*. Tricks, appearing in one way externally and in another way internally, pretexts, excuses, duplicity, cheating, deceitfulness – there are some synonyms for the word **kapata**. Being free from all connections with *māyā*, free from all ulterior motives and completely identifying oneself with one's constitutional position is called *niṣkapaṭa bhajana*, worship free from duplicity. Due to bodily consciousness different desires for profit, adoration and distinction arise within the heart of the practitioner during his devotional practice. This is also a trick of *māyā*, so that worship of the Lord can again not take place in a non-duplicitous or sincere way. When Śrī Guru, the Vaiṣṇavas and the Lord are externally worshipped but the inner faith and devotion for them is not there, then there is duplicity and devotion will not follow. In his *Bhakti Sandarbha* Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has called such a deceitful attitude the result of offences committed against great souls in the past. If this duplicity does not go even after commencing *bhajana*, consisting of taking up residence in the holy *dhāma* and associating with great saints, then this is a disease which becomes hard to cure. As a result of this Guru, Vaiṣṇavas and the Lord Himself will be cheated in various ways. Such a devotee, whose heart is polluted by duplicity, will externally perform items of worship, but until he gets powerful association and mercy of the saints this duplicity will not leave him and there is no hope for him attaining sincere devotional spirits. Those who do *bhajana* by surrendering to the lotus feet of Śrī Guru, Vaiṣṇavas and the Lord with a simple and humble heart, will attain the good fortune of sincere devotion and will be blessed with their grace. Hence Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya has said: *tathāpi tumi se gati, nā chāriho prāṇapati, āmā sama nāhiko adhamā* "Still You are my destination, so please don't let me down, O Lord of my life! There is no one more fallen than me! Although I was not able to worship You in a simple and sincere manner, giving up everything and surrendering exclusively unto You, still You are my only goal. If I am really Your innate, natural servant and You are my eternal master, although Your powerful external energy *māyā* has deluded me from a beginningless time, making me forget Your lotus feet and keeping me attached to all kinds of bodily things, still my servant-master relationship was not lost. Actually You remain my only shelter and You will always remain so. Therefore, O Lord of my heart! Although I have been tricked by Your *māyā* and have become attracted to ulterior objects, leaving Your lotus feet, still You do not abandon Your eternal servant! There is no more fallen wretch, who is so wholly unqualified than me! If You are the saviour of the fallen and I am the most fallen soul, then please attract this fallen soul with Your own attributes and bless

him by giving him a place at Your lotus feet, that grant fearlessness!" If a *sādhaka* who is thus surrendered to the lotus feet of the Lord offers such humble and eager prayers at the lotus feet of the Lord, then by His grace he will be blessed with the good fortune of sincere devotion – this is the contextual purport. (34)

patita pāvana nāma, ghoṣaṇā tomāra śyāma,
upekḥile nāhi mora gati
yadi hoi aparādhī, tathāpiho tumi gati,
satya satya yeno satī pati (35)

"O Śyāmasundara, You are proclaimed the saviour of the fallen! If You reject me I am lost. Even if I am an offender You are still my sole shelter, truly, like the husband is the only shelter of the chaste wife!"

The holy name redeems the fallen:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā– As great humility arises within Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya, he considers himself to be a very fallen wretch and aspires for exclusive surrender to the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord – *patita pāvana nāma, ghoṣaṇā tomāra śyāma, upekḥile nāhi mora gati* "O Śyāma! You are proclaimed everywhere as the saviour of the fallen! I am also a deeply fallen soul, therefore if You reject me I have no other shelter!" There is a small secret in the address of Śrī Kṛṣṇa under the name of **Śyāma** in the prayerful words of this *tripadī*. One meaning that the dictionary gives of the word Śyāma is written as follows – *sāyate gacchati mano'sminn iti śyāmaḥ* – "He to whom the mind goes is Śyāma." But not everyone's mind is naturally going towards Śyāma. Rather, everyone's mind is going to bodily pleasures such as money, friends, honour, power and good standing. If everyone's mind was naturally going towards Śyāma, then for what reason would anyone still practise any *sādhana*? It is natural that such a question will arise in our minds. If we calmly ponder on this subject we will certainly understand that the minds of all the living entities are running after happiness and joy. The living entities want pleasure and joy, and the condensed form of that joy is '*raso vai saḥ*', '*ānandaṁ brahma*', '*rasānāṁ rasatamaḥ*' Śyāma. Therefore although our minds are naturally running towards Śyāma, many of us cannot capture Him. We are forgetting Śyāma, getting intoxicated by the beauty and the flavours of the mundane world, that are just a reflected drop of the bliss that emanates from Him. Those who forget about the world by the grace of Śrī Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas, becoming greedy after the transcendental beauty, sweetness, form and flavour of the Lord of the universe, will, as a result of their practice of *bhajana*, become blessed with the relish of Śyāma's sweetness. Without becoming really 'fallen', by forgetting about the mundane world and giving up all identification with the material body, it will be very difficult to seek and find Patita Pāvana (the Lord, the saviour of the fallen). Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: "Your name of Patita Pāvana is proclaimed throughout the world and I am also very fallen, therefore there will be a stain on Your reputation as Patita Pāvana if You let me down, for however much You will search, You will

not find anyone in this world more fallen than me!" And if Śyāma says: "Alright, let there come a stain on My reputation as Patita Pāvana; what is that to you?"¹⁹, then the answer will be: "If You let me down I will have no other recourse anywhere!"

Another meaning of this half a *tripadī* can be that 'O Śyāma', Your names like 'Kṛṣṇa', 'Govinda' and so are proclaimed all over the world as redeemers of the fallen. Although I am a fallen wretch, I have taken shelter of Your holy names, that redeem the fallen, therefore You can not let me down, since I now have no other shelter." Although Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the saviour of the fallen souls, His holy name reveals that quality even more. Simply by uttering the name 'Nārāyaṇa' of his son, the Viṣṇudūtas came to the great sinner Śrī Ajāmila on his death bed. They saved Ajāmila by chasing the messengers of death (*yama-dūtas*) away and brought him to Vaikuṅṭha in due course of time. So it is described in Śrīmad Bhāgavata (6.2.9-10), where we can find the following words of the Viṣṇudūtas to the Yamadūtas—

*stenaḥ surāpo mitra dhruḡ brahmahā guru talpagah
strī rāja pitṛ gohantā ye ca pātakino'pare
sarveṣāṃ apyaghavatām idam eva suniṣkṛtam
nāma vyāharaṇaṃ viṣṇor yatas tad viṣayā matiḥ*

"Uttering the name of Śrī Viṣṇu is certainly and by all means the purest way of atonement for a gold thief, a consumer of alcoholic beverages, a traitor of his friends, the killer of a brahmin, a person who has sex with the wife of his Guru, a killer of women, the king, his father or of cows, and all other kinds of big sinners, for someone who loudly chants the holy name will certainly obtain the grace of the Lord." The purport of this is that other atonements may purge sins but they will not purify the heart of the sinner or awaken remembrance of the Lord within his heart. Rather, it will cause the pride of 'I am sinless' to arise within the heart. The glories of the atonement of *śrī nāma saṅkīrtana* is that innumerable great sins are at once scorched to ashes, just as a fluff of cotton is suddenly burned up by the fire, through a mere reflection of the holy name (*nāmābhāsa*), and the heart, which is polluted by sinful desires, is also purified. The reason for this is that when the reflection of the holy name is chanted the heart does not seek Viṣṇu, nor is the chanter consciously chanting with the attitude of 'I am taking the name of Viṣṇu' (the way Ajāmila uttered the name of Nārāyaṇa, intending to call his son, is called *nāmābhāsa*, or a reflection of the holy name), but still Śrī Viṣṇu will remember the person who chants His holy name and will develop a feeling of: "This is My servant who should always be protected by Me". Therefore the power and the quality of the holy name as the saviour of the fallen cannot be found anywhere else.

It is as if the Lord is saying: "The holy name will certainly show its quality as the saviour of the fallen towards the inoffensive persons, but surely the holy name will not be pleased with offenders?" To this Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya answers: *yadi hoy aparādhi, tathāpiho tumi gati, satya satya yeno satī pati*. Although he is the embodiment of *prema*, out of great humility Thākura Mahāśaya considers himself a great offender, and he says: "My master, if¹⁹

¹⁹ Here the word 'if' is used to certify something, not to indicate doubt, for Thākura Mahāśaya genuinely considers himself an offender. For instance, it is said: *yadi vedāḥ pramāṇaḥ syuh*, or: "If the Vedas are authoritative". Here the word *yadi* or 'if' certifies, because the Vedas are certainly authoritative, and nobody doubts the authority of the Vedas.

I am an offender, then still the husband certainly forgives his chaste wife if she commits some offence at his feet, for the husband is the only shelter of the chaste wife. If he does not forgive her, whom will she turn to? In the same way, O Lord! You are my only shelter. If You will not forgive my offences there is no other solution!"

The purport of this is that if the chaste wife commits some offence to the feet of her husband, the husband will certainly forgive it, but if the wife commits adultery the husband will never forgive her and will abandon her. Similarly if the pure, one-pointed devotees of Śrī Hari, that is, those who are fixed in one of Śrī Hari's forms like Vrajendranandana, without worshipping any other gods and goddesses, or who have no other desire than to render loving devotional service, accidentally commit some offence at Śrī Hari's lotus feet, due to bad company or bad old habits, Śrī Hari will certainly forgive them, but when the desire to worship other gods or to attain anything else but Kṛṣṇa remains in the heart, Śrī Hari will abandon such a person as a husband abandons an adulterous wife. Or, if some offence is committed while remembering the Lord or engaging in His service, the Lord will forgive it, but when someone commits adultery with someone else's wife, even while engaging in the Lord's service, the Lord will not forgive the offence, nor will He accept the devotional service of such a person. Therefore if some exclusive devotee becomes attached to another man's wife due to powerful bad company or due to bad habits, he should give up that sin and repent greatly, exclusively surrendering at the lotus feet of Śrī Hari. Then it is to be understood that Śrī Hari will become pleased with that person and forgive him. Hence it is said in Bhagavad Gītā— *kṣipram bhavati dharmātmā śaśvac chāntim nigacchati. kaunteya prati jānīhi na me bhakti praṇaśyati* "He will swiftly become righteous and attain permanent peace. O son of Kunti, you may declare boldly that My devotee never perishes!" (35)

*tumi to parama devā, nāhi more upekhībā,
śuno śuno parāṇera īśvara
yadi kori aparādha, tathāpiho tumi nātha,
sevā dije koro anucara (36)*

"You are the supreme Godhead, so don't let me down! Listen, O listen, O Lord of my heart! Even if I am an offender, still You are my Lord! Please make me Your follower by engaging me in Your service!"

Prayer for service:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā— With great humility and eagerness Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya prays for the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, saying: *tumi to parama devā, nāhi more upekhībā, śuno śuno parāṇera īśvara*—"You are the supreme Godhead, so don't let me down! Listen, O listen, O Lord of my heart!" Previously the devotee's loyalty to his beloved deity has been compared to a chaste wife's loyalty to her husband. If the conditioned soul would apply such one-pointed loyalty solely to the Supreme Lord he would become blessed with the attainment of the truly supreme gain. If worshippers of other gods think that they will be able to attain genuine spiritual gain from their loyalty to their own worshipable godheads,

then that is a great mistake. The reason is that as a result of forgetting the lotus feet of the Lord, the living entities, who are intrinsically the Lord's eternal servants, attain all kinds of misery in the material world of birth and death, wandering around in 8,400,000 species of life. The living entity has no other means to attain the service of the Lord than to worship His lotus feet. Even though one may be fixed in the worship of a particular god or goddess, no other gain can be gotten from it but luxury and enjoyment in this life or enjoyment of heavenly pleasures in the next life. Hence Śrī Kṛṣṇa instructed Arjuna in the Gītā: "Since I am the aggregate of all the gods, worshippers of other gods attain Me through their worship, but still they do not reach (the real) Me, for they do not follow the prescribed rules in their worship."²⁰ In other words, no injunction has been given in these practices that will help one attain love or the service of the lotus feet of the Lord— *ye'pyanya devatā bhaktā yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ. te'pi mām eva kaunteya yajantyavidhi pūrvakam* (9.23)

Anyway, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the *parama devā*, the worshipable God of Brahma, Rudra and others. Not only that, *divyantīti devāḥ* The different Personalities of Godhead, who are most luminous and full of transcendental bliss, are the greatest. He is not an expansion, but their origin, He is not a part, He is the whole, He is not a person, He is the Supreme Person, He is not Godhead, He is the Original Godhead; therefore the word *parama* or 'greatest' culminates in Him. Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya says: "O Master! You are the origin of all Personalities of Godhead, therefore You cannot neglect me at all; rather, since You are most compassionate, it is desirable that You notice me more than anyone." From the devotional scriptures we can know how important it is for the living entities to attain the Lord or His devotional service, and from the Lord's point of view it is even more important to get the living entities to become His devotees. Those who have studied the second Canto of Śrīmat Sanātana Gosvāmīpāda's Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta all know that when Śrī Gopakumāra went to Vaikuṅṭha, Śrī Nārāyaṇa had for long tried all kinds of means to get him as His devotee, and had applied His mercy accordingly. He personally expressed that this attainment would fulfill a long-standing aspiration of His. And when that Gopa Kumāra attained Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *darśana* during Goloka's *uttara goṣṭha*²¹ time, Śrī Kṛṣṇa embraced him in ecstatic love and and fainted of ecstasy. From this it is known that although all the Personalities of Godhead are waiting for the living entities to turn to them, the greatest eagerness for that is seen in Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Original Personality of Godhead.

Then again the blessed author says: *śuno śuno prāṇera īśvara* – "Hear me, O hear me, O Lord of my life!" Just to attract Śrī Kṛṣṇa's glance to his direction and to draw attention he says 'hear me, hear me' twice. *prāṇera īśvara* means He who is everyone's deepest self, and is therefore always aware of everyone's inner core. It is simply unnecessary to say more. Or, *prāṇera īśvara* means the worshipable principle who is dearer than millions of hearts. What can be the destination of the living entities if He rejects them? Another meaning of *prāṇera īśvara* is that Vṛṣabhānu's daughter Śrī Rādhā is the life (*prāṇa*) of all those who practise Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. Under Her shelter the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The *īśvara* or Lord of that Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the crownjewel of all *rasikas*. It is to be understood that the worship of the lotus feet of the Divine Pair Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava is

²⁰ Just as a river flows from a mountain into the ocean, but the mountain itself never reaches that ocean.

²¹ *uttara goṣṭha* takes place in the afternoon, when Kṛṣṇa returns to His village with the cows at the end of the day and is observed doing so by Śrī Rādhā.

playfully indicated through this statement. Later in the book, many more prayers will be offered to the lotus feet of the Divine Pair. Prayers that are to be heard by Śrī Kṛṣṇa include: *yadi kori aparādha, tathāpi-o tumi nātha, sevā diyā koro anucara* ("If I commit an offence, still You are my Master. Make me Your follower by giving me Your service!"). In the previous *tripadī* it is written: *yadi hoy aparādhī, tathāpi-o tumi gati, satya satya jeno satī pati*. "The husband, who is like God for the wife (*pati devatā*) forgives the chaste wife, whose life is dedicated to her husband and is satisfied with her. Similarly, O Lord! Be pleased with me and forgive me my offences, for Your lotus feet are my only shelter!" If Śrī Kṛṣṇa says: "*ācchā*, I may forgive you all the offences that you have accumulated, but it is simply your nature to make offences— how can you prove that you will not commit any more offences?" As the blessed author thinks to himself in such an extraordinary humble way, he says: "O Master! It is indeed my nature to commit hundreds of offences, therefore it is not that I will not commit any more offences. O Master! Even if I commit offences, aren't You *nātha*, the constant guardian? You will always protect me from all these offences." Another meaning is *nāthṛ upatāpake*— the verbal root *nāthṛ* creates the word *nātha*. The verbal root *nāthṛ* has many meanings, one of them being *upatāpa*. "O Master! If I commit an offence, then purify your servant through *tāpa* or punishment." If Śrī Kṛṣṇa says: "Tell me what you want?", then the answer is: *sevā diyā koro anucara* "O Master! Please bless me by bestowing Your devotional service on me, I do not pray for anything else! Let Your service be the all-in-all in my life! I will always stay close by You as Your follower to render service to You— this is my highest ambition in life!" Another meaning of the word *anucara* can be "You are the playful Līlā Puruṣottama, always absorbed in different pastimes with Śrī Rādhārāṇī, day and night. Wherever You wander around in Vraja to perform Your pastimes, I will always follow You (*anu*=behind) there and be immersed in the flavours of Your devotional service—this is my ambition!" Actually, although Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya is the embodiment of *prema*, he humble thinks of himself as an ordinary practitioner who has all kinds of bad habits and with this attitude he offers his prayers. Since this is spoken in the mood of a practitioner it is to be understood as an example of how the practising devotees should offer their prayers. (36)

*kāma mora hoto citta, nāhi māne nija hita,
manera nā ghuce durvāsanā
more nātha aṅgikuru, ohe vāñchā kalpataru
karuṇā dekhuka sarva janā (37)*

"My heart is afflicted by lust and I never think of my own welfare. My mind cannot shake off bad desires for sense enjoyment. O Lord, O wish-yielding tree, please accept me, so that all the people can behold Your mercy!"

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *ṭīkā*— *durvāsanā—viśaya bhoga vāsanā*.

Wish-yielding tree:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā- With increasing humility Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya considers himself to be a lust-stricken soul and a person possessed by wicked sinful desires. *kāma mora hota cita, nāhi māne nija hita, manera nā ghuce durvāsanā* "My heart is afflicted by lust and I never think of my own welfare. My mind cannot shake off bad desires for sense enjoyment." The mind, intelligence, consciousness and false ego – these four internal workings form the subtle body or *liṅga śarīra* of the conditioned soul. This subtle body is the first covering of the living entity and the gross body, consisting of five gross elements, is the second covering. Innumerable subtle desires reside within the subtle body of a human being. Although the gross body is destroyed again and again, the subtle body does not perish unless and until the soul is free from illusion. According to his previous conditioning to fruitive activities in his subtle body, the soul enters into a gross body. As long as the soul is under *māyā*'s jurisdiction, he will remain bound to one single subtle body. Therefore we can understand from this that the shell of the living entities' consciousness is filled with the conditioning to subtle and gross desires of innumerable lifetimes past. The heart's subtle activity of seeking pleasure is called *kāma janmā* or the birth of lust. In other words, from the consciousness, desires are manifest according to one's previous conditioning and when they are manifest within the mind and the intelligence they make the body and the senses restless and activate them. Therefore it is said: "My heart is struck or destroyed by lusty desires." My heart is bereft of the power to distinguish between good and bad—*nāhi māne nija hita* "I am unable to give up what is bad for me or to distinguish between what is good and bad for me, nor am I able to accept those things that are good for me."

The purport of this is that the seeking subtle body seeks the custom of the topmost worship of the Lord. By associating with saints this custom of *bhajana* becomes placed within the heart, which then gives up all wickedness and becomes most saintly and able to distinguish between good and bad. On the other hand, if wicked desires are placed in the heart through bad company it becomes polluted and gets immersed in unsaintly subjects. This makes it very weak and bereft of the power to distinguish between good and bad. Such a heart, which is bereft of knowledge of good and bad, is *hata* or dead-like.

After this the blessed author says: *manera nā ghuce durvāsanā*. When the heart is polluted it manifests wicked desires within the mind. The mind can only accept and reject, and it is constantly engaged in accepting and rejecting different wicked desires for sense gratification. On the strength of its contact with such wicked desires for sense gratification it becomes greatly polluted and loses its ability to think of good things or to fix itself on something good. Psychiatrists and psychologists are saying that the mind has unlimited power. In the modern mundane scientific world, mankind has subdued the power of electricity and accomplishes countless astonishing tasks through it. Things that used to take thousands of persons a long time to accomplish are now accomplished within a moment by electrical power. Like a slave it accomplishes an unlimited variety of necessary and convenient tasks. It cannot be denied that the power of mankind itself still exceeds all or each of these powers that mankind has taken in the hand, that is for sure. If it were not like that, mankind would never have been able to retain command over all these operative powers. The human mind is the cause of its power to retain command over all these operations. Human mental power is the greatest of all powers. If the human mind associates with saints and takes shelter of the path of *bhajana*, it will gain the support of the very great transcendental power of devotion as a result of taking shelter of the Supreme Lord. It goes

without saying that it then becomes more powerful than millions of electrical powerhouses and it will bring the human soul to the transcendental kingdom, blessing it with the relish of the mellows of Godhead. This most powerful human mind, or mental power, is immersed in the mud of wicked desires and suffers tremendously in 8,400,000 species of life and in dreadful hells like Kumbhīpāka— can there be any greater ill fate of mankind than this? ***manera nā ghuce durvāsanā*** "Wicked desires will not leave my mind".

After this the blessed author says: *more nātha aṅgikuru, ohe vāñchā kalpataru, karuṇā dekhuk sarva janā* "O wishyielding tree Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa! Accept me at Your feet as Your eternal servant! Let everyone in the world witness Your compassion!" Śrī Kṛṣṇa is called 'a wishyielding tree' here. In Śrīmad Bhāgavata (10.38.22) these words of Akrūra are found—

*na tasya kaścīd dayitaḥ suhr̥ttamo na cāpriyo dveṣya upekṣya eva vā
tathāpi bhaktān bhajate yathā tathā suradrūmo yadvad upāśrito'rthadaḥ*

"Although the Supreme Lord does not like or dislike anyone, He loves, hates or rejects no one, still He bestows the devotees the fruits of their worship of Him, according to their endeavours, just as a wish-yielding tree bestows its fruits to anyone who takes its shelter." Here the comparison with a wish-yielding tree only applies to the person who takes shelter of it, it is not universal, for though a wish-yielding tree bestows its fruits on a person who takes shelter of it, it never becomes subdued by him. And in connection with the devotee, the Lord cherishes friendship for the friend of the devotee and malice towards the enemies of His devotees, while this is not possible in a wish-yielding tree. Then again, a wish-yielding tree bestows its fruits on anyone who takes its shelter without distinguishing between beneficial favours and harmful favours it may bestow. But Śrī Bhagavān will not bestow a harmful boon on His devotee, even if that devotee will ask for it. Instead He will bestow *prema*, the devotees' highest welfare and the fifth human pursuit, to him. Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya prays for loving devotional service from Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the wish-yielding tree. Śrī Kṛṣṇa's compassion should be known through the example of Him bestowing His own loving devotional service, hence the blessed author says: ***karuṇā dekhuk sarva janā*** "Let all the people behold Your compassion!" (37)

***mo sama patita nāi, tribhuvane dekho cāi,
narottama pāvana nāma dhara
ghuṣuka saṁsāre nāma, patita pāvana śyāma,
nija dāsa koro giridhara! (38)***

"There is no one as fallen as I am, just look around you in the three worlds! Please bear the name 'saviour and purifier of Narottama!' Let the whole world glorify You as Śyāmasundara, the purifier of the fallen, and make me Your servant, O Giridhārī!"

The service of Giridhārī:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā– Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya's humility gradually increases and reaches its summit. Such humility is the culmination of *prema*– *dainyaṁ tu paramaṁ premnaḥ paripākena janyate* (Bṛhad Bhāg. 2.5.224) The deeper the love becomes as a culmination of humility, the more the eagerness for the service of the beloved deity also increases. Therefore through the excellence of eagerness the excellence of the *prema* can also be understood. Humility and eagerness are the intrinsic activities of *prema*. Humility attracts the grace of the beloved deity and grace is situated within humility. Hence the practitioner must always remain humble, with body, mind and words.

*yayā vāce'hayā dainyaṁ matyā ca sthairyam iti tat
tām yatnena bhajed vidvāṁs tad viruddhāni varjayet* (Bṛ.Bhāg.2.5.223)

"The intelligent practitioner should stabilise humility with the right activities, words and application of intelligence, and renounce activities that work to the contrary." Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya is the embodiment of humility, therefore humility is his inherent treasure, so with the urge of humility he says: *mo sama patita nāi; tribhuvane dekho cāi, narottama pāvana nāma dhara* "O Lord Kṛṣṇa! No one in the three worlds is as fallen and wretched as me! After due consideration You can easily understand this!" This is the nature of inherent humility. The real sinners and rascals are actually fallen, but they do not consider themselves to be so. However, those great souls that are unstained by sin, purify the world with the mere touch of their footdust, consider themselves the most sinful and fallen rascals, that are a burden to the world. Therefore this humility is not ordinary; the goddess of devotion, who is endowed with great extraordinary attributes is born from it. This humility is the great quality and a special ornament of the devotee. Being adorned with this ornament of humility, the devotee attracts the grace of the Lord. Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: "O Lord! Redeem me and thus bear the name **the purifier of Narottama**. Amongst Your innumerable names this name will be the greatest witness to You being the saviour of the most fallen, and its broadcast will infuse hope within the hearts of the great sinners and rascals – *ghuṣuka saṁsāre nāma, patita pāvana śyāma, nija dāsa koro giridhara*. "O Śyāma! When the name 'purifier of Narottama', which indicates the limit of the redemption of the fallen, is broadcast throughout the world, then may it inspire the most fallen souls to worship Your lotus feet. O Giridhara! O Lord! Make this fallen soul Your servant and bless him by bestowing Your devotional service on him!" The purport of the use of the word **Giridhara** is that when Śrī Kṛṣṇa aborted the (Vrajavāsīs') worship of Indra and promoted the worship of Śrī Govardhana, Indra became enraged and engaged his cataclysmic clouds with the determination to inundate Vraja. Thus he created a terrible rainstorm. Then, to protect the people of Vraja, Śrī Kṛṣṇa held the huge Govardhana Hill on the little finger of His left hand for seven days and nights continuously, thus giving them a safe shelter. Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya is saying: "O Giridhara! The enemies like lust are showering me with vice, like the clouds of cataclysm, and make me float towards an ocean of suffering. Lord! Please give me a little place in the shade of the umbrella of Your feet and thus protect me. Thus Your name of **Giridhara** will be fulfilled." (38)

narottama boḍo duḥkhī, nātha! more koro sukhī,
tomāra bhajana saṅkīrtane
antarāya nāhi yāy, ei to parama bhaya,
nivedana kori anukṣaṇa (39)

"Narottama is very unhappy. O Lord, make me happy by allowing me to worship You and to chant Your holy name! The greatest fear I have is that my bad habits and material attachments will not go, hence I pray to You at every moment."

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *ṭīkā* – *antarāya* – *kāmādi kṛta vighnaḥ*.

Worship through chanting the holy name:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā– Now Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya is praying for *bhajana* in the form of *sankīrtana*, saying: *narottama boḍo duḥkhī, nātha! more koro sukhī, tomāra bhajana saṅkīrtane* "Narottama is very unhappy. O Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa! You are the saviour from this terrible suffering (the word *nātha* or 'lord' also means 'saviour' or 'protector') Therefore protect me from suffering and make me happy by maintaining me!" If Śrī Kṛṣṇa will say: "What will make you happy, tell Me?" Then the answer will be: "Your worship through **saṅkīrtana** will make me happy; therefore, make me happy by giving me the good fortune of Your worship." Out of great humility Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya considers himself to be an ordinary wordly person, but what he says serves like a reviving elixir for the benefit of the wordly people, who are mad after sense enjoyment. Worldly people, who have forgotten their intrinsic position, are mad after eating and other worldly enjoyments, considering this to be the greatest happiness. Although they have attained this human body, which is the vessel of discriminating intelligence, they are themselves creating the conditions for wandering through different miserable species of life and suffering in many ghastly hells. Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya himself has said: *viṣaya garalamaya, tāte māno sukhaçaya, sei sukha duḥkha kori māno* – "You think the poison of the sense objects consist of great happiness, but you should take that 'happiness' to be misery." After slight consideration everyone can understand that this illusory worldly happiness is the cause of indescribable misery—can that truly be called happiness? It can easily be understood that it is deep misery and agony instead. According to the philosophical thesis of Mahārṣi Gautama, the cessation of misery spells liberation. According to him there are 21 kinds of misery – the body, the six senses, the six sense objects and the six kinds of intelligence. These 19 factors are called 'misery' because they are abodes of suffering. Then there is happiness, for that culminates into misery and misery itself, that makes 21 kinds of suffering. In this way happiness is also to be known as misery. Actually there is no object in the material world which gives real happiness, hence it is said –

sukha nāi kabhu e saṁsāre; sukha āche māyāra opāre
sukha bole tumi dekho yāre; se tomāya duḥkha dibāra tare–
āche sukhera ākāra dhare; sarvātmā gilibāra tare
jemon keho nāginīre; puṣpa mālā bole pore
tāra biṣe sab aṅga jāre; kebā bāncābe tāre
sādhu dhanvantarī dhare; akapaṭe āśraya kore

*jhāḍāya bahire antare; tabe ḍubibe sukha sāyare*²²

"There is never any happiness in this material world. Happiness is there beyond the realm of illusion. That which you look at, thinking it will bring you happiness, will actually make you suffer. Assuming the form of happiness, it is there to swallow you from head to toe. Just as some people mistake a female snake to be a flower garland, and then their whole body fills up with poison—who will survive such an ordeal? Hold on to the **doctor named the sādhu** and take sincere shelter of him. He will cleanse you inside out and then you will swim in **an ocean of bliss**."

Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: *narottama boḍo duḥkhī*. We are all unhappy to some extent, but we lack the experience of unhappiness. The experience of misery is the touchstone of human life. Touching it, the iron heart, which is contaminated by sensuality, will become brightly golden with devotional aspirations! When mankind constantly experiences misery it can stretch out the hand towards Govinda's blissful lotus feet, by the grace of the saints. Finally they will be blessed with the attainment of the devotional service of Śrī Govinda's blissful lotus feet.

Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says, Śrī Kṛṣṇa's worship, in the form of congregational chanting, is genuine bliss! Its form of bliss or relish is revealed in the blissful and relishable forms, attributes and pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Through the devotional process of hearing and chanting the devotee can relish the full sweet flavours of these forms, attributes and pastimes. The worship that Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya is talking about, should be known to be the nine types of devotion, starting with hearing and chanting, and above that he again mentions *saṅkīrtana*. Although *saṅkīrtana* is already counted amongst the ninefold devotion, the blessed author reveals a special craving for this item, just to reveal its superexcellence. In Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta it is seen— *bhajanera madhye śreṣṭha nava vidhā bhakti, kṛṣṇa prema kṛṣṇa dite dhare mahā śakti. tāra madhye sarva śreṣṭha— nāma saṅkīrtana; niraparādha nāma hoite hoy prema dhana*. "Amongst all types of worship the nine types of devotion are the best, for they bear great power to bestow both Kṛṣṇa and love for Kṛṣṇa. Amongst them, the greatest is again *nāma saṅkīrtana*. The treasure of *prema* is attained by taking the holy name without committing offences." When many people join together to loudly sing, with the accompaniment of drums and cymbals, that is called ***saṅkīrtana***. This blesses oneself, others, and even all moving and immobile beings by hearing the holy name, and thus it exceeds even practices like *japa*. When the *nāma kīrtana* is also accompanied by meditation on the Lord's pastimes, etc., it is called *saṅkīrtana* (full, complete glorification). Amongst the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava-practitioners of *rāga bhajana* it is seen that *nāma kīrtana* is to be done in accompaniment with such meditation on the Lord's pastimes. Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has promulgated the tune known as *garāṇa hāṭī* and thus managed to embody the flavours of the *saṅkīrtana* of the Lord's holy names, attributes and pastimes, hence it is written — *saṅkīrtanānandaja manda hāsyā danta dyuti dyotita diṅ mukhāya. svedāśru-dhārā snapitāya tasmai namo namaḥ śrīla narottamāya* — "I offer my humble obeisances again and again to Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, whose body was showered with sweat- and teardrops during the *saṅkīrtana*, and whose teeth, that became visible because he smiled slightly due

²² This song was first published in the booklet '*bhava kūpe jivera gati*', compiled by my most worshipable 108 Śrī-Śrī Guru Mahāhāja.

to the ecstasy of *saṅkīrtana*, illuminated the horizon." This is the best means to come to know Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya as someone who was delighted to perform *saṅkīrtana*.

After this Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya makes another very valuable statement, saying—*antarāya nāhi jāy, ei se parama bhoy, nivedana kori anukṣaṇa* "I pray at every moment, for my greatest fear is that these obstacles to devotion will not leave me." The practice of devotion has such an inconceivable power that, in the absence of vices like offences, the practitioner will very swiftly be blessed with the attainment of *prema*, which is the fruit of worship. According to the gravity of the obstacles, the practitioner's attainment of *prema* will experience delay in *bhajana sādhana*. Those who take shelter of the lotus feet of Śrī Guru and Vaiṣṇavas and always keep an eye on the obstacles to *bhajana*, like offences, take very good care that no kind of obstacle will come to them. They are always careful to abandon such offences during their engagement in *bhajana*, and obstacles will not come to such careful practitioners. If by chance, through some bad association or some bad habit an obstacle will come to them, they become greatly repentant and will quickly abandon them, taking even stronger shelter of the grace of Śrī Guru and Vaiṣṇavas and surrendering to the lotus feet of the Lord. When the practitioner anxiously prays at the lotus feet of Śrī Guru, the Vaiṣṇavas and the Supreme Lord, he will always remain safe from the grip of these obstacles. In other words, the anxious prayers of the practitioner will release the Lord's grace on him, and as a result the obstacles will go far from him. Hence it is said—*nivedana kori anukṣaṇe* (39)

*āna kathā āna vyathā, nāhi yeno yāi tathā,
tomāra caraṇa smṛti sāje
avirata avirala, tuyā guṇa kala kala,
gāi yeno satera samāje (40)*

"Let me not go there where there are other (worldly, non-Kṛṣṇa-conscious) topics discussed, so that pain will not touch me. May my heart always be beautified by remembering Your lotus feet. May I always be able to sing Your glories in the assembly of saints with a sweet and inarticulate voice and with an undisturbed mind."

Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *ṭikā* – *āna kathā āna byathā - yatrānya kathāsti tatrānya vyathāsti; tatra nāhaṁ gacchāmi.*

Glorifications of the Lord's attributes –

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – In this *tripadī* the worshipable author offers a prayer to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, so that he may be immersed in the mellows of remembering these feet and become intoxicated by constantly glorifying Lord Hari in the company of the great saints, so that he can give up all topics and all painful connections that cause different evils to arise in the heart. First of all he prays to be able to give up all topics that do not deal with Kṛṣṇa by saying: *ān kothā ān byathā, nāhi jeno jāi tothā* – "Wherever topics are discussed that do

not deal with Kṛṣṇa, or mundane topics are discussed, there are also certainly other pains connected with non-Kṛṣṇa-topics. The mind cannot get scattered more through the hearing and chanting of topics that do not relate to Kṛṣṇa or His devotees, in other words topics of bodily subjects, than from any other kind of topic, for the consciousness is like a mirror that reflects whatever topic is in front of us. Thus the consciousness gets accustomed to these subjects. According to their conditioning human beings contemplate dull mundane objects, become attached to them and start hankering for them. When that hankering is obstructed anger will arise, from anger delusion, or inability to see what is to be done and what is not to be done, will come, from delusion comes loss of memory, or destruction of intelligence and this accomplishes one's wholesale destruction. This means that one will have to suffer a hellish existence or will have to transmigrate through 8,400,000 species of life. This is the poisonous result of contemplating the sense objects. In Śrī Gītā (2.62 and 63) it is seen –

*dhyāyato viṣayān puṁsaḥ saṅgas teṣūpajāyate
saṅgāt sañjayate kāmaḥ kāmāt krodho'bhijayate
krodhād bhavati sammohaḥ sammohāt smṛti vibhramaḥ
smṛti bhraṁśād buddhi nāśo buddhi nāśāt praṇaśyati*

Through discussion of alternative topics this terrible and severe pain will come. The Supreme Lord is the only qualified object of our attachment or love, but when we contact other topics our heart's attachment will turn towards the sense objects. Then our attachments will be polluted, steal our virtuous tendencies and render us penniless. In Śrīmad Bhāgavata (10.14.36) it is seen—

*tāvad rāgādaya stenās tāvat kārāgrhaṁ gṛham
tāvan moho'ṅghri nigāḍo yāvat kṛṣṇa na te janaḥ*

Brahmā said: "O Kṛṣṇa! As long as the people do not turn to You, their attachments will act like thieves on them, their houses will remain prisons for them, and their illusion will remain their shackles!" In the Vaiṣṇava Toṣaṇī-commentary on this verse it is written: *tatra nirupādhi premāspadasyātmano'py ātmatvena tvam eva rāgasya svābhāvika parama योगyāśrayaḥ. atas tal lakṣaṇa nija svāminam anupalabhyaiva bhramann asau janānām śubha vāsanā rūpām tvad bhajana sāmāgrīṁ haraṁś caura eva. tatas tad anuvartino'pi tādrśāḥ. atha gṛhamayo viṣayo'pyavaśiṣṭa daṇḍanāyaiva kārāgārī-kṛtaḥ syāt. tat pādānusmaraṇa virodhi bodhapradatvāt. moho'pyasau tena tanāvasthā-vaiśiṣṭyaṁ prāptas tatra svayaṁ nigāḍāyate* – "You are the natural abode of everyone's causeless love, because You are the Self of selves. Therefore You are the best shelter for everyone's love. When the living entities don't get attached to You as their master, as defined above, their attachments will act like thieves that steal their auspicious aspirations in the form of the ingredients of their worship from them, and greed and delusion will follow. The followers of attachment, tendencies like compassion and submission, will be polluted accordingly. The blind well of household life, which is filled with ugly sense objects, will be like a prison house for their punishment, for this household life is providing consciousness that will cause forgetfulness of You, and their illusion will also attain such a condition that it will tightly bind them like balls and chains around the feet."

These should be known to be poisonous results in discussing topics that are not related to Kṛṣṇa.

āna kothā means giving up discussing sensual topics with materialists and instead engaging in hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa with the saints. Then the *sādhaka* will attain the greatly praiseworthy and acceptable *kṛṣṇa-byathā*, Kṛṣṇa-consciousness, instead of the severe agony of mundane life. In other words, they will swiftly attain love for the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet and become blessed with the ***viraha byathā***, the agony of separation from Śrī Kṛṣṇa's audience and personal devotional service. This *viraha byathā* for Śrī Kṛṣṇa may appear like other kinds of agony, but after due consideration it should be known as ***most relishable***. Therefore the soul yearns for the pain of separation from Kṛṣṇa. The reason for this is that *prema* has two bodies – one is meeting and the other is separation. The loving devotees are always immersed in a great ocean of blissful meetings with Śrī Kṛṣṇa and sorrowful separation from Him. There is absolutely no experience of this transcendental happiness and distress in worldly feelings of happiness and distress, for worldly happiness and sorrow are each others' opposites. When there is happiness there is no awareness of pain and when there is pain there is no awareness of happiness. But the loving devotees simultaneously enjoy the bliss of meeting with Kṛṣṇa and the agony of separation from Him – *bahir viṣa jvālā hoy, antare ānandamoy, kṛṣṇa premāra adbhuta carita* (C.C.) – "Outwardly it burns like poison, but inwardly it is blissful – such is the wonderful character of love for Kṛṣṇa!"

Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: "Wherever there are other topics and other pains, *nāhi jeno jāi tothā* – I will never go there." And then he gives a very simple solution to where one should go if one wants to avoid being touched by mundane, non-Kṛṣṇa-topics– *tomāra caraṇa smṛti sāje* "O Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa! May my heart always be decorated by remembrance of Your lotus feet!" Later (in *tripadī* nr.60) he will say: *manera smarāṇa prāṇa* – Remembrance of the Lord is the very life force of the mind and the mind is dead if it does not remember Him. When there is life in the body the jackals and dogs will not approach it, but they find great happiness in eating up the corpse. Similarly, the remembrance of Hari that dwells in the mind will not allow the lust and anger that arises from discussing non-Kṛṣṇa-topics in. Lust and anger can only rejoice in the mind which is devoid of remembrance of Hari. Hence it is written in the Garuḍa Purāṇa –

*ekasminn apyatīkrānte muhūrte dhyāna varjite
dasyubhir mūṣitenaiva yuktam ākranditum bhṛśam*

"If even one moment passes without remembering Śrī Hari, the *sādhaka* should cry out loud like someone who has been robbed of all his possessions by highwaymen." The blessed author thus wants to increase the beauty of his own mind and consciousness by calling the remembrance of Śrī Hari the all-in-all of his mind.

After this he prays for the good fortune of being allowed to become absorbed in glorifying Śrī Hari's attributes in the company of the saints by saying: *avirata avikala, tuyā guṇa kola kola, gāi jeno satera samāje* – "O Lord! Please allow me to sing about Your attributes and pastimes in a sweet, inarticulate voice (***kala kala***) in the company of the saints with an undisturbed (***avikala***) mind." There can be no greater gain than to attain the good fortune of reaching the Lord or the service of the great souls and singing the glories of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's

teaching Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrīman Mahāprabhu said: *ei sabher vidhā tyāga aviddhā karaṇa; akaraṇe doṣa koile bhaktira lambhana* (C.C. Madhya 24, 342) "You should recommend the avoidance of mixed Ekādaśīs and the observance of pure Ekādaśīs. You should also describe the fault in not observing this, which results in discrepancy in devotion." About the faults and reactions to non-observance it is written in Śrī Nārādīya: *yāni kāni ca pāpāni brahma hatyāsamāni ca; annam āsṛitya tiṣṭhanti samprānte hari vāsare; tāni pāpānyavāpnoti bhuiṅjāno hari vāsare* "All the sins of the world, like murdering a brahmin, take shelter of grains on the holy day of Śrī Harivāsara (Ekādaśī). All these sins are assumed by one who eats grains on Ekādaśī." In the Skanda Purāṇa it is seen: *mātrhā pitṛhā caiva bhrātrhā guruhā tathā; ekādaśyām tu yo bhunkte viṣṇulokāc cyuto bhavet*. "Anyone who eats grains on Ekādaśī assumes the sins of killing his mother, father or Guru and will fall from Viṣṇuloka forever." In the Vaiṣṇava Tantra is written about the attainment of devotion as a result of observing the vow of Ekādaśī – *ekādaśī mahā puṇyā viṣṇor īśasya ballabhā, tasyām upoṣito yas tu dvādaśyām pūjayed dharim. tasya pāpāni naśyanti viṣṇau bhaktiś ca jāyate* "The holy day of Ekādaśī is very dear to Śrī Viṣṇu, and anyone who fasts on Ekādaśī and serves Śrī Hari on Dvādaśī (the following day) will be freed from all kinds of sin and will attain devotion to Viṣṇu." In this way Śrī Haribhakti Vilāsa's 12th Chapter quotes hundreds of scriptural statements to glorify the main Vaiṣṇava-fast. It is also described to be a fault to give up Vaiṣṇava vows and to take to other vows – *ekādaśīm parityajya yo'nyavratam upāsate; saṅkarastha mahāratnam tyaktvā loṣṭram hi yācate* (Tattva Sāgara) "He who gives up Ekādaśī (including all other Vaiṣṇava vows) and begins to follow other vows, is giving up a jewel already in the hand, replacing it with a clod of mud." Therefore the practitioner who wishes benefit must give up other vows.

The aspirant for devotion must also give up other charities. Other charities means gifts given to others but Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the Vaiṣṇavas, or unworthy persons. Desiring love for Śrī Viṣṇu one must donate to the Vaiṣṇavas. *tasmād viṣṇu prasādāya vaiṣṇavān paritoṣayet. tasmāi deyaṁ tato grāhyaṁ sa ca pūjya yathā hyaham*. "To satisfy Śrī Viṣṇu one must satisfy the Vaiṣṇavas." "Donate to the Vaiṣṇavas and accept gifts from them, for Vaiṣṇavas are as worshipable as Me." Such scriptural statements show the glories of donating to the Vaiṣṇavas. Donations to Viṣṇu's devotees are transcendental. Other than transcendental, devotion-yielding donations are mentioned in Gītā (17.20-22) as *sāttvika*, *rājasik* and *tāmasik*

*dātavyam iti yad dānaṁ diyate'nupakāriṇe; deśe kāle ca pātre ca tad dānaṁ sāttvikam smṛtam
yat tu pratyupakārārtham phalam uddiśya vā punaḥ; diyate ca parikliṣṭam tad dānaṁ rājasam
smṛtam*

adeśa kāle yad dānam apātrebhyas ca diyate; asatkṛtam avajñātam tat tāmasam udāhṛtam

"Those who are aware that they must give charity, who consider time, place and recipient and who donate without expecting favours in return, give *sāttvika* charity. Those who desire favours (like residence in heaven) in return for their charity and go through hardships for this, give *rājasika* charity, and those who do not consider time, place and recipient and give without proper respect are in the mode of darkness." All these donations within the modes of nature are 'other donations' that do not yield devotion to Kṛṣṇa, therefore the aspirant must give up such charity. Those who desire love for Viṣṇu give transcendental gifts to the Vaiṣṇavas, which yields the attainment of devotion to Kṛṣṇa.

Then again *nahi koro vastu jñāna*. Here the words *vastu jñāna* mean that the devotee has no need for any other knowledge from knowledge of physical matters, that belong to the illusory phenomenal world, up to knowledge of the undifferentiated *brahma*, except triple knowledge on Kṛṣṇa, devotion to Him and being His servant. Acyuta is the Supreme Substance, knowing which there remains nothing else to be known, and attaining which nothing remains to be attained – *vinācyutāt vastvaparām na vācyam*. It is this substance that has been outlined by Śrīmad Bhāgavata, the essence of all Vedānta – *vedyam vāstavam atra vastu śivadam* (1.1.2). *sādhana*, *bhajana* and living in Vraja are all meant for knowing this Supreme Substance. Śrīla Līlāsuka said, after experiencing this Supreme Substance in Vṛndāvana :

*asti svas taruṇī karāgra vigalat kalpa prasūnāplutaṁ
vastu prastuta veṇu nāda laharī nirvāṇa nirvyākulam
srasta srasta niruddha nīvi vilasad gopī sahasrāvṛtaṁ
hasta nyastana tāpa vargam akhilodāraṁ kiśorākṛti*

(Śrī Kṛṣṇa Karṇāmṛta – 2)

"In Śrī Vṛndāvana there eternally is an **adolescent form** who is showered by the young girls from heaven with flowers that fall from the heavenly wish-yielding trees, who is agitated by the captivatingly sweet sounds of His flute, who is surrounded by thousands of cowherd girls whose girdles are slackening, whose hands hold liberation for His surrendered devotees and who is generously disposed towards everyone." When the mind is absorbed in this incomparably sweet substance all other substances become tasteless.

Then again *anya sevā*. The Vaiṣṇavas are forbidden to serve others than Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His devotees or to worship other gods than Kṛṣṇa. The practitioner's service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His deity is eternal and along with that there is a rule to serve the Vaiṣṇavas. The Lord told Uddhava that serving the Vaiṣṇavas is even more important than serving Himself – *mad bhakta pūjyābhyādhikā* (Bhāg. 11.19.21) *abhyādhikā mat pūjāto'pi tatra mama santoṣa viśeṣāt* (Krama Sandarbha *ṭikā*) "Knowing that serving My devotees is pleasing Me more than serving Me Myself, one should serve the devotees with special care." *tasmād viṣṇu prasādāya vaiṣṇavān paritoṣayet. prasādaṁ sumukho viṣṇus tenaiva syān na saṁśayaḥ* (Itihāsa Samuccaya) "One who desires the satisfaction of Viṣṇu must satisfy the Vaiṣṇavas. There is no doubt about it that they will thus attain the full grace of Viṣṇu." Therefore the practitioner does not serve anyone but Kṛṣṇa and His devotees and he will never worship any other godhead; this has been previously described in the prohibition of worshipping other deities. It is mentioned time and again that this causes special ruin to one's exclusive devotion, that is why the pure devotees are constantly warned about this.

Finally it is said: *hā hā kṛṣṇa! boli boli, beḍābo ānanda kori, mane āra nāhi yeno dujā'*, meaning: Giving up all connections with everything that is not connected with Kṛṣṇa, one becomes a pure devotee and thus begins to see the world as wholly void out of separation from Kṛṣṇa. Then he wanders around weeping: "*hā hā kṛṣṇa!* Where are You? Show Yourself to me!" In this way he forgets about the world and will become so absorbed in Kṛṣṇa-consciousness that he will be truly blessed with the relish of transcendental bliss. Weeping in separation from Kṛṣṇa and lamenting is to be known as the most coveted goal of life for the devotee, the deepest ecstasy. Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya says: "Weeping out of separation from

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the most blissful condition, let there be no doubt about this in my mind, hence:
mane āra nāhi jeno dujā (41)

jīvane maraṇe gati, rādhā-kṛṣṇa prāṇapati,
doṅhāra piriti rasa sukhe
yugala saṅgati yārā, mora prāṇa gale hārā,
ei kathā rahu mora buke (42)

"Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, the monarchs of my heart, are my shelter, in this life and in the next. Those who have become the eternal associates of the Divine Couple, having become overwhelmed by Their blissful mutual love. These *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs* are the necklaces around my heart and around my neck. May this matter always remain in my heart."

Rādhā-kṛṣṇa – The monarchs of my heart!

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – After this Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya shows the greatest example in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sādhakas'* beloved *rāga bhakti* by revealing his yearning after the merciful gift of Śrīman Mahāprabhu – *yugala bhajana*. In this way he shows the *sādhakas* expertise in *yugala bhajana* – *jīvane maraṇe gati, rādhā-kṛṣṇa prāṇa-pati, doṅhāra piriti rasa sukhe. yugala saṅgati yārā, mora prāṇa gole hārā, ei kothā rahu mora buke* – **Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa** are the monarchs of my heart and in life or in death, meaning in this life and in the next, they are my *gati* or my supreme shelter. The *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs* who are always greedy after the mutual *rasika* happiness of the Yugala, and that are always in Their company, are my very life and the necklaces around my neck. May they always dwell in my heart."

First Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya speaks about his loyalty to his beloved deities – **rādhā-kṛṣṇa prāṇa pati**. The goal of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas is **rādhā-dāśya- mañjarī bhāva**. This is the merciful gift of Śrīman Mahāprabhu and the dearest subject preached by the six Gosvāmīs, headed by Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana. According to the Gosvāmīs this is **the greatest and most extraordinary goal of life**. This is the highest step on the staircase of advancement to the spiritual kingdom that the *jīvas* can ascend to through their *sādhana bhajana*. *rādhā kṛṣṇa prāṇa pati* means that Śrī Rādhārāṇī is the goddess of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas' hearts and taking shelter of Her lotus feet is their shelter at Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. When taking shelter at the lotus feet of a bonafide Guru, the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sādhaka* becomes acquainted with his/her *siddha svarūpa* (spiritual body) as Śrī Rādhā's maidservant or *mañjarī*. (along with an introduction to her eleven-fold spiritual identity: name, age, complexion and dress etc.). Their *rāga bhajana* pivots around this internal worship involving meditation on and establishing a self esteem in this *svārūpa*. The scriptures tell us of *bhūta śuddhi* during the worship of the Lord. Meditating on one's *siddha svarūpa* and establishing one's self esteem in this is the real *bhūta śuddhi* of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmī has written – *tatra bhūta śuddhir nijābhilaṣita bhagavat sevaupayika tat pārṣada deha*

bhāvanā paryantyaiva tat sevaika puruṣārthibhiḥ kāryā nijānukūlyāt (Bhakti Sandarbha 286th Paragraph) – "Those whose only goal of life it is to serve God, meditate on a spiritual body for themselves which is an eternal associate of the Lord and which is suitable for serving the Lord. This will suit their worship very well. This is their true *bhūta śuddhi*." *devo bhūtvā devaṁ yajet. nādevo devam arcayet.* "The *sādhaka* must become a god himself to worship the Supreme Lord." "Don't worship the Supreme Lord without being a god yourself." These scriptural rules and prohibitions definitely show that the devotee who wishes to serve the Supreme Lord must think of his spiritual self in the form of an eternal associate of the Lord. Such a Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *pārśada deha* (associate-body) is a ***rādhā kiṅkarī*** or ***mañjarī-body***. In other words, Śrī Rādhārāṇī is their heart's goddess, dearer to them than their own lives millions of times over, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Lord of their lives on the basis of the fact that He is the Lord of Her life. In this connection Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has used the words *rādhā-kṛṣṇa prāṇa pati*. Hence Śrī Yugala Kīśora is his ***jīvane maraṇe gati***, the supreme and only shelter both in this life and in the next. By using the words *rādhā-kṛṣṇa prāṇapati* the blessed author mentions his loyalty to his chosen deity and by saying *jīvane maraṇe gati* he mentions his firm surrender to Their lotus feet.

In the words *jīvane maraṇe gati* he shows his surrender to the Śrī Yugala in both *sādhaka* self esteem as well as in *siddha deha* self esteem. In *sādhaka* self esteem the *sādhaka* thinks of himself as 'I am one worshipper in *mañjarī bhāva*' and in the mentally conceived *bhāva deha* (body of transcendental ecstasy) he is immersed in the flavours of meditating on the relishable service and sweetness of the Yugala Kīśora. This is another wonderful condition of relish. Those who have even a slight experience with *mañjarī bhāva* can understand this. In it the *sādhaka* thinks: 'Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are my only shelter, in life or in death.' In life They protect me from evil and bless me by giving me the good fortune of *bhajana*, *rati* and *prema*, and in death They are so kind to bless me by giving me the service of Their divine lotus feet, or, if I'm not suitable for that service to Their blessed lotus feet, They can keep me wherever They wish. Their wish will become my very life." In this way the surrendered *sādhakas* keep the lotus feet of the Yugala Kīśora as the essence of everything and become carefree and free from doubts throughout their *bhajana* lives, in life or in death.

When the *sādhaka* reaches the level of *rati*, he perceives his *siddha svarūpa* day and night and he forgets about his present body. In that state of *siddha svarūpa* he also considers the lotus feet of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa his only shelter, in life or in death. Although there is indeed no question of life or death within the *siddha svarūpa*, still in the human-like transcendental pastimes the *svarūpāviṣṭa sādhaka* considers himself as an ordinary soul, subject to birth, death, old age and disease as do indeed even the *nitya siddhā gopas* and *gopīs*. In this way the flavours of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's sweet human-like pastimes are nicely achieved.

After mentioning his *upāsya niṣṭhā* (fixation in a certain worshipable deity) he mentions his *upāsanā niṣṭhā* (fixation in a certain means of worship) – *donhāra pirīti rasa sukhe, yugala saṅgati yārā...mora prāṇa gole hārā...ei kothā rahu mora buke* – Those *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs* who are beside themselves from Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's blissful mutual love and who are Their eternal companions, are like necklaces around my heart and around my neck.....let this topic always remain in my heart." There are two kinds of *madhurā rati* – 1) *sambhogecchāmayi* and 2) *tad-bhāvecchātmikā* (*sakhībhāva*). In the manifest pastimes or the pastimes of gradual growth the hearts of the *nitya siddhā* Śrī Rādhā, Lalitā and others were

stolen by some unknown, most sweet and beautiful man, and they had also offered everything to his lotus feet. In due course of time they understood that it was Śrī Vrajendranandana, who is the embodiment of beauty and sweetness. When during some pastime Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *darśana* was attained, then the hearts of Lalitā and others beheld the sweetness of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's mutual feelings and they became devoid of the desire to attain Śrī Kṛṣṇa for themselves as heroines; rather, they became greedy to **relish the sweetness of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava as a couple**. For instance, the *mahājanas* sing as follows about the pastime of Kṛṣṇa defeating the Kāliya-snake—

*kāliya damana dina māha; kālindī kūla kadambaka chāho
koto śata vraja nava bālā; pekhaluṃ janu thira vijurika mālā
tohe kahoṅ subala sāṅgāti; taba dhari hāma nā jāno dina rāti
tahi dhanī-maṇi dui cāri; tahi mana mohinī eka nārī
so rahu majhu mone paiṭhī; manasija dhūme ghume nāhi diṭhi
anukhana tahika samādhi; ko jāne kaichana viraha veyādhi
dine dine kṣīna bhelo dehā; govinda dāsa koho aiche nava lehā*

"How many hundreds of Vraja-gopīs didn't I see under the shade of the Kadamba-tree on the bank of the Yamunā on the day I subdued the Kāliya-snake? I tell you, O friend Subala! Then (I was so startled that) I didn't know whether it was day or night! Amongst them there were about two or four jewellike girls, and among them there was again one particularly mind-enchanting girl. She entered My mind and the resultant smoke of Cupid did not allow me to sleep anymore. I am now constantly meditating on Her; who knows how the pain of separation feels? My body becomes skinnier and weaker every day." Govinda dāsa says: "Such are the ways of new, young love!"

Relishing the sweetness of the sight of the Divine Pair as They fell in love, relishing the bliss of Their mutual love, and being overwhelmed by this, Śrī Lalitā and the others carry equal affection, or *sama snehā*, for Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and remain ever in Their association. Rūpa Mañjarī and others are *rādhā snehādhikā*, which means that they love Śrī Rādhā more than Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, although they are Śrī Rādhā's girlfriends, they are eager for Her service and thus remain with Her forever. This should be understood to be their *nitya siddha bhāva* (eternally perfect feelings) which is thus manifest in the *krama līlā* (gradually evolving manifest pastimes). In *mañjarī bhāva* Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: "These *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs* are the necklaces around my neck and around my heart. Just as a necklace beautifies the body, similarly they beautify both my body and my spiritual self." *ei kothā rohu more buke* "May these feelings always remain in my heart, so that no other mood can ever take possession of my heart." '*yugala saṅgati yārā mora prāṇa gole hārā*' ("The confidantes of the Yugala are the necklaces around my neck") is sometimes also read as '*yugala bhajana yārā, premānande bhāse tārā*' ("Those who worship the Yugala all float in ecstatic love") This means that: "Those *sādhakas* who have adopted *sakhī-* or *mañjarī bhāva* who become happy by experiencing the bliss that Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa experience from relishing Each others sweet *rasa*, forget everything about their personal happiness and float in ecstatic love by engaging in *yugala bhajana* – this thought is always on my mind. In other words, my heart is always yearning for this." Such yearning is to be known as the sole cause for *rāga bhakti*. (42)

yugala caraṇa sevā, yugala caraṇa dhievā,
yugalei manera pirīti.
yugala kiśora rūpa, kāma rati gaṇa bhūpa,
mane rahu o-līlā ki rīti (43)

"May the devotional service of the Yugala's lotus feet remain on my mind. May I meditate on Their feet and may my mind love this Yugala Kiśora, that are the monarchs over all Cupids and Ratis, and remain fixed on Their pastimes!"

The monarchs over all Cupids and Ratis :

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – In the previous *tripadī* the blessed author has mentioned the loyalty of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas to their worship and to the object of their worship, and in this *tripadī* he describes the sorts of worship of the Divine Pair that exist. The worship of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas consists of *rāga mārga* linked to *vidhi mārga*. Their main item of *rāga bhakti*, namely *smaraṇa*, is linked to items of *vidhi bhakti* such as hearing, chanting and temple worship. Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has written –

śravaṇotkīrtanādīni vaidhi bhaktyuditāni tu
yānyaṅgāni ca tānyatra vijñeyāni maṇiṣibhiḥ (B.R.S.1.2.296)

śravaṇotkīrtanādīni guru pādāśrayādīni tvākṣepa labdhāni. tāni vinā vraja lokānugatyādikaṁ kim api na siddhetarthah. maṇiṣibhir iti maṇiṣayā vimṛṣyaiva svīya bhāva samucitānyeva tāni kāryāṇiḥ na tu tad viruddhāni. tāni cārccana bhaktāvahaṁgrahopāsana mudrā nyāsa dvārakā dhyāna rukmiṇyādi pūjanāni āgama śāstra vihītānyapi naiva kāryāni. bhakti mārge'smin kiñcit kiñcid aṅga vaikalye'pi doṣa bhāva śravaṇāt (ṭikā of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī)

The purport of this is that all the 64 items of *bhajana* that are mentioned in this book, the process of hearing and chanting in *vaidhi bhakti* (following items like taking shelter of the lotus feet of Śrī Guru) are also suitable for *rāgānugā mārga* or are depended on in it. Without practising items of *vaidhi bhakti* like hearing, chanting and deity worship, *rāga mārga's* allegiance to the people of Vraja will not yield perfection at all. The wise will practise the items according to their own feelings, but do not practise unfavorable items. This means that in formal worship the Vedic scriptures may prescribe worshipping oneself, using *mudrās* and *nyāsa*, meditating on Dvārakā, worshipping Rukmiṇi and other queens, but practitioners of *rāga bhakti* reject these practices. It must be known that slight lapses in practice of devotion will not do any harm."

Hence Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya mentions the different items of Yugala worship by saying: *yugala caraṇa sevā, yugala caraṇa dhievā, yugalei manera pirīti* "May the devotional service of the Yugala's lotus feet remain on my mind. May I meditate on Their feet and may my mind love this Yugala Kiśora." Here the word *caraṇa* must be understood as being used out of great devotion. Actually this is a prayer for the service or worship of the Divine Pair, for meditation on Them and for the opportunity to place the mind's love fully in Them. In *rāga mārga* the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas' *bhajana* is not performed according to scriptural injunctions, as is the case with *vaidhi bhakti* worshippers– their worship is driven by sacred

passion or sacred greed. Therefore the flow of their *bhajana*, consisting of hearing, chanting, remembering and worshipping the deity, continues with the mind filled with love for the most favorite Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava. In this way their each and every item of worship will remain very juicy and honey-sweet. One must remember that the practitioner will not be able to keep love for the lotus feet of the desired Divine Couple within the heart on his own strength, this must be known to be solely depended on the grace of Śrī Guru, Vaiṣṇava and Bhagavān. In the appendix to his description of *rāgānugā bhakti* in his scripture Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu (1.2.309), Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has written –

*kṛṣṇa tad bhakta kārūṇya mātra lābhaika hetukā
puṣṭimārgatayā kaiścid iyaṁ rāgānugocyate*

"The only and paramount cause of the attainment of *rāgānugā bhakti* is the grace of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His pure devotees. Hence some (Vallabha Sampradāyīs) call this *rāgānugā mārga* also *puṣṭi mārga* (the path of grace)." *mātra padasya vidhimārge kutracit karmādi samarpaṇam api dvāraṁ bhavatīti tad vicchedārthaḥ prayoga iti bhāva* (ṭikā- Śrī Jīva Pāda) 'Sometimes the offering of fruitive activities may be a gateway to *vidhi bhakti*, but in *rāgānugā bhakti* only **grace** can be the cause." By the grace and through the association of like-minded *rāgānugā* devotees who are fixed in *bhajana* a fortunate practitioner commences his *rāgānugā bhajana* and as a result of serving like-minded Śrī Guru and Vaiṣṇavas he will gradually be infused with a corresponding amount of grace that his mind and heart will be showered with the juice of love for the Divine Pair. This is the essential purport of the above point.

Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: "I will serve the Divine Pair with a love-showered mind and I will similarly serve Their deities and meditate on Them." Here external service with the practitioner's body, according to one's ability and taste, with sixteen or five ingredients, and mental service with mental ingredients in a body of feelings, as well as meditation on Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, is mentioned. *viśeṣato rūpādi cintanaṁ dhyānam* "Detailed thoughts on specific forms is called meditation". When the describing the sweetness of the Dual Forms he is meditating on, the blessed author says: *yugala kiśora rūpa, kāma-rati gaṇa bhūpa* "The forms of the Divine Pair reign like monarchs over millions of Cupids and Ratis." Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the master over millions of Cupids; even the luster of His toenails captivates millions of Cupids – *koṭi madana vimohanāśeṣa cittākaraśaka sahaja madhuratara lāvaṇyāmṛtāpārāṇavena mahānubhāva-cayenānubhūyamāna tat tan mahābhāva nivahena śrī madana gopāla rūpeṇādhunāpi vṛndāvane virājamānatvāt* (Sāraṅga Raṅgadā) "He who attracts the hearts of millions of Cupids and everyone in the universe with the boundless, billowing ocean of His natural nectarean luster, is now manifest in Śrī Vṛndāvana in the form of Śrī Madana Gopāla. Experienced souls, meaning loving devotees, can experience that sweetness according to the amount of love they cherish for Him. Above all the Vraja-goddesses who are endowed with *mahā bhāva* can relish the sweetness of the transcendental youthful Cupid Śrīman Madana Gopāla to the utmost." Therefore how insignificant are millions of Cupids compared to this transcendental youthful Cupid! Then again, when He is in the company of His enchantress Śrī Rādhārāṇī, this huge ocean of physical beauty surges up with even higher billowing waves! Śyāma's form also causes huge waves on the ocean of Śrī Rādhā's sweetness!! How most insignificant are

millions of Ratis also in front of this sweetness of Śrī Rādhā!! Nothing in the world can be compared to Her! Hence the experienced souls say –

*rākāneka vicitra candra uditaḥ premāmṛta jyotiṣāṃ
vīcībhiḥ paripūrayed aḡaṇita brahmāṇḍa koṭim yadi
vṛndāraṇya nikuṅja sīmaṇi tad ābhāsāḥ param lakṣyase
bhāvenaiva yadā tadaiva tulaye rādhe tava śrī mukham*

"O Rādhe! If millions of universes would be filled with the waves of the ambrosial love-effulgence of many simultaneously rising wonderful full moons, it would only slightly resemble the beauty of Your face, that is visible of the arbours of Vṛndāvana. I can only make a comparison with an idea!" (Rādhā Rasa Sudhānidhi – 126)

After this the blessed author prays that he may always remember the pastimes of the Divine Pair – *mane rahu o līlā ki rīti*. "May the *rasika* pastimes of the Divine Pair always remain on my mind." The self-manifest pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Mādhava are automatically arising in the purified heart of the practitioner. The practitioner endeavours in his practice solely for the purpose of purifying his consciousness and for attaining the grace of the *līlā*. This practice of recollection is the internal practice of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas' *rāḡānugā mārga*. – *bāhya antara ihāra dui to sādhana; bāhya sādhaḡa deha kore śravaṇa kīrtana. mane nija siddha deha koriyā bhāvana; rātri dina cinte rādhā-kṛṣṇera caraṇa* (C.C.) "There are two kinds of devotional practice – engaging in the process of hearing and chanting in the external, practitioners' body and meditating on Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet day and night in the mentally conceived spiritual body." (43)

*daśanete tṛṇa dhari, hā hā kiśora kiśori,
caraṇābje nivedana kori
vraja rāja kumāra śyāma, vṛṣabhānu nandinī nāma,
śrī rādhikā rāmā manohārī (44)*

"Keeping a straw between my teeth I pray to their lotus feet: "O Kiśora and Kiśori! O Prince of Vraja, Śyāma! O daughter of king Vṛṣabhānu, Śrī Rādhikā, O enchanting young girl!"

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *ṭikā*: *he śrī rādhikādinām rāmāṇām manohārin śrī kṛṣṇa.*

Humble petition :

Sudhākāṇikā vyākhyā – In this *tripadī* the blessed author, who is a great king of loving devotion, humbly petitions the lotus feet of his beloved deity– *daśanete tṛṇa dhari, hā hā kiśora kiśori, caraṇābje nivedana kori* "Holding a straw between my teeth, O Kiśora and Kiśori, I submit this at Your lotus feet!" Humility is the very life force of devotional practice; without humility devotion is as if lifeless. From humility a limitless flow of *prema* arises and

from *prema* again such humility arises. This is how Śrī Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta describes the interaction of love and humility in terms of cause and effect. The limit of this humility is manifest within the *gopīs* as they feel the pangs of separation from Śrī Kṛṣṇa – *dainyas tu paramam premnaḥ paripākeṇa janyate. tāsāṃ gokula nārīnām iva kṛṣṇa-viyogataḥ* (Bṛ.Bhāg. 2.5.224) *dr̥ṣṭāntenānena śrī kṛṣṇasyānugraha viśeṣataḥ prāyas tan mādḥuryānubhavādinaiva prema viśeṣodayāt tad virāhe dainya viśeṣo jāyata iti dhvanitam (ṭīkā)* "Humility is manifest as the genuine culmination of *prema*. The paramount humility which was manifest within the women of Gokula as they were separated from Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is understood to be the ultimate phase of *prema*. In the example of the women of Gokula it is understood that from such a special mercy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and through their great experience of His sweetness such special love had arisen, and that in the wake of this *prema* their special humility has also arisen. And again amongst these cowherd women Śrī Rādhārāṇī is again everyone's crown jewel. Some of this ocean of humility is also infused in the maidservants that have taken shelter of Her, when they suffer the pangs of separation from Her or from the Divine Pair. Such extraordinary humility was manifest in the Gosvāmīs like Śrī Rūpa and Raghunātha. Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura Mahāśaya was also one of Śrī Rādhārāṇī's dearest maidservants in Vraja named **Campaka Mañjarī**, hence when he feels separation from Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava this extraordinary humility also arises within his heart. In great humility he says: *Hā hā Kīśora! Kīśori! Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava! Holding a straw between my teeth, I submit something to Your lotus feet!*" The great sinless saints who purify the whole world with the touch of their footdust are so humble that they consider themselves like grazing cattle, hence they pray with straws between their teeth. With such humble conduct the greatly pure-hearted and experienced saints cause the Lord's heart to melt greatly. When Śrī Rūpa Sanātana attained the audience of Śrīman Mahāprabhu in Rāmakeli Grāma and held straws between their teeth to submit their anxious prayers unto Him, the Lord melted from their humility and said :

śuni prabhu kohe – śuno rūpa dabīr khās; tumi dui bhāi mora purātana dāsa
āji hoite donhāra nāma – rūpa sanātana; dainya chāro, tomāra dainye phāte mora mana

"When the Lord heard (their humble prayers) He said: "Hear Me, O Rūpa and Dabīr Khās – you two brothers are My old servants. From today on your names are Rūpa and Sanātana. **Give up your humily**, for your humility **breaks My heart.**" (C.C. Madhya Ch.1)

By exclaiming *hā hā kīśora kīśori!* Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya Mahāśaya reveals his heart's lamentation, born of love in separation. Holding a straw between his teeth he prays to the lotus feet of the Yugala Kīśora, as he actually attains a vision of Them. When his eyes and mind attain that vision they merge with it, there is no more need for prayer; he begins to describe the sweet forms of the Divine Pair. First he describes the sweet form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa–*vraja rāja kumāra śyāma, vṛṣabhānu nandinī nāma, śrī rādhikā rāmā manohārī* "O son of Nanda Mahārāja! O Śyāma! O thief of the minds of Śrī Vṛṣabhānu's daughter named Śrī Rādhikā and the women of Vraja!" When he has this transcendental vision of Śrī Nandanandana it is as if ecstasy takes a personal shape within the eyes and mind of Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya. He addresses Śrī Kṛṣṇa as Śrī Nandanandana. He who caused the Original Personality of Godhead to descend to earth through his extraordinary parental love and thus inundated all the people of the world in the mellows of transcendental ecstasy, certainly deserves the name

Nanda. *nandayati jagad iti nanda* – "He who delights the world is named Nanda." And his blissful son is Śrī Vraja-rāja Nandana.

As he has a good view at this blissful man in this transcendental vision, suddenly his eyes are filled with a blackish light that illuminates the horizon. Hence he addresses Him with **Śyāma!** After that he sees Śrī Rādhārāṇī who is captivated by Śyāmasundara's beauty and relishes Śyāma's sweetness through the cups of Her eyes. This captivation with His form is crystallised within Her eyes! Hence the blessed author says– *vṛṣabhānu nandinī nāma śrī rādhikā rāmā manohāri!* "The daughter of Vṛṣabhānu, named Śrī Rādhikā, is the captivated woman!" Captivated by the matchless beauty of Śyāma, Śrī Rādhārāṇī once tells a girlfriend –

*heri mukha candra, sudhā-rasa laharī,
kiraṇahi bhuvana ujora
tirapita cāhi, cakoriṇī kāmīnī
locana niśi diśi bhora*

"As I beheld His moon-like face, a wave of nectar juice shone on earth in the form of its rays. My eyes were like female Cakora-birds that were absorbed in satisfying themselves with this nectar day and night."

*sajani! ab hām nā bujhi vidhāna
atīśaya ānande, vighini ghaṭāolo,
heraite jharaye nayāna*

"O girlfriend! Today I do not understand Fate! He has created obstacles in the form of excessive bliss and tears overflowing My eyes!"

*dāruṇa daiva, koyolo duhuṅ locana,
tāhe palaka niramāi
tāhe ati hariṣe, e duhuṅ diṭhi pūralo,
kaiche herabo mukha cāi*

"Cruel Fate has created these two eyes in such a way that they blink. Within this framework I am very happily filling up my eyes. How will I look at His face now?"

*tāhe guru durujana, locana kaṅṭaka,
saṅkaṭa koto huṅ vithāra
kulavatī vāda, vivāda koroto koto,
dhairaja lāja vicāra*

"On top of that My superiors create so many obstacles that are like thorns in My eyes. There are so many disputes on the duties of a chaste housewife and considerations of shame and patience.."

*sabahuṅ upekhi, yāi vana paiṭhabo
kānu gīme kori hāra
nirajane rāti, dibasa sukhe herabo,
ehi dadhāyaluṅ sāra*

"Giving up all these things I entered into the forest and placed a necklace around Kṛṣṇa's neck (or: hung Myself as a necklace around Kṛṣṇa's neck). I will blissfully behold (Him) day and night in solitude – this is My firm resolve."

*ki korobo āna, dharama karama mata
jīvana hīna janu deho
govinda dāsa bhaṇa, manamatha mohana,
milane kiye koru keho*

"What more should I do in terms of duties of virtue? My body has become bereft of life. Govinda dāsa says: "Will anyone meet the enchanter of Cupid?" (44)

*kanaka ketakī rāi, śyāma marakata kākī
darapa darapa koru cura
naṭavara śekharinī, naṭinīra śiromaṇi
duṅhu guṇe duṅhu mana jhura (45)*

"Śrī Rādhikā's complexion defies a golden Ketakī-flower and Śyāmasundara's complexion crushes the pride of an emerald gem. She is the Queen of dancing-girls and He is the crownjewel of dancers and Their minds are absorbed in Each other's qualities."

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *ṭikā* – *kākī* – *kānti*. *naṭavarasya śrī kṛṣṇasya, śekharinī śirobhūṣaṇa rūpā. naṭinyāḥ śrī rādhāyāḥ śirobhūṣaṇa-maṇirūpaḥ.*

The sweetness of the Divine Pair :

Sudhā Kaṇikā vyākhyā – In a transcendental vision Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava stand facing Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya in Their full abundant sweetness. In his form of Campaka Mañjarī Ṭhākura Mahāśaya relishes the sweetness of the Divine pair and reveals some of this afterwards in this *tripadī*. First he says: *kanaka ketakī rāi, śyāma marakata kākī, darapa darapa koru cūra*—Śrī Rādhārāṇī's luster resembles a golden Ketakī flower. To give some kind of indication of this endlessly sweet form it has been said **kanaka ketakī**. Actually there is no comparison within this world of the luster of *mahābhāva*. Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī has written in his Śrī Rādhā-Rasa Sudhānidhi-*grantha*: *kānti kāpi mahādbhutā* "Śrī Rādhā's luster is greatly wonderful", sometimes he says: *kānti kāpi parojjalā* "Her luster is most brilliant, in an indescribable way". From the word **parojjalā** it is understood that no object in the world can have such a luster. Sometimes again he has said: *gātre koṭi taḍicchabi* "Śrīmatī's body shines like millions of lightning strikes". The question may arise: "The shimmer of lightning hurts the eyes; how can the eyes ever tolerate the shimmer of millions of lightning strikes?" To answer this question the word **chabi** is used instead of *dyuti*. In other words, although the light of love is very bright it does not hurt the eyes; this light soothes the eyes

with its sweetness for it has nothing to do with a material luminary – an **abundance** of *mahābhāva* is manifest within it.

Thereafter the blessed author describes Śyāma's bodily luster by saying: **śyāma marakata kī** The word *kī* means *kānti* or luster, so Śyāmasundara's bodily luster resembles an emerald. This also is a mere effort to express Śyāma's matchless luster. The Mahājanas have sung: *kuvalaya nīla ratana, dalitāñjana megha puñja, jini varaṇa sucānd* (Govinda Dāsa) "His luster defeats that of blue lotus flowers, sapphires, crushed eyeliner or a host of rainclouds". One gradually loses interest in looking at a mundane form, but longing increases when beholding Śrī Kṛṣṇa's form. This form is eternally blissful and incomparably so. Although Kṛṣṇa's form has been compared to deep blue objects like sapphires, crushed eyeliner and a host of monsoon clouds, still Śrī Rādhārāṇī's golden light pervades this deep blue colour and makes Śrī Kṛṣṇa's bodily luster shine like an emerald, which is not too brightly blue (more green)!!

After this the blessed author said: **darapa darapa koru cūra** "He crushed the pride of Cupid." *kandarpo darpako'naṅga ityamaraḥ* According to the Amara Koṣa dictionary one name of Cupid is Darpaka. When Śrī Kṛṣṇa is with Śrī Rādhārāṇī He wholly captivates Cupid – *rādhā saṅge yadā bhāti tadā madana mohanaḥ* (Govinda Līlāmṛtam)

*coṛi gopī manorathe, manmathe mana mathe,
nāma dhare madana mohana
jini pañca śara darpa, svayaṁ nava kandarpa,
rāsa kore loiyā gopīgaṇa (C.C.)*

"He is named Madana Mohana, because mounting the chariots of the *gopīs*' minds, He churns the mind of Cupid. He defeats the pride of Cupid, who fires five arrows and is Himself actually the fresh young Cupid who takes the *gopīs* along to dance the Rāsa."

In the *Rāsa-līlā* Cupid's pride was crushed in all respects. In the beginning of his commentary on the *Rāsa-līlā* Śrīdhara Svāmī has written: *brahmādi jaya saṁrūḍha darpa kandarpa darpahā. jayati śrīpatir gopī rāsamaṇḍala maṇḍitaḥ* "When Cupid, who deludes even Brahmā, Śiva, Indra, Candra and other demigods, saw Śyāmasundara's sweet form, adorned by a corona of *gopīs*, He went beside himself of His radiant luster and became himself deluded."

While the blessed author speaks of how even Cupid's pride was crushed by the forms of the Divine Pair, remembrance of the Rāsa-dance also awakens within his heart, hence he says while describing the Divine Pair's sweetness – *naṭavara śekhariṇī, naṭinīra śiromaṇi, duhuṅ guṇe duhuṅ mana bura* "Śrī Rādhārāṇī is the *śekhariṇī* or crown jewel of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the *naṭavara* or king of dancers. Their minds are *bura* or absorbed in Each other's attributes. Śrī Śuka Muni has described that amongst the three billion *gopīs* in the Mahā-Rāsa dance Śrī Rādhārāṇī was the greatest. From amongst all the *gopīs* Śrī Kṛṣṇa took Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and disappeared with Her in order to enjoy with Her in private – this proves that She is Śrī Kṛṣṇa's crowning jewel. Above all, during the Rāsa-dance *naṭavara* Śyāmasundara relished great *rāsa* by taking His crown jewel Śrī Rādhārāṇī to the middle of the Rāsa-circle in front of everyone and dancing with Her. But it is also learned within the great Rāsa-dance that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the crown jewel of *naṭinī* Śrī Rādhā as well. When Śrī Kṛṣṇa left Śrī Rādhā after privately enjoying with Her, Śrī Rādhā, not seeing Her crown jewel anymore, fell into a state

of swoon like no other *gopī* would by not seeing Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Above all, during the Mahā Rāsa dance *naṭinī* Śrīmatī stayed in the middle of the Rāsa-circle Herself and through Her ever-so-sweet dancing and singing and the very captivating dancing of the countless *gopikās*, who are Her phalanx-expansions, She gave unprecedented pleasure to Her own **crownjewel Śrī Kṛṣṇa**.

After that, seeing how the Divine Pair are captivated by Each other's attributes, the blessed author says: *duhuṅ guṇa duhuṅ mana bura* – "The minds of the Divine Pair are immersed in Each other's captivating attributes"! The Mahājanas have described how Śrīmatī is immersed in Śyāmasundara's attributes –

rūpe bhorolo diṭhi, sowari paraśa miṭhi
pulaka nā tejai aṅga
mohana muralī rabe, śruti paripūrīta,
na śune āna parasaṅga

"I filled My eyes with His form; remembering His sweet touch I could not give up the goosebumps on My body. When I filled the cups of My ears with His captivating flute song I did not hear any other topic anymore."

sajani! ab ki korobi upadeśa
kānu anurāge mora, tanu mana mātaḷo,
nā guṇe dharama bhaya leśa

"O *sakhi!* What more can I tell you? Out of passionate love for Kānu My mind and body went mad and I lost My fear of virtuous principles completely."

nāsikā se aṅgera, saurabhe unamata,
vadane nā loy āna nāma
nava nava guṇa gaṇe, bāndhalo majhu mane
dharama rahobo kon ṭhām

"My nose went mad from His bodily fragrance and My mouth cannot pronounce any other name (than His). **His ever-fresh qualities bound up My mind**– where will My virtue remain now?"

grhapati tarajane, gurujana garajane
ko jāne upajaye hāsa
tahiṅ eka manoratha, yadi hoye anurata
puchato govinda dāsa

"Rebukes by My husband or other superiors are simply making Me laugh. Govinda dāsa asks: "What if You have become attached to one desire?"

Being captivated by Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's attributes Śyāmasundara said:

sundari! āna guṇe naha mora vacana madhura; tuyā parasāde sādha sab pūra
āna saṅga kabhu nā kohobi mora; cāṅd nā tejai kabahu cakora

*tuyā guṇa gāyena boyana hāmār; tuyā ḥṛdi 'śītala' pañkaja hāra
tuhuñ daraśana vinu sab āndhiyāya; micha naha nanda kohoye koto bāra*

"O beautiful girl! I cannot find the sweet words to describe Your attributes; by Your grace all desires are fulfilled. I will never associate with anyone else anymore, just as the Cakora bird never gives up the moon. My mouth sings **of Your attributes** – Your heart is a cool lotus-garland. All is dark for Me if I cannot see You. It is not false, Nanda said it so many times."

duhuñ mona bura is sometimes also read as *duhuñ mana jhura*. The purport of this must be known as that Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava remain floating in Each other's sweet attributes or that They shed endless tears because of it. (45)

*śrī mukha sundara vara, hema nīla kānti dhara,
bhāva bhūṣaṇa koru śobhā.
nīla pīta vāsa dhara, gaurī śyāma manohara,
antarera bhāve duhu lobhā (46)*

"Their exquisitely beautiful faces, that carry a golden and blue lustre, are beautified by ornaments of ecstatic love. Their complexions are golden and blue and Their garments are blue and golden, showing that They carry love for Each other in Their hearts and that they are yearning for Each other."

Ornaments of ecstasy:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā– Now the blessed author attains a vision of the emotional ornaments of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, and he describes it in this *tripadī* by saying: *śrī mukha sundara vara, hema nīla kānti dhara, bhāva bhūṣaṇa koru śobhā*– "Their exquisitely beautiful faces, that carry a golden and blue lustre, are beautified by ornaments of ecstatic love." The extraordinary speciality of the transcendental poetry of experienced and sensitive poets is that hearing and chanting it will easily bring similar experiences to the hearts of sensitive devotees. From reading this simple verse line it is easily understood that the author had direct experience of the forms of the Divine Pair as he described them. His is a natural description of the sweet forms of the Divine Pair, not at all artificial. *śrī mukha sundara vara*. The small word *vara* (best, most) indicates the limitlessness of the sweetness and beauty of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's divine countenances. The beauty of these faces exceeds everyone else's beauty. This beauty must be understood to excel the beauty of all other godheads within the spiritual world, which again transcends the mundane world. The faces of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa excel even the beauty of Their own faces when They are separated from Each other, and are thus most lovely. *gopī-preme kore kṛṣṇa mādhyera puṣṭi; mādhyera bādhāy premā hoiyā mahā tuṣṭi*–"The love of the *gopīs* nourishes Kṛṣṇa's sweetness and when His sweetness increases, love itself becomes very satisfied." Above all is the crownjewel of *gopikās, mahābhāvamayī* Śrī Rādhā; in Her presence the ocean of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweetness

increases greatly! When Śrī Rādhā sees Śrī Kṛṣṇa's moon-like face, waves surge on the ocean of Her sweetness in innumerable ways. Śrī Kṛṣṇa says:

*yadyapi nirmala rādhāra sat prema darpaṇa; tathāpi svacchatā tār bāre kṣaṇe kṣaṇa
āmāra mādhyera nāhi bārite avakāṣe; e darpaṇera āga nava nava rūpe bhāse
man mādhyera rādhā prema– donhe hoṛa kori; kṣaṇe kṣaṇe bārhe donhe keho nāhi hāri*

"Although the mirror of Rādhā's true love is spotless, still its clarity increases at every moment. There is no end to the increase of My sweetness and before this mirror it floats in ever-new shapes. My sweetness and Rādhā's love– these two constantly compete. Both increase at every moment without ever suffering defeat." (C.C.)

In a transcendental vision the blessed author relishes the sweetness of the Divine Pair. First he describes the sweetness of Their faces and the glowing luster of Their bodies – *hema nīla kānti dhara* "The sweetness of Śrī Rādhā Mādhava glows with a golden and bluish luster. Śrī Rādhā's golden luster and Śrī Kṛṣṇa's blue luster illuminate the forest of Vraja! Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī has written (Vṛndāvana Mahimāmṛta 10.38) –

*ananta rati manmathonmathana darpa śobhāmayam
mithaḥ praṇaya kīlitaṁ kim api gaura-nīla cchabiḥ
ananta rasa vāridhau buḍitamanta pārojjhite
mahaḥ prathama yauvanam dvayam udeti vṛndāvane*

"A golden and bluish light, that is endowed with the pride and beauty that defeats innumerable Ratis and Kāmadevas, that is bound to Their own mutual love, that has an indescribable blue and golden glow, that is endowed with fresh adolescence and that is immersed in a boundless ocean of *rasa*, rises in Śrī Vṛndāvana." "Rising" means that it diffuses a light like that of the moon, and those golden and blue lights are again ***bhāva bhūṣaṇa koru śobhā***, decorated with emotional ornaments such as shedding tears and having goosebumps.

*sarvāṅge pulakāvalim aruṇatām akṣṇor vaco'nanvayam
yānam ca skhalitaṁ mitho vivadanam keśāmbarā samvṛtim
mālyādi truṭanam muhuḥ prahasitam bhūyo rasātunmadam
yatrābhūd dvaya gaura nīla mahasas tan naumi vṛndāvanam*

"I offer my humble obeisances unto Śrī Vṛndāvana, where a golden and blue light, which is decorated with wonderful **emotional ornaments** like dense goosebumps, reddish eyes, stumbling gait, incoherent words, mutual loving quarrels, dishevelled hairs and garments, broken garlands and strings, repeated laughter and repeated *rasika* madness, is always manifest."

Another meaning of **emotional ornaments** may be that Śrī Rādhārāṇī's body is adorned with the 22 ornaments of ecstatic love, namely *bhāva, hāva, helā, śobhā, kānti, mādhyera, prāgalbhya, audarya, dhairyā, līlā, vilāsa, vicchitti, vibhrama, kila kiñcita,*

mottāyita, kuṭṭamita, vivvoka, lalita, vikṛta, maugdhyā and *cakita*²³, and when Śrī Kṛṣṇa sees that, His body becomes adorned with similar ornaments. The forms of the Divine Couple is thus adorned with very wonderful and variegated ornaments of ecstatic love.

After this the blessed author says: *nīla pīta vāsa dhara, gaurī śyāma manohara, antarera bhāve duhuṅ lobhā* "This enchanting Gaurī and Śyāma wear bluish and golden garments respectively. By wearing a blue garment from tip to toe of Her loving body Gaurī Śrī Rādhārāṇī makes it known that Śyāmala Sundara constantly plays within Her heart and by wearing a golden garment Śyāma also wants to show that Gaurī Śrī Rādhārāṇī always dwells in His heart. In this way They always remain eager after Each other, cherishing good feelings in Their heart towards Each other.

Another meaning of *antarera bhāve duhuṅ lobhā* may be that Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are very eager to relish the heart's feelings of Their worshippers, whereas They are not greedy after merely external worship with different paraphernalia, but without feeling.

*nānopacāra kṛta pūjanam āṛta bandhoḥ premnaiva bhakta hṛdayaṅ sukha vidrutaṅ syāt
yāvat kṣudanti jaṭhare jaraṭhā pipāsā tāvat sukhāya bhavato nanu bhakṣya peye*

"O devotee! The heart of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who is the friend of the distressed, melts when He is lovingly worshipped with different ingredients. For instance, as long as there is powerful hunger and thirst within the stomach, water and food will be a source of happiness." The more the loving worshipper of the Divine Pair gradually becomes greedy after the mellows of the forms, attributes and pastimes of the Divine Pair and the more his heart becomes greedy after Them, the more They also become greedy after the devotee's loving feelings and become manifest inside out of the heart of the fortunate worshipper, in order to relish his sweet feelings. (46)

*ābharāṇa maṇimaya, prati aṅge abhinaya,
kohe dīna narottama dāsa
nīsi diśi guṇa gāi, parama ānanda pāi,
mane mora ei abhilāṣa (47)*

"Fallen Narottama dāsa sings: Each of Their limbs is decorated with jewelled ornaments, just as actors are decorated. I sing Their glories day and night and thus get topmost bliss. This is the desire on my mind."

Own aspiration :

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya describes the jewelled ornaments of the Yugala Kiśora as he attained it in a transcendental vision, and then he submits his own aspiration to Their footsoles. First he speaks of Their jewelled ornaments – *ābharāṇa*

²³ The definitions and examples of each of these ecstasies can be found in the Anubhāva Prakaraṇa chapter of Śrī Ujjvala Nīlamanī.

mañimoy, prati aṅge abhinoy, kohe dīna narottama dāsa "Fallen Narottama dāsa sings: Each of Their limbs is decorated with jewelled ornaments." Śrī Yugala Kīśora is not only decorated with many different ornaments of ecstasy, Their limbs are also decorated with different actual ornaments. On Śrī Kṛṣṇa's body is the great gem Kaustubha and Śrī Rādhārāṇī's body is permanently beautified by the greatly luminous Syamantaka jewel. On top of that, Mother Yaśomatī decorates Śrī Kṛṣṇa's limbs with different jewelled ornaments and the *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs* also decorate Śrī Rādhārāṇī's beautiful body with different jewelled ornaments. Then again, when the Śrī Yugala are performing different pastimes within the *nikuñja mandira*, then also the *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs* decorate Their limbs with various jewelled ornaments. Just as the bodies of actors and actresses are decorated with various dresses and ornaments, similarly each of the Yugala's limbs are always beautified by various wonderful garments and ornaments.

In a transcendental vision Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya describes the sweetness of the Yugala and submits to Their lotus feet: *niśi diśi guṇa gāi, parama ānanda pāi, mone mora ei abhilāṣa*. "I sing Their glories day and night and thus get topmost bliss. This is the desire on my mind." The Supreme Person is all-blissful and all-delicious – '*prajñānam ānandaṁ brahma*', '*raso vai saḥ*', and other statements from the Upaniṣads show the blissful status of the Supreme Person. The holy names, forms, attributes and pastimes of the Supreme Lord are all manifest full of taste and bliss. Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya hence reveals his own aspiration to the lotus feet of His dearest Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's dual lotus feet– may he be able to sing the glories of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava day and night! In this he will be blessed by attaining the paramount bliss he desires. The devotees have no desires for personal happiness, they are just immersed within the devotional service of their chosen deity. So does Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya desire his own happiness here when he says ***parama ānanda pāi***? This question is of course open, but here the blessed author does not say he wants to attain happiness himself. He says he wishes to sing the glories of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava by stating ***niśi diśi guṇa gāi***. The Divine Pair Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava attain paramount bliss when Their glories are being sung– Śrī Hari even leaves His own abode to reside where His pastimes are being glorified – *nāhaṁ vasāmi vaikuṅṭhe yoginām hṛdaye na ca; mad bhaktā yatra gāyanti tatra tiṣṭhāmi nārada* (Padma Purāṇa) "O Nārada! I don't reside in Vaikuṅṭha, nor in the hearts of the *yogīs* – wherever My devotees sing My glories, there I reside!" The bliss He feels when He hears His glories being sung, is also awakening within the hearts of the devotees. Apart from this **intrinsic bliss** the devotees never aspire for any separate happiness.

The purport of this is that through *bhakti*, which is the very form of service to the Supreme Lord, the Lord Himself becomes the very form of happiness within the heart of the devotee (*prītiḥ svayam prītim agāt*, Bhāgavata). This experience is very strong. "When the Lord experiences this happiness I will be happy". Although this kind of seeking personal, independent happiness will not awaken within the devotee's heart, the heart of the devotee will be automatically pleased when the Lord is pleased, just as the branches and the leaves of a tree are automatically nourished when its roots are sprinkled, and the experience of this bliss in the heart will again increase the devotee's thirst for more service to the Lord. Here it must be understood that Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya aspires for the paramount bliss of thirst for more service to the Supreme Lord. (47)

*rāgera bhajana patha, kōhi ebe abhimata,
loka veda sāra ei vāṇī
sakhīra anugā hoiyā, vraje siddha deha pāiyā,
ei bhāve juḍābe parāṇi (48)*

"Now I will tell you the opinion of the saints and the scriptures about the path of spontaneous devotion. These words are the essence of the popular and Vedic teachings. If you follow in the footsteps of the *sakhīs* you will attain a spiritual body in Vraja. In this way you will gratify your spiritual self."

Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *ṭīkā* – *loka veda sāra ei vāṇī – iyaṁ vāṇī loka-vedayoḥ sāra rūpāḥ.*

The ways of *rāgānugā bhakti* :

Sudhā Kaṇikā vyākhyā – From this *tripadī* onwards the worshipable Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya describes expertise in the ways of *rāgānugā bhajana*, most of all of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's great gift, the practice of *mañjarī bhāva*. First he says: *rāgera bhajana patha, ebe kōhi abhimata, loka veda sāra ei vāṇī*. This means that **abhimata**, according to the scriptures and the saints, we will speak of **rāgera bhajana patha**, the subject of *rāga mārga bhajana*. This **vāṇī**, teaching, of mine is the **loka veda sāra**, the essence of popular and scriptural sayings. This means that the words of the experienced followers of the path of *rāga* and *rāga* scriptures like Śrī Gopāla Tāpanī Śruti and Śrīmad Bhāgavata, the essence of the Vedānta, scriptures that elaborately describe all subject matters concerning *rāga mārga bhajana*, are the greatest. First of all we can understand from these words of the blessed author that his teachings are not his mental fancies, and on the other hand we can understand in essence that the subject of *rāga mārga* is elaborately described by the scriptures and the saints. Therefore those who want to know the essence of *rāga mārga bhajana* should most certainly study this Prema Bhakti Candrikā of Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya.

rāga mārga bhajana is an elaborate and confidential subject matter. This *rāga bhakti* is directly present within the eternally perfect residents of Vraja, the eternal associates of the Lord. Devotion in allegiance to them is called *rāgānugā bhakti*. Therefore '*rāgera bhajana patha*' is understood to mean the path of *rāgānugā bhakti* here.

*virājantīm abhivyaktāṁ vrajavāsi janādiṣu
rāgātmikām anusṛtā yā sā rāgānugocyate*

(B.R.S. 1.2.273)

"The devotion which is evidently present within the residents of Vraja is called **rāgātmikā** and the devotion in its wake is called **rāgānugā**." Therefore without first knowing the characteristics of *rāgātmikā* we cannot understand *rāgānugā bhakti*. The definition of *rāgātmikā* is as follows –

*iṣṭe svārasikī rāgaḥ paramāviṣṭatā bhavet
tanmayī yā bhaved bhaktiḥ sātra rāgātmikoditā*

(B.R.S. 1.2.272)

"The natural complete absorption in one's own chosen deity, or the loving thirst that lies as root to that paramount absorption is called *rāga* and devotion with an abundance of such *rāga* is called ***rāgātmikā bhakti***."

The purport of this is that the natural deep loving thirst towards the chosen deity is called the *svarūpa lakṣaṇa* or the intrinsic characteristic of *rāga*. Just as the senses automatically engage in the tangible sense objects and do not depend on any encouragement, similarly the deep loving thirst towards the own desired Lord is natural for the *rāga bhakta* – it is not caused by anyone's encouragement.

Just as water turns into ice due to contact with frost, grass and other things can enter into water, but cannot enter into ice, similarly when loving thirst becomes very deep the heart of the loving devotee cannot seek even the slightest personal happiness anymore other than the happiness of Kṛṣṇa. Then all activities become centered around Kṛṣṇa's happiness. This deep thirst causes one to be fully absorbed in the chosen deity; this is the *taṭastha lakṣaṇa* or marginal characteristic of *rāga*. *ākṛti prakṛti dui svarūpa lakṣaṇa; kārya dvārā jñāna ei taṭastha lakṣaṇa* (C.C.) "Both the form and the nature are the intrinsic characteristics, and the knowledge acquired through activities is the marginal characteristic." This *rāgamayi* or *rāgātmikā bhakti* is only present within the eternally perfect associates of the Lord in Vraja. Those who perform *bhajana* after becoming greedy after the particular feelings of the *rāgātmikā* Vraja-people and who follow the feelings of the *rāgātmikā* devotees according to their own mood, are practising a devotion named *rāgānugā bhakti*. Following the practice of this *rāgānugā bhakti* the moonlight of *rāga* that shines within the hearts of the eternally perfect Vraja-people begins to rise within the heart of the practitioner of *rāgānugā bhakti* and begins to shine there. *yasya pūrvokte rāga viśeṣe rucir eva jātāsti na tu rāga viśeṣa eva svayaṁ tasya tādrśa rāga sudhākara karābhāsa samullasita hrdaya sphaṭika-maṇeḥ sāstrādi śrutāsu tādrśā rāgātmikāyā bhakteḥ paripāṭiṣvapi rucir jāyate* (Bhakti Sandarbha-310) "When the moonlight in the heart of the eternally perfect *rāgātmikā bhaktas* shines on the crystal-like hearts of those devotees who became attracted to the aforementioned kind of passionate love, but who have not awakened that special passion themselves yet, and when they hear about the expertise, that is the loving - mental, physical or vocal - activities of these *rāgātmikā bhaktas* from the mouths of Guru and *sādhu* or from the scriptures, they also gain taste for such expert activities."

The purport of this is that when the hearts of the devotees are crystal clear, free from the contaminations of lust and anger, and they hear about the loving activities of the eternally perfect *rāgātmikā bhaktas* from the mouths of Guru, *sādhu* or *sāstra*, their hearts will light up just as crystal lights up when the moonlight shines on it, and taste will awaken for these devotees' loving activities. Driven by this taste they engage in a kind of devotion that follows in its wake and which is called *rāgānugā bhakti*. Without allegiance to the *rāgātmikā bhaktas* this *rāgānugā bhajana* can never reach perfection.

*vraja lokera bhāve yei koroye bhajana; sei jana pāy vraje vrajendranandana
śruti sab gopīgaṇera anugata hoyā; vrajeśvarī suta bhaje gopī bhāva loiyā
vyūhāntare gopī deha vraje jabe pāilo; sei dehe kṛṣṇa saṅge rāsa krīḍā koilo*

*gopī anugati vinā aiśvarya jñāne; bhajileho nāhi pāy vrajendra nandane
tāhāte dr̥ṣṭānta-lakṣmī korilā bhajana; tathāpi nā pāilo vraje vrajendranandana*

"Whoever performs *bhajana* in the mood of the people of Vraja will attain Vrajendra-nandana in Vraja. All the Upaniṣads followed the path of the *gopīs* and worshipped the son of the Queen of Vraja in the mood of the *gopīs*. In another creation they attained *gopī*-bodies in Vraja, with which they performed the Rāsa-play with Kṛṣṇa. Even when worshipping Him, if it is not done in allegiance to the *gopīs* or with feelings of awe and reverence, Vrajendra nandana will not be attained. The example of that is Lakṣmī. She worshipped Kṛṣṇa, but still did not attain Vrajendra nandana in Vraja."

Vraja's eternally perfect associates of Kṛṣṇa come in four moods – of servanthood, friendship, parental love and conjugal love and thus there are also four kinds of people who yearn for these four kinds of moods. Those who yearn for the mood of servanthood will follow the eternally perfect servants Raktaka, Patraka and so, those who yearn for the mood of friendship will follow Kṛṣṇa's friends like Subala or Madhumaṅgala, those who yearn for parental love will follow parents like Nanda and Yaśodā, and those who yearn for amorous love will follow Śrī Rādhikā, Lalitā and others. In these way everyone accomplishes *rāgānugā bhajana*. In this particular Kali-age Śrīman Mahāprabhu and the Gosvāmīs like Śrī Rūpa and Raghunātha dāsa, who have surrendered to His lotus feet, have distributed the worship of *mañjarī bhāva* or *rādhā dāsya* which is in the topmost class of amorous love. This is the beloved *rāgānugā bhajana* of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya. Hence Śrī Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has said: *sakhīra anugā hoiyā, vraje siddha deha pāiyā, sei bhāve juṛābe parāṇī* – "Being a follower of the *sakhīs* I will attain a spiritual body in Vraja. That feeling will soothe my heart." The fish-like hearts of the *kiṅkarīs* or *mañjarīs* who have surrendered to Śrī Rādhā's lotus feet, freely swim in the ocean of *rasa* that arises from the meeting of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the embodiment of deep transcendental flavours and eros personified, with Śrī Rādhārāṇī, who is filled with *mahābhāva*, and this gives them an ecstasy which is incomparable with any other bliss within the transcendental kingdom. The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava practitioners who have surrendered to Śrīman Mahāprabhu's lotus feet will become greedy after this practice of *mañjarī bhāva* by the grace of Śrī Guru or the *sādhus* from their own tradition. When they take shelter of Śrī Guru's lotus feet they will become acquainted with their own *nitya siddha mañjarī svarūpa* and their intrinsic *ekādaśa bhāva* (eleven-fold spiritual personality). In this way they continue doing *bhajana* externally, in their material practitioner-bodies, by hearing and chanting the Lord's glories, and in their mentally conceived spiritual *mañjarī*-bodies thinking around the clock about Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's pastimes and their devotional service therein in allegiance to Śrī Lalitā and the *sakhīs* and Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī and the other *mañjarīs*. After they attain the perfection of *bhajana*, or *prema*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa's Yogamāyā-energy will bless the practitioners by giving them the direct devotional service of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā Mādhava in their mentally conceived spiritual body within the kingdom of *līlā*. In this way their hearts will be soothed or cooled off by attaining the long desired and thirsted-for service of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in the mood of a maidservant of Śrī Rādhā. Nothing else can soothe the hearts of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava practitioners – *sei bhāve juṛābe parāṇī*. (48)

rādhikāra sakhī yoto , tāhā vā kohibo koto,
mukhya sakhī koribo gaṇana
lalitā viśākhā tathā, citrā campakalatā
raṅgadevī sudevī kathana (49)
tuṅavidyā indurekhā, ei aṣṭa sakhī lekhā,
ebe kohi narma sakhīgaṇa
rādhikāra saharī, priya preṣṭha nāma dhari,
prema sevā kore anukṣaṇa (50)

"How can I count the number of Rādhikā's girlfriends? I will simply mention the chief *sakhīs*: Lalitā, Viśākhā, Citrā, Campakalatā, Raṅgadevī, Sudevī, Tuṅavidyā and Indurekhā - these are the eight chief *sakhīs*. Now I will mention the *narma-sakhīs* (*mañjarīs*). These assistants of Śrī Rādhikā are called *priya preṣṭha* and are constantly rendering loving devotional service."

The dearest girlfriends :

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā- In the previous *tripadī* Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya spoke of doing *bhajana* in allegiance to the *nitya siddha rāgātmikā sakhīs* and *mañjarīs* while defining *rāgānugā bhajana*, and now he is introducing us to some of the chief *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs* by mentioning their names. After knowing the *svarūpas* of Śrī Rādhā's *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs* we must proceed towards some *tattva vicāra* (consideration of principles), for the pastimes are built on the foundation of *tattva siddhānta* (philosophical and technical knowledge). All the Vedic scriptures ascertain that Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Original Personality of Godhead, full in all opulences and might, the supreme truth and the cause of all causes. This embodiment of spirit (*sac cid ānanda vighraha*), the Almighty Śrī Kṛṣṇa, has innumerable potencies, of which three are predominant – the internal spiritual potency, the marginal potency of the individual souls and the external illusory potency. Of these, the internal potency is the greatest, for it is Śrī Kṛṣṇa's intrinsic energy. The ability to perform something is called *śakti* or power, and according to its activities this intrinsic energy shows three aspects – *hlādinī*, *sandhinī* and *samvit*. Of these, the *hlādinī* potency is the greatest, for although Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the embodiment of full and paramount ecstasy, He relish His intrinsic bliss through the *hlādinī* energy and makes His devotees relish the same. The special feature of this is that the *hlādinī* energy dwells within Śrī Kṛṣṇa's form in a formless, energetic way to make Him relish His intrinsic ecstasy and that formless *hlādinī* energy dwells on His outside in the form of its presiding goddess to make Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the embodiment of full and deep erotic flavours, relish the sweetness of wonderful erotic mellows. **This is Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī Śrī Rādhā.** The special activities of the *hlādinī śakti* make it gradually turn from *rati*, *prema*, *sneha*, *māna*, *praṇaya*, *rāga* and *anurāga* into *mahā bhāva*. **This mahābhāva is the real form of Śrī Rādhārāṇī.** Just as a puppet of sugar consists of sugar inside out, similarly each limb of Śrī Rādhārāṇī is made of *mahābhāva* or the *prīti rasa* known as *mahā bhāva* inside out. Lalitā and the other *sakhīs* are the expanding phalanx of Śrī Rādhā. In this connection Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta (Madhya Ch.8) describes:

kṛṣṇera ananta śakti, tāte tin pradhāna; cicchakti, māyā śakti, jīva śakti nāma antaraṅgā, bahiraṅgā, taṭasthā kōhi yāre; antaraṅgā svarūpa śakti sabāra upore sac cid ānandamoy kṛṣṇera svarūpa; ataeva svarūpa śakti hoy – tin rūpa ānandāṁśe hlādinī, sad aṁśe sandhinī; cid aṁśe samvit yāre jñāna kori māni kṛṣṇake āhlāde tāte nāma hlādinī; sei śakti dvāre sukha āsvāde āpani sukha rūpa kṛṣṇa kore sukha āsvādana; bhaktagaṇe sukha dite hlādinī kāraṇa hlādinīra sāra aṁśa tāra prema nāma; ānanda cinmaya rasa premera ākhyāna premera parama sāra mahā bhāva jāni; sei mahābhāva rūpā rādhā thākuraṇī premera svarūpa – deha prema vibhāvita; kṛṣṇera preyaśi śreṣṭhā jagate vidita sei mahābhāva hoy cintāmaṇi sāra; kṛṣṇa vāñchā pūrṇa kore – ei kārya yār mahābhāva cintāmaṇi rādhāra svarūpa; lalitādi sakhī tāra kāya vyūha rūpa²⁴

Not only Lalitā and the other *sakhīs*— all the girls of Vraja are Śrī Rādhārāṇī's expanding phalanx! According to their forms and dispositions they make Śrī Kṛṣṇa relish various kinds of wonder-filled sweet flavours, and for this reason Śrī Rādhārāṇī has expanded Herself into innumerable forms as all the Vraja-girls.

ākāra-svabhāva bhede vraja devīgaṇa; kāya vyūha rūpa tāra rasera kāraṇa bahu kāntā vinā nahe rasera ullāsa; lilāra sahāya lāgi bahuta prakāśa tāra madhye vraje nānā bhāva rasa bhede; kṛṣṇake korāya rāsādika lilāsvāde

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta Ādi Ch.4)

"The Vraja-goddesses (*gopīs*) appear in different forms and with different natures. They are all Rādhā's expansions and they are the cause of *rasa*. Without the presence of many consorts there can be no joy in *rasa*, therefore many consorts are manifested to assist in the pastimes. Of them, there are many kinds of consorts in Vraja with different dispositions and different flavours, that make Kṛṣṇa relish the Rāsa-*līlā* and other pastimes."

In the form of Her expanding phalanx, the countless *gopikās*, that have different moods and flavours, divided in four classes, namely the own party, the enemies' party, the friendly party and the neutral party, Śrī Rādhārāṇī makes Śrī Kṛṣṇa relish wonderfully sweet erotic flavours. Taking the root form Śrī Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī as the pivot, the four parties are there, mentioned according to their feelings. Śrī Lalitā, Viśākhā and other dearest girlfriends are Śrī Rādhārāṇī's own party, Śrī Candrāvalī, Padmā, Śaibyā and others are the enemies' party, Śyāmalā and others are the friendly party and Bhadrā and others are the neutral party. The most relish is given by the own party and the enemies' party. Although all the Vraja-girls are expansions of Śrīmatī Bhānunandinī, and therefore there can be no question of any of them being Her equal, still Vraja's *śṛṅgāra rasa* has given Śrī Candrāvalī and others the feeling of equality with Śrīmatī in order to create the wonderful feelings of *khaṇḍitā*, *māna* and *kalahāntarītā* in Her, to make Śrī Kṛṣṇa relish wonderfully sweet mellows. In the nourishment of all these emotional conditions the own party, containing Śrī Lalitā and others, play a very wonderful role. Although Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's love is all-pervading, and therefore requires no one's help in nourishment, still this love can never find

²⁴ The translation of these verses has already been given in the above English text.

nourishment without the aid of the *sakhīs*, just as *brahman* cannot carry the nourishment of *rasa* to display the wonder of *līlā* without the aid of its spiritual energy. *vibhur api sukha rūpaḥ svaprakāśo'pi bhāvah kṣaṇam api na hi rādhā-kṛṣṇayor yā rte svāḥ. pravahati rasa puṣṭim cidvibhūtir ivesaḥ śrayati na padam āsān kaḥ sakhīnām rasajñah* (Govinda Līlāmṛta 10.17)

sakhī vinu ei līlā puṣṭi nāhi hoy; sakhī līlā vistāriyā sakhī āsvāday (C.C.) "Without the aid of the *sakhīs* these pastimes cannot be nourished. The *sakhīs* expand these pastimes and the *sakhīs* make them relishable." Śrī Rādhā has five kinds of such *sakhīs* – *asyāḥ vṛndāvaneśvaryāḥ sakhya pañca-vidhāḥ matāḥ sakhyaś ca nitya sakhyaś ca prāṇa sakhyaś ca kaścana. priya sakhyaś ca parama preṣṭha sakhyaś ca viśrutāḥ* (Ujjvala Nīlamanī) – '*sakhīs, nitya sakhīs, prāṇa sakhīs, priya sakhīs* and *parama preṣṭha sakhīs*. These are again divided into three classes – *viśama snehā, sama snehā* and *adhika snehā*. Kusumikā, Vindhya, Dhaniṣṭhā and others are *sakhīs*, they are *viśama snehā* and *śrī kṛṣṇa snehādhikā* (they love Kṛṣṇa more than Rādhā). Kasturī, Maṇi Mañjarī and others are *nitya sakhīs* and Śāsimukhī, Vāsantī, Lāsikā and others are *prāṇa sakhīs* – they are *adhika snehā* or *rādhā snehādhikā* (they love Rādhā more than Kṛṣṇa) and are called *mañjarīs*. Kuraṅgākṣī, Sumadhyā, Madanālasā are *priya sakhīs* and Lalitā, Viśākhā and the other leading *aṣṭa sakhīs* are the *parama preṣṭha sakhīs*– they are *sama snehā*, which means that though they love Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa equally, they still constantly cherish the self esteem of 'We are Rādhā's'. First the blessed author mentions the main eight *sakhīs* : '*lalitā viśākhā tathā, citrā campakalatā, raṅgadevī, sudevī kothan. tuṅgavidyā indurekhā, ei aṣṭasakhī lekhā*. To teach the practising devotees some details about the *sakhīs* we are mentioning their names, dresses, natures and activities, on the basis of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Gaṇoddeśa Dīpikā (by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī).

Lalitā : Śrī Lalitā is the greatest of all the eight *sakhīs* and she is 27 days older than Śrī Rādhārāṇī. She is also known as Anurādhā and is decorated with a *vāmā prakharā* (harsh-stood-up) nature. Her bodily complexion is of Gorocanā and her dress is like peacock feathers. Her mother's name is Śārādī, her father's Viśoka, her husband²⁵ is a cowherd named Bhairava, who is a friend of Govardhana Malla.

Śrī Lalitā is the leader of all of Śrī Rādhārāṇī's girlfriends, and all the feelings of the pastimes of the Divine Pair are under her control. She is expert in causing a loving quarrel and in making a truce, during *vigraha* (quarrel), *prauḍhi vāda* (proud words), answers and rational arguments she angrily lowers her head and is concealed by the luster of the *sakhīs*. When the Divine Pair get into a loving quarrel she gives the *sakhīs* presence of mind and enthusiastically coordinates the quarrel. Then, when the time has come for Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's reconciliation or meeting she may go there, but she will stay there as if indifferent. She is very expert in making floral ornaments, umbrellas, beds and grove cottage-constructions and she is learned in conjuring tricks and composing riddles. Her service is making betelleaves with camphor and her *kuñja* is named Lalitānandana Kuñja. In her *yūtha* there are *sakhīs* like Ratnaprabhā, Ratalā, Subhadrā, Bhadrarekhā, Sumukhī, Dhaniṣṭhā, Kalahānsī and Kalāpinī.

Viśākhā : She is the second of the *aṣṭa sakhīs*, and her behaviour, attributes and dedication are exactly like her *priya sakhī* Śrī Rādhā's. She was born on exactly the same moment as Śrī Rādhā. Her bodily complexion is like lightning, her dress shines like clusters

²⁵ Here 'husband' means a cowherd who is considered a *gopī*'s husband, a mere reflection of a husband created by Yogamāyā to nourish the *parakīya bhāva*.

of stars, her father's name is Pāvana, her mother is Jaṭilā's niece Dakṣiṇā and her father's name is Vāhika Gopa. Viśākhā is expert in humorous dealings with the Divine Pair, hence she is called *narma sakhī*. Her advice is hard to overrule and she can speak joking words to Śrī Kṛṣṇa like no other. She knows the hearts of the Divine Couple and is expert in bringing messages and in *sāma* (appeasement), *dāna* (offering presents) and *bheda* (separating)-customs when the Divine Couple have an erotic dispute. She is very good at making leaf-*tilaka*, garlands, crowns etc., magic tricks, puppet dance etc., collecting paraphernalia for Sūrya-pūjā, speaking different languages and in musical arts like the Dhruvāda. Her service is dressing and ornamenting and her *kuñja* is named Viśākhānandada. Her *yūtha* consists of Mālatī, Mādhavī, Candralekhā, Kuñjarī, Hariṇī, Capalā, Surabhī, Śubhānā and other *sakhīs*.

Campakalatā : Campakalatā is the third of the eight *sakhīs*. Her bodily complexion resembles a blooming Campaka flower, she is one day younger than Śrī Rādhā and her garments shine like Cāṣa-birds. Her father is named Ārāma, her mother Bāṭikā, and her husband Caṇḍākṣa Gopa. Her attributes are like those of Viśākhā.

She is very expert in conveying messages and in concealing the purport of her activities. She is an eloquent speaker and knows various ways to discredit her enemies and glorify her own party. She is very expert in making pickles of fruits, flowers and roots, she is better than anyone in the making of clay pots, testing the six basic flavours and making sweets. For the last she is called 'Miṣṭa-hastā', or sweet handed one. Her *kuñja* is named Campakalatānandada Kuñja and her service is making jewel strings and fanning with a yaktail fan. The eight *sakhīs* in her *yūtha* are named Kuraṅgākṣī, Sucaritā, Maṇḍalī, Maṇikuṇḍalā, Candrikā, Candralatikā, Kandukākṣī and Sumandirā.

Citrā: She is the fourth *sakhī*. Her bodily complexion resembles vermilion and her garments shine like glass. She is 26 days younger than Śrī Rādhā and is happy when Śrī Kṛṣṇa is happy. Her father is the cousin of Vṛṣabhānu-rājā, named Catura, her mother is named Carcikā and her husband Piṭhara. She has free access to all expertise in performing her duties. She recognises all indications, knows languages from different areas and she can recognise honey, milk and other things on mere sight. She makes glass trays, bowls and glasses, can make waves appear in water, knows astrological books and the science of recognising animals. One of her duties is to plant and guard trees and she is most expert in making delicious drinks. Her *kuñja* is named Citrānandada Kuñja and her service is making clove-garlands. The eight *sakhīs* in her *yūtha* are Rasālikā, Tilakinī, Śaurasenī, Sugandhikā, Ramilā, Kāma Nāgarī, Nāgarī and Nāgavelikā.

Tuṅavidyā: Tuṅavidyā is the fifth *sakhī*. She is five days older than Śrī Rādhā, her body shines like vermilion, her dress is yellow and her nature is *dakṣiṇā prakharā* (submissive, yet harsh). Her mother is named Medhā, her father is Puṣkara and her husband Bāliśa. Tuṅavidyā is expert in eighteen sciences²⁶ is expert in arranging truces, is the object of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's great trust, is expert in scriptures on Rasa (aesthetics), Nīti (manners), Nāṭaka (drama) and Ākhyāyika (narrations), and she is a music teacher. Her *kuñja* is named Tuṅavidyānandada and her service is singing and dancing. The eight *sakhīs* in her *yūtha* are

²⁶ Ṛg Veda, Sāma Veda, Yajur Veda, Atharva Veda, Śikṣā, Kalā, Vyākaraṇa, Nirukta, Jyotiṣa (astrology), Dhātu (metallurgy), Vedānta Darśana, Mīmāṃsā Darśana, Nyāya Darśana, Vaisheshika Darśana, Sāṅkhya Darśana, Pātāñjala Darśana (yoga), Purāṇas and Dharma śāstras (books on morality) are the 18 sciences.

Mañjumedhā, Sumadhurā, Sumadhyā, Madhurekṣaṇā, Tanumadhyā, Madhusyandā, Guṇacūḍā and Varāṅgadā.

Indulekhā: Indulekhā is the sixth *sakhī*. Her complexion is bright like Haritāla (yellow), her dress shines like pomegranate flowers, she is three days younger than Śrī Rādhā. Her mother is named Belā, her father Sāgara and her husband Durbala. Her nature is *vāmā prakharā* (harsh and unwilling). Indulekhā is especially able in *mantras* from the Sarpa-sāstras (serpentine scriptures), Vijñāna Mantra and astrology. She can make wonderful necklaces, paint teeth, test gems and make silken ribbons. The science of writing *mantras* of good fortune is given to her handpalms. Thus she extends the topmost fortune of creating mutual passion between Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava.

Raṅgadevī: Raṅgadevī is the seventh *sakhī*. Her bodily luster resembles the filaments of a lotus, her dress is red like a Javā-flower. She is seven days younger than Śrī Rādhā and her attributes resemble those of Campakalatā. Her father is named Raṅgasāra, her mother Karuṇā and her husband Vakreṣaṇa, who is again the younger brother of Lalitā's husband Bhairava. She extends astonishing humour and laughter (*raṅga* means fun, Ed.) to her *priya sakhī* Śrī Rādhārāṇī even before Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In the past she performed penances to attain a *mantra* to attract Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Sudevī: She is the eighth *sakhī*, the mild-natured twin-sister of Raṅgadevī. Her form, attributes and nature all resemble those of her twin-sister, so much so that if you look at her it seems as if you are seeing Raṅgadevī. The younger brother of Raṅgadevī's husband Vakreṣaṇa, named Rakteṣaṇa, is the husband of Sudevī. She stays with Śrī Rādhā, and her services are arranging Her hair, making Her eyeliner and massaging Her body. She is most expert in teaching the male and female parrots how to sing, in playing boat, arranging cock-fighting, consulting from astrological books and by reading hand-lines, knowing the sounds of birds and animals and what flowers blossom when the moon rises. She knows the science of fire and is expert in giving a massage with oil.

After that Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: *ebe kohi narma sakhīgaṇa; rādhikāra sahacari, priya preṣṭha nāma dhari, prema sevā kore anukṣaṇa*— After mentioning Śrī Rādhārāṇī's dearest girlfriends like Lalitā and so, he now mentions the *narma sakhī mañjarīs*. Although they are Śrī Rādhārāṇī's very dear *sakhīs* they are also her affectionate maidservants who are always immersed in Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's service. Although they are in the class of *sakhīs* they are still dedicated to devotional service and their forms consist solely of the flavours of service. Hence their service is very relishable, hearty and filled with the erotic flavours of the Divine Pair. They must be specially known by the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava-practitioners, for it is in their allegiance that they must serve. That is mentioned in the following *tripadī*. (49-50)

*sama snehā viṣama snehā, nā koriho dui lehā
kohi mātra adhika snehā-gaṇa
nirantara thāke saṅge, kṛṣṇa kathā līlā raṅge*

narma sakhī ei sab jana (51)²⁷

"Equal affection for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa or more affection for Kṛṣṇa than for Śrī Rādhā - do not become attached to that. I will just speak about preference for Śrī Rādhā! They are always in Her company, blissfully telling Her about Kṛṣṇa. They are all called *narma sakhīs*."

Allegiance to the *adhika snehās* :

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya establishes allegiance to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas' *adhika snehā mañjarīs* or *rādhā snehādhikā mañjarīs* by saying: *sama snehā viṣama snehā nā korio dui lehā, kōhi mātra adhika snehāgaṇa*. Previously we have mentioned the difference between Śrī Rādhārāṇī's five types of *sakhīs*, namely *viṣama snehā* or *śrī kṛṣṇa snehādhikā*, those who have a greater love for Kṛṣṇa, *sama snehā* or those who love Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa equally and *adhika snehā* or those who love Śrī Rādhā more than Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The blessed author says: "We will not do *bhajana* in allegiance to those who love Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa equally or those who love Śrī Kṛṣṇa more than Śrī Rādhā. Therefore ***na koriho dui lehā*** – We do not have to ***lehā***, love them or be affectionate towards them." This does not mean that we should not love them or be indifferent towards them, for those who practise *mañjarī bhāva* have proper faith, respect, love and friendship for all the girlfriends of Śrī Rādhārāṇī. Therefore the word *lehā* is understood to mean special love or allegiance to their feelings here. In his description of the distinction between the feelings of the *viṣama snehā* and *sama snehā sakhīs* on the one hand and the feelings of the *rādhā snehādhikā mañjarīs* on the other hand, Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has written –

*sañcārī syāt samonā vā kṛṣṇa ratyā suhrd ratih
adhikā puṣyamāṇā ced bhāvollāsa itiryate* (B.R.S.2.5.128)

"Those amongst Śrī Rādhārāṇī's *sakhīs* whose love for Śrī Rādhā is equal to or slightly less than their love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa have love for Kṛṣṇa as *sthāyi bhāva* within which their love for Rādhā is counted as a *sañcārī bhāva* (injected, infused, inserted feelings), for that nourishes their basic love for Kṛṣṇa. But those *sakhīs* who love Rādhā more than Kṛṣṇa and whose feelings are increased due to constant absorption in this have the status of *bhāvollāsa* because their feelings have come to dominate all feelings, although they are officially *sañcārī bhāvas*. Thus, despite it all, this *adhika snehā* must be counted as a *sthāyi bhāva*."

The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas who have taken shelter of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's lotus feet and who follow the Six Gosvāmīs, headed by Rūpa and Sanātana, are following this *upāsanā* (mode of worship) of *mañjarī bhāva* or *bhāvollāsa*. Thus the *rāgānugā bhajana* of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas who follow the *nitya siddha mañjarīs* of Vraja, who love Rādhā more than Kṛṣṇa, will be accomplished. Therefore the blessed author does not mention the *bhajana* in allegiance to *viṣama snehā* or *sama snehā* and only shows the path of allegiance to the *adhika snehās* or *mañjarīs*. This is the great gift of Śrīman Mahāprabhu and the most beloved goal

²⁷ This *tripadī* (couplet) is not present in every edition of this book, but has been accepted by us due to its extreme importance to the *sādhakas*.

of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. In the kingdom of *bhāva sādhana*, *mañjarī bhāva* is the pinnacle of relish that a living entity can ascend to!

Then, while defining the reason for which the *adhika snehā mañjarīs* relish more, Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: *nirantara thāke saṅge, kṣṇa kothā lilā raṅge, narma sakhī ei sab jana* "All the *sakhīs* are eternal companions in Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's pastimes, because although the feelings of the Divine Pair are all-pervading, they cannot find nourishment without the support of the *sakhīs*. Still there are no other associates than the *mañjarīs* who continuously stay with Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava during Their pastimes. By Śrī Rādhārāṇī's wish Lalitā and other *sakhīs* sometimes are heroines (lovers) of Śrī Kṣṇa, therefore due to their equal feelings they cannot be there when the Divine Pair are having Their intimate pastimes – there would be shyness and embarrassment. But the *mañjarīs* who are endowed with *bhāvollāsa* are especially absorbed in the different services of the Divine Pair and due to their oneness in feelings with Her, Śrī Rādhārāṇī considers them to be non different from Her own body. Thus the *mañjarīs* never become heroines. They are also present when Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava have Their intimate meetings to engage in Their private service. At that time the Divine Pair consider them the *āveśa mūrtis* (embodiments of Their ecstatic absorption) of Their *rasika* pastimes, and thus there is no reason for Them to feel embarrassed and only these *mañjarīs* are constantly in the company of the Divine Pair. In his Śrī Vṛndāvana Mahimāmṛta (8th Śatakam) Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatīpāda has written about the sweet mood of the *mañjarīs* and how they are always present –

kṣaṇam caraṇa vicchedācchrīsvaryāḥ prāṇa hāriṇīm;
padāravinda samlagna tayaivāhar-nīsam sthitām
bahunā kim sva kāntena krīḍantyāpi latā grhe;
paryanīkādhīṣṭhāpitām vā vastrair vācchādītām kvacit

.....

rādhā padābja sevānya sprhā kāla trayojjhitām
rādhā prīti sukhāmbhodhāv apāre buḍītām sadā
rādhā padāmbujād anyat svapnānte'pi na jānatīm
rādhā sambandha samdhāvat prema sindhaugha mālinīm
seṣāseṣa mahā vismāpaka kaiśora rūpiṇīm;
kṣaṇe kṣaṇe rasāsvāda prodañcat pulakāvalīm
sarvāṅga kānti saundarya apāraiḥ sarva mohinīm
rādhā karmākulatayā tatra tatra vicālinīm

"Since they will die if they are separated from the lotus feet of their Īsvarī Śrī Rādhārāṇī, the *mañjarīs* stay with Her lotus feet day and night. What more can I say? When Śrīmatī enjoys with Her lover in the vine cottage She will take the *mañjarī* with Her onto the bed and sometimes even covers her with the sheets! The *mañjarī* does not desire anything but the service of Śrī Rādhā's lotus feet in all three phases of time – past, present, or future, and is always immersed in a boundless ocean of ecstatic love for Rādhā. Even in dreams she does not know anything else but the lotus feet of Rādhā. She is beautified by waves of the billowing ocean of *prema* for Śrī Rādhā, she has an adolescent female form that astonishes even the great gods and the entire universe, and she wears big goosebumps due to relishing *rasa* on her body at every moment. Rādhā's maidservants captivate everyone by the endless

luster and beauty of their every limb and they always anxiously wander around here and there in Rādhā's service."

In this way the *kiṅkarīs* are always with Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, enjoying their services when They meet, and in times of separation they relieve *virahinī* Rādhā from the pangs of separation by *kṛṣṇa-kathā līlā raṅge*, enjoying discussing topics of Kṛṣṇa. Then, when they view the pastimes of the Divine Pair, they keep these intimate pastimes marked on the canvases of their hearts with the pencils of *prema*, so that they can describe these blissful pastimes again to Śrīmatī at the time of separation. In this way they give shape to playful Śyāma in front of Śrīmatī. Also for this *prasaṅga* (conversational) form of devotional service the *mañjarīs* always stay with Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Although they are always engaged in acts of service they are still known as *narma sakhīs* (intimate joking girlfriends). They extend tasty jokes to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, to Śrī Rādhārāṇī and again to the Divine Pair both, to give them topmost happiness according to the time.²⁸ Hence it is said: "They are all called *narma sakhīs*." (51)

śrī rūpa mañjarī sāra, śrī rati mañjarī āra,
lavaṅga mañjarī mañjulālī.
śrī rasa mañjarī saṅge, kasturikā ādi raṅge,
prema sevā kore kutūhole (52)

"Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī, Śrī Rati Mañjarī, Lavaṅga Mañjarī, Mañjulālī Mañjarī, Śrī Rasa Mañjarī, Kasturikā and others are blissfully rendering loving devotional service with each other."

nitya siddhā mañjarīs—

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – In this *tripadī* the blessed author mentions the names of the chief *narma sakhīs* or *nitya siddha rāgātmikā mañjarīs* by saying: *śrī rūpa mañjarī sāra, śrī rati mañjarī āra, lavaṅga* ²⁹ *mañjarī mañjulālī; śrī rasa mañjarī saṅge, kasturikā ādi raṅge, prema sevā kori kutūholi*. First of all it is said : *śrī rūpa mañjarī sāra*. Here the word *sāra* is accepted to mean 'chief'. Of all the *mañjarīs* Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī is the greatest and the chief. In allegiance to her and under her control all the *mañjarīs* perform and accomplish their services to Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava. Just as Śrīman Mahāprabhu would not listen to anyone's poetry before having it examined by Śrīpāda Svarūpa Dāmodara, the great knower of *rasa*, because if it contained *rasābhāsa* (incompatible flavours) or *viruddha siddhānta* (controversial theories) the Lord would suffer intolerably, similarly in Vraja, the new *mañjarīs* attain the eligibility to engage in the *rasika* service of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, when they passed Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī's examination. Otherwise it is not possible for anyone to attain the *yugala sevā*. We get a clear indication of this from Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya's 'Prārthanā

²⁸ There are different examples given in my commentary on Śrī Vilāpa Kusumāñjali.

²⁹ In some editions of this book 'Anaṅga Mañjarī' is mentioned instead of 'Lavaṅga Mañjarī, but since Anaṅga Mañjarī is also mentioned as a *nāyikā*, we found it better to mention 'Lavaṅga Mañjarī' in this book.

pada'. Here Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya describes his own *mañjarī svarūpa*. When he first attains the good fortune of *yugala sevā* he will collect all the paraphernalia for this *yugala sevā* on Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī's order, and remain standing behind her—

*śrī rūpa paścāte āmi rohibo bhīta hoiyā; donhe puna kohiben āmā pāne cāiyā
sadayā hṛdaye donhe kohiben hāsi; kothāy pāile rūpa ei nava dāsi?³⁰
śrī rūpa mañjarī tabe donha vākya śuni; mañjulālī dilo more ei dāsi āni!
ati namra citta āmi ihāra jānilo; sevā kārya diyā tabe hethāya rākhilo
heno tattva donhākāra sākṣāte kohiyā; narottame sevāya dibe niyukta koriyā*

"I will shyly stand behind Śrī Rūpa as Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa look at me again, smile and ask Rūpa with kind hearts: "O Rūpa! Where did you get this new maidservant?" Hearing Their inquiry, Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī then tells Them: 'Mañjulālī Mañjarī (the spiritual name of Śrīla Lokanātha Gosvāmī) has given me this maidservant to bring her before You!' Knowing her to be very humble I kept her to serve You!" While she told Them this personally she will engage Narottama in Their service."

Here the words *namra citta* (humble attitude) indicates Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya's qualification for *yugala sevā* in *mañjarī svarūpa* and it is also clear from this that she has passed Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī's examination. Again, from the words *sevā kārya diyā tabe hethāy rākhilo* it is also clearly understood that Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī is in charge of bestowing *yugala sevā*. Therefore, following the words *sādhane bhāvibo jāhā, siddha dehe pābo tāhā* of the upcoming *tripadī* nr.55 it is understood that during the time of *sādhana* the *sādhakas* must mainly ³⁰ follow Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī in rendering service in their mentally conceived spiritual body. In this couplet the names of six *mañjarīs* are mentioned, with the word *ādi* (beginning with) after 'Kasturi Mañjarī'. This *ādi* indicates that Śrī Guṇa Mañjarī and Vilāsa Mañjarī are also meant to be mentioned here. To facilitate the remembrance of the *adhika snehās* we are mentioning the acquaintances to the eight *mañjarīs*' complexions, dresses etc., offered by Śrīla Gopāla Guru Gosvāmī and Śrīla Dhyānacandra Gosvāmī in their Śrī Śrī Gaura Govindārcana Smaraṇa Paddhatis—

Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī—

*kuñjo'sti rūpollāsākhyo lalitā kuñjakottare; sadā tiṣṭhati tatraiva suśobhā rūpa mañjarī
priya narma sakhī mukhyā sundarī rūpa mañjarī; gorocanā samāṅga śrīḥ keki patrāmśuka priyā
sārdha tridaśa varṣāsau vāma madhyātvam āśritā; raṅgaṇa mālīkām ceti pravadanti mañiṣiṇaḥ
iyam labāṅga mañjaryā ekenāhnā kanīyasī; ratnabhānuḥ pitā mātā yamunā durmedhakaḥ patiḥ
śvarśūs ca jaṭilā nāmnī pāda sevana tatparā; kalau gaura rase rūpa gosvāmitvaṁ samāgatāḥ*

"In the north of Lalitānandada Kuñja is the *kuñja* named "Rūpollāsa, where the very beautiful Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī always resides. She is the chief of the *priya narma sakhīs*, or *mañjarīs*, she is very beautiful, her bodily luster resembles *gorocana* pigments, her dress is decorated with peacock feathers, she is 13 years and 6 months of age, and has attained the nature of *vāma madhya*. The learned also call her 'Raṅgaṇa-mālā'. She is one day younger

³⁰ The word 'mainly' here means that in the following *tripadīs* allegiance to all the *mañjarīs* mentioned in this couplet is meant.

than Labaṅga Mañjarī, her father is named Ratnabhānu, her mother 'Yamunā', her husband Durmedha and her mother-in-law Jaṭilā. She is dedicated to the devotional service of massaging the feet. In the age of Kali she has descended in the Gaura-avatāra as **Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī.**"

Śrī Rati Mañjarī –

*ratyambujākhyāḥ kuñje'stindulekhā kuñja dakṣiṇe. tatraiva tiṣṭhati sadā surūpā rati mañjarī
tārāvalī dukūleyaṁ taḍit tulya tanu-cchabiḥ . dakṣiṇā mṛdvikā khyātā tulasīti vadantī yām
asyā vayo dvimāsādhya hāyanāstu trayodaśa. pitāsyā vṛṣabhaḥ kānto divākhyāḥ śāradā prasūḥ
śvaśruś ca sannikā proktā cāmara sevānāvitā; iyaṁ śrī raghunāthākhyāṁ prāpto gaura rase kalau*

"In the *kuñja* known as Ratyambuja (the lotus of Rati), south of Indulekhā's *kuñja*, the beautiful Rati Mañjarī always resides. Her dress is decorated with a cluster of stars and her body shines like lightning. She has a mild, submissive nature and is nick-named 'Tulasī'. She is 13 years and two months old. Her father is Vṛṣabha, her husband Diva and her mother is named Śāradā. Her mother in law is named Sannikā and her service is fanning. In the age of Kali she has descended as Śrī Raghunātha Dās Gosvāmī."

Śrī Labaṅga Mañjarī –

*kuñjasya tuṅgavidyāyāḥ kuñjaḥ pūrvatra vartate; labaṅga sukhado nāmnā sudṛśāṁ sumanoharaḥ
labaṅga mañjarī tatra mudā tiṣṭhati sarvadā; sā tu rūpākhyā mañjaryā ekenāhnā varīyasī
udyad vidyut samāna śrīs tārāvalī paṭāvṛtā; śrī kṛṣṇānandadā nityaṁ dakṣiṇā mṛdvika matāḥ
vaya eka dinaṁ sārddha hāyanāstu trayodaśa; śvaśrūḥ suśilā pitarau yamunā ratna bhānukau
patisyān maṅḍalibhadraḥ sarvābharaṇa sevikā; śrī sanātana nāmāsau khyātā gaura rase kalau*

"East of Tuṅgavidyā's *kuñja* is the captivating grove of fair-eyed girls named 'Labaṅga Sukhada', where Śrī Labaṅga Mañjarī always blissfully resides. She is one day older than Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī, her body shines like an excellent lightning strike, her dress is decorated with a galaxy of stars and she always delights Śrī Kṛṣṇa with a soft and submissive nature. Her age is 13 years, 6 months and 1 day. Her mother is named Yamunā, her father Ratnabhānu, her mother-in-law Suśilā and her husband Maṅḍalibhadra. She serves with all kinds of ornaments. In the present Gaura-avatāra she has appeared in the form of Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī."

Śrī Rasa Mañjarī –

*rasānandaprado nāmnā citrā kuñjasya paścime; kuñjo'sti tatra vasatī sarvadā rasa mañjarī
śrī rūpa mañjarī samyag jīvātuh sā prakīrtitā; haṁsa pakṣa dukūleyaṁ phulla campaka kāntibhāk
labaṅga mañjarī tulyā prāyeṇa guṇa sampadā; atīva priyatām prāptā śrī rūpa mañjarī śritā
sandhāna caturā seyaṁ dautye kauśalam āgatā; trayodaśa śārad yuktā dakṣiṇā mṛdvikā matā
pitā subhānur mātā ca prema mañjarī sanjñikā; patir viṭāṅkaḥ śvaśrūr ambhāvati vastra sevikā
sā kalau raghunāthākhyā yukta bhāṭṭatvam āgatā*

"West of Citrā's *kuñja* is the *kuñja* named 'Rasānanda-prada', where Śrī Rasa Mañjarī, who is dearer than life to Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī, always resides. Her bodily luster resembles that of Campaka flowers and her dress shines like swans' wings. Because she has taken shelter of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī, who is as qualified as Labaṅga Mañjarī, she has become the object of her great love. She is expert in different inquiries and in the duties of relaying messages. Her age is 13 and she is endowed with a soft and submissive nature. Her father is named Subhānu, her mother Prema Mañjarī, her husband Viṭaṅka and her mother-in-law Rambhāvati. Her service is dressing. In this Kali age she has appeared as Śrī Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa."

Śrī Guṇa Mañjarī –

*aiśāne campakalatā kuñjāt kuñjo'sti śobhanaḥ; guṇānandaprado nāmnā tatrāste guṇa mañjarī
rūpa mañjarikā saukhyābhilāṣā sā prakīrtitā; javārāji dukūleyaṁ taḍit prakāra kānti bhāk
kaniṣṭheyaṁ bhavet tasyās tulasyāstu tribhir dinaiḥ; śrī kṛṣṇāmoda dākṣiṇyam āśritā prakharoditā
vayo'syā eka māsāḍhyā hāyanāstu trayodaśa; saptaviṁśatibhir yuktam dinaiś ca samudīritam
candrabhānuḥ pitā mātā yamunā gobhaṭaḥ patih; śvaśrus tārāvalī jñeyā śayyā sevā parāyaṇa
gopāla bhaṭṭa nāmāsau khyātā gaura rase kalau*

"In the north eastern corner of Campakalatā's *kuñja* is the beautiful *kuñja* named 'Guṇānanda-prada' where Śrī Guṇa Mañjarī, who desires Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī's happiness, resides. Her bodily luster resembles lightning and her dress is colored (red) like Javā-flowers. She is three days younger than Tulasī Mañjarī and always delights Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Her nature is *dakṣiṇa prakharā*, submissive yet harsh, her age is 13 years, one month and 27 days. Her father is named Candrabhānu, her mother is named Yamunā, her husband Gobhaṭa, her mother-in-law Tārāvalī and her service is making the bed. In Śrī Gaura *avatāra* she descended in the form of Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa."

Śrī Vilāsa Mañjarī–

*vaiśākha kuñjād āgneye kuñjo'sti sumanoharaḥ; vilāsānando nāmnātrāste vilāsa mañjarī
vilāsa mañjarī rūpa mañjarī sakhyam āśritā; sva kāntyā sadṛśī cakre yā divyāṁ svarṇa ketakīm
cañcarīka dukūleyaṁ vāmā mṛdvītvam āśritā; kaniṣṭhā rasa mañjaryās caturbhir divasair iyam
sva bhānuḥ durbalā pitā patir viḍambakaḥ; śvaśrū ramābhīdhāsyās ca jala sevā parāyaṇā
jīva gosvāmītam prāptā kalau gaura rase tvasau*

"In the south eastern corner of Viśākhā's *kuñja* is the captivating grove named 'Vilāsānanda' where Vilāsa Mañjarī, who has a relationship of friendship with Rūpa Mañjarī, is residing. With her own bodily luster she makes all objects that face her shine like divine golden Ketakī-flowers, her dress shines like a Cañcarīka (bee) and her mood is contrary, yet mild (*vāmā mṛdvī*). She is four days younger than Rasa Mañjarī, her age is twelve years old, 10 months and 26 days. Her father's name is Svarbhānu, her mother's Durbalā, her husband's Viḍambaka, and her mother-in-law's Ramā. Her service is providing water. In the Gaura-*avatāra* she is Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī."

Śrī Mañjulālī Mañjarī –

*līlānandaprado nāmnā viśākhā kuñjakottare; tatraiva tiṣṭhati mudā śrī mañjulālī mañjarī
rūpa mañjarikā sakhya prāyeṇa guṇa sampadā; kimśuka puṣpa vastrādhyā tapta hema tanucchahiḥ
līlā mañjarī nāmnāsyā vāma madhyātvam āśritā; śrī rādhikā mano'bhijñā vastra sevā parāyaṇā
vayaḥ saptāha yuktāsau sārddha tridaśa hāyanā; kalau gaura rase lokanātha gosvāmīṅ gatā*

"North of Śrī Viśākhā's *kuñja* is the grove named 'Līlānanda-prada' where Śrī Mañjulālī Mañjarī resides in topmost bliss. She is as qualified as Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī due to her loving friendship with her, her bodily complexion resembles molten gold, her dress is colored like a Kimśuka flower and another name of her is Līlā Mañjarī. Her nature is medium contrary (*vāma madhya*) and she serves Śrī Rādhārāṇī, knowing exactly what is on Her mind. She is dedicated to the service of dressing Her. Her age is 13 years, 6 months and 7 days and in the Gaura-*avatāra* she is Śrī Lokanātha Gosvāmī."

Śrī Kasturī Mañjarī –

*kastūryānandado nāmnā sudevyaḥ kuñjakottare; tatraiva tiṣṭhati mudā sadā kastūrī mañjarī
kāñcatulyāambarā cāsau śuddha hemāṅga kāntibhāk;
mañindra maṇḍanair yuktā śrikhaṇḍa sevanotsukā
vayas tridaśa varṣāsau vāmāmṛdvītvam āśritā; śrī kṛṣṇa kavirājākyāṅ prāptā gaura rase kalau*

"North of Sudevī's *kuñja* is 'Kastūryānanda-kuñja' where Kastūrī Mañjarī always resides. Her body shines like pure gold, her dress shines like glass, she is decorated with the finest ornaments, she renders sandal-service, her age is 13, her nature is *vāma mṛdvī* (contrary, yet soft) and in this age of Kali she has appeared in the Gaura-*avatāra* as Śrī Kṛṣṇa dāsa Kavirāja."

Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya says: "In the company of these *nitya siddhā mañjarīs* I will enthusiastically and blissfully render loving service³¹ to Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava – *prema sevā kori kutūholī*. Here the word *kutūholī* must be understood to have a special meaning. In his 'Camatkāra Candrikā', Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda has used the word '*kutūhala*' to express his eagerness to have *darśana* of captivating scenes. Hearing and chanting are also synonyms of *darśana*, or beholding, here. The only cause and propeller of *rāgānugā bhajana* is the heart's sacred greed to attain feelings similar to those of the expert *nitya siddhā kiṅkarīs* as they render service to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, by hearing and chanting of Their sweet forms, attributes and pastimes. When the *rāgānugīya sādḥaka* becomes greedy after the feelings, expertise or service of the aforementioned *nitya siddhā mañjarīs*, he will meditate on his loving devotional service in his mentally conceived spiritual body in allegiance to them and in their company, and attains them in *bhāva siddhi* (perfection of developing the desired feelings). It is believed that the word *kutūholī* is used to indicate that.

Another meaning of *kutūholī* is said in the dictionary to be *kautukī* which is used in the Vaiṣṇava scriptures as 'amusement', 'joy', 'astonishment', 'eagerness', 'amazement', 'festival', 'humor' etc. All these meanings are to be known to reach perfection in meditation on devotional service rendered to the Yugala Kīśora in allegiance to the *nitya siddhā kiṅkarīs* and in their company. In other words, meditations on and attainment of such devotional

³¹ The word 'loving service' will be explained in the next *tripadī*.

service in *svarūpa siddhi* is accomplished with pleasure, joy, astonishment, eagerness, amazement, as a festival for the eyes and mind and in great humour. The intelligent devotees will easily become acquainted with evidence of all this by studying the *rasa śāstras*, out of fear of increasing the bulk of this book I did not mention them.

Some editions of this book mention the alternative reading of *prema sevā kore kutūholī*. In this the meaning is found that the abovementioned *nitya siddhā mañjarīs* render loving service to Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava with such *kutūhala* or *kautuka*. With this reading the following *tripadī* is seen with comparatively greater consistency. (52)

***e sabhāra anugā hoiyā, prema sevā nibo cāiyā,
iṅgite bujhibo sab kāja.
rūpe guṇe ḍagamagi, sadā hobo anurāgī,
vasati koribo sakhīra mājha (53)***

"I will render loving devotional service in allegiance to them all. Simply on their hints I will understand what is my duty. I will always be passionately absorbed in Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's forms and qualities while residing amongst the *sakhīs*."

Prayer for loving service –

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – In this *tripadī* Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya reveals his aspiration for attaining the loving service in the wake of the *nitya siddha mañjarīs* and the consequent qualification. First of all he says – *e sab anugā hoiyā, prema sevā nibo cāiyā, iṅgite bujhibo sab kāj*. *Vraja bhajana* cannot reach *siddhi* without one following in the footsteps of the *nitya siddha rāgātmikā pāṛṣadas* (the eternally perfect associates of Kṛṣṇa). *rāgamayī bhaktir hoy rāgātmikā nāma; tāhā śuni lubdha hoy kon bhāgyavān; lobhe vrajavāsi-bhāve kore anugati* (C.C.) "Devotion full of spiritual attachment is called *rāgātmikā bhakti*. If a fortunate soul becomes greedy after that he will start following the people of Vraja." By following the *Vraja-gopīs* the sages of the Daṇḍaka forest and the personified Vedas became themselves *Vraja-gopīs* and attained the service of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in Vraja, but on the other hand the goddess of Vaikuṅṭha, Lakṣmī devī, could not attain Śrī Kṛṣṇa's company, despite the fact that she lived in Vraja and performed penances there. This is described in Śrīmad Bhāgavata and other Purāṇas. In this connection Śrīman Mahāprabhu told Veṅkaṭa Bhaṭṭa –

*śruti sab gopīgaṇer anugata hoiyā; vrajeśvarī suta bhaje gopībhāva loiyā
vyūhāntare gopī deha vraje jabe pāilo; sei dehe kṛṣṇa saṅge rāsa krīḍā koilo
gopa jāti kṛṣṇa – gopī preyasī tāhār; devī vā anya strī kṛṣṇa nā kore aṅgikāra
lakṣmī cāhe sei dehe kṛṣṇera saṅgama; gopikā anugā hoiyā nā koilo bhajana
anya dehe nā pāiye rāsa vilāsa; ataeva 'nāyam' śloka kohe veda vyāsa (C.C.)*

"All the personified Vedas followed the *gopīs* and worshipped the son of the Queen of Vraja in their mood. When they attained a *gopī* body in another age they could play the Rāsa-dance with Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is of the cowherd-caste and the cowherd girls are His sweethearts –

He will not accept goddesses or other ladies in that feature. Lakṣmī wanted to associate with Kṛṣṇa, but she did not worship Him **in allegiance to the gopikās**. She could not attain the Rāsa dance in another body, thus Vedavyāsa spoke the verse '*nāyam śriyo'ṅga u nitanta rateḥ prasādaḥ* (Bhāg. 10.47.60)."

The blessed author says: 'Following in the footsteps of Śrī Rūpa and other *mañjarīs*' *prema sevā nibo cāiyā*, which means: "From them I will accept the loving service of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā Mādhava." Here not just the word 'service' has been used, but 'loving service'. This has a special purpose. Love is the best ingredient for serving the Lord, if there is no love in the heart of the servant, the Lord cannot attain pleasure from the fruits, water and foodstuffs offered by him. Hence it is said in Padyāvalī –

*nānopacāra kṛta pūjanam āta bandhoḥ premnaiva bhakta hṛdayam sukha vidrutam syāt
yāvat kṣudanti jaṭhare jaraṭhā pipāsā tāvat sukhāya bhavato nanu bhakṣya peye*

"O devotee! The heart of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who is the friend of the distressed, melts when He is lovingly worshipped with different ingredients. For instance, as long as there is powerful hunger and thirst within the stomach, water and food will be a source of happiness." The eager love of the devotee will awaken a strong desire within the heart of the Lord to accept the ingredients of his service.

Rādhā's maidservants are the embodiments of *sevā rasa*, and their *svarūpas* entirely consist of *sevā rasa*. Their love is so pure and great that their hearts' love culminates into a form of service. Their love is just like iron that gets red hot in identification with the fire in which it is laid by the blacksmith. Their love and their service become so identical that they become an indivisible thing. Hence it is said **prema sevā**. This *prema sevā* is to be asked from the *nitya siddha kiṅkarīs*. Rādhā-Mādhava's *prema sevā* is their own treasure. When they are so kind to bestow it upon a *sādhaka* then he is able to achieve it. The words *prema sevā nibo cāiyā* indicate that the *sādhaka*'s expertise in *bhajana* and the resultant loving eagerness are all there to invoke their grace. Through their anxious prayers such eager *kiṅkarī bhāva sādhakas* must beg the loving service of Śrī Rādhā Mādhava from them (the *nitya siddhas*). They are also most merciful and when they see the eagerness of such a qualified new maidservant they bless her with the proper devotional service – this is suggested with the words *prema sevā nibo cāiyā*.

After that it is said: *īṅgite bujhibo sab kāja*. By Śrī Rādhārāṇī's grace the *kiṅkarīs* are able to understand the hints She makes through any medium – Her glances, words, hands and feet – *śrīsvarī dṛṣṭi vāg ādi sarveṅgita vicakṣaṇām* (Śrī Vṛndāvana Mahimāmṛtam 8.33) "Rādhā's maidservants are able to understand all of their Prāṇeśvarī's hints, expressed through the glances and the words." They are also expert in all respects in understanding the hints given by the *sakhīs* and the *mañjarīs* headed by Śrī Rūpa. Their service is rendered in *parakīya madhura rasa*, and unless they understand all hints, rendering service will be impossible for them. Once an intense love game was taking place within the *kuñja*. *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs* quietly kept their eyes at the slits in the *kuñja*-walls to fill their eyes with the relish of the *yugala mādhuri*. When the sound 'tu' is heard Their absorption in play is broken. Unless the *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs* understand this hint in all respects they won't be qualified for service and their attainment of service will be impossible. Apart from rendering

service within the *kuñja*, the *kiñkarī* must also be expert in catching Śrīmatī's hints when She is at home. In the morning Jaṭilā enters Śrī Rādhārāṇī's bedroom to wake Her up. Hearing the calls of Her mother-in-law Śrīmatī, who is tired of Her nocturnal pastimes, wakes up and sits up in Her bed. Viśākhā-*sakhī* becomes afraid when she sees the signs of lovemaking on Śrīmatī's limbs – if that old hag sees it everything is lost! Viśākhā then gives a hint with her eyes to Śrīmatī's surrendered maidservants and these maidservants, who understand each hint, will immediately conceal the signs of lovemaking with a dye unguent. In this way one needs to be expert in understanding all hints while rendering devotional service within *parakīya madhura rasa* – "*ingite bujhibo sab kāj*".

After that it is said: "*rūpe guṇe ḍagamagi, sadā hobo anurāgī, vasati koribo sakhī mājha*" "I will always remain attached to and immersed in Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's *yugala rūpa*." This means that I will always remain immersed in the sweet relish of the Yugala's ever-fresh forms and attributes and in the sweetness of Their devotional service." Another meaning is that by following the *mañjarīs* one becomes qualified to attain *prema sevā* and expertise in performing all duties. The *sādhaka* will then be immersed in the bodily beauty of a *rādhā kiñkarī* and in their different attributes such as humility and good behaviour. This meditation of the *mañjarī bhāva sādha* on the forms and qualities of the own *siddha svarūpa* runs as follows –

*śrī guroś caraṇāmbhoja kṛpāsikta kalevarām; kiśorīm gopa vanitām nānālankāra bhūṣitām
pṛthu tuṅga kuca dvandvām catuḥ ṣaṣṭhi kalānvitām; rakta citrāntarīyam āvṛta śuklottarīyakām
svarṇa citrāruṇa prānta muktādāma sukāñcalīm;
candanāguru kāśmīra carccitāṅgīm madhusmitām
sevopāyana nirmāṇa kuśalām sevanotsukām; vinayādi guṇopetām śrī rādhā karuṇārthiṇīm
rādhā kṛṣṇa sukhāmōda mātra ceṣṭām supadminīm;
nigūḍha bhāvām govinde madanānanda mohinīm
nānā rasa kalālāpa śālinīm divya rūpiṇīm; saṅgīta rasa saṅjāta bhāvollāsa bharānvitām
tapta kāñcana śuddhābhām sva saukhya gandha varjjitām; divānīśām mano madhye dvayoḥ prema
bharākulam; evam ātmānam īśām bhāvayed bhaktim āśritaḥ*

The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sādhaka* who has taken shelter of the path of *bhakti* always thinks of himself as someone with the adolescent body of a cowherd girl, which is adorned with various ornaments and is sprinkled with the honey of the Guru's grace, whose breasts are firm and raised, who is well trained in 64 arts, who wears a red variegated dress and a white veil, a nice blouse endowed with a pearl string and wonderful golden and red borders (that were all given by Śrī Rādhārāṇī as *prasāda* when She was satisfied with service rendered to Her), whose body is anointed with sandalwood pulp, aloe and vermilion, whose face is adorned with a sweet smile, who is very expert in manufacturing articles for the service of the Yugala, who is very enthusiastic to render devotional service, who is endowed with all saintly qualities such as humility, who hankers for Śrī Rādhā's grace, whose every activity is aimed at making Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa happy, who is a nice Padminī girl (the best of four kinds of girls), who has intimate feelings for Śrī Govinda, who is in His turn captivated by erotic bliss upon seeing her (according to the quality and quantity of his love the loving devotee awakens a certain amount of desire to accept his service in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's heart, that is its nature. Even in dreams Śrī Rādhā's maidservants do not desire to amorously unite with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Thus,

although they are fit to be Yūtheśvarīs due to being very beautiful and qualified, when Śrī Kṛṣṇa sees their *sevāmaya vighraha* He becomes overwhelmed by erotic bliss and desires to unite with them – this is their secret feeling towards Govinda. In this way their feelings are more special and secretive than those of the *sakhīs*), who speaks in a very *rasika* and artistic manner, who has a lustrous, divine body and who is full of joyful feelings caused by *saṅgīta rasa* (musical flavours). In this way the *sādhaka* always establishes his self esteem in the form of a beautiful and qualified adolescent cowherd girl with a love-filled heart, thinking himself to reside amongst the *sakhīs*. (53)

vṛndāvane dui jana, catur-dike sakhīgaṇa
samaya bujhibo rasa sukhe
sakhīra iṅgite hobe, cāmara dhulābo kobe,
tāmbūla yogābo cānda mukhe (54)

"This Divine Couple resides in Vṛndāvana, surrounded by Their girlfriends. I will blissfully serve Them according to the time (of the year or the day). When will the *sakhīs* give me a hint to fan Them with a yaktail-fan or to place betelleaves in Their moon-like mouths?"

Service in *rasa sukha* –

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā– In this *tripadī* Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya gives an indication of *anurāgamaya sevā*-meditation of the *rāga sādhakas* who are in *mañjarī bhāva*. In the previous *tripadī* an indication was given of the *siddha svarūpa* of the *sādhaka*. In this *siddha svarūpa* the *anurāgī rāgānugā* practitioner mentally dwells amongst the *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs* in *Vraja-dhāma*, the kingdom of *līlās*. How the *sādhaka* then renders *mānasī sevā* is thus indicated – "*vṛndāvane dui jana, caturdike sakhīgaṇa, samaya bujhiyā rasa sukhe. sakhīra iṅgita hobe, cāmara dhulābo kobe, tāmbūla yogābo cānda mukhe*" Within the matchlessly beautiful environment of Śrī Vṛndāvana, the kingdom of *rasa*, the *sādhaka* meditates on the Divine Pair, that is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who is the *śṛṅgāra rasarāja mūrti*, the king of transcendental erotic mellows, and Śrī Rādhārāṇī, who is the embodiment of *mahābhāva*, and Who is endowed with matchless beauty, attributes and passionate love. The Yugala Kīśora is surrounded by the *sakhīs*, who are the reflections of Śrī Rādhārāṇī, and who are swimming in the high waves of the ocean of *rasa* and *prema* of Śrī Rādhā-Śyāma which is full of laughter and joking, beauty, love and passion. In his 'Prārthanā Gītikā' Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has drawn a wonderful *bhāva* picture of this –

vṛndāvana ramya sthāna, divya cintāmaṇi dhāma
ratana mandira manohara
āvṛta kālindī nīre, rāja haṁsa keli kore,
tāhe śobhe kanaka kamala
tāra madhye hema-piṭha, aṣṭa dalete veṣṭita,
aṣṭa dalete pradhānā nāyikā

"Rāi and Kānu hold hands and dance around and around on a jewelled stage which is greyed by pollen and cooled by the moon, Their hairs standing on end of ecstasy when They touch Each other."

*mṛgamada candana, kore kori sakhīgaṇa,
variṣaye phula gandha rāje
śrama-jala bindu bindu, śobhā kore mukha indu,
adhare muralī nāhi bāje*

"The *sakhīs* keep musk and sandalpaste in their hands and throw fragrant flowers. Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's moonlike faces are beautified by sweatdrops and Kṛṣṇa cannot play His flute anymore."

*hāsya vilāsa rasa, sarasa madhura bhāsa,
narottama manoratha bhoru
duhuka vicitra veśa, kusuma racita keśa,
locana mohana līlā koru*

"Narottama's desires are fixed on the mellows of Their joking pastimes and Their sweet and juicy talks. With Their wonderful dresses and Their flower-decorated hairs They perform pastimes that enchant the eyes."

The descriptions of those who have directly experienced the sweetness of the pastimes of the Yugala Kīśora and Their *sakhīs* with their *bhāva*-eyes in the *līlā*-kingdom of Śrī Vṛndāvana, are the very life sustenance of the meditations of the *sādhakas*. The *sāmājika sādhakas* (sensitive devotees) can experience how nicely a picture of the sweet pastimes of the Yugala with Their *sakhīs* in Vṛndāvana has been drawn in the above mentioned *pada*. The *rāgānugīya sādhakas* can understand when their time has come to render blissful *rasika* devotional service to Śrī Yugala Kīśora, as They are surrounded in the transcendental kingdom of Śrī Vṛndāvana by Their *sakhīs*, who are a great ocean of beauty, attributes and pastimes. ***samaya bujhiyā*** means serving according to the hot or cold season, according to the time of the day in circumstances as *abhisāra* (love journey), *milana* (meeting), *vilāsa* (love making) and *viccheda* (separation), and in the two different branches of service, *paricaryā* (practical service) and *prasaṅga* (hearing and chanting etc.). ***rasa sukhe*** means the happiness that arises from the passionate service of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava and Their *sakhīs*, and the happiness that arises from relishing the sweetness of Their forms, attributes and pastimes. *svayaṁ bhagavān* (the Original Personality of Godhead) *paratama tattva* (the topmost principle of transcendental truth) *mādhurya mūrati* (the embodiment of sweetness) *vrajendra nandana* (the prince of Vraja) Śrī Kṛṣṇa is a billowing ocean of nectarean beauty, attributes and pastimes, and through *rāgānugā bhakti* the relish of this sweet *rasa* is available. The ocean of sweetness of this Kṛṣṇa expands beyond limits when He is in the company of Śrī Rādhārāṇī and Her girlfriends. Only Śrī Rādhā through Her *mādanākhyā mahābhāva* is able to fully relish this limitlessly sweet *rasa*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa says—

*adbhuta ananta pūrṇa mora madhurimā; trijagate ihār keho nāhi pāy simā
ei prema dvāre nitya rādhikā ekali; āmāra mādhuryāmṛta āsvāde sakali (C.C.)*

"My sweetness is wonderful, limitless and complete, and no one in the three worlds can match with it. Through Her *prema* only Rādhikā can relish all of My nectarean sweetness."

By Śrī Rādhārāṇī's grace the *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs* that have taken shelter of Her lotus feet are constantly swimming in the boundless ocean of *rasa* of the Yugala's sweetness. Nothing in the spiritual world can match this bliss of sweet savour. This is the highest stage of *rasika* bliss that a *jīva* can reach through *sādhana bhajana*. Here again it is to be known that this *rāgānugā bhajana* can never be practised in this current human body, that consists of five gross material elements. Therefore during his *sādhana* the *sādhaka* conceives of another, very captivating body, that resembles that of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī and others, and which is known as ***siddha deha***, within his mind. By the grace of Śrī Gurudeva, who is experienced in *bhajana*, the *sādhakas* become acquainted with this *siddha deha*. Śrī Gurudeva, who is non different from Śrī Bhagavān, introduces the *rāgānugā sādhaka* to his eternally perfect transcendental body, along with *ekādaśa bhāva* (the eleven-fold spiritual personality) which is an abode of beauty within the spiritual sky, on the strength of his *antaryāmītvā śakti*, the power received from the Supreme Lord, Who is the Inner Monitor. The Gosvāmīs have called such a body (*siddha deha*) the body which is suitable to render direct personal service to Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava. In this *siddha deha* the *sādhaka* lives within the circle of *sakhīs* in *Vraja-bhūmi*, meditating on rendering direct devotional service to Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava with them. Those who have gained a slight vision of this *siddha deha* have also experienced the wonderful *rasika* bliss of such a mental service. No one is able to explain this merely through writing comments.

After this Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya said : *sakhīra iṅgita hobe, cāmara dhulābo kobe, tāmbūla jogābo cānda mukhe* – The hearts and minds of Rādhā's maidservants are so merged with Śrī Rādhārāṇī's feelings, that Śrī Rādhārāṇī considers them to be non different from Her own body. By the wish of Śrī Rādhārāṇī Her girlfriends may sometimes enjoy pastimes of intimate meeting with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but Her maidservants do not accept this position even in dreams. Therefore these maidservants are blessed with an even more intimate service to the Yugala than the *sakhīs*.

*tāmbūlarpaṇa pāda-mardana payo dānābhisārādibhir
vṛndāraṇya maheśvarīm priyatayā yās toṣayanti priyāḥ
prāṇa preṣṭha sakhī kulād api kilāsaṅkocitā bhūmikāḥ
keḷi bhūmiṣu rūpa mañjarī mukhās tā dāsikāḥ saṁśraye*

(Vraja Vilāsa Stava –38)

"I take shelter of Śrī Rādhikā's maidservants, headed by Rūpa Mañjarī, that always engage in serving betelleaves, massaging the feet, serving water, and arranging for the Divine Couple's secret trysts. These maidservants are even more dear to the great Queen of Vṛndāraṇya (Śrī Rādhikā) than the *prāṇa preṣṭha sakhīs* (the girlfriends that are dearer to Her than life), and She is therefore not at all shy before them!" When, during the *kuñja vilāsa*, the Śrī Yugala become exhausted, the *sakhīs* give hints to the *mañjarīs* that they should engage in their scheduled services, and on these indications the *mañjarīs* proceed to the playground of the Yugala without hesitation and engage in services such as providing water and betelleaves and fanning Them.

*rati-raṇe śramayuta, nāgarī nāgara
mukha bhari tāmbūla yogāya
malaya-ja kuṅkuma, mṛga-mada karpūra,
militahi gāta lāgāya*

*aparūpa priya sakhī prema!
nija prāṇa koṭi, dei niramāñchai,
naha tula lākho bāṇa hema*

"How wonderful is the love of the *priya sakhīs*! They serve Nāgarī (heroine Rādhikā) and Nāgara (hero Kṛṣṇa) with millions of lives when They are tired of love-making, by filling Their mouths with betelleaves and by anointing Their bodies with sandalwood paste, vermilion, musk and camphor. Their love is so pure that it cannot even be compared to gold molten a hundred thousand times over!"

*manorama mālya, duhu gole arpai,
vijai śīta mṛdu bāta
sugandhī śītala, koru jala arpaṇa,
yaiche hota duhu sānta*

"They offer enchanting garlands to Their necks, give Them cool breezes by fanning Them, and relieve Them from Their heated affliction by offering Them cool and fragrant water."

*duhuka caraṇa puna, mṛdu sarivāhana,
kori śrama korolohi dūra
iṅgite śayana, korolo duhu sakhī-gaṇa
sabahu manoratha pūra*

"These *sakhīs* again softly massage Their feet and thus remove Their fatigue. On Their indication they put the Divine Pair to rest and fulfill any of Their other desires."

*kusuma śeje duhu, nidrita herai,
sevana parāyaṇa sukha.
rādhā mohana dāsa, kiye herabo,
meṭabo sab mano-dukha*

"These girls, that are totally dedicated to their devotional service, then put the Divine Pair to sleep on a bed of flowers. All the mental distress of Rādhā Mohana dāsa is mitigated when he sees this."

***yugala caraṇa sevi, nirantara ei bhāvi,
anurāgī thākibo sadāya.
sādhana bhāvibo yāhā, siddha-dehe pābo tāhā***

rāga pathera ei se upāya (55)

"I will always think of the devotional service of the lotus-feet of the Divine Pair, and I will always remain attached to that. Whatever I think of during my spiritual practice I will attain in my *siddha deha* when I reach perfection. This is the means of *rāga bhakti*."

The similarity of practice and perfection–

Sudhākaṇikā vyākhyā – The varieties and the results of the *sevā cintana* of the *rāgānugīya sādḥaka* that was hinted at by the blessed author in the previous *tripadī* are further described in this *tripadī*. *rāgānugīya gauḍīya vaiṣṇava sādḥakas* establish their *abhimāna* (self esteem) into the own *siddha svarūpa* received from Śrī Guru and then proceed in meditating on their devotional services within Śrī-Śrī Gaura-Govinda's *aṣṭakāla līlā*. *gauḍīya vaiṣṇavācārya* Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has briefly described the *aṣṭakālīn līlā* within his own composition 'Smarāṇa Maṅgala Stotram'. On the basis of this, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāja Gosvāmīpāda has very elaborately described Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's *aṣṭakālīn līlā* in his scripture Śrī-Śrī Govinda Līlāmṛta, and thus blessed the assembled devotees with a celestial Ganges-current of *līlā rasa*. In later times Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda has given more elaborate descriptions of those pastimes that were only briefly described in Govinda Līlāmṛta in his scripture Śrī Kṛṣṇa Bhāvanāmṛta, and thus increased the storehouse of *aṣṭakāla līlā rasa* in all respects. Since it is not possible to perceive the pastimes of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Govinda without meditating on the pastimes of Śrī-Śrī Gaurāṅga, later the resident of Govardhana Śrīla Kṛṣṇa dās Siddha Bābā was visited by Śrī Rādhārāṇī Herself, Who ordered Him to publish something that would suit meditation on Śrī-Śrī Gaura-Govinda's *aṣṭakālīn līlā*. After receiving this order from his worshipable goddess, Śrīla Siddha Bābā compiled the Śrī Gaura Govinda Līlāmṛta Guṭikā, making the manual completely fit for the practice of *līlā smarāṇa*. To make the assembly of *sādḥakas* relish the *aṣṭakālīn līlā rasa* through the realisations of the *mahājanas*, Śrīla Siddha Bābā compiled a large anthology of *aṣṭakālīn līlā* called 'Bhāvanā Sāra Saṅgraha'. In this way the *mahājanas* of yore largely increased the jewel-storehouse of Śrī-Śrī Gaura-Govinda's *aṣṭakālīn līlās*, that make up the confidential worship of the *rāgānugīya gauḍīya vaiṣṇavas* that have taken shelter of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's lotus feet. While constantly meditating on these *aṣṭakālīn līlās* the *gauḍīya vaiṣṇava sādḥakas* meditate on their own favorite services within these pastimes. Hence Śrī Ṭhākura Mahāśaya is saying: '*yugala caraṇa sevi, nirantara ei bhāvi, anurāgī thākibo sadāy*' – "I will always think of the devotional service of the lotus-feet of the Divine Pair, and I will always remain attached to that." While considering the limb of *smarāṇa* within the framework of the nine kinds of devotional practice in his Bhakti Sandarbha-scripture, Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has shown the necessity of thinking of Śrī Hari, by quoting evidence from Śrī Garuḍa Purāṇa–

*ekasminn apy atikrānte muhūrte dhyāna varjite
dasyubhir muṣitenaiva yuktam ākranditum bhṛśam*

"One must weep for each moment that was not spent meditating on Śrī Hari, just as one cries out after having been robbed of all one's possessions by a robber." Thus the *mahājanas* have prescribed *aṣṭakāla līlā smaraṇa*, so that the *bhakti sādhakas* would not lose one moment of the eight time periods of the day and night, and so that they would be blessed with the loving service of the lotus feet of their beloved deities. Those who do not depend on scriptural injunctions, but are only subdued by devotional greed and eagerness to follow the *bhāva* of the *nitya siddha rāgātmika vrajavāsīs* (which is not the same as imitating them), and who are eternally engaged in rendering mental service to Śrī Śrī Rādhā Mādhava, while meditating on Their pastimes, are called ***rāgānugīya rasika bhaktas***. Hence it is written about the practice of *rāgānugā bhakti*—

*bāhya antara ihāra dui to sādhana; bāhya – sādha dehe kore śravaṇa kīrtana
mane nija siddha deha koriyā bhāvana; rātri dine kore vraje kṛṣṇera sevana (C.C.)*

"There are two kinds of *sādhana* – external and internal. Externally one practises hearing and chanting with the *sādha* body, and internally one mentally conceives of one's *siddha deha* in which one serves Kṛṣṇa in Vraja day and night."

Therefore *rāgānugīya gaudīya vaiṣṇava sādhakas* are averse to the mundane world and wander around in the kingdom of *bhāva* in *svarūpāveśa*. In this way they always spend their lives passionately doing *bhajana*. ***anurāgī thākibo sadāy***. While thus doing *bhajana* in allegiance to the *nitya siddha svarūpa-śaktis* one becomes identified with their feelings. Then, by the grace of the *śrī guru rūpā mañjarī* the *sādha* attains *siddhi* and he will be blessed with Śrī Śrī Rādhā Mādhava's *kuñja sevā* in *mañjarī svarūpa* in Vraja-*dhāma*.

Hence Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya says: '*sādhane bhāvibo yāhā, siddha dehe pābo tāho, rāga pathera ei se upāya*'. There is a most transcendently scientific truth hidden in the manual of the Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavas' meditation on *aṣṭakāla līlā*. In the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (3.14.1) it is seen – *yayā kratuḥ asmilloke puruṣo bhavati tathetaḥ pretya bhavati sa kratuḥ kurvita*, meaning: "Whatever mentality a *jīva* maintains in the world, he will be endowed with that mentality also when he goes from this place (meaning: when he leaves his current body). Let therefore the aspirant take shelter of this mentality." In the Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad (4.4.5) it is seen: *sa yathākāmo bhavati tat kratūr bhavati tat karma kurute yat karma kurute tad abhisampadyate iti*. "The *jīva* acts according to his desires, completes these actions and consequently reaps their fruits." Elsewhere in the Upaniṣad it is seen: *yathā yathopāsate tad eva bhavantīti* – "As one worships and meditates, so one becomes." In the Gītā (8.6), the Lord has said: *yaṁ yaṁ vāpi smaraṇ bhāvaṁ tyajantyante kalevaram. taṁ tam evaiti kaunteya sadā tad bhāva bhāvitaḥ* - "Whatever one constantly thinks of during life is what one will remember at the time of leaving the body, and whatever one thinks of while leaving the body will be attained in the next existence." This is the scientific truth about the power of constant meditation, which is also found in Śrīmad Bhāgavata –

*kītaḥ peśaskṛtaṁ dhyāyan kuḍyāṁ tena praveśitaḥ
yāti tat sātmatāṁ rājan pūrva rūpam asantyajam*

"As a powerful cockroach besieges a worm in his hole, he causes the weak worm to assume the form of a cockroach due to constant meditation on him in sheer terror, without

the worm even having to leave his body!" If deep meditation on mundane objects has such power, then there should be no room for doubt about the transcendental devotional power of meditating on the Lord, Who has a transcendental form which is supremely true, by a true devotee. Śrī Kṛṣṇa tells Śrī Uddhava (Bhāg. 11.15.26) –

*yathā saṅkalpayed buddhyā yadā vā mat paraḥ pumān
mayi satye mano yuñjāns tathā tat samupāśnute*

"A devoted person who meditates on Me, Who am also called *satya saṅkalpa*, He Who keeps His promises, will get any of his thoughts fulfilled exactly according to his wishes." Such meditation of the *sādhaka*, which induces the shelter of the Supreme Lord and which is a powerful assistant to *bhakti*, which is the essence of the Lord's pleasure potency, can never result into vain imagination. In his *sādhana* he is meditating on his service to Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava throughout the eight times of the day, and he will achieve this in his *siddha deha*, or his mentally conceived *mañjarī*-body which was received from Śrī Guru. This can never be altered or watered down. This is the greatest means of attaining the desired *siddhi* in *rāga bhajana*. (55)

*sādhane ye dhana cāi, siddha dehe tāhā pāi,
pakkāpakka mātra se vicāra
apakke sādhanā rīti, pākile se prema-bhakti,
bhakati lakṣaṇa tattva sāra (56)*

"The treasure I desire as a practitioner I will get when I attain my spiritual body; it's just a question of being ripe or unripe. The ripe stage is the stage of pure loving devotion and the unripe stage is the stage of practice. That is the essential truth about devotional principles."

The essence of the truth:

Sudhā Kaṇikā vyākhyā- In the previous *tripadī* Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya explained how *sādhana* and *siddhi* are qualitatively identical, and in this *tripadī* he uses an analogy to ascertain this more firmly – '*sādhane ye dhana cāi, siddha dehe tāhā pāi, pakkāpakka mātra se vicāra*' *sādhana bhakti*, *bhāva bhakti* and *prema bhakti* are sequential, qualitatively identical, stages of each other. The treasure of direct loving service that the *rāgānuga sādhanā* desires as he performs his *sādhana* of meditating on Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's service, he will attain when he achieves *prema siddhi* in his *siddha svarūpa*. When *laulyamayī bhakti* (greedy devotion) is not yet fulfilled, but moves towards *siddhi*, it is called *sādhana bhakti*. When this becomes intense it is called *prema bhakti*. Hence it is said – *siddhasya lakṣaṇam yat syāt sādhanam sādhakasya tat* (Bṛhad Bhāg. *ṭkā*) "What is the characteristic of *siddhi*, is the practice of the *sādhaka*." *sādhana bhakti* always keeps the desire for the attainment of *prema bhakti* or direct service awake; this is the nature of *sādhana bhakti*. Hence the blessed author says: *sādhane ye dhana cāi*. Insatiability is the nature of *bhakti*; the more advanced the *sādhaka*

becomes in his devotional practice, the more eagerness and anxiousness he will feel rising in his heart. This eagerness and anxiousness will help the *sādhaka* to attain the kingdom of *prema siddhi* or direct service. There is also a great relish in *sādhana bhakti*, especially in the *līlā smaraṇa* of the *rāga sādhakas*. Their meditation is just like rendering direct service, therefore the wonderful relish they savour during their *sādhana* is incomparable. Then if the *sādhaka* is satisfied with that and he does not awaken a feeling of lacking of *prema* or direct devotional service, finally a situation of self-satisfaction may arise in which the *sādhaka*'s advancement in *bhakti sādhanā* will be blocked. ***sādhane ye dhana cāi*** – these words explain this fact in a hidden way.

The wealth craved for in the stage of *sādhana*, meaning the direct loving service of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava in Vraja yearned for by the *sādhaka*, will be attained within the *siddha deha* after *prema* is attained, this is for sure – *siddha dehe tāhā pāi*. After giving initiation into *kāma bīja* and *kāma gāyatrī* Śrī Gurudeva bestows *siddha praṇālī*, so that the disciple gets knowledge of his distinct relationship with the deity and about the *śrī yugalopāsanā*, the means to worship the Divine Pair. In it the disciple will become acquainted with the name, complexion, age, nature and the other of the eleven aspects of his or her *siddha svarūpa*. The learned knowers of the truth call that initiation ceremony through which all sins are destroyed and divine knowledge is bestowed, *dikṣā* – *divyaṁ jñānaṁ yato dadyāt kuryāt pāpasya saṅkṣayam tasmād dikṣeti sā proktā deśikais tattva kovidaiḥ*. In the 283rd paragraph of Śrī Bhakti Sandarbha, Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda gives the following explanation of the above mentioned words *divyaṁ jñānaṁ* - *divyaṁ jñānaṁ hyatra śrīmatī mantrā bhagavat svarūpa jñānaṁ tena bhagavatā sambandha viśeṣa jñānaṁ ca yathā padmottara khaṇḍādāv aṣṭākṣarādīkam adhikṛtya vivṛtam asti*, meaning: "Here the word *divya jñāna* refers to knowledge of the empowered *mantra* being the very form of the Lord, and that through it the aspirant will achieve knowledge of his specific relationship with the Lord, Who is the Presiding Deity over the *mantra*. In this connection there is an explanation of *mantras* like the 8-syllable *mantra* in the Uttara Khaṇḍa of Śrī Padma Purāṇa, wherein this meaning of the words *divya jñāna* is determined." In the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* the knowledge of this specific relationship means the *ekādaśa-bhāva*, the eleven-fold relationship of the *sādhaka* with the *mantra devatā* Śrī Gopījana vallabha, or *mañjarī svarūpa*. In the Pātāla Khaṇḍa of the Padma Purāṇa we find descriptions of how the practitioners who have taken shelter of *madhura-rasa* and who know the principle of *Kṛṣṇa-rasa*, meditate on their *siddha deha* which is suitable for mentally rendered devotional service. '*nādevo devam arcayet*' '*devo bhūtvā devam yajet*'. In other words, 'unless the *sādhaka* is a god he cannot worship Godhead', and 'being himself a god, he can worship Godhead'. These scriptural statements of rule and prohibition firmly establish the need for the *bhakta* who aspires for the service of the Lord to do *bhajana* while thinking of himself as a personal associate of the Lord. Such meditation of the *pārsada rūpa* (form of an associate of the Lord) by the *sādhaka* is a meditation on the *siddha deha*.

Some think: "At first the *sādhaka* can take shelter of an imagined mental body, and then later, when the Lord is satisfied with his *sādhana bhajana*, according to the rule of

*yādṛṣī bhāvanā yasya siddhir bhavati tādṛṣī*³², He will make the *sādhaka's* *ātmā* His associate. In this way, although the *pārṣada* body of the *sādhaka* is real, it is an imagination in the stage of meditation." This is, however, not the conclusion approved of by the *sāstras* and the *mahājanas*. In Śrīmad Bhāgavata (3.15.14) it is described: *vasanti yatra puruṣāḥ sarve vaikuṅṭha mūrtayaḥ. ye'nimitta-nimittena dharmenārādhayan harim* "Those persons who live in Vaikuṅṭha have transcendental bodies just like Vaikuṅṭha (Lord Viṣṇu) and they worship Lord Śrī Hari there constantly through causeless devotional service." Commenting on this *śloka*, Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has written in the 10th paragraph of his *Prīti Sandarbha* – *vaikuṅṭhasya bhagavato jyotir aṁśa bhūtā vaikuṅṭhaloka śobhā-rūpā yā anantā mūrtayaḥ tatra vartante tāsām ekayā saha muktasyaikasya mūrtiḥ bhagavatā kriyata iti vaikuṅṭhasya mūrtir iva mūrtir yeṣām ityuktam*. The basic meaning of this saying by Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda is that there are two kinds of associates of the Lord in the Supreme Abode, one that is engaged in the Lord's direct service, and the other that is eternally present in innumerable transcendental, yet non-functioning forms, that are like sparks from the Lord's radiant form and are the treasures of Vaikuṅṭha-loka's beauty. Each of the innumerable *jīvas* is an eternal servant of the Lord, and each of them is staying in the abode of the Lord in a body that is suitable for the Lord's service. By the grace of *bhakti* one becomes qualified for the service of the Lord and by the Lord's grace that body will be attained.

In the *siddha praṇālī* that is received from the lotus feet of Śrī Guru within the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya, the acquaintance with this body is attained. No one should consider this to be imaginative. This is eternal and real. Of all the innumerable abovementioned forms situated in the abode of the Lord there is one form in which the Lord will accept the *sādhaka*. On the strength of his meditation Śrī Gurudeva is aware of this and is conferring the proper *siddha deha* to the disciple. While the *sādhaka* performs his *sādhana* he establishes his self-esteem into this form, and when he attains *prema siddhi* he is blessed with direct devotional service within this body. *pakkāpakka mātra se vicāra. pākile se prema bhakti, apakke sādhana gati, bhakati lakṣaṇa tattva sāra*. Just as a fruit is bitter in the unripe stage and sweet and juicy in the ripe stage, similarly when *sādhana bhakti* ripens it becomes known as **prema**. Although in the stage of *sādhana* the relish is slightly transient, due to the presence of *anarthas* and so, in the stage of *prema bhakti* the relish is very deep. By saying *apakke sādhana gati*, Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya is hinting at some of the principles of *sādhana bhakti*. One of the meanings of the word *gati* is 'flow'. Just as the Mandākinī constantly flows towards the ocean and will not stop unless and until it reaches the ocean, similarly the Mandākinī-flow of *sādhana bhakti* constantly flows towards the ocean of *prema bhakti*. Although its fruits are compared with ripe and unripe stages, still the thirst for *prema bhakti* remains constantly awake within the heart of the *sādhaka*, thus constantly awakening the tendency towards *sādhana bhakti* within him that leads him towards the kingdom of *prema*. That point is consistent in this part of the *tripadī*. Another meaning of the word *gati* is that *sādhana bhakti* is the means to attain *prema bhakti*, but is also the goal itself. This means that it embodies *prema bhakti*, which has been indicated in the example of the ripe and unripe fruit. Or it means that *sādhana bhakti* is both the means and the goal, because

³² According to one's meditation one achieves perfection.

the relish of *sādhana bhakti* is also not less. Even the *premika bhaktas* covet the relish of *sādhana bhakti*. Those who relish ripe mangoes also like the taste of unripe mangoes – in the form of mango pickles for instance. Another meaning of the word *gati* is 'sort'. Then *apakke sādhana gati* means the stages of *sādhana bhakti* from *śraddhā* (faith) up to *āsakti* are the unripe phase, *bhāva bhakti* or *rati* is the slightly ripe phase, and *prema bhakti* is the fully ripe stage. In some editions of this book we can find the reading '*apakke sādhana rīti*'. Here *rīti* is understood to be indicating the aforementioned sequence.

Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says this is ***bhakati lakṣaṇa tattva sāra***, meaning that whatever is coveted during the stage of *sādhana* is attained at the time of *siddhi*. The only difference is that it is unripe in the phase of *sādhana* and ripe in the phase of *siddhi*. This is the essence of the devotional principle. Another meaning can be that the secrets of *mañjarī bhāva sādhana* that have been revealed from *tripadī* nr.52 '*śrī rūpa mañjarī sāra*' up to this current *tripadī* are the characteristics of the essence of the principles of *bhakti* or the ***carama niryāsa*** (ultimate extract). The characteristics of the essence of the principles of *bhakti* are selfless service to the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord. There is no comparison to the pure and selfless service of the *mañjarīs* to be found anywhere, they embody the summit of selflessness. (56)

narottama dāse koy, ei yeno mora hoy,
vrajapure anurāge vāsa.
sakhīgaṇa gaṇanāte, āmāre likhibe tāte,
taba hi pūrabo abhilāṣa (57)

"Narottama dāsa says: 'May I live in Vrajapura with deep devotional attachment. My desires will be fulfilled when I am counted and written down among the *sakhīs*.'"

Living in Vraja with *anurāga*–

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā– In this *tripadī* Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya desires to live in Vraja with *anurāga* (constant attachment) and to be counted amongst the *sakhīs*. Here we can understand that he prays for living in Vraja with *anurāga* both in the *sādhaka*- and the *siddha-deha*. First we shall speak of living in Vraja with *anurāga* within the *sādhaka deha*. *anurāga* here does not mean the *anurāga* which is counted amongst the *sthāyi bhāvas*, for that can not take place within the *sādhaka* body. Thus Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya reveals the aspiration to live in Vraja with love, loving attachment and respect. Śrīmad Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda advises the *rāgānugīya sādhakas* to constantly live in Vraja– *kuryad vāsam vraje sadā* (B.R.S). Even more so, those who are unable to live in Vraja physically, are instructed to aspire to live in Vraja mentally. The reason for this is that, by the inconceivable power of Vraja-dhāma, *bhāva* will swiftly awaken within the heart of a non-offensive *sādhaka* as a result of living in Vraja – *durūhādbhuta vīrye'smin śraddhā dūre'stu pañcake; yatra svalpo'pi sambandhaḥ saddhiyām bhāva janmane* (B.R.S. 1.2.238) "Associating with *sādhus*, hearing the

Bhāgavata, serving the *vigraha*, performing *nāma saṅkīrtana* and residing in Vraja – each of these five items of *sādhana* are so incomprehensible and wonderfully powerful, that, even if they are performed without faith, even the slightest contact with them by the non-offensive *sādhaka* will awaken *bhāva* within his heart." The question may be asked now: "In his proper sequence of *sādhana bhajana* the *sādhaka* must ascend different steps, from *śraddhā* up to *āsakti*, to be able to arrive in the kingdom of *bhāva*– how can then even the slightest contact with these five items of *sādhana* awaken this *bhāva*? To this Śrī Rūpa answers: *alaukika padārthānām acintyā śaktir idṛśī; bhāvaṁ tad viṣayaṁ cāpi yā sahaiva prakāśayet* (B.R.S. 1.2.244) "These five extraordinary practices have such an inconceivable power that even the slightest touch with them can reveal both *bhāva* and the object of *bhāva*." But the *sādhaka* will have to live in Vraja with *anurāga*, meaning with respect, love and loving attachment, otherwise he will commit offences to the holy *dhāma* and as a result of the *dhāma* being dissatisfied with him there will be a very long delay in the attainment of the desired result. After he suffers for a long time and repents, the holy *dhāma* will become satisfied and will make the attainment of the desired result of living in the *dhāma* possible.

Secondly, there is no other place anywhere in the universe like Vraja that can give such great arousal to the *rāgānugīya sādhaka* in his *bhāvamaya vraja-vāsa upāsana* (ecstatic worship in the form of living in Vraja). Let alone the material world, for the perfection of Vraja-*bhāva* Śrī Uddhava Mahāśaya advised Gopa Kumāra to give up even Vaikuṅṭha, all the way up to Ūrdhva Dvārakā (upper Dvārakā) and to live in the terrestrial Vraja. This is described in Śrī Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta (2:5:243-244)–

*tatraivotpadyate dainyam tat premāpi sadā satām
tat tac chūnyam ivāraṇya sarid giryādi paśyatām
sadā hā-hā ravākrānta vadanānām tathā hṛdi
mahā santāpa dagdhānām sva priyam parimṛgyatām*

When the *sādhus* see the empty forests, rivers and mountains in the terrestrial Vraja, love and humility always automatically awakens within them. The *sādhus* there are always lamenting and always seek their beloved deity with greatly afflicted, anxious hearts." When Śrīla Gopa Kumāra arrived in the terrestrial Vraja he attained a similar mood –

*sadā mahārtyā karuṇa svarai rudan nayāmi rātrir divasāms ca kātaraḥ
na vedmi yad yat sucirād anuṣṭhitam sukhāya vā tat tad udārti sindhave
kathāncid apyākalayāmi naitat kim eṣa dāvāgni śikhāntare'ham
vasāmi kim vā paramāmṛtāccha suśītala śrī yamunā-jalāntaḥ* (2.6.3-4)

Śrī Gopakumāra told Śrī Jana-Śarmā: "O *brahman*! When I came to terrestrial Vraja I always wept with great anxiousness. In other words, I was so agitated that I called out 'O Lord!' with a pitiful voice. In this way day and night passed. For a long time I practised all these things, but whether it brought me great happiness or immersed me into an ocean of great misery, I don't know. I could not understand at all whether I was living day and night within the flame of a forestfire or whether I resided within the most sweet, clear and cool water of the Yamunā." This is a sweet picture of how to live in Vraja with *anurāga* within the

sādhaka body. Śrī Rūpa, Sanātana, Raghunātha and the other of the six Gosvāmīs thus set the best example of how to live in Vraja with great *anurāga*.

Also in this *tripadī* the desire is revealed to live with *anurāga* in Vraja, the playground of the Lord, directly within the *siddha deha*. In his 'Ānanda Candrikā'-*tīkā* of Śrī Ujjvala Nīlamaṇi (3.49-51) as well as in his 'Rāga Vartma Candrikā'-booklet, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda has shown with logic and reason how the *sādhaka* takes birth in the kingdom of *līlā* in his mentally conceived *siddha deha* and how he lives in Vraja with *anurāga*. The gist of his explanation runs as follows: "Those who are specially attracted to the ecstasy of the Vrajavāsīs and thus perform *rāgānugā bhajana* will attain that abundance of eagerness that is fit for performing *rāgānugā bhajana* and will take birth in Vraja in groups of one, two or three in their own time, according to their eagerness.' The words 'taking birth in Vraja' means the *sādhana siddhas* take birth from the womb of a *gopikā* in their mentally conceived *siddha dehas*, just as Kṛṣṇa's eternally beloved *gopīs* appear with Him when He descends to earth (*prakāṣa līlā*). After that, gradually *sneha*, *māna*, *praṇaya*, *rāga*, *anurāga* and *mahābhāva* will become manifest in the *gopikā*-body of that *sādhaka* on the strength of associating with the *gopīs* that are endowed with *mahā-bhāva* and by hearing and chanting and seeing the greatness of Kṛṣṇa's eternally liberated *gopīs*. In the *sādhaka deha* one can advance upto the stage of *prema*. The stages of *sneha* up to *mahābhāva* can not arise within the *sādhaka deha*. Without taking birth from the womb of a *gopī* in the house of a cowherd one can not get a proper acquaintance according to the human-like pastimes there, like: "Whose daughter is this *sakhī*? Whose wife is she? Whose daughter-in-law is she?" After the *sādhaka*-body perishes, that loving devotee, who is fully engaged in his *sādhana* and who has eagerly desired direct devotional service for a long time, will once, by the Lord's grace, receive the gift of the desired service and the audience of the Lord and His eternal associates, either in a dream or directly, even though he has not yet attained the manifestations of *prema* like *sneha* and so. Just as the Lord once bestowed a spiritual body on Śrī Nārada Muni (after he had a similar snap vision of the Lord in his previous birth), similarly He will give the *sādhaka* the transcendental *gopikā*-body he has meditated on all the while. Yogamāyā will make that body take birth from a *gopikā*-body in the manifest pastimes, when Śrī Kṛṣṇa descends to earth with His eternal associates, so that he can attain *prema siddhi* from the stage of *sneha* upwards. There will be not even the slightest delay in that, because the eagerness of the *premika* for attaining direct loving service at that time will take him immediately to the kingdom of *līlā*, there is no other means. Nevertheless for the ripening of *prema*-stages like *sneha* and because of attaining the *siddhi* of taking birth in a *gopī*-body in the *nara līlā* (human pastimes) he must first be taken to the *prakāṣa līlā*. The *prakāṣa līlā* also goes on without interruption, rotating like a firebrand throughout the innumerable universe. After the devotee whose *prema* has awoken leaves his body, Yogamāyā is so kind to give him birth in the house of a cowherd in the universe where Śrī Kṛṣṇa-*līlā* is manifest. In this way the *sādhaka* perfects his residence in Vraja in great *anurāga* in his *siddha deha* along with the *nitya siddhas*. Knowing him to have become qualified, the *nitya siddha sakhīs* will count him amongst their different groups and bless him by giving him the devotional service of the Divine Pair. In this way all the aspirations of the *sādhaka* are fulfilled. Hence it is said – '*sakhīgaṇa gaṇanāte, āmāre likhite tate, tabahi pūrabo abhilāṣa*'. Also in Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya's 'Prārthanā-*pada* this *siddhānta* is found –

*hari hari! āra kobe emon daśā hobo
kobe vṛṣabhānu pure, āhīri gopera ghare,
tanayā hoiyā janamibo*

"Hari! Hari! When will I attain this condition? When will I be born as a daughter in the house of a cowherd in Vṛṣabhānu's town (Varṣānā)?"

*yāvate āmāra kobe, e pāṇi grahana hobe,
vasati koribo kobe tāya
sakhīra parama śreṣṭha, ye hoy tāhāra preṣṭha,
sevana koribo tāra pāya*

"When will I be married in the village of Yāvāt and when can I live there? When can I serve the feet of the best of *sakhīs* with everything that is most dear to Her?"

*teṅho kṛpāvān hoiyā, rātula caraṇe loiyā,
āmāre koribe samarpaṇa
saphala hoibe daśā, pūribe manera āśā,
sevi duhāra yugala caraṇa*

"She will be merciful and take me to her reddish lotus feet, offering me to the lotus feet of the Yugala Kīśora. My condition will become successful and my desires will be fulfilled when I can serve these lotus feet!" (57)

***sakhīnām saṅginī rūpām ātmānām vāsanāmayīm
ājñā sevāparām tat tad rūpālankāra bhūṣitām (58)***

(Sanat Kumāra Samhitā)

"The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sādhaka* should think of himself as an adolescent cowherd girl, a female associate of Śrī Rādhārāṇī's girlfriends, engaged in the service of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa on the order of these *sakhīs*, and decorated with Śrī Rādhārāṇī's leftover garments and ornaments."

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *ṭīkā* – *sakhīnām śrī lalitā-śrī rūpa mañjaryādinām saṅginī rūpām ātmānām dhyāyed iti śeṣaḥ. kimbhūtām? ājñā sevāparām ājñayā tāsām anumatyā sevā parām śrī rādhā mādhavayor iti śeṣaḥ. punaḥ kimbhūtām? tat tad rūpālankāra bhūṣitām suprasiddha śrī kṛṣṇa manohara rūpeṇa śrī rādhikā nirmālyālanakāreṇa bhūṣitām nirmālyā mālyā vasanābharaṇās tu dāsya ityukteḥ. punaḥ kimbhūtām? vāsanāmayīm cintāmayīm iḥsate cintāmayam etam īśvaram ityādivat. (58)*

Meditation on the *siddha deha* –

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – Previously Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has established *mañjarī svarūpa* and *mañjarī bhāva* as the essential principles, and to prove it he is now quoting one verse from the Sanat Kumāra Samhitā Tantra and one verse from Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda's Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu. First he offers evidence from Śrī Sanat Kumāra Samhitā – *sakhīnām saṅginī rūpām ātmānām vāsanāmayīm ajñā sevāparām tat tad rūpalaṅkāra bhūṣitām*: "The *rāgānugā sādḥaka* must meditate on himself as a female associate of *sakhīs* like Śrī Lalitā, Viśākhā or Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī, who is dedicated to the service of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava on their order, and whose own body, consisting of spiritual aspirations, is decorated by Śrī Rādhikā's (leftover) garlands, dresses and ornaments. Apart from following Śrī Lalitā, Viśākhā, Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī etc., the *sādḥaka* also meditates on himself as a dedicated maidservant, engaged in loving devotional service according to the Guru-given *siddha praṇālī*, following his/her own *guru mañjarī*. Thus he meditates on himself as a submissive maidservant or *priya narma sakhī* who follows Śrī Lalitā, Rūpa Mañjarī and so, and renders each and every loving service to Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava on the order of his Śrī Guru Mañjarī. There is conforming evidence for this in Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya's own words – *guru rūpā sakhī vāme, tribhaṅga bhaṅgima thāme, cāmarera bātāsa koribo* etc. (Prārthanā) "Standing on the left side of my *Guru rūpa sakhī* I will fan Them, standing in a threefold bending form." He who teaches *rāgānugā bhajana* by giving initiation into *śrī kṛṣṇa mantra* is a *guru rūpa sakhī* in *Vraja-līlā*. Though in *Vraja-līlā* Śrī Gurudeva is a superior *sakhī* he must be considered as the embodiment of the Supreme Lord's Grace—in external dealings the *sādḥaka* should never deal with him in a fraternal manner, for this is opposed to the teachings of the *sādḥus* and the scriptures.

Before this verse *sakhīnām saṅginī rūpām* another verse can be found in Śrī Sanat Kumāra Samhitā – *ātmānām cintayet tatra tāsām madhye manoramām. rūpa yauvana sampannām kiśorīm pramadākṛtim* "The *sādḥaka* should meditate on himself as a captivating beautiful adolescent girl amongst Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *gopī*-consorts and their girlfriends." The word *cintayet* in this verse means to see oneself (the soul) or identify oneself as a girl who looks and feels like one of the *nitya siddha sakhīs* (the way in which it was revealed by Śrī Gurudeva in the *siddha praṇālī* or *ekādaśa bhāva*). In other words, to firmly identify oneself as: "I am this body which is endowed with such-and-such a form and mood." When the *sādḥaka* can establish such a firm self esteem he may consider himself to approach perfection (*siddhi*); such is the principle established by Śrī Jīva Gosvāmīpāda—*astu tāvad bhajana prayāsaḥ kevala tādrśatvābhimānanenāpi siddhir bhavati* "Let alone performing *bhajana* with full spiritual self esteem, *siddhi* is attained simply by considering oneself to belong to the Supreme Lord."

Ṭhe *rāgānugā bhajana* of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas is a wonderfully powerful spiritual psychology. Psychologists say that of all human powers the powers of thought, that are self-manifest within the brain, are the most powerful ones, since through research we can know that anything rising and falling, manufactured and destroyed, preached and dissipated is sitting on the golden throne of our thoughts. This is caused by our customary worship of this power. Its nature is independent, therefore it is not bound to any fixed place. Its unchecked course pervades all places, both on earth and in the firmament. The results of this power are indestructable, and those who keep this power within the brain will keep it also after their destruction. Just as the sky within a jug is not destroyed after the jug is destroyed, but merges within the firmament, similarly this great power is not destroyed when the human

body is destroyed. Even after this the acting power rules over the next human mind. Just as the book or musical composition of a great author or musician does not heed facts like birth or death and continues to increase the delight of society or attains the status of a mental bouquet of love.

If the mundane mental faculties of mankind have such power, then the human brain can certainly not conceive of the power of spiritual psychology or the fixed meditation on God of the *sādhaka*, that becomes ever-so-more powerful with the aid of the power of devotion. Actually, by thinking of his *siddha deha* and being situated in identification with his *svarūpa*, the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sādhaka* becomes fixed in meditation on his mental service of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava with the aid of thought-power endowed with the like-minded grace-power of the wise men of yore. Thus there is no doubt at all that they will very swiftly attain absorption in *bhāva* and reach the kingdom of perfection. This is the utmost manifestation of spiritual psychology and the very sweet spiritual flavours of Godhead within the soul of the *sādhaka*.

In connection with the meditation of the *sādhaka* on the *siddha deha* it is to be particularly known that the *sādhaka* must mainly prepare his heart by meditating on *gopī bhāva*, since *gopī bhāva* is the practice of *rāgānugā bhakti*. Thus it is not sufficient just to meditate on oneself in the form of a *gopī*; the *siddha deha* is nourished by thinking of oneself in the form of a *gopī* and adopting the feelings of a *gopī*. It is advised to meditate on the pastimes of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa while adopting the feelings of a *gopī* – *ataeva gopībhāva kori aṅgikāra; rātri dina cinte rādhā-kṛṣṇera vihāra. siddha deha cinti kore tāhāi sevana; gopībhāve pāy rādhā-kṛṣṇera caraṇa* (C.C.) "Therefore do accept the feelings of a *gopī* and think of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's enjoyments day and night. Serve them with a mentally conceived *siddha deha*. When you adopt the feelings of a *gopī* you will attain the lotus feet of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa." Being absorbed in *mañjarī bhāva*, which is the highest stage of *gopī bhāva*, the *sādhaka* who aspires for loving devotional service will constantly think that he is a female associate of Śrī Lalitā, Viśākhā and Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī and that he is a maidservant dedicated to the service of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava according to their orders, adorned with Śrī Rādhā's leftover ornaments, her heart consisting of the determination to engage in the loving devotional service of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava and her body consisting of the ingredients of the flavours of Their service. (58)

***kṛṣṇaṁ smaran janaṁ cāsyā preṣṭhaṁ nija samīhitam
tat tat kathā rataś cāsau kuryād vāsaṁ vraje sadā (59)***

(Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu)

"Remembering Kṛṣṇa and his favorite beloved eternal associate of Kṛṣṇa, the practitioner should always reside in Vraja, greatly attached to conversing about them."

Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *tīkā* – *kṛṣṇaṁ smarann iti. smaraṇasyātra rāgānugāyām mukhyatvaṁ rāgasya manodharmatvāt. śreṣṭhaṁ nija bhāvocita līlā vilāsināṁ kṛṣṇaṁ vṛndāvanādhiśvaram. asya kṛṣṇasya janāṁ ca kidṛśaṁ nija samāhitaṁ svābhilaṣaṇīyaṁ śrī vṛndāvaneśvari-lalitā-viśākhā-rūpa mañjaryādikaṁ kṛṣṇasyāpi nija samāhitatve'pi taj janasya ujvala bhāvaika niṣṭhatvāt nija samāhitatvādhikyam. vraje vāsam iti asāmarthyē manasāpi sādhaika śarīreṇa vāsaṁ kuryāt. siddha śarīreṇa vāsaṁ tu uttara ślokaṛthaḥ prāpta eva.*

Expertise in *rāgānugā bhakti* –

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya backs up his own words by citing the example of this *śloka* from *Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu* (1.2.294), written by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, the *mūlācārya* (founding teacher) of the Gauḍīya Sampradāya, who is the incarnation of Vraja's very Rūpa Mañjarī. First of all he says: *kṛṣṇaṁ smaran janāṁ cāsya preṣṭhaṁ nija samāhitam*—"Remember playful Śrī Vrajendranandana and your own favorite associates of Him like Śrī Rādhā, Lalitā, Viśākhā and Rūpa Mañjarī, according to one's own proper mood, meaning the erotic mood." This means that in *rāgānugā bhajana* the item of *smaraṇa* is predominant, since *rāga* is a mental religion (*dharma*). The very nature (*dharma*) of the mind is *rāga* (attachment, passion), and hence mental worship is the root cause of *rāgānugā bhajana*. Still the external practice of hearing and chanting must not be neglected or given up—this is to be noted specifically. The perfection of allegiance to the Vraja-people cannot be achieved by giving up external practices like hearing and chanting. As much as the external practices like hearing and chanting nourish the internal practice of *smaraṇa*, that much the internal practice also awakens taste for external practices. Since they nourish each other equally, efforts to fix one's mind on *līlā smaraṇa* without taking shelter of external practices will not become fruitful. And again, efforts to perform only external practices without practising *līlā smaraṇa* cannot be called *rāgānugā mārga's bhajana*. Hence both are required.

All those new aspirants who are unable to meditate on their own *siddha dehas* or on Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's pastimes, but rather find this difficult to do, should initially not be too eager for *līlā smaraṇa*. If they, along with hearing and chanting etc., practise some light and easy *smaraṇa* while hearing and chanting texts like Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya's 'Prārthanā' and 'Prema Bhakti Candrikā', Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda's 'Stavamālā', Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmīpāda's 'Stavāvalī', Śrīla Kṛṣṇa dāsa Siddha Bābā's 'Prārthanāmṛta Taraṅgiṇī', that glorify *gopī bhāva* or *rāgānugā bhajana*, and at the same time try to cultivate *mañjarī bhāva* within the heart, the heart will easily become qualified to practise *līlā smaraṇa*. Hence it is said: *tat tad kathā-rataś cāsau* – "Being attached to their topics", in other words, 'Being engaged in hearing and chanting about them.' Since Śrī Kṛṣṇa and topics concerning Him are non-different, Śrī Kṛṣṇa enters the pathways of the *sādhakas'* ears through the mouths of the *sādhu bhaktas* who converse about Him and thus enters into their hearts, where He removes all dirt in the form of gross or subtle mundane desires, thus making it a tidy place. This is clearly described in Śrīmad Bhāgavata (1.2.21) – *śṛṇvatāṁ sva kathāḥ kṛṣṇaḥ puṇya śravaṇa kīrtanaḥ hṛdyantaḥ stho hyabhadraṇi vidhunoti suhṛt satām.*

Finally, the blessed author says: *kuryād vāsaṁ vraje sadā* – "The *rāgānugīya sādhas* should always live in Vraja." (Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī comments:) *sāmarthyē sati vraje śrīman nanda vraja-vāsa sthāne śrī vṛndāvanādau śarīreṇa vāsaṁ kuryāt tad abhāve manasāpītyarthaḥ* "If possible one must live in Vraja physically, and if that is not possible one must either live

there mentally or aspire to live in Vraja physically." In Bṛhad Gautamīya Tantra Śrī Kṛṣṇa personally glorifies residence in Vraja –

*idaṁ vṛndāvanam ramyaṁ mama dhāmaiva kevalam;
atra ye paśavaḥ pakṣi mṛgāḥ kiṭā narāmarāḥ
ye vasanti mamādhiṣṇe mṛtā yānti mamālayam*

.....

*pañca yojanam evāsti vanam me deha rūpakam; kālindīyam suṣumnākhyā paramāmṛta-vāhinī
atra devās ca bhūtāni vartante deha rūpataḥ; sarva devamayaś cāham na tyajāmi vanam kvacit
āvīrbhāvas tirobhāvo bhaven me'tra yuge yuge;
tejomayam idaṁ ramyam adṛśyam carma cakṣuṣā*

"This Vṛndāvana is most charming and is My only abode. All the animals, birds, deer, insects, humans and demigods who reside here will attain My abode when they leave the body. This ten-mile Vṛndāvana is My very body and the spine is formed by Yamunā, the flow of supreme nectar. Here gods and humans live in subtle, extraordinary or spiritual bodies. I am the aggregate of all the demigods and I never leave this abode. I appear and disappear here age after age. This lovely Vṛndāvana is very powerful, as it consists of pure *sattva* and is invisible to the physical eye." Although it is the manifestation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's transcendental *sandhinī śakti* or existence potency, out of its own kindness this abode is also visible to the eyes of the *sādhakas* of this world, so that they are easily able to attain *bhakti siddhi*. Which fortunate *sādhaka* will not take shelter of this transcendental abode for the attainment of *bhakti siddhi*?³³

By taking shelter of Śrī Vraja-*dhāma* and engaging in items of devotion like hearing and chanting in the company of like minded *rasika bhaktas*, in the abovementioned way, and as a result of practising *smaraṇa*, the basket-like heart of the *rāga sādhaka* will be cleansed by the fragrant stream of *bhakti's* grace. Then the mind and intelligence will become fixed and the *sādhaka* will gradually become deeply attracted to the Lord. In this way the love-scented desires for service are reflected within the heart of the attracted *sādhaka* while he performs his *bhajana*. This first colours the heart, which is softened by gusto, then it will awaken the intelligence to give it certainty and then it will make the ego absorbed in *svarūpa bhāva*, a mood according to one's intrinsic self. Then the *sādhaka* will perform his *bhajana* nicely, his mind always planning and desiring service, his intelligence being fixed in spiritual knowledge, his ego identifying itself with the proper mood and personality and his consciousness getting deep roots into *bhakti* and getting deep transcendental visions. Then the senses will perceive all these divine emotions while continuing to engage in hearing and chanting. As the force of these emotions nourishes the sweetness of hearing and chanting, they automatically turn inwards and, taking shelter of their own intrinsic faculties, gradually enliven and entertain all the inner faculties of mind, intelligence and ego with the attained and experienced feelings. These are the *sādhakas'* ***bhajana anubhava*** (experiences in *bhajana*). (59)

³³ See the preceding commentary on *tripadī* nr. 57 and the upcoming commentaries on *tripadīs* nr. 66 and 67.

*yugala caraṇe prīti, parama ānanda tathi,
rati prema-maya parabandhe
kṛṣṇa nāma rādhā-nāma, upāya koro rasa dhāma,
caraṇe poḍiyā parānande (60)*

"Love for the lotus feet of the Divine Couple is a most blissful thing. Become lovingly attached to the love-filled topics narrated by the *ācāryas* who know Śrī Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti rasa*, and take to the holy names of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā, that are the abode of *rasa*, falling at Their feet in topmost ecstasy!"

Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *ṭikā* – *parabandhe – prabandhe, śrī kṛṣṇa-bhakti rasa vijña bhakta jana viracita premamaya kathāyānī mama ratir bhavatu. caraṇe rādhā mādhavayor iti śeṣaḥ* – "May I be always lovingly attached to the loving topics about Śrī Kṛṣṇa *bhakti rasa* composed by the devotees who are realised in this. *caraṇa* stands for Rādhā-Mādhava's lotus feet."

Confidential bhajana :

Sudhā-kaṇikā vyākhyā – In this *tripadī* Śrīla Narottama Thākura Mahāśaya reveals some confidential items of the *bhajana* practised by the *rāgānugīya sādhakas* through his own prayers. First of all he says: *yugala caraṇe prīti, parama ānanda tathi* – "May my love dwell in the lotus feet of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava", *tathi* meaning "there, or in this love, I will attain paramount bliss." In the Taittiriya Upaniṣad it is said '*saiṣānandasya mīmāṃsa bhavati*' - The bliss of Hiranyagarbha, the progenitor, and others, is a hundred times greater than human happiness. Greater than that is again the bliss of the non-personal *brahman* – The *śloka*: *yato vāco nivartante aprāpya manasā saha; ānandaṁ brahmaṇo vidvan na vibhethi kutaścana* ³⁴ shows how special and unlimited that bliss is. After that the words *ko hyevanyāt kaḥ prāṇyād yad eva ākāśa ānando na syāt* show the bliss of the all-pervading principle of *brahman*. The Upaniṣadic words *ānandādध्येवा खल्विमāni bhūtāni jāyante* proclaims the joyful message of universal bliss – "The whole universe attains birth from bliss, it is remaining in bliss and it is destroyed in bliss." From this it is learned that nothing can exist in this world outside of bliss. He who is *ānanda rūpam amṛtam*, He who is *raso vai saḥ*, He who is *sarveṣāṁ bhūtānāṁ madhu*, that blissful, nectarean, flavourful and honey-filled Lord has created a world in which misery can never exist. Thus the happiness and distress that follows the course of the living entities' lives, are nothing else but the culmination of the *karmik* reactions of the conditioned souls, who are actually vessels of spiritual light. Intrinsically the living entity is a particle of spiritual bliss, but because he has been averse to the Lord since beginningless time his heart is contaminated, and because he is devoid of spiritual knowledge he remains seated within material bodies and continues to suffer the beginningless pangs of material life. On the day that the conditioned soul turns inwards, and develops a service-attitude towards the Lord by

³⁴ "From where the words return and what cannot be attained by the mind — anyone who knows this *brahman* will never fear again."

the grace of a great saint, experiencing the Lord as dearer than the dearest in his heart of hearts, on that day his awareness of his intrinsic nature awakens within his heart and his eternally perfect *prema* awakens, so that he becomes immersed in an ocean of transcendental bliss, forever relishing the sweetness of the all-blissful and all-delicious Lord. Within the relish of the Lord's sweetness the relish of the very embodiment of sweetness, the Original Personality of Godhead Bhagavān Vrajendranandana (Kṛṣṇa) is the greatest of all, and then again the ocean of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweetness increases when He is in the company of Śrī Rādhārāṇī, hence there can be no comparison anywhere to the paramount bliss attained by those who are dedicated to loving the lotus feet of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava. Hence the blessed author has said: "*yugala caraṇa prīti, parama ānanda tathi.*"

Then the blessed author said: *rati premamaya parabandhe*, meaning: "May I be lovingly attached to the books that were lovingly made by the Mahājanas of my own *sampradāya* (tradition), who are great knowers of Śrī Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti rasa*." Books like Śrīpāda Rūpa and Raghunātha's Stavamālā and Stavāvalī and Śrīla Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāja's Govinda Līlāmṛta are most relishable for the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sādhakas* practising *mañjarī bhāva*, and these books greatly enhance their own *bhāva*. Each syllable of these books of the Mahājanas is *premamaya*, filled with *prema - premamaya akṣara yāhāra*. Each syllable of the scriptures composed by the Mahājanas is permeated by the *rasa* of their realisations, therefore they are greatly capable of cleansing the heart of all impurities and bestowing *prema bhakti*. This Prema Bhakti Candrikā of Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya is one of them. In connection with this I am mentioning an event that really took place: Once a high ranking government official (Judge) stayed in Ambikā Kālnā in West Bengal for a few days to perform some duties. At that time Siddha Śrī Bhagavān dās Bābājī Mahārāja was manifest in this world. Having heard about Siddha Bābā's glories from the local residents the judge once went to see him. When Siddha Bābā saw him coming he asked him why he had come, and the gentleman said: "Bābā! Tell me how *prema bhakti* can be achieved!" Siddha Bābā immediately said: "*prema bhakti* can be purchased for 2 *ānās* (a very small amount of money in colonial India, like 5 *paisā*)!" When the gentleman heard these words of Siddha Bābā he was a little taken aback and said: "Bābā! Why are you joking with me?" Siddha Bābā replied with determination: "It's not a joke; for 2 *ānās* you can buy Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura Mahāśaya's **Prema Bhakti Candrikā** in Calcutta's Baṭa-talā. Always read this and you will attain *prema bhakti*."

Following Siddha Bābā's advice the gentleman purchased a copy of Prema Bhakti Candrikā and began to study it regularly. By the force of *mahad ājñā* (the order received from a saint) and because of constantly serving (reciting) the *premamaya akṣara* (love-filled syllables) of Prema Bhakti Candrikā he lost his taste for his job. He promptly gave up his job and began to sit at home, reciting Prema Bhakti Candrikā with great attachment as a rule. Because he gave up his job he immediately became uninteresting to his relatives and family members. He had no more liking for the enjoyments in his home, and one day he left home and began to wander around here and there like one indifferent. Wearing torn up dirty clothes and filling up his belly with foodstuffs attained by begging alms, he continued constantly reciting Prema Bhakti Candrikā, lovingly offering everything to Śrī Hari in his heart. Because he was at first such a high official and he had suddenly changed so radically the worldly people had begun to consider him **crazy**. In this way quite some time passed.

One day all the great *paṇḍitas* of India were invited to a meeting in the Vibudhajanānī assembly in Śrī Navadvīpa-*dhāma*. The aforementioned gentleman tried to enter into the assembly at its very outset, but the doorkeeper kicked him away, considering him crazy. After a short while he tried to enter the assembly again, and was again kicked away by the gatekeeper. When he tried to enter the assembly for the third time and the gatekeeper began to kick him for the third time, the person who has accepted the seat of the leader of the assembly, Mahā-mahopādhyāya Paṇḍita Śrī-yukta Ajita Nyāya-ratna Mahāśaya, stopped the gatekeeper and asked the gentleman to enter into the assembly, asking him: "Why do you enter into this assembly, despite the fact that you're being kicked away time and again? Do you have any business here?" When Nyāya-ratna inquired thus, the newcomer openly told him everything - how he was always reading Prema Bhakti Candrikā on the order of Siddha Śrī Bhagavān dāsa Bābā and how he had begun to spend his life in a completely detached manner as a result. Finally he asked if he had not attained the *prema bhakti* that Siddha Bābā had told him about? When the leader of the assembly, Nyāya-ratna Mahāśaya, heard this, he offered *sāṣṭāṅga daṇḍavats* (prostrated obeisances with eight limbs of the body) to him. Standing before him with folded hands he prayed for his grace and declared that this person was blessed with the shower of the pure moonbeams from Prema Bhakti Candrikā (the moonbeams of loving devotion) as a result of reciting Prema Bhakti Candrikā and by the mercy of Siddha Bābā. He announced to all those present that the meeting of the Vibudhajanānī assembly had borne a wonderfully juicy fruit at its very outset. In other words, that ceremony which was held to glorify the process of hearing and chanting the Ārya-śāstras (Vedas) and the teachings of the Mahājanas has now witnessed the exemplary embodiment of the recitation of these great teachings with its own eyes. Thus those who attended the assembly considered themselves blessed and everyone present offered their obeisances to the visitor.³⁵ Śrīla Bhagavān dāsa Siddha Bābā's disciple, Vṛndāvana Kālidaha Nivāsī Siddha Śrī-yukta Jagadīśa Bābā gave similar instructions to recite and read Prema Bhakti Candrikā and Prārthanā to a faithful person; this is described in his hagiography in Śrīla Haridāsa dāsajī's 'Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana'. Success is guaranteed for those who hear and chant the loving compositions of the Mahājanas whose hearts are absorbed in the flavours of devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāja Gosvāmīpāda has written in his *phalaśruti* (final benediction to the reciter) of Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta - *yebā nāhi bujhe keho, śunite śunite seho, ki adbhuta caitanya carita. kṛṣṇe upajibe prīti, jānibe rasera rīti, śunilei hoibe boḍo hita* (C.C.) "Even those who cannot understand anything will awaken their dormant love for Kṛṣṇa by continuously hearing these amazing pastimes of Śrī Caitanya. Hearing this is very beneficial, for you will get to know the intricacies of *rasa*." Therefore it goes without saying that a *sādhaka* who recites and reads these loving compositions with loving attachment will be blessed with the attainment of *prema*.

After this the blessed author says: *kṛṣṇa nāma rādhā nāma, upāy koro rasadhāma, caraṇe poriyā parānande* - "Fall at Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, or surrender exclusively to the most blissful *yugala caraṇa*. Do *bhajana* by taking the holy name of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, that are the sole abodes of *rasa*." The main foundation of worshipping the lotus feet of the Lord is surrendering to them. If a mood of surrender does not come to the heart of the devotee,

³⁵ Heard from Rādhākunḍa-nivāsī parama bhajanānandī pravīna mahātmā Śrīmat Jaya Nitāi dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja.

bhagavad bhajan will not take place. The more one surrenders, the more one advances in *bhajan*. Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has written: *asyāścāpūrvatvam tām vinā tadīyatvāsiddhe* (Bhakti Sandarbha, Paragraph 237) – "The wonderful thing about surrender is that without surrender *tadīyatva* (status of belonging to the Lord) cannot reach perfection." When *tadīyatva* reaches perfection the *sādhaka* will always be fearless. The Lord told Śrī Uddhava Mahāśaya – *mām ekam eva śaraṇam ātmānaṁ sarva dehinām. yāhi sarvātma-bhāvena mayā syāt hyakutobhayaḥ* (Bhāg. 11.12.15) "O Uddhava! Give up everything and surrender to Me, the true Self of all embodied souls, and thus become completely fearless!" The surrendered devotee will not only become fearless through his *bhājana sādhana*, he will also become most happy, since he certainly also becomes free from worries – *tavāsmīti vadan vācā tathaiva manasā vidan. tat sthānam āsritas tanvā modate śaraṇāgataḥ* (Hari Bhakti Vilāsa) "Any surrendered *sādhaka* who says: "O Lord! I am Yours!" and cherishes such ideas within the mind also, while physically taking shelter of the Lord's playground, experiences the topmost bliss."

Hence Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: "By exclusively surrendering to Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's lotus feet and by most blissfully accepting the holy names of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, that are most relishable abode of *rasa*, as the best means to attain *prema*, I will take shelter of the greatest items of *bhājana*." The holy name is the shelter or the abode of all *rasas*. Although the holy name of the Lord is naturally most sweet and relishable, the tongue which is contaminated by offences cannot taste this, just as the tongue of someone suffering from jaundice experiences the sweet taste of sugar to be bitter. Only by continuously tasting sugar the patient will be cured from his jaundice and ultimately experience the naturally sweet taste of sugar. In the same way the tongue of an offender cannot taste the natural sweetness of the holy name of the Lord on his tongue, but when he continues to serve (chant) the holy name the offenses will cease and he will experience the sweetness of the holy name. Hence Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has written, *ataevānanda rūpatvam asya mahad dhṛdaya sākṣikaṁ yathā śrī vighrahasya* "The holy name of the Lord is like the very form of the Lord and the very embodiment of transcendental bliss, this is proven by the experiences of the great souls." In other words, the demoniac non devotees do not feel happy when they see Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the embodiment of sweetness, rather their hearts will light up in hatred and envy. In the same way, the holy name, which is the abode of *rasa*, cannot be relished by the tongue of an offender at all. The devotee experiences : *kṛṣṇa nāme ye ānanda sindhu āsvādana; brahmānanda tāra āge khātodaka sama* (C.C.) "The bliss of the non-personal *brahman* is just like a little pool in comparison to the relish that lies in the ocean of bliss of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa." Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya yearns for the *nāma bhajan* of the sweeter-than-sweet holy name of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. About the sweetness of the holy names of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, Śrīmat Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī has written in his Abhiṣṭa Sūcana stava: *rādheti nāma nava sundara sīdhu mugdhan; kṛṣṇeti nāma madhurādbhuta gāḍha dugdham; sarva kṣaṇam surabhi rāga himena ramyaṁ; kṛtvā tad eva piba me rasane kṣudhārtte* "O my thirsty tongue! Always drink these two substances – The names **rādhā**, which is captivating like fresh beautiful nectar, and **kṛṣṇa**, the name which is very sweet like wonderful condensed milk, and make them wonderful by mixing them with the fragrant ice of *anurāga* (constant passionate attachment)!" Śrīman Mahāprabhu asked Rāma Rāya: *upāsyera madhye kon upāsyā pradhāna?*, ("What is most adorable?") and Rāma Rāya answered: *śreṣṭha upāsyā – yugala rādhā-kṛṣṇa nāma* (C.C.) –

("The names of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are most adorable.") Through this *tripadī* three confidential practices in *rāgānugā bhajana* are shown – love for Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, attachment to the books written by the Mahājānas who are all deeply realised in the flavours of devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and the *nāma saṅkīrtana* of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. (60)

manera smaraṇa prāṇa, *madhura madhura dhāma,*
yugala vilāsa smṛti sāra
sādhya sādhana ei, *iha boi āra nāi,*
ei tattva sarva tattva sāra (61)

"The very life of the mind is *smaraṇa*, and the sweetest remembrance is the pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. This is the goal and this is the practice and there is nothing more than this. This truth is the essence of all regulative principles."

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *ṭīkā*: *vidhinām kartavyopadeśānām sāraḥ. smartavyaḥ satataṁ viṣṇur vismartavyo na jātūcit; sarva vidhi niṣedha syur etayor eva kiṅkarāḥ.*

The life force of the mind:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā– In this *tripadī* composed by the blessed author the main item of *rāgānugā bhakti*, namely *smaraṇāṅga bhakti*, is revealed. First it is said: ***manera smaraṇa prāṇa***. The human mind is the king, or greatest of the senses. Although it is silent it experiences all the objects the senses contact. The senses act according to its orders like slaves. Form, sound, taste, smell and touch – these five sense objects are relished or experienced by our eyes, ears, tongue, nose and skin respectively, and all of them are centered around the mind. If at present we do not see an object which we may have seen in the past, we can say what it is, because its picture is marked in our minds. When we see the flash of lightning we dread the rolling of the thunder, for we remember that this sound is coming along with the lightning. We can tell how delicious the food is that we have enjoyed before, even if we do not savour it now, for we can recollect its relish. When we see a beautiful flower we can say how it smells, for that fragrance was so sweet to us before. The little speechless child places its hand only once into the fire, and never again. Rather when he sees fire he backs away, for he remembers that its touch will burn him and hurt him. Although we use or accept gross matters through our gross senses, we will not experience anything if our minds are not at it. In this way the mind, which is the center of all the senses, may be incorporeal, it is able to give us all kinds of experiences.

From beginningless time the human mind has been turned away from God and has become so polluted by thinking of mundane objects that it constantly billows on high and low waves of thoughts of small and large sense enjoyments, just as high and low waves billow on the ocean. Our intelligence cannot accept all thoughts, only particular thoughts are captured by the intelligence. What to speak of the waking state, even in a state of slumber the waves of sensual impressions billow on and this state we thus call ***svapna*** or dream. Only when the state of deep sleep enters the waves of thoughts stop. The practising devotee

performs all his plays with this mind, for when the mind is not concentrated *bhajana* may proceed in a mechanical way for a long time, but the fruit of *bhajana*, namely *prema* will not be yielded. Through the practice of *bhajana*, which is attained by the grace of the Lord and His devotees, the mind, which is muddled by thoughts of sensual desires, is purified and gives up its experiences of sensual thoughts that are unrelated to Kṛṣṇa. Constant remembrance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is called pure or transcendental devotion by the Bhāgavata.

*mad guṇa śruti mātrena mayi sarva guhāsaye;
manogatir avichinnā yathā gaṅgāmbhaso'mbudhau
lakṣaṇaṁ bhakti yogasya nirguṇasya hyudāhṛtam
ahaitukyavavahitā yā bhaktiḥ puruṣottame* (Bhāg.3.29.11-12)

Śrī Kapiladeva told His own mother Devahūtī– "O mother! The uninterrupted flow of the mind-stream towards Me, who is reclining in the cave of everyone's heart, like that of the waters of the Gaṅgā towards the ocean, at the mere mention of My attributes, combined with causeless and ceaseless love for Me, the Supreme Person, is cited as the distinguishing characteristic of transcendental *bhakti yoga*."

Hence Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: "**Remembrance of God** is called the **life force** the practising devotee's mind." The mind which does not remember God is lifeless like a corpse without its five life-airs. Just as a lifeless corpse serves as free meal for the jackals and dogs, similarly the mind which is devoid of remembering God is constantly bitten by its enemies like lust and greed. Just as the jackals and dogs flee fearfully from a living body, similarly the enemies like lust flee far away from the mind which is alive and vibrant through remembrance of Hari. Therefore each devotee should take shelter of the item of recollection to be rescued from the enemies like lust and to attain the relish of *rasa* in the ecstasy of *bhajana*. Any mental connection with the Lord is called *smaraṇa*. Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has mentioned five successive stages of the item of recollection – *smaraṇa*, *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna*, *dhruvānusmṛti* and *samādhi*. Slight remembrance of the Lord's form, attributes and pastimes is called *smaraṇa*, withdrawing the mind from all other sensual thoughts and keeping it generally on the Lord's pastimes etc. is called *dhāraṇā*, detailed thinking of the Lord's form etc. is called *dhyāna*, remembering the Lord's form, attributes and pastimes continuously like a stream of nectar is called *dhruvānusmṛti* and perception in sheer meditation is called *samādhi*. This *samādhi* is not the same undistinguished *samādhi* as is achieved through the practices of *jñāna*, *yoga* etc. Here *smaraṇa* has become very deep and causes a perception of the Lord's pastimes etc. as if they are vividly experienced.

The essence of this practice of *smaraṇa* is the pastimes of the Divine Pair, hence it is said – *yugala vilāsa smṛti sāra*. There are four kinds of *smaraṇa*– remembering the Lord's names, remembering His form, remembering His attributes and remembering His pastimes with His associates. Of them, remembering the pastimes is the greatest, for recollection of the Lord's pastimes includes the remembrance of His names, forms and attributes. Then again, of recollecting any kind of pastime of the Lord the recollection of the pastimes of Vrajendra-nandana, the embodiment of sweetness, is the best, for His pastimes are the sweetest. Then again of all His different pastimes, like His childhood or early youth-pastimes, the greatest pastimes of Kṛṣṇa to remember are His romantic adolescent pastimes with Śrī Rādhārāṇī. Therefore the pastimes of the Divine Pair are the essence of all

meditations, and that includes Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's meetings with Their girlfriends, picking flowers, stealing Kṛṣṇa's flute, play in the forest, drinking honey-wine, intimate pastimes, watersports, dice game and the Rāsa pastimes. In the Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya a manual can be seen of recollection of the eight fold daily pastimes of Śrī Gaurāṅga along with Śrī-Rādhā-Mādhava or *svārasikī līlā* and *mantramayī* or *yogapīṭha milana līlā*, which is the greatest item of *smaraṅgā bhajana*. However, the practitioner who is fixed in such meditations should constantly beware that during his recollections the relish of the sweetness of the pastimes, forms and attributes of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava and Their girlfriends should be taken to heart as ***madhura madhura dhāma*** – the ever-so-sweet abode. The root target of his practice must be the attainment of the sweetness of his chosen deity. If the practitioner, especially in *rāga bhakti*, which has sacred greed at its roots, simply practises *smaraṅga* in different regulated ways without relishing any of the sweetness of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's forms and attributes, then how can that be really considered *rāga bhakti*? On the other hand, if the relish of sweet forms etc. is attained, then *līlā smaraṅga* is considered accomplished, even if the succession of memorable events is incomplete. In the second part of his 'Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana', Śrīla Haridās dāsī has written about the life of Siddha Śrīla Kṛṣṇa dāsa Bābājī, the resident of Govardhana – "Those who learned the science of *bhajana* from Siddha Bābā would assemble with him every night and Siddha Bābā would hear how each person was doing *bhajana* and correct mistakes. One day a Vaiṣṇava saint was there who did not say anything but only wept. To encourage and console him Siddha Bābā asked him why he was weeping, and the Vaiṣṇava replied: "Today I could not do any *bhajana*! In the morning I was putting an ornament on Prāṇeśvarī's right hand, but I became so absorbed in the beauty of Her hand that I could not withdraw my mind from that image the rest of the day!" To encourage him Siddha Bābā declared: "Your *bhajana* is accomplished!"

In some editions of this book we see the reading *manera smaraṅga prāṇa, madhura madhura nāma*. This means that since the life force of the mind is *smaraṅga*, the mind must take shelter of the ever-so-sweet holy name of the Lord, for the item of *smaraṅga* depends on a pure consciousness, as Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has written: *smaraṅgaṁ tu śuddhāntaḥ karaṅga tāmapēkṣate* (Bhakti Sandarbha-276) The impure mind which is polluted by sensual cravings can not concentrate itself, and can therefore not accomplish the *bhajana*-item of *smaraṅga*. However, *nāma kīrtana* does not depend on a pure consciousness; even an impure consciousness does not obstruct the practice of *nāma kīrtana*. When the heart is cleansed by *nāma saṅkīrtana* the *bhajana*-item of *smaraṅga* is nicely accomplished.

One may ask here, then if that is so let us do *nāma saṅkīrtana* until the consciousness is purified, but what is the use still of *nāma kīrtana* when the mind is concentrated and *smaraṅga* is conducted with a pure heart? In this regard Śrīmat Sanātana Gosvāmīpāda has explained in Śrī Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta that through *nāma saṅkīrtana* the relish of *smaraṅga* is nourished and through *smaraṅga* or meditation the relish of the holy name is also nourished. Since they nourish each other there can be no question of doing only the item of *smaraṅga* without practising *nāma kīrtana*. Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has written: *śuddhāntaḥ karaṅgaś cet nāma kīrtanāparityāgena smaraṅgaṁ kuryāt* (Bhakti Sandarbha-275) "The practitioner performs *nāma saṅkīrtana* along with *smaraṅga* with a pure consciousness."

After this the blessed author says: *sādhya sādhana ei, ihā boi ār nāi, ei tattva sarva vidhi sāra*– To take shelter of a means or practice to attain a certain goal is called ***sādhana*** and the

goal that is to be attained through that practice is called *sādhya*. In the schools of *jñāna* and *yoga* the means and the goal are different things, but in *bhakti* the means equals the goal. This is the great difference between *bhakti sādhana* and *yoga* or *jñāna sādhanā*. *sādhana bhakti*, *bhāva bhakti* and *prema bhakti* are different sequential, yet integral stages of each other. What is unripe during *sādhana* is ripe in the stage of *siddhi*. Therefore those who are able to become absorbed in *līlā smaraṇa* during their *sādhana* will be blessed with the direct attainment of the service they meditated on at the achievement of *siddhi*. Therefore it is not different from the goal of practice – *ihā boi āra nāi*. This is the essence of all the instructions the scriptures give the living beings on their duties – *ei tattva sarva vidhi sāra*. In Śrī Padma Purāṇa it is said: *smartavyaḥ satataṁ viṣṇur vismartavyo na jātūcit; sarva vidhi niṣedha syur etayor eva kiṅkaraḥ* "Always remember Lord Viṣṇu and never forget Him – all the scriptural injunctions and prohibitions are subservient to this one rule and this one prohibition." Hence it is said: Just as a person who is robbed from all his belongings by a robber loudly weeps, a devotee should loudly weep for each moment which is lost not thinking of Śrī Hari." *ekasminn apyatikrānte muhūrte dhyāna varjito dasyubhir mūṣitenaiva yuktam ākrandituṁ bhṛṣam* (Garuḍa Purāṇa) (61)

jalada sundara kānti, madhura madhura bhāti,
vaidagadhi avadhi suveśa
pīta vasana dhara, ābharāṇa maṇivara,
mayūra candrikā karu keśa (62)

"Kṛṣṇa's luster resembles that of a beautiful monsooncloud, shining sweeter than sweet, and His clothing displays the limit of cleverness. He wears a yellow *dhotī* and the greatest gem ornaments, and His hair is decorated with a peacock feather crown."

Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *ṭīkā* – *madhura madhura – madhurād api madhuram atīśaya madhuram ityārthaḥ.*

Endless expertise in dressing:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – As Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura Mahāśaya explains the main item of the practitioner's *rāga bhakti* practice, and he speaks about the contemplator's relish of his beloved deity's sweetness, his loving eyes perceive the sweet form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa ahead of him. Thus in the next four *tripadīs* he describes this sweet form and the expertise required to dress and ornament Him. He sees that Vṛndāvana is as if illuminated by Śrī Kṛṣṇa's cloud-blue bodily luster. Thus he proceeds by first describing that bodily luster – *jalada sundara kānti, madhura madhura bhāti* "Sweet like a beautiful raincloud." There is a wonderfully captivating power in the way the loving devotees describe Śrī Kṛṣṇa's beauty. Certainly they are magicians when it comes to describing Śrī Kṛṣṇa's beauty! This form is transcendental and only perceivable by those who love Him. Although there is no mood and no language in this world that facilitates a description of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's form, still the loving

devotee-poets' words and feelings, that are filled with their loving experiences, have such power that they are able to awaken the wonderful relish of the Lord's transcendental sweetness in the sensitive devotee's consciousness with just a few words. Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya uses only a few words like **jalada sundara kānti**, **madhura madhura bhāti** to explain how wonderful the bodily luster is that Śrī Kṛṣṇa bears, and the sensitive *rasikas* will understand it and see it. Generally we can understand from the sacred words of Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya that Śrī Kṛṣṇa bodily luster is more beautiful than that of a *jalada* or fresh monsoon cloud – it is beautiful and sweeter than sweet. The poets have compared Śrī Kṛṣṇa lustrous form with blue lotus flowers, sapphires, crushed eyeliner, fresh monsoon clouds and so many other objects, but is it really possible to compare Śrī Kṛṣṇa's transcendental form with such mundane objects? The realised souls say that Śrī Kṛṣṇa's form is matchless – He can only be compared to Himself. Still they have tried to make it somewhat conceivable to the devotees that thirst to relish His form. Śrīla Govinda dāsa, for instance, has written in his Padāvalī – *kuvalaya nīla ratana, dalitāñjana megha puñja, jini varaṇa suchānd* ("His fine complexion defeats that of the blue Kuvalaya lotus, the sapphires, crushed eyeliner and rainclouds"). This means that blue lotus flowers may be tender and pleasing, but they close and wilt at night. Therefore he says: *nīla ratana*: Śrī Kṛṣṇa's bodily luster resembles sapphires. Sapphires may shimmer equally day and night, but can they ever be as glossy as Śrī Kṛṣṇa's luster? Hence the word *dalitāñjana*, crushed eyeliner. Certainly crushed eyeliner is very glossy, but is there any *rasa* (juice) in it? Hence the words *megha puñja* (row of clouds). Certainly there is juice (water) in a bank of clouds, but is there any sweetness in that? Hence the words *jini varaṇa suchānd* (His luster is defeating all of the aforementioned objects). In other words, the mildness of the fresh blue lotus flower, the radiance of the sapphire, the glossiness of crushed eyeliner, the juiciness of a bank of clouds combined cannot equal the luster of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. It is peerless. Then why all the effort to compare it to a fresh monsooncloud? The devotee-poets have shown the usefulness of this also – describing Śrī Rādhārāṇī's *rūpānurāga* (attraction to Kṛṣṇa's form), Śrīla Jñāna Dāsa has written –

*ki rūpa dekhilām kālindi kūle?
aparūpa megha kadamba mūle
acala capalā meghera gāy
mṛgāñka rahita śaśāñka bhāy
nāciche mayūra jalada'pori
alikulā āche cāndere gheri
āra aparūpa kohilo nahe
yathā megha tathā bāri nā rohe
hṛdoya ākāśe udoy kori
nayana yugale bohāy bāri
heno mone loy vijurī hoye
joṛāye thāki meghera gāye
jñāna dāsa kohe nā koho ān
he kohilā dhani sei to pramāṇ*

Śrī Rādhārāṇī says: "What did I see on the bank of the Yamunā at the base of a Kadamba-tree? How wonderful is that form! What a wonderful cloud this is! In the cloud in the sky the restless lightning strike shines beautifully, but on the body of this cloud there is a

beautiful steady lightning (yellow garment). If there is a full moon visible in the lap of the cloud in the sky, then it is a moon with spots, but the lap of this wonderful cloud is beautified by a spotless full moon (His face). Another wonderful feature of this moon is that it is beautified by a corona of bumblebees (His locks)! Another wonderful thing about this moon is that when the peacocks on the earth see a cloud in the sky they start dancing, but here the peacocks are dancing on top of this cloud (the peacock feather crown on His head). There is no water where this cloud appears. When it arises in the sky of the (viewer's) heart, water starts flowing from their eyes (their tears of ecstatic love). When I see this cloud I think of entwining this cloud like a lightning strike." Jñāna Dāsa says: "Rādhe! Don't discuss any other (false) topic; whatever You say is authoritative!" Hence Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says – this beautiful cloud-like luster is sweeter than sweet!

After this Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya beholds the expertise with which Śrī Kṛṣṇa is dressed and ornamented, and says – "*vaidagadhi avadhi suveśa*". *kalā vilāsa digdhātmā vidagdha iti kīrtite* (Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu) "Expertise in various artistic pastimes is called *vidagdha*." The way Śyāmasundara is decorated with various garments and ornaments shows His endless expertise in artistic pastimes. The speciality of His *rasika* form, the expert dressing and ornamenting, the sweetness of His emotional gestures— all these items consummate in *dhīra lalita nāyaka* Śyāmasundara! What to speak of any mundane hero, even other Personalities of Godhead, upto Nārāyaṇa, the master of the Paravyoma, are exceeded by Vrajendranandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa in speciality of *rasika* form! When we cast an objective glance we can understand that such a sweet form and such expert dressing and ornamenting cannot be found anywhere else! Śrīman Mahāprabhu's dear associate Śrīla Rāmānanda Rāya has described in his Śrī Jagannātha Vallabha Nāṭaka—

mṛdutara māruta belli pallava ballī balita śikhaṇḍam
tilaka viḍambita marakata maṇitala bimbīta śaśadhara khaṇḍam
yuvatī manohara veśam
kalaya kalānidhim iva dharaṇīm anu pariṇata rūpa viśeṣam
khelā dolāyita maṇimaya kuṇḍala ruci rucira nava śobham
helā taralita madhura vilocana janita vadhūjana lobham

"The peacock feather crown on top of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's head slightly tilts in the waves of the gentle breeze. His beautiful emerald-blue forehead, which is anointed with sandalwood pulp, looks as beautiful as a half moon. How beautiful is His dress, that captivates all the young girls! Indeed, He is like a full autumn moon that descends to earth in some amazing form! Jewelled Makara-earrings dangle on His earlobes with great feeling, and His restless glances ignite lusty desires within the hearts of the married girls!" The devotees can easily appreciate that no description can be found of any Personality of Godhead who is dressed as expertly as this one. In the abovementioned verse Śrīla Rāmānanda Rāya describes Śrī Kṛṣṇa's expertise in dressing along with His emotional expertise, which is most relishable for the devotees, like a combination of jewels and gold.

In the following three and a half *tripadī* Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya describes Śrī Kṛṣṇa's full expertise in dressing. First, in this half of the *tripadī* he says: *pīta vasana dhara, ābharāṇa maṇivara, mayūra candrikā koru veśa* "He wears a yellow *dhoṭī* and the greatest gem ornaments, and His hair is decorated with a peacock feather crown." Śrī Kṛṣṇa's black-bluish

body, which mocks the fresh monsoon cloud, is beautified by a yellow garment that shines like lightning. His beautiful body is made even more beautiful by the most excellent jewelled ornaments; then again His neck is beautified by Kaustubha, the greatest of gems, and a peacock feather is placed on His curly locks. One day in Nīlācala, Śrīman Mahāprabhu perceived Śrī Vṛndāvana in a flower garden near the ocean beach. In the ecstasy of a Rāsa-nāyikā Gopikā He asked every tree and vine about the whereabouts of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, until He saw Him standing at the base of a Kadamba tree, captivating millions of Cupids. As soon as He attained that vision He fainted and through the diligent service rendered by His devotees, headed by Svarūpa Dāmodara, He recuperated. Then He began to speak in the madness of His ecstasy, recollecting Śrī Kṛṣṇa's astonishingly sweet form in the following way—

*nava ghana snigdha varṇa, dalitāñjana cikkaṇa,
indīvara nindi sukomala.
yini upamāna-gaṇa, hare sabhāra netra mana,
kṛṣṇa kānti parama prabala.*

"His pleasant lustre defeats the pride of a fresh monsooncloud, crushed glossy collyrium and a soft blue lotus flower. It defies all standards of comparison and steals everyone's eyes and mind, being most powerful."

*koho sakhi! ki kori upāya?
kṛṣṇādbhuta balāhaka, mora netra cātaka,
nā dekhi piyāse mori yāy.*

"O *sakhi!* Tell me, what should I do? Kṛṣṇa is like a wonderful monsooncloud and My eyes are like Cātaka-birds that die of thirst when they do not see Him!"

*saudāminī pītāmbara, sthira rahe nirantara,
muktā-hāra baka pānkti bhāla.
indra-dhanu śikhi pākhā, upore diyāche dekhā,
āra dhanu vaijayantī māla.*

"His yellow *dhoti* resembles a lightning-strike that always remains steady within this monsooncloud, His pearl necklace looks like a row of ducks and His peacockfeather-crown and Vaijayantī-garland both resemble rainbows."

*muralira kala-dhvani, madhura garjana śuni,
vṛndāvane nāce maura-caya.
akalanika pūrṇa-kala, lābaṇya jyotsnā jhalamala,
citra candrera tāhāte udoy*

"When the peacocks in Vṛndāvana hear the sweet thundering sound of His flute they begin to dance. A wonderful spotless full moon, distributing the shimmering moonlight of elegance, is rising above this Kṛṣṇa-cloud."

līlāmṛta variṣaṇe, siñce caudda bhuvane,

mañimaya kuṇḍala jhalamala mañḍita gaṇḍa yuga smita śālī

"His blue body is anointed with sandalwood pulp, He wears a yellow garment and a garland of forest flowers, and His smiling cheeks are adorned with shimmering jewelled earrings." When She first fell in love with Śrī Kṛṣṇa due to casting a single glance at a sandal-spot on His forehead, Śrī Rādhārāṇī told one of Her girlfriends –

ki heriluṅ kadamba talāte
vini paricaye mora, parāṇa kemon kore,
jite ki pāriye pāsarite
kapāle candana cāṅḍ, **kāminī mohana phāṅḍ**
āndhāre koriyāche ālā
meghera upore cāṅḍ, sadāi udoy kore,
nīśi diśi śaśī ṣola kalā

(*padakartā* Ananta dāsa describes–) "O *sakhi!* What did I see at the base of this Kadamba tree? I don't know who He is, but still My heart is very anxious for Him. Can I forget Him as long as My life airs remain in My body? *sakhi!* The spot of sandalwood pulp on His forehead casts the young girls in a net of forgetfulness (they forget everything else but Him)! This spot of sandalwood pulp on His excellent forehead, that resembles an emerald slab, resembles a full moon rising above a cloud. Thus there is light even in darkness. When the moon stays above the clouds, the clouds usually cover the moon, but this moon-like spot of sandalwood pulp is always rising above the clouds! And what's more, this moon shines equally in day and night." In the *padas* of Śrī Jñāna Dās we can also find –

candanera cāṅḍ mājhe mṛgamada dhāṅḍā
tāra mājhe parāṇa putalī roilo bāṅḍhā

"Within this moon-like sandal-spot is a spot of deer-musk, and within that the doll of My heart is captured."

After this the blessed author describes the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa's threefold bending form– *mohana mūrati tiribhaṅga*. The three bends are in the knees, the waist and the neck. Why these three bends? The Vrajadevīs think it is because Kṛṣṇa is unable to bear the burden of His own sweetness, whereas the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas that are fixed in the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā think that He stands like that to touch the border of *premamayī* Śrī Rādhā's garment! This threefold bending form greatly captivates the eyes of those who see it! And this divine sweetness does not only enchant the eyes of those who love Him, but of everyone who has eyes, from Brahmā down to the immobile creatures! It just takes a little grace from the great saints.

It is said that by the grace of Śrī Rāmānuja Svāmī a wrestler named Dhanurdās had the true *darśana* of the deity of Śrī Raṅganātha. Dhanurdās had mounted a beautiful woman on a horse and shaded her from the blazing sun by holding a parasol above her head. In this way he took *darśana* of Śrī Raṅganātha. When he was rebuked for such abominable behaviour, he said: "I serve this woman because her beauty is rare within this world!" Hearing this, Śrīpāda Rāmānuja Svāmī mercifully told him: "Dhanurdāsa! If you behold the

sweet form of Raṅganātha just once, you will not look at the ugly face of this woman again!" Dhanurdāsa was amazed when he heard Svāmijī's words and he said: "Svāmin! I have already seen Raṅganātha, but thusfar I was unable to realise the truth of your words!" Then Svāmijī personally took Dhanurdāsa by the hand and brought him before Śrī Raṅganātha, saying:

*ayaṁ dhanurdāsa ramādhinātha śrī raṅganātho jagatām adhīśaḥ
asyākṣi vaipulyam idaṁ tvayādya dṛṣṭaṁ kilaivāpratimaṁ hi samyak*

"My child Dhanurdāsa! Now behold Raṅganātha once more! Look! The Lord of the three worlds, the Lord of the goddess of fortune Śrī Raṅganātha is there before you! Look to your heart's content at the large eyes of Śrī Raṅganātha, who is the matchless abode of beauty and sweetness!" By the grace of Śrīpāda Rāmānuja Dhanurdāsa beheld the world-enchanting form of Śrī Raṅganātha and he fainted of transcendental ecstasy. After merging in this ocean of nectarean beauty for a long time he renounced everything, surrendered at the feet of Svāmijī and spent the rest of his life in the service of Śrī Raṅganātha.

There is no comparison to the sweetness of Śrī Govinda, who is so lovely due to His threefold bending form, and who is the very embodiment of sweetness. Whoever sees Him cannot be attracted to other Personalities of Godhead anymore. In Śrīla Bilvamaṅgala's Śrī Kṛṣṇa Karṇāmṛta (verse 22) it is seen—

*vicitra patrāṅkura śālī bālā stanāntaraṁ yāmaḥ vanāntaraṁ vā
apāsya vṛndāvana pāda lāsyaṁ upāsyaṁ anyāṁ na vilokayāma* ³⁶

The gist of what Śrīmat Kavirāja Gosvāmīpāda has written in his 'Sāraṅga Raṅgadā'-commentary on this verse runs as follows: "When his associates saw Śrī Lilāśuka in a state of swoon when he travelled from South India to Śrī Vṛndāvana, maddened by ecstatic love, they woke him up and told him: "Svāmin! Isn't your beloved Kṛṣṇa everywhere? Here in south India He is present in the forms of Śrī Viṭṭhalnātha and Śrī Raṅganātha. Why don't you see and remember Them instead to soothe your heart, which is scorched by the fire of separation?" Śrī Lilāśuka then told those who wished to console him: "I will not behold any other Godhead than Śrī Kṛṣṇa, when He is embraced by the best of Vraja-girls Śrī Rādhā—such is my vow! Therefore I will proceed to Śrī Vṛndāvana!"

After this Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: *navīna kusumāvalī, śrī aṅge śobhaye bhālī, madhu lobhe phire matta bhṛṅga* – "This lovely threefold bending form is beautified by garlands of fresh flowers and flowers also decorate His ears and His head; bumblebees buzz all around His divine body, intoxicated by the honey-scent of all these flowers." The flowers that decorate Śrī Kṛṣṇa's body are always fresh, for whatever He wears around His neck or on His other limbs with paramount attention, cannot be broken, moistened, burned or dried! The Vraja-sundarīs see:

*mālatī phulera, mālatī gole,
hiyāra mājhāre dole*

³⁶ "Why should I leave Him, in whose heart the breasts of the *gopīs* dwell, or He who dwells inbetween two such breasts, and go in search of someone else? Or why should I go to seek another forest's leaves and sprouts? I will not behold any other worshipable Godhead than Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whose dancing paces beautify Śrī Vṛndāvana!"

*uṭhiyā poriyā, mātala bhramarā,
ghuriyā ghuriyā bule*

"A garland of Mālāti flowers dangles around His neck and over His heart (chest). Drunken bumblebees land on them and fly around them."

Others who see this garland think with ecstatic hearts—

*vinoda gole, vinoda mālā,
vinoda vinoda dule
kon vinodinī, gānthilo mālā
vinoda vinoda phule?*

"A pleasure garland blissfully dangles around a pleasure neck. Which blissful girl has strung this garland with pleasure flowers?" (63)

*īṣat madhura smita, vaidagadhi līlāmṛta,
lubadhala vraja vadhu vṛnda
caraṇa kamala para, maṇimaya nūpura,
nakha maṇi yeno bāla candra (64)*

"His sweet slight smile and the nectar of His clever pastimes attract the married girls of Vraja. He wears jewelled anklebells on His lotus feet and His toenails shine like the moonrays."

The greed of the brides of Vraja :

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – In this *tripadī* the blessed, most worshipable author describes the beauty of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's tender sweet smile, His clever pastimes, His anklebells and His moon-jewel-like nails. *raso vai saḥ. sarveṣāṃ bhūtānāṃ madhu*. How to experience Śrī Bhagavān as full of flavour and honey, is best to be relished within His Vraja-pastimes; the loving poets give the best indications of this. Their descriptions create a fountain of Vraja-sweetness. The slightest experience of that sweetness infuses the purity of Goloka even in a heart contaminated with sensual desires and makes a soothing Gaṅgā-stream of loving devotion flow within an afflicted and scorched, desert-like heart. Then again, even if this profuse sweetness is relished, an insatiable hunger will awaken within the loving devotee that will keep the relish endless and inexhaustible. Such is the nature of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweetness. Śrīman Mahāprabhu floated in endless streams of sweetness as He described Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweetness to Śrīmat Sanātana Gosvāmīpāda, but still He told Śrī Sanātana – *sanātana! kṛṣṇa mādhurya amṛtera sindhu. mora mana sānnipāti, sab pite kore mati, durdaiva vaidya nā dey ek bindu* (C.C.) "Sanātana! Kṛṣṇa's sweetness is like an ocean of nectar! My mind is as if suffering from cholera and wants to drink all of it, but the doctor of ill fate will not give Me even one drop of it!" The greater the relish, the greater the thirst – the greater the thirst, the greater the relish!!

In this *tripadī* Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya first describes Śrī Kṛṣṇa's slight smile and then the sweetness of His clever and nectarean pastimes – *īṣat madhura smita, vaidagadhi līlāmṛta, lubadhalo vraja vadhū vṛnda* "He makes the brides of Vraja greedy with His tender, sweet smile, His clever nectarean pastimes or with the sweetness of His different artistic, *rasika* emotional gestures." Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda describes the power of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweet and tender smile as follows (in Śrī Govinda Virudāvalī-19): *prapanna janatā tamaḥ kṣapaṇa sārādenḍu prabhā-vrajāmbuja vilocanā smara samṛddhi siddhauṣadhiḥ; viḍambita sudhāmbudhi prabala mādhuri ḍambarā vibhartu tava mādharma smita kaḍamba kāntir mudam*—"O Mādhava! May the luster of Your sweet and tender moonlight-smile, that destroys the darkness of ignorance in the hearts of those who surrender unto You, that increases the lusty desires of the girls of Vraja and that takes away the sweetness of an ocean of nectar, give endless delight to my eyes!" In Śrīmad Bhāgavata's Śrī-Śrī Rāsa-līlā the Vrajasundarīs repeatedly describe their own greed after the sweetness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's tender smile and the cleverness of His tasteful, playful, artistic emotional gestures. When they heard Śrī Kṛṣṇa speaking His words of rebuff they said (Ś.B. 10.29.35):

*siñcāṅga nas tvad adharāmṛta pūrakeṇa hāsāvaloka kalagītaja hṛcchayāgnim
no ced vayanḁ virahajāgnyupayukta dehā dhyānena yāma padayoḥ padaviḁ sakhe te*

"O Śrī Kṛṣṇa! Your smiling glances and Your sweet flute-playing have kindled the fire of lust within our hearts – please extinguish it with the nectar-stream from Your lips! If not, O friend! We will burn in the fire of separation from You and will reach Your lotus feet in our next births, due to constant meditation on them!" Then again they said (10.29.38):

*tan naḥ prasīda vṛjinārdana te'ñghrī mūlaḁ prāptā viśṛjya vasatis tad upāsanāśāḥ
tvat sundara smita nirīkṣaṇa tīvra kāma taptātmanāḁ puruṣa bhūṣaṇa dehi dāsyam*

"O destroyer of all miseries! Desiring to serve Your lotus feet we have renounced kith and kin and have come to Your footsoles. O jewel among men! Since You cast Your smiling glances on us, our bodies and minds have been scorching in the fire of lust. Please bless us with the desired qualification to serve You!" In Śrī Gopī Gītā (10.31.10) they said:

*prahasitaḁ priya prema vīkṣitaḁ viharāṇaḁ ca te dhyāna maṅgalam
rahasi samvido yā hṛdi sprśaḥ kuhaka no manaḥ kṣobhayanti hi*

"O beloved! O crown jewel of cheaters! After seeing Your sweet and tender smile, Your loving glances and Your bodily gestures, that indicate Your desire to meet us, and after hearing the flute songs that You play in solitude and Your joking words, our minds and hearts have become agitated!" And furthermore they prayed (10.31.17) :

*rahasi samvidaḁ hṛcchayodayaḁ prahasitānaḁ prema vīkṣaṇam
bṛhad uraḥ śriyo vīkṣya dhāma te muhurati sprhā muhyate manaḥ*

"Our minds are deluded with desire again and again because of Your solitary prayers to us for love-making, Your loving glances on Your smiling face, that arouses lusty feelings

within us, and because of seeing Your broad chest, which is the abode of beauty." In the songs of the Mahājanas, which describe Śrī Rādhā's falling in love with Kṛṣṇa, we can also find descriptions of how Śrī Kṛṣṇa's slightest sweet smile and the nectar of His clever pastimes inevitably cause the delusion and greed of the Vrajasundarīs –

*cikaṇa kālā golāy mālā bājana nūpura pāy
cūḍāra phule bhramara bule teracho nayāne cāy
kālindīra kūle ki āja pekhaluṅ choliyā nagara kān
ghara mu jāite nārīluṅ soi ākula korilo prāṇ
cānda jhalamali mayūrera pākhā cūḍāy uṛaye bāy
īṣata hāsi madhura bāṅśī madhura madhura gāy
rasera bhare aṅga nā dhare keli kadambe helā
kulavati satī juvati janāra parāṇa loiyā khelā
śravaṇe cañcala makara kuṇḍala pindhalo piyala vās
rātā utapala caraṇa jugala nichani govinda dās*

"His complexion is glossy black, He wears a garland around the neck and jingling anklebells adorn His feet. Bees wander around the flowers on His top knot and He casts askance glances. Did I see that naughty Kṛṣṇa on the bank of the Yamunā today? O *sakhi!* My heart was so agitated that I could not return home. His peacockfeather crown sways in the wind and shines in the moonlight. He smiles slightly and sweetly and He plays ever-so-sweetly on His flute. He cannot carry His own abundant *rasika* sweetness and therefore He leans against the playful Kadamba tree, playing with the hearts of the young chaste housewives. Restless Makara earrings dangle on His ears and He wears a yellow *dhoṭī*. Govinda dāsa takes His ruddy lotus feet into his heart."

The Mahājanas have also sung–

<i>ḍhala ḍhala sajala, aruṇa nayana gati,</i>	<i>jalada tanu śohana, bijurī camaka jiti, sajani! yab dhari pekhaluṅ kān</i>	<i>mohana ābharaṇa sāja dagadhala kulavati lāja</i>
<i>tab dhari jagabhari, majhumukha daraśi, nā jāniye kon, ataye se majhu mana, govinda dāsa,</i>	<i>bharolo kusuma śara, vihasi tanu moṛai, manorathe ākula, jvalitahi anukhana, michai āsoyāsalo,</i>	<i>nayane nā heriye ān vigalita mohana vaṁśa kiśalaya dale koru daṁśa dolato capala parāṇa tabahuṅ nā milalo kān</i>

"His body is beautiful as a dripping raincloud and He wears captivating ornaments. His ruddy eyes are more startled than the lightning strike and they scorch the bashfulness of the chaste housewives. O my dear girlfriend! Ever since I saw that Kṛṣṇa it seems as if the whole world is filled with (Cupid's) floral arrows, and my eyes cannot see anything else anymore! He looked at my face and then curved His body, dropping His captivating flute from His hand out of ecstasy. I do not know which desire has agitated Him, that makes Him bite a tree-leaf (revealing His wish to bite Śrī Rādhā's leaf-like lips). Thus My mind is constantly scorched by Cupid and I cannot calm down My restless heart." Govinda dāsa gives this false consolation; today You have not met Kṛṣṇa."

Then, in the second half of the song, the blessed author describes Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, jewelled anklebells and the sweetness of His toenails – *caraṇa kamala para, maṇimaya nūpura, nakhamaṇi yeno bāla candra* "Jewelled anklebells shine on His lotus feet and His jewel-like nails shine like young moons." The most successful comparison of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's divine feet with lotus flowers has been given by Kavi Karṇapūra in his auspicious invocation to Ānanda Vṛndāvana Campū –

*śoṇa snigdhāṅgulī dala kulaṁ jāta rāgaṁ parāgaiḥ
śrī rādhāyāḥ stana mukulayoḥ kuṅkuma kṣoda rūpaiḥ
bhakta śraddhā madhu nakha mahāḥ puñja kiñjalka jālaṁ
jaṅghānālaṁ caraṇa kamalaṁ pātu naḥ pūtanāre*

"May the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whose tender ruddy toes represent the petals of the lotus, the vermilion which they have caught by embracing Śrī Rādhā's bud-like breasts, represent their pollen, the faith of whose devotees represent their honey, the splendor of whose nails represent their filaments and whose stalks are represented by Śrī Kṛṣṇa's shanks, protect us." Jewelled anklebells are always jingling on these lotus feet. Śrīpāda Līlāśuka experienced this and said:

*maṇi nūpura vācālaṁ vande taccaraṇaṁ vibhoḥ
lalitāni yadiyāni lakṣmāṇi vraja vithiṣu*

"I praise the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, that have jingling anklebells and that leave enchanting marks on the soil of Vraja's pathways." (Kṛṣṇa Karṇāmṛta 16) After this he has a vision of the sweetness of these jewelled anklebells–

*mama cetasi sphuratu ballabī vibhor maṇi nūpura praṇayi mañju śiñjitaṁ
kamala vane cara kalinda kanyakā kalahaṁsa kaṅṭha kala kūjitādṛtaṁ*

"May the sweet jingling of the jewelled anklebells of the Gopī-lover (Kṛṣṇa, the lover of Rādhā), that sounds like the cooing of the swans in a lotus-forest of the Yamunā-river, be manifest in my mind." (Kṛṣṇa Karṇāmṛta - 17) After this the blessed author describes the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa's toenails, saying: *nakhamaṇi yeno bālacandra*!. Śrī Kṛṣṇa's jewel-like nails have the shape and the radiance of moon-phases. Again, we can also find the version *nakhamaṇi jhalamala candra*, which means that the nails on His feet shine in the form of jewels. In Śrī Caitanya Candrodāya (Act VII), Śrīpāda Kavi Karṇapūra has written –

*liḍhāneva pathaś cakora yuvatī yūthena yāḥ kurvate
sadyaḥ sphāṭikayanti ratna ghaṭitāṁ yāḥ pāda piṭhāvalīm
yāḥ prakṣālita mṛṣṭayor jalalava prasyanda saṅkākṛtas
tāḥ kṛṣṇasya padābjayor nakhamaṇi jyotsnāś ciraṁ pāntu naḥ*

"May the moonlight shining from Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, that attracts the female Cakora-birds and has the pathways licked by them, that turn all the jewelled pedestals into crystal, and that create the fear that if one sees them waterdrops will trickle from washed and wiped feet, forever protect us." (64)

nūpura marāla dhvani, *kula-vadhū marālinī*
śuniyā rahite nāre ghare
hṛdaye bāḍāya rati, *yeno mile pati satī,*
kulera dharama gelo dūre (65)

"His anklebells sound like the warbling of swans and when the married girls hear them they become like female swans that cannot stay at home. Their heart's love for Him then increases, becoming like the love of a chaste wife for her husband, and their household fidelity goes far away."

Sacred extra marital love:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā— In this *tripadī* Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya describes the sweetness of the extra-marital love of the women of Vraja while discussing the sweet jingling of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's anklebells. The anklebells placed on Śrī Kṛṣṇa's anklebells sound very sweet, like the warbling of lordly swans. Just as female swans are attracted to the sound of the males and run in their direction, similarly when the married girls of Vraja hear the greatly captivating sound of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's anklebells they can no longer stay at home, but, just as these queens of swans, and just as chaste wives that go to meet their husbands with deep heart's attachment, they give up their household duties and come running to meet Śrī Govinda with deep heart's attachment.

In this *tripadī* the words *kula vadhū marālinī*, and *kulera dharama gelo dūre* show that the beautiful girls of Vraja are Śrī Kṛṣṇa's extra-marital lovers. They are embodiments of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pleasure potency, and His eternal sweethearts. Intrinsically they are non-different from Śrī Kṛṣṇa, like the fire and his power of combustion, since they are the energy and He is the energetic. On the strength of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *yogamāyā* potency, who can accomplish the impossible, these eternal wives of Kṛṣṇa have come to think of themselves as other men's wives. The *gopīs* can never even cast an eye on other men then Śrī Kṛṣṇa, let alone think of them, and they don't even look at the shadows of their would-be husbands, let alone see them or touch them, nevertheless Yogamāyā extends such an inconceivable power that these eternal beloveds of Śrī Kṛṣṇa call these would-be husbands of a cowherds their actual husbands, and that they mistake their actual husband Śrī Kṛṣṇa to be their paramour. By the power of His own *yogamāyā*-potency Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whose knowledge and awareness is unhindered, has also come to consider Himself to be the paramour of His eternal sweethearts, the beautiful girls of Vraja to be other men's wives. Therefore, although they consider the cowherds to be their husbands, instead of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Vraja-devīs did not lose their honour of chastity and Śrī Kṛṣṇa has also never become an adulterer. Merely on the strength of Yogamāyā the women of Vraja call themselves the wives of other cowherds and their friends and relatives as well as Śrī Kṛṣṇa acknowledge this. Therefore they live in the knowledge that seeing and meeting Śrī Kṛṣṇa will destroy their virtuous reputation and Śrī Kṛṣṇa also thinks of Himself as meeting with other mens' wives. All this is an illusion,

which has been going on since beginningless time and which will continue for the eternal future to come. This is not ignorant activity that is concocted by Yogamāyā, it is the working of a certain transcendental energy. Through this illusion the blissful Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*, that are His pleasure potency, feel strongly attracted to each other, and consequently relish an eternally fresh abundance of transcendental passionate ecstasy. Hence it is written in Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta –

*parakīya bhāve ati rasera ullāsa;
vraja vinu anyatra nāhi bāsa* (Ādi Ch.4)

"The extra-marital love causes more tasty pleasure, and it resides nowhere else but in Vraja." The extraordinary nature of this extra-marital love is that it shows an unlimited variety of relish. In his Ujjvala Nīlamanī scripture, Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has quoted a saying of Bharata Muni, which defines the cause of this–

*bahu vāryate khalu yatra prachanna kāmukatvaṁ ca;
yā ca mitho durlabhatā sā manmathasya paramā ratiḥ*

"That erotic *rati* (loving attraction) in which the hero and heroine find many obstacles to meeting each other, in which the lusty desires of the hero and heroine remain concealed, and in which they are generally rarely attained by each other, is the greatest of all." For the hearts of heroes become very attached to the *rati* that makes it difficult for them meet their doe-eyed heroines, and which finds many prohibitions on its path before the meeting can take place. The heroines are also greatly excited and eager, and thus the meeting becomes very passionate and sweetly relishable.

The question may be here, the mundane *rasa*-scriptures do not accept the *rasa* of the adulterous women, but rather dismisses it as a polluted, reflected *rasa* (*rasābhāsa*), therefore how can the *rasa* of the Vraja-*gopīs*, who are also married to other men, be accepted as a *rasa*?" For this reason it is said: *vraja vinu ihā anyatra nāhi bās*. In all other heroines except the heroines of Vraja, who are Śrī Kṛṣṇa's beloveds, extramarital love is *rasābhāsa*, or contrary to good taste, but in the Vraja-*devīs* this is not contrary to good taste, but has become the essence of good taste! In his Ujjvala Nīlamanī Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has quoted the following saying of Bharata Muni – *neṣṭā yad aṅginī rase kavibhiḥ paroḍhās tad gokulāmbuja-dṛṣāṁ kulam antareṇa* "The poets describe that in conjugal mellows an adulterous woman is contrary to *rasa* or good taste, but that applies to all heroines except the lotus-eyed girls of Gokula." There is no fault in the adultery committed by the heroines of Vraja, for they are the embodiments of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's innate, transcendental pleasure potency, endowed with the prowess of *rasa*. They are the eternal consorts of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and their adulterous relationship with Him is merely an illusion created by Yogamāyā to deceive the relatives. Therefore they are only adulterous in feeling; actually they are Kṛṣṇa's eternal consorts. Yogamāyā has expertly arranged this to make Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is *rasikendra mauli*, the king of relishers, relish the wonderful extract of *rasa*. Therefore the extramarital love of Vraja is not a pollution (*dūṣaṇa*) but the greatest ornament (*bhūṣaṇa*) of *rasa*. Thus a great wise saint like Śrī Uddhava repeatedly praised the extramarital love of the beautiful girls of Vraja in ecstatic astonishment and great devotion to them arose in his heart that made him pray that he might

take birth even as a blade of grass or as a shrub in the forest of Vraja so that he could be showered with even one speck of dust from their feet –

*āsām aho caraṇa reṇu juṣām ahaṁ syām vṛndāvane kim api gulma latauṣadhīnām
yā dustyajāṁ svajanam ārya pathaṁ ca hitvā bhejur mukunda padavīm śrutibhir vimṛgyām*

"Aho! May I become a blade of grass or a weed in Vṛndāvana, so that I can be showered with the footdust of these Vraja-goddesses, that have given up their husbands and relatives along with the path of virtue to take shelter of the path of loving devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is rarely attained even by the Vedic scriptures!" In his Laghu Toṣaṇi-commentary on this verse, Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has written— *śrutibhiḥ kartrībhir vimṛgyām parama puruṣārthatayānveṣaṇīyām. kiṁ kṛtvā bhejuḥ? svajanam ārya pathaṁ ca hitvā, loka maryādām veda maryādām ca tyaktvetyarthaḥ. tat tu dustyajāṁ pūrvokte śrī prabhṛtibhiḥ sarvair apyatyājyam. te khalu sarva loka sarva mahāveda puruṣārtha sāra buddhyaiva bhajantītyato na teṣu rāgotkaṭyam eva kāraṇam ityetā evāsamordhva rāgā iti bhāvāḥ. tad evaṁ mukunda padavīm iti tatrāpi śrutibhir vimṛgyām iti tasyā nityatvaṁ sarvoktamatvaṁ ca gamyate*— The essential meaning of this comment is that the Śrutis (Vedas or Upaniṣads) are all seeking the path to the supreme human pursuit, which is loving devotion unto Mukunda, whereas the *gopīs* have abandoned the path of virtue or their vow of chastity to their husbands, which means they attained this position by violating public virtue and Vedic virtue. It is very hard to transgress the Vedic regulations, for in the preceding verse (*nāyaṁ śriyo'ṅga*) Śrī Uddhava Mahāśaya had proclaimed the Vraja-sundarīs' victory over Lakṣmī-devī, which means that for Lord Hari's dear consorts like Lakṣmī it is impossible to transgress their relatives and Vedic virtue, for they worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the destination of all the people and of all the great Vedic scriptures. Therefore this great passionate love, or loving thirst of Lakṣmī and others is not the cause of Śrī Hari-*bhajana*. Therefore the women of Vraja have been indicated here as those incomparably attached to Kṛṣṇa. From this it is also understood that since it is mentioned that their worship, which is the means to attain Mukunda, is sought for by the Vedas, this is an indication that **their great passionate extramarital love is eternal and greater than all others**. The Lord is very deeply absorbed in the extramarital love of the brides of Vraja, and in the verse *na pāraye'haṁ niravadya saṁyujām* (Bhāg. 10.32.22) He acknowledges His eternal debt to them. Therefore the crownjewel of all *sādhus*, Śrī Uddhava Mahāśaya, the crown jewel of all scriptures, Śrīmad Bhāgavata, and the crown jewel of all Personalities of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, all three of them are seen to be most absorbed in this extramarital love.

Some people think that extramarital love is irreligious and it is possible that this irreligious attitude will be infused into the hearts of people who hear, chant or remember it. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda condemns such persons, who are averse to the extramarital love of the women of Vraja by saying – *aḥ kimvānyad yatas tasyām idam eva mahāmuniḥ; jagau pāramahamṣyām ca saṁhitāyām svayam śukaḥ* "What to speak of others, even the great liberated sage Śrī Śukadeva described the extramarital behaviour of the brides of Vraja in the great assembly of the Śrīmad Bhāgavata, which is the *paramahamṣa saṁhitā*, the scripture of the greatest saints, and was fully absorbed in ecstasy while singing it!" If it were harmful to hear and chant of the extramarital love of the brides of Vraja, then the great sage Śrī Śukadeva would never have described Kṛṣṇa's enjoyments so vividly as he did in the verse

kṛtvā tāvantam ātmānaṁ yāvatiṛ gopa yoṣitaḥ; rarāma bhagavāns tābhir ātmārāmo'pi līlayā – "Although the Original Personality of Godhead, who is full in six opulences, is Self-satisfied, still He assumed as many forms as there were *gopīs* and enjoyed with them." Anyone who hears, chants and remembers these great love-pastimes is blessed by attaining *prema*, this is clearly described by Śrī Śuka Muni in his final blessing at the end of the *Rāsa-līlā* narration. Thus he loudly proclaimed the great love-bestowing power of this loving pastime –

*vikṛīḍitaṁ vrajavadhūbhir idaṁ ca viṣṇoḥ śraddhānvito'nuśṛṇuyād atha varṇayed yaḥ
bhaktiṁ parāṁ bhagavati pratilabhya kāmāṁ hṛd rogam āśvapahinotyacireṇa dhīraḥ*

"Anyone who hears or describes Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *Rāsa*-adventures with the brides of *Vraja* with a faithful heart, will swiftly attain the highest devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He will give up the heart's disease of lust and attain topmost tranquility."

Some people say: "In the manifest, terrestrial pastimes Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the brides of *Vraja* are engaged in extramarital love and thus relish delicious joy, but in the unmanifest pastimes (in the spiritual sky) there is no place for extramarital love. Hence those who worship Kṛṣṇa in extramarital love will ultimately attain Him in a wedded form. After all, in his *Gopāla Campū*-scripture Śrī Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has also given the extramarital pastimes a wedded conclusion." It is not proper to think like that, for how can one who relishes the superior taste of extramarital love as a practising devotee be so unfortunate that he will be deprived of such relish when he attains perfection, and has to accept an inferior relish? Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has previously said: *sādhane bhāvibo yāhā, siddha dehe pābo tāhā, rāga pathera ei se upāya* ("Whatever I contemplate during my practice I will attain in my spiritual body. Such is the way of *rāgānugā bhajana*") and *sādhane ye dhana cāi siddha dehe tāhā pāi, pakkāpakka mātra se vicāra* ("The treasure I covet during my practice I will receive in my spiritual body. The only difference is being ripe or unripe") Such statements make it very clear that the desired goal during practice is one and the same with the attainment at the stage of perfection. How can there be any compromise or diminution in this? The great saints and the revealed scriptures have repeatedly described each and every pastime of the Lord to be eternal. Therefore to consider the superexcellent extramarital pastimes of *Vraja* to be temporary is contrary to the verdict of the Vedic scriptures and the teachings of the great saints and therefore an act of great audacity. In Śrī Sanat Kumāra Samhitā and in the 52nd chapter of the *Pātāla Khaṇḍa* of the *Padma Purāṇa* there are clear descriptions of the extramarital love in the unmanifest pastimes in the spiritual sky –

*yathā prakāṣṭa līlayāṁ purāṇeṣu prakīrtitāḥ; tathā te nitya līlayāṁ santi vṛndāvane bhuvī
gamanāgamane nityaṁ karoti vana goṣṭhayoḥ; gocāraṇaṁ vayasyaiś ca vināsura vighātanam
parakīyābhimāninyas tathā tasya priyā janāḥ; pracchannenaiva bhāvena ramayanti nija priyam*

"The eternal, unmanifest pastimes as they take place in the spiritual sky are to be known as identical to the manifest pastimes as they are described in *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* and *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and as they took place in the terrestrial *Vṛndāvana*. In the eternal pastimes Śrī Kṛṣṇa also eternally goes into the forest with His friends to herd His cows and returns to His home every afternoon. Only His pastimes of destroying the demons does not take place in

the spiritual sky. Unmanifest pastimes Śrī Kṛṣṇa also meets with the goddesses of Vraja in a hidden manner, as their love is extramarital also there."

Then again we can see in the Bṛhad Vāmana Purāṇa that the Śrūtis or Vedic scriptures became greedy after seeing Gopinātha having extramarital meetings with the *gopīs* in the eternal, unmanifest pastimes, and they prayed to Śrī Kṛṣṇa—

*kandarpa koṭi lāvāṇye tvayi dṛṣṭe manāṁsi naḥ; kāmīnī bhāvam āsādya smara kṣubdhānya saṁśaya
yathā talloka vāsinyā kāma tattvena gopikāḥ; bhajanti ramaṇaṁ matvā cikīrṣāṇi nas tathā*

"O Śrī Kṛṣṇa! When we see the luster of Your body, that defies millions of Cupids, our hearts become agitated by Cupid and we desire to serve You as lovers! Just as the *gopikās* who live in Śrī Vṛndāvana serve You in a sweet and amorous extramarital manner as their heart's lover, we also have a strong desire to serve You!" Hearing their prayers, Śrī Kṛṣṇa replied:

*durllabho durghaṭas caiva yuṣmākaṁ sumanorathaḥ; mayānumoditaḥ samyak satyo bhavitum
arhati*

*āgāmini viriṅcau tu jāte sṛṣṭyartham udyate; kalpaṁ sārāsvataṁ prāpya vraje gopyo bhaviṣyatha
pṛthivyāṁ bhārata kṣetre māthure mama maṇḍale; vṛndāvane bhaviṣyāmi preyān vo rāsa maṇḍale
jāra dharmeṇa susnehaṁ sudṛḍhaṁ sarvato'dhikam; mayi saṁprāpya sarve'pi kṛtakṛtyā bhaviṣyatha*

"Your desires are most elevated, but at the same time hard to fulfill and rarely attained. Still I will consent – let your aspirations come true! In the next creation when Brahmā is born to commence a new creation, you will attain the status of a *gopī* in the Sārāsvata-age. You will attain Me as your beloved in the Rāsa-circle in Vṛndāvana, in the Mathurā district in India on planet earth, and you will become blessed by attaining Me as a fixed paramour in the most intensely affectionate relationship." Through this statement it is firmly established that extramarital love is also eternally present in the unmanifest Vraja. Śrīla Kavirāja Gosvāmīpāda has also written *ataeva madhura rasa kōhi tāra nāma; svakīyā parakīyā rūpe dvividha saṁsthāna* "Therefore I call this the sweet flavour, which has two stations in both wedded and extramarital forms." Here the word **saṁsthāna** means a completely permanent station, therefore we can understand that in the amorous mellow both wedded love and extramarital love are eternally present.

The extramarital love described by Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda in Śrī Gopāla Campū ends with Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava playing the pastime of wedding, and thus it appears as if he wishes to show us that wedded love is the ultimate culmination. Thus is thought by those who cannot understand the deepest purport of Śrī Gopāla Campū. In the beginning of said book Śrī Jīva has himself written: *tatra ca prakāṭāprakāṭa prakāśamayasya vṛndāvanasya bahu vidha saṁsthānatayā bahu vidha śāstra śrutasyāprakāṭa prakāśamaya vaibhava viśeṣa eva samprati varṇanīyaḥ. sa ca gokula pradhāna eveti sva vivakṣita hitā brahmasaṁhitānusāhitā kriyate. tad vacanāni tu bodha kramāya kramamatikramyānukramyante* (1.1.19) The purport of this is that "There are innumerable manifestations of the transcendental Vraja-*dhāma* and each of these manifestations have two kinds of stations. One kind of manifestation is visible to the human eye, and the other kind of manifestation is never visible to the human eye. Those manifestations that are sometimes visible to the human eye are named *prakāṭa prakāśa*, or

'the manifest display' and the manifestation that is never visible to the human eye is called the *aprakāṣa prakāśa* or 'unmanifest display'. All these different kinds of manifest and unmanifest displays are described in different manners by many different types of scriptures. Of all of these, the unmanifest display of Śrī Goloka, which is endowed with specific prowess, is discussed by me here. This narration will be mainly about the Gokula pastimes. The main scriptural authority on which I base this narration of mine will be Brahma Samhitā. However, my narration will follow the course of the topic that I wish to discuss in the angle in which I am aiming, and thus the sequence of the book which I am quoting will be transgressed, so that it will be easily understandable." This statement clearly proves that in whatever part of Gopāla Campū Śrī Jīva Gosvāmīpāda describes the existence of wedded love, it pertains to the pastimes of the majestic Goloka sphere, which is an unmanifest display of Śrī Vṛndāvana. Then again it is not so that all the displays of the majestic Goloka are merely stations of wedded love, for in his Śrī Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta (2.6.109) Śrīmat Sanātana Gosvāmīpāda shows the presence of extramarital love also in Goloka's pastimes –

*etat pāda nakhāgrāika saundaryasyāpi nārhati
saundarya bhāraḥ sarvāsām āsām nīrājanam dhruvam*

tīkā – *nanu anya jano mā bhavatu nāma imās tu gauraṅgyaḥ śrī rādhādyāḥ parama sundaryas tatrāha etad iti. sarvāsāmāsām śrī rādhādīnām saundarya bhāraḥ etasya madīya śyāmasundarasya yat pāda nakhāgrasya ekaṁ ekataram saundaryam tasyāpi nīrājanam nārhati. dhruvam niścitam. bhāra śabdasyāyam abhiprāyaḥ yac ca kiñcit saundaryamāsām vidyate, tan madīya śyāmasundarasya vadhūtvā bhāvena vaiphalyāpatter bhāra eveti.* The purport of this is that in Śrī Goloka, which is situated beyond Vaikuṅṭha, mother Yaśodā tells Mukharā: "Nobody is as beautiful as my Gopāla, that goes without saying– even the golden-bodied daughters of the cowherds, headed by the most beautiful Śrī Rādhā, cannot match the beauty of Śrī Kṛṣṇa! Their abundant beauty isn't able even to worship the beauty of the tip of one of my Śyāmasundara's toenails, that's for sure!" Here the word **saundarya bhāra** means that 'Śrī Rādhā and the other cowherd daughters may be very pretty, but their beauty is wasted because they cannot become the brides of my Śyāmasundara. Hence their beauty becomes like a *bhāra* or burden to them." From this narration we can understand that there is extramarital love also in Śrī Goloka. Hence the Mahājanas call Goloka the place of **avivikta svakīya parakīya** (a place where it is difficult to ascertain whether there is wedded love or extramarital love).

Anyway, here it is certified that the extramarital love is eternally present in Śrī Vṛndāvana's unmanifest display. Here the question may be put– "If extramarital love is eternally present in the unmanifest display, then why is there still a desire to relish the astonishment of this extramarital love in the manifest display?" The answer to this is that the wedded love of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava that is described to take place in Goloka shows itself in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's self esteem of 'I am the husband of the *gopīs* and they are My eternal consorts' in the unmanifest display. In such consciousness His heart wishes to relish the extramarital love in the manifest display. *goloka vrajera saha nitya vihāra* (C.C.). Here the word **saha** indicates an identity in abodes; in other words, in the abode of Goloka there are eternal pastimes and in the abode of Vraja there are eternal pastimes. Without seeing this Lord of Goloka and the Lord of Gokula together, the pastimes cannot find perfection. In other words, when the

pastimes are perceived by human eyes in this world, then the Lord of Goloka wants to relish extramarital mellows in the manifest pastimes, and the desire to relish extramarital love awakens in the Lord of Gokula when He becomes filled with astonishment in the course of His pastimes like *pūrva rāga* (preliminary love). The reason is that if these pastimes with the eternal associates are not shown in the material world the flavours of pastimes like *pūrva rāga* could never be extracted (savoured to the utmost). This is why both the Lord of Goloka and the Lord of Gokula cherish the desire to relish the astonishing mellows of extramarital love within the manifest display. Hence we can find Kṛṣṇa's statement '*se se lilā koribo jāte mora camatkāra*' (C.C.) 'I will perform those pastimes that will astonish Me'.

Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda aimed at the Lord of Śrī Goloka when he described the pastimes of wedded love in Gopāla Campū, and in the end, after Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava were married, he quotes a verse from the Kāvya Prakāśa, beginning with *yaḥ kaumāra-haraḥ sa eva hi varas tā eva caitra kṣapāḥ*, showing Their dissatisfaction with wedded love, thus promulgating the superexcellence of extramarital love. Thus it should be understood. (65)

govinda śarīra satya, tāhāra sevaka nitya,
vṛndāvana bhūmi tejomaya
tribhuvane śobhā sāra, heno sthāna nāhi āra,
yāhāra smarāṇe prema hoy (66)

"Govinda's transcendental body is real and His servants are eternal. Vṛndāvana is a very effulgent place and there is no such a beautiful place within all the three worlds! Simply by remembering it *prema* is attained!"

The form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, His devotee and Vraja:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā- In this *tripadī* Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya describes the reality of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's form, the devotee-principle and the principle of Śrī Vṛndāvana. First he establishes the reality of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's form by saying *govinda śarīra satya*. The form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the Supreme Brahman in human form, is eternally real. The only ingredient that makes up His body is *saccidānanda* (existence, knowledge and bliss). Although the individual living entities are by nature eternal drops of consciousness, their illusory material bodies are made of material nature, and are thus temporary and unreal. However, there is no difference between the Supreme Lord and His body— *deha dehi bheda caiva neśvare vidyate kvacit*. In the Sarva Samvādinī of his Bhagavata Sandarbha, Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has quoted evidence from the Mahābhārata — *na bhūta saṅgha saṁsthāno deho'sya paramātmanaḥ* "The body of the Supreme Self is never made of five gross elements." In Śrīmad Bhāgavata, Śrī -śabhadēva has said: *idaṁ śarīraṁ mama durvibhāvyaṁ* (5.5.19) *idaṁ manuṣyākāraṁ śarīraṁ mama durvibhāvyaṁ avitarkyaṁ mad icchā vilasitaṁ natvahaṁ prākṛto manuṣya ityarthah* (Comment by Śrīdhara Svāmī) "This human appearance of Mine is absolutely beyond all arguments and disputes. This transcendental body of Mine is displayed by My wish. I am never a material human being." Śrī Kṛṣṇa's being is fully transcendental and there is no difference between His being and His appearance. *tam ekaṁ govindaṁ saccidānanda vighraṁ*

(Śruti). In the Gītā the Lord Personally tells Śrī Arjuna '*brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭāham*' (Gītā 14.27) and '*nāhaṃ prakāśaḥ sarvasya yogamāyā samāvṛtaḥ*' (Gītā 7.25) "I am the substantive support of the non-personal *brahman*" and "Since I am concealed by My mystic potency (*yogamāyā*) I am not manifest to everyone." In Śrī Gopāla Tāpanī Śruti it is said: *kṛṣṇo hi paramaṃ daivatam 'kṛṣṇa eva paro devas taṃ dhyāyet taṃ raset taṃ yajed iti*. In the Pūrva Tāpanī (the first part of the book) the -ṣis like Śrī Sanaka inquired from Brahmā: 'Who is the Supreme Godhead?', to which Brahmā replied: "Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Godhead." In the appendix of the Pūrva Tāpanī it is also seen: "Due to His super excellence Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Godhead. He should be meditated upon, His sweet flavours must be relished and He must be worshipped", etc. All these statements prove that Śrī Kṛṣṇa's human-like form is supreme. Śrī Kṛṣṇa's human-like form is ***para brahma sarva para tattva*** The Supreme *brahman* and the Supreme Truth of all. *ānanda mātraḥ kara pāda mukhodarādi* (Śruti) "His hands, feet, face and belly are all full bliss." Just as all the limbs of a sugar puppet consist of sugar, similarly all of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's body, the hands the feet and so, are all blissful spirit.

This is why Mahāmuni Vyāsadeva said *satyaṃ paraṃ dhīmaḥi* at the beginning of Śrīmad Bhāgavata, which is the essence of all the Vedānta, as he meditated on Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Master, whose form is genuine and real. At the beginning of their praise of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, as He still lay in the womb of Devakī-devī in the prison of King Kaiṁsa (Ś.B. 10.2.26), Brahmā and other gods defined Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the embodiment of truth who is real in all three phases of time, in different ways –

*satya vratam satyaparam tri-satyam satyasya yonim nihitam ca satye
satyasya satyamṛta satya netram satyātmaḥ tvāṃ śaraṇam prapannāḥ*

Brahmā and the other gods declared: "We take shelter of Śrī Govinda, who is true to His vow, who is attained by practising truth, who is real in past, present and future, who is the cause of the creation of the five elements like earth (and who was thus real also before the creation) Who is the inner overseer (showing that He is real at present) and the principle of the Supreme Self (showing that He will remain real also after the cosmic destruction), who speaks the truth and who promulgates an equal vision." Hence the blessed author has said: *govinda śarīra satya* "Govinda's form is real".

After this it is said: *tāhāra sevaka nitya* "His servants are eternal" Śrī Govinda's eternally perfect associates, like His servants are all transcendental and eternally real. *ātma koṭi guṇam kṛṣṇe premānam paramam gatāḥ; nityānanda guṇāḥ sarve nitya siddhā mukundavat* (B.R.S. 2.1.290) *mukundavat ye nityānanda guṇās te nitya siddhā ityanvayaḥ nityās ca ānanda svarūpās ca guṇās tad upalakṣita dehās ca yeṣāṃ te iti* (Comment by Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī) "Those who love Śrī Kṛṣṇa millions of times more than themselves, whose transcendental attributes are just like those of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and whose bodies are transcendental like that of Śrī Kṛṣṇa – these are His eternally perfect associates. What's more, even the devotees within the material world attain transcendental bodies by following in the footsteps of these eternally perfect devotees!" Śrīman Mahāprabhu personally told His beloved associate Śrīmat Sanātana Gosvāmīpāda–

*prabhu kohe– vaiṣṇavera deha prakṛta kabhu noy; aprākṛta deha bhakter cid-ānandamoy
dikṣā kāle bhakta kore ātma samarpaṇa; sei kāle kṛṣṇa tāre kore ātma sama*

sei deha tāre kore cidānanda moy; aprākṛta dehe tāra caraṇa bhajoy (C.C.)

"The Lord said: "The body of a Vaiṣṇava is never material. He has a transcendental body. When the devotee gives himself away at the time of initiation Kṛṣṇa makes him (qualitatively) equal to Himself. He makes the devotee's body transcendental, for in a transcendental body the devotee can serve the Lord."

After this Śrīman Mahāprabhu strengthens His statement with evidence from Śrīmad Bhāgavata—

*martyo yadā tyakta samasta karmā niveditātmā vicikīṛṣito me
tadāmṛtatvaṁ pratipadyamāno mayātma bhūyāya ca kalpate vai*

Śrī Kṛṣṇa told Śrī Uddhava: "O Uddhava! When mankind ³⁷ gives up all activities and surrenders unto Me, then I wish to make them even more special than *jñānīs* and *yogīs*. He attains immortality and he attains a transcendental body (*ātmabhūta*) like Me." The words of Śrīman Mahāprabhu 'At that time Kṛṣṇa will make him equal to Himself' mean that when the faithful aspirant attains the mercy of a great saint, he commences this process along with his taking shelter of the lotus feet of a bona fide Guru, or taking initiation. The purer the heart of the practitioner gets in the course of his practise of *bhajana* and he gradually attains the stages of *niṣṭhā*, *ruci*, and *āsakti*, his body, senses, mind and intelligence will slowly give up their mundane character and become spiritual instead. When he attains the stage of *rati*, the devotee's inner senses, that is, his mind, intelligence, consciousness and ego have become fully spiritual, and at the stage of *prema* his entire body with its senses have also become fully spiritualised. Hence Śrīmat Sanātana Gosvāmīpāda has written in Śrī Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta —

*kṛṣṇa bhakti sudhāpānād deha daihika viśmṛte
teṣāṁ bhautika dehe'pi saccidānanda rūpatā*

"Those who drink the nectar of devotion to Kṛṣṇa forget all about their bodies and all that is connected with them. Even their material bodies, that consist of five gross elements, have become spiritual!" One may ask here "If the devotee's gross material body even becomes spiritual, then how come we see disease, old age and death in his body too? Then it is described that when a devotee leaves his body he will attain a transcendental body of an associate of the Lord. How can a transcendental body be destroyed then? And if his visible body is not destroyed (at the time of death), then what will happen with that body at the time he receives his spiritual body?" In this way many doubts may arise. The right answers to these questions are available in the scriptures and in the words of the Mahājānas. The essence of these statements is that the Lord always wishes to conceal the confidential ways of devotion or the secret results and symptoms of devotional activities, for if the result of devotional practice were visible to the worldly people, unqualified people would place their hands on the practice of devotion and thus commit offences. Secondly, confidential devotion herself also always wants to remain concealed, and the humble devotees also constantly wish to conceal their devotional practice or the results of their devotion. This nourishes their humility, which is the natural treasure of *prema sādhana*. Hence the Supreme Lord, who is

³⁷ "When the causeless grace of My fully independent devotee is attained."

the master of illusion and the great magician, shows the eyes of the ordinary people symptoms of the five gross elements, like old age, disease and death also on the devotee's transcendental body. In the actual sense the transcendental body of the devotee will merge with his *pārṣada deha* (eternal body of the Lord's associate) and enter the kingdom of transcendental pastimes. Then a false form is burned on the funeral pyre, just as what was seen to have happened to *siddha* devotees as the Yādavas. To demonstrate this secret the Lord has shown in Śrīmad Bhāgavata that Dhruva entered the spiritual world in his current body and in Śrī Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta that Gopa Kumāra and others also entered the spiritual world in their current bodies, just like the *sthālīpulāka nyāya*³⁸.

After this the blessed author establishes that Śrī Vṛndāvana Dhāma is transcendental just like the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, by saying: *vṛndāvana bhūmi tejomaya* "Vṛndāvana's soil is shimmering with transcendental splendour. The Lord's playgrounds like Śrī Vṛndāvana are not like this world, which is a transformation of the external illusory energy called matter. The holy *dhāma* is a manifestation of the internal existence potency.

*sandhinīra sāra aṁśa-śuddha sattva nāma; bhagavānera sattā hoy yāhāte viśrāma
mātā pitā sthāna grha śayyāsana āra; e sab kṛṣṇera śuddha sattvera vikāra (C.C.)*

"The essential portion of the existence potency is called *śuddha sattva*, in which the Lord's existence rests. His mother, father, abode, house, bed and couch – all these are transformations of Kṛṣṇa's pure existence (*śuddha sattva*)."

The Upaniṣads also say: *sa bhagavaḥ kasmin pratiṣṭhita iti sve mahimni* "Where is that God established?" Answer: "He is established within His inconceivable opulence." In the Śrī Gopāla Tāpanī Śrutī it is also seen: '*gokulaṁ vana vaikuṅṭham*', '*sākṣād brahma gopāla purīhi*' "Another name of Gokula is Vana Vaikuṅṭha" "Gopāla's City is direct transcendence." Thus there is a lot of proof in scripture of the fact that Śrī Vṛndāvana-*dhāma* is beyond the material creation, eternal, supernatural, God's eternal playground, invisible to the mundane eye and luminous. In the Bṛhad Gautamīya Tantra it is seen that Śrī Nārada asked Śrī Kṛṣṇa: "O Lord of the cowherds! What is the truth about this Vṛndāvana, that consists of twelve forests? If I am qualified to hear this, then kindly describe it to me!" To this Śrī Kṛṣṇa answered:

*idaṁ vṛndāvanam ramyaṁ mama dhāmaiva kevalam; atra ye paśavaḥ pakṣi mṛgāḥ kiṭā narāmarāḥ
ye vasanti mamādhiṣṭhe mṛtā yānti mamālayam*

.....

*pañca yojanam evāsti vanaṁ me deha rūpakam; kālindīyaṁ suṣumnākhyā paramāmṛta-vāhinī
atra devās ca bhūtāni vartante deha rūpataḥ; sarva devamayaś cāhaṁ na tyajāmi vanaṁ kvacit
āvīrbhāvas tirobhāvo bhaven me'tra yuge yuge tejomayam idaṁ ramyam adṛśyaṁ carma cakṣuṣā*

"O Nārada! This Vṛndāvana is most charming and is My only abode. All the animals, birds, deer, trees, insects, humans and demigods who reside here will attain My abode when they leave the body. This ten-mile Vṛndāvana is My very body and the spine is formed by

³⁸ When rice is being boiled one takes out two to four grains of rice and presses them to see if it is boiled properly. If two grains are boiled the whole pot of rice is known to be boiled. This is called *sthālīpulāka nyāya*.

Yamunā, the carrier of the supreme nectar. Here gods and ghosts live in subtle, extraordinary or spiritual bodies. I am the aggregate of all the demigods and I never leave this abode. I appear and disappear in this terrestrial Vraja age after age. This lovely Vṛndāvana is very powerful, as it consists of pure *sattva* and is invisible to the physical eye."

After this the blessed author says: *tribhuvane śobhā sāra, heno sthāna nāhi āra, yāhāra smaraṇe prema hoy* "There is no place in the three worlds as beautiful as this one. Simply by remembering it one attains *prema*." Some people think: "These places like Vṛndāvana that we are seeing now, is not really the spiritual abode— it is a certain area on planet earth. When Śrī Kṛṣṇa performed His pastimes on this planet He descended here and when He disappeared the holy *dhāma* also disappeared with Him." However, such thinking is condemned by the scriptures and the *sādhus*. Although Śrī Kṛṣṇa is a form of transcendental bliss, He does appear in this material world to perform His manifest pastimes, and accepts many human customs in order to perfect His human like pastimes, and that occurs by His grace only. In the same way, being greatly overwhelmed by compassion for the conditioned souls, the transcendental abode of Vraja, which is totally beyond mundane illusion, assumes a manifest terrestrial form and remains present even after Śrī Kṛṣṇa has concluded His manifest pastimes. If the holy *dhāma* would have remained in its transcendental form, the conditioned souls would not be able to receive its mercy. Thus it has displayed such compassion. Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has called this very compassionate manifestation the visible manifestation. The tangible evidence of it is that the *premika mahābhāgavata* pure devotees can perceive the real form of the holy *dhāma* even now— *viśeṣatas tādṛg laukika rūpatva bhagavan nitya dhāmatve tu divya kadambāśokādi vṛkṣādayo'pyadyāpi mahābhāgavataiḥ sākṣāt kriyante iti prasiddheḥ* (Śrī Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha) In Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta it is described—

*sarvopari śrī gokula vrajaloka dhāma; śrī goloka śvetadvīpa vṛndāvana nāma
sarvaga ananta vibhu kṛṣṇa tanu sama; uparyadho vyāpi āche— nāhika niyama
brahmāṇḍe prakāśa tāra kṛṣṇera icchāya; ekai svarūpa tāra nāhi dui kāy
cintāmaṇi bhūmi, kalpavṛkṣamaya vana; carma cakṣe dekhe tāre prapañcera sama
prema netre dekhe tāra svarūpa prakāśa; gopa gopī saṅge jāhāṇ kṛṣṇera vilāsa*

"Beyond even all spiritual abodes is the abode of Vraja-loka, or Śrī Gokula, which is also known by the names of Śrī Goloka, Śvetadvīpa and Vṛndāvana. This abode is all-pervading and unlimited like Kṛṣṇa's body. It spreads above and below without any restriction. By Kṛṣṇa's wish it becomes manifest in the mundane universes, but it has only one basic form, and not two separate ones. The soil consists of thought gems and the forests consist of wish-yielding trees, but the physical eyes perceive it as a mundane place. Its actual form, though, is manifest to the eyes of love divine— here the cowherds and cowherd girls play with Kṛṣṇa."

Let alone the service of residing within this loving abode of Śrī Vṛndāvana, even remembering it from afar will cause *prema* to arise in the offenseless heart — *yāhāra smaraṇe prema hoy*. Of this half a *tripadī* there is another reading, which runs as follows — *tāhāte yamunā jala, kore nitya jhalamala, tāra tīre aṣṭa kuñja hoy* ("In it the water of the Yamunā river is eternally shimmering, and on her banks are eight groves") The two words *nitya jhalamala* have described the eternality, the transcendental status and the beauty of even the Yamunā river. The verses that have previously been quoted from Gautamiya Tantra show

that the Lord calls Śrī Yamunā 'His own divine body' which is 'a stream of most nectarean beauty in Śrī Vṛndāvana.' *tāra tīre aṣṭa kuñja hoy* have described the positions of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's lovely play-groves on the most beautiful and solitary bank of Śrī Yamunā. (66)

śītala kiraṇa kora, kalpataru guṇadhara
taru latā chaya ṛtu sevā
govinda ānandamaya, nikate vanitā-caya
madhura vihāra ati śobhā (67)

"Govinda's sweet pastimes are very beautiful and blissful as He is surrounded by young girls in a wonderful environment, served by six seasons, where each tree and vine bears the hallmarks of a desiretree -or vine and where the moon extends its soothing beams."

Vṛndāvana's beauty :

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – In the latter half of the previous *tripadī* Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya gave a hint of Śrī Vṛndāvana's beauty, that excels within the three worlds, by writing '*tribhuvane śobhā sāra, heno sthāna nāhi āra*'. In this *tripadī* he summarises this beauty by describing: *śītala kiraṇa kara, kalpa taru guṇadhara, taru latā chay ṛtu sevā*. Here *śītala kiraṇa* means the moon, and its *karas* are its soothing rays that color Vṛndāvana. In the previous *tripadī* it is written *vṛndāvana bhuvī tejomoy*—Vrajabhūmī is self-luminous and self manifest, and although there is thus no real need there for the rising of the sun and the moon, still, for the sake of nourishing the human-like pastimes, the sun and the moon rise there. But these are not like the suns and moons of the mundane world, they are transcendental luminaries that constantly diffuse beams of great sweetness. Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda writes in his commentary on the strophe *cid ānandaṁ jyotiḥ param api tad āsvādyam api ca* of the Brahma-Saṁhitā-verse *śriyaḥ kānta* (5.56) – *jyotir laukika līlā mādhuryāya mahā pralaye'pyanaśvaraṁ sūryādi rūpaṁ yat tatra vartate tathā teṣāṁ āsvādyam api yat kiñcit tat sarvaṁ cidānanda rūpaṁ param api parama tattvam eva na tu prākṛtam. candrārkaḥ sthitiś ca tatra vilakṣaṇatvenaiva gautamīya tantra kathitā. samānodita candrārkam iti hi vṛndāvana viśeṣaṇam. samānatvaṁ ca rātrau rātrau rākā candramayatvād iti.* (Śrī Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha–Paragraph 172) "Although this abode is self-luminous, still for the sake of revealing the sweet human-like pastimes, the sunlight which is not destroyed at the time of universal cataclysm shines there. Everything there, the light plus the transcendental residents of this sacred abode, is relishable. Everything there is transcendental, the paramount truth. There is nothing material there. The special nature of Vṛndāvana's sun and moon are described by the Gautamīya Tantra as *samānodita candrārkam* (the sun and moon rise simultaneously). The full moon rises there every night. The sky is pervaded by the soothing beams of the full moon, that are thus poured over the chest of Vṛndāvana's transcendental environment, keeping Śrī Vṛndāvana, the playground of Gopīnātha and the *gopīs*, splendid with transcendental bliss, soothing and honey-sweet.

All of Śrī Vṛndāvana's trees and vines bear the attributes of wishyielding trees and vines. In Śrī Brahma Samhitā it is written '*kalpataravo drumāḥ*' "All of Vṛndāvana's trees are wishyielding trees." In the Rudra Yāmala Tantra Śrīman Mahādeva tells Śrī Gaurī devī –

*vīthyāṁ vīthyāṁ nivāso'dhara madhura suvacas tatra santānakānām
eke rākenḍu koṭyāpaviśad akarās teṣu caike kamante. rāme rātrer virāme samudita tapana dyoti
sindhūpameyā ratnāṅgānām suvarṇa-cita mukura rucas tebhya eke drumendrāḥ
yat kusumaṁ yadā mṛgyaṁ yat phalaṁ ca varānane tat tadaiva prasūyante vṛndāvana suradrumāḥ*

Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has quoted these two verses in his Śrī Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha (paragraph 172) and has explained them in the following way: "O Gaurī, whose words are sweetened by the honey of your lips! Each of Vṛndāvana's pathways is lined by jewelled wishyielding trees. Some of the best trees shine like millions of full-moon beams! O Rāme! Some other trees shine like the rising sun at the end of the night, and some others, that shine more than all the other trees, shine with the luster of golden mirrors. O fair faced lady! Vṛndāvana's wishyielding trees give each and every fruit or flower that is sought for." Although Śrī Vṛndāvana's wishyielding trees can fulfill each and every wish of the seeker, they do not display such prowess, in order to preserve the sweet pastimes of Vraja, and because none of Vṛndāvana's residents desire any ulterior human pursuit. *kalpavṛkṣa latā yāhā sāhajika vana; phala phula vinā keho nā māge anya dhana* (C.C.) "This forest is naturally endowed with wishyielding trees and vines, but no one asks anything from them but fruits and flowers." Although wishyielding trees and vines are endowed with all attributes, the trees and vines of Śrī Vṛndāvana are simply decorating the beautiful rustic environment of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's playground Śrī Vṛndāvana and thus complete the blissful enjoyments of the Divine Pair! In Śrī Vṛndāvana Mahimāmṛta (10.83 and 84) it is written –

*vicitra pallava prasūna guccha jālakair apām ullasan mahā maranda sindhu nirjharam
vicitra rocīśācitāṁ sudhā rasātmakaiḥ phalaiḥ smarāmi kṛṣṇa kānane vicitra śākhi maṇḍalam
ananta hari rādhikā praṇaya phulla vallī drumāṁ
tad aṅghri rasa vihvalaiḥ khaga mṛgādibhir maṇḍitam
tad adbhuta vilāsan nava nikuṅja puṣpodayaṁ
smarāmyati mahojjvalan madhura vṛnda vṛndāvanam*

"I remember Śrī Vṛndāvana's wonderful trees, that have wonderful leaves and sprouts, that are the sole source of a great ocean of trickling honey that is generated by networks of flower-bunches, that diffuse a wonderful aura of luster and that are filled with special juicy nectar-fruits."

"I remember the brightly effulgent abode of Śrī Vṛndāvana, which is ornamented with attributes of sweetness, which is beautified by trees and vines that blossom with innumerable flowers of love for Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, that is decorated with birds and animals that are overwhelmed by ecstatic love for Their lotus feet and that is endowed with ever fresh groves that always play host to so many of the wonderful pastimes of the Divine Pair."

The six seasons constantly serve this Śrī Vṛndāvana. The moon, the sun, the wind and time are all servants of the *līlā*. For the perfection of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's blissful pastimes in Vṛndāvana, at some places there are separate seasonal forests, at some places there are dual

joint seasonal forests and at some places all six seasons are present in one forest in full beauty. In such forests the climates, animals, fruits, flowers, birds and trees of all six seasons are beautifully and simultaneously present.³⁹

After that the blessed author says: *govinda ānandamaya, nikaṭe banitācoy, madhura bihāra ati śobhā* – In the soothing rays of the bright transcendental moonlight, the blissful Śrī Govinda and the Vraja-devīs are immersed in the ever-so-sweet flavours of Their pastimes in a *kalpa-taru* forest in Śrī Vṛndāvana, that is constantly being served by six seasonal forests. This half a *tripadī* hints at the greatly inconceivable Yogapīṭha (transcendental meeting place) of Śrī Gopīnātha and the *gopīs* in the extraordinarily beautiful Śrī Vṛndāvana. In the book 'Svayambhuvāgama', in the discussion between Īśvara and Devī, the meditation on the incomparably beautiful environment of the Yogapīṭha in Śrī Vṛndāvana is described –

*pīyūṣa latikākīnām nānā sattva niṣevitām; sarvartu sukhadām svacchām sarva jantu sukhāvahām
 nilotpala dala śyāmām vāyunā cālitaḥ mṛdu; vṛndāvana parāgais tu vāsītām kṛṣṇa-vallabhām
 sīmni kuñjataṭām yoṣit kṛṣṇamaṇḍapa madhyamām;
 kālindīnī saṁsmareddhīmān suvarṇa taṭa pañkajām
 nitya nūtana puṣpādi rañjitaṁ sukha saṅkulam; svātmānanda sukhokarṣa śabdādi viṣayātmakam
 nānā citra vihaṅgādi dhvanibhiḥ parirañjitaṁ; nānā ratna latā śobhi mattālī dhvani-maṇḍitam
 cintāmaṇi paricchannaṁ jyotsnājāla samākulam; sarvartu-phala puṣpādhyam prabālaiḥ śobhitaṁ
 pari
 kālindī jala saṁsargī-vāyunā kampitaṁ muhuḥ; vṛndāvanam kusumitaṁ nānā vṛkṣa vihaṅgamaiḥ
 saṁsmaret sādhaḥko dhīmān vilāsaika nīketanam; ekībhāvo dvayor yatra vṛkṣayor madhya deśataḥ
 tad adhaś cintayeddevi maṇi maṇḍapam uttamam; trilokī sukha sarvasvam suyantraṁ keli vallabham
 tatra śimhāsane rāmye nānā ratnamaye sukhe; sumano'dhika mādhyura komale sukha saṁstare

 tatra prema bharākrāntam kīśoram pītavāsanam; kalāya kusuma-śyāmam lāvānyaika nīketanam
 līlā rasa sukhāmbhodhi saṁsargaṁ saṁmagnaṁ sukha sāgaram;
 navīna nīradābhāsam candrikāñcita kuntalam*

"The intelligent person meditates fully on Yamunā – This Yamunā is surrounded by nectar-vines, worshipped by different living beings, delighting all seasons, filled with spotless water, the abode of joy for all living beings, colored blackish-blue like Nilotpala lotus flowers, slightly swaying in the wind (meaning that it has gentle waves), scented by the pollen of Vṛndāvana's flowers and is very dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. On her banks there are groves, in her middle there is the play-platform of the Vraja-sundarīs, on her shore a golden land and in her waters are beautiful golden lotus flowers.

After this the attentive *sādhaka* fully meditates on flowerful Vṛndāvana, the sole playground of love. This Vṛndāvana is beautified by ever-fresh flowers, is constantly filled with bliss and the five sense objects – sounds, touch, forms, taste and scents – that increase the happiness that arises from her intrinsic experience, which is pleasing due to the sounds of its various birds, beautified by its different kinds of jewelled vines, adorned by the humming of intoxicated bees, permeated by the rays emanating from her Cintāmaṇi-gems, filled with fruits and flowers that grow in every season, beautified by fresh sprouts in all

³⁹ See Chapter 12 of Śrī Govinda Lilāmṛta.

directions, where a gentle Malayan breeze constantly carries the drops of the Kāḷindī-water and which is beautified by trees and birds."

"O Devi! Below the spot in Vṛndāvana where two Kalpavṛkṣa-trees meet there is a paramount jewelled platform. Meditate on that. In the middle of that platform is an enchanting jewel-studded paramount *yantra*-throne, which is the abode of joy for the three worlds and loves play. On this throne adolescent Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is overwhelmed by *prema*, who is attired in yellow dress, whose complexion resembles that of blackish-blue Kalāya flowers, who is the only shelter of all lustre known as *lāvanya*, who is immersed in the blissful ocean of delicious sports, who is Himself an ocean of transcendental bliss, who shines with the luster of a fresh monsoon cloud, and whose curly locks have been beautified with peacock feathers, presides." With His sprout-like lips He produces sweet and gentle flute sounds, hearing which thousands upon thousands of passionate Vraja-girls come running to see Him and surround Him out of sheer attraction. With these loving Vraja-girls Śrī Govinda, Who is the very embodiment of transcendental erotic *rasa*, is immersed in ever-fresh *rasa*-pastimes in Vṛndāvana, which is inundated by the flavours of sweet pastimes of enjoyment. Such is being sung by the poet Vidyāpati:

nava vṛndāvana, nava nava tarugaṇa, nava nava kikasita phul
navala vasanta, navala malayānila, mātala nava ali-kula
viharai navala kiśora

kāḷindī pulina, kuñja nava śobhana, nava nava prema vibhora
navala rasāla, mukula madhu mātiyā, nava kokila kula gāya
nava yuvatī-gaṇa, cita umatāyai, nava rase kānane dhāy
nava yuva-rāja, navala nava nāgari, milaye nava nava bhāti
niti niti aichana, nava nava khelana, vidyāpati mati māti

"Vṛndāvana is new and fresh (because of spring), and the trees are new and ever-fresh. The blossoming flowers are ever-fresh. The new spring and the new Malayan (southern) breezes are inebriating the new bumblebees. The young adolescent Pair (Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa) thus enjoys. On the bank of the Yamunā-river is a beautiful new harbour. overwhelmed by ever-fresh love. The new cuckoos sing, inebriated by the fresh mangoes with their honey-filled buds! Overcome by new, luscious feelings the young girls run into the forest (to meet Kṛṣṇa). The young prince Kṛṣṇa and the fresh young heroine are meeting in ever-fresh splendour. Thus they nicely play Their ever-fresh pastimes. Maddening the heart and mind of Vidyāpati."

In some editions this *tripadī* is preceded or followed by another *tripadī* – *pūrṇa candra sama jyoti, cid ānandamoya mūrti, mahā līlā darśana lobhā;.....duhuṅ preme ḍagamagi, doṅhe doṅhā anurāgī, duhuṅ rūpe duhuṅ mana lobhā* – "In this topmost beautiful Śrī Vṛndāvana Śrī Govinda, whose *darśana* is most desirable, whose bodily luster is even more bright and pleasing than that of the full moon light, and whose transcendental body is most playful, in immersed in the mellows of pastimes with the Vraja-girls." Of all these girls Śrī Rādhārāṇī is again the crownjewel, since Her love, beauty and sweetness are supreme. Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava are immersed in mutual love, they carry great passionate love for Each other and Their minds and hearts are very greedy for Each other's love. (67)

vraja-pura vanitāra, caraṇa āśraya sāra,
koro mana ekānta koriyā
anya bola gaṇḍagola, nā śunaho uttarola,
rākho prema hṛdaya bhariyā (68)

"O mind! Take one-pointed shelter of the lotus feet of the Vraja-gopīs! Don't listen to any other topic, this is simply confusing noise, and keep the swelling ecstasy of your love hidden within your heart!"

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *ṭīkā* – *utarola uttaralah*

One-pointed shelter:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā– In this *tripadī* the divine vision of Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya subsides and in *sādhakāveśa* he instructs his own mind to make *rāgānugā bhajana* his first and foremost priority. *vraja-pura vanitāra, caraṇa āśraya sāra, koro mana ekānta koriyā* "O mind! Take one-pointed shelter of the lotus feet of the Vraja-gopīs!" As we have said before: In *rāgānugā bhajana* one must meditate on rendering loving devotional service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His associates in a mentally conceived spiritual body, which is suitable to one's adopted mood and which has been bestowed by Śrī Guru, and the most important item of this meditation is adopting the right mood, for if one does not aim at the right mood the spiritual body which is suitable to one's adopted mood will be hard to attain in all respects. The practitioners of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava religion practise their worship in the mood of the *gopīs*, for the more one's yearning for the mood of the *gopīs* increases, and the heart and mind become struck with this mood, the more one advances in *bhajana*. After all, the speciality of *rāgānugā bhajana* is that it is driven by greed after the sweet feelings of the Vraja-goddesses and their consequent relish of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweetness. The sweet feelings of the goddesses of Vraja and their consequent expert relish of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweetness is their very own treasure. Other than them, no other group of devotees is endowed with such an extraordinary wealth of devotional feelings, therefore there is no way to attain greed after this treasure than through their grace. The aspirants must take exclusive shelter of their lotus feet in order to attain their grace. By taking shelter of their lotus feet one perfects allegiance to their feelings. Without allegiance to their feelings even Lakṣmī-devī, the goddess of Vaikuṅṭha, was unable to gain the touch of Vrajendra-nandana's footdust, what to speak of others? On the other hand, the Śrutis (Vedas) did attain the mood of the *gopīs* by following their feelings, and thus they were able to attain Śrī Kṛṣṇa's association in *gopī*-bodies during the Rāsa-pastimes. In Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta Śrīman Mahāprabhu told Śrī Venkāṭa Bhaṭṭa –

śruti sab gopīgaṇera anugata hoiyā; vrajeśvarī suta bhaje gopī bhāva loiyā
vyūhāntare gopī deha vraje jabe pāilo; sei dehe kṛṣṇa saṅge rāsa krīḍā koilo
gopa jāti kṛṣṇa– gopī preyasī tāhāra; devī vā anya strī kṛṣṇa nā kore aṅgikāra
*lakṣmī cāhe sei dehe kṛṣṇera saṅgama; **gopikā anugā hoiyā** nā koilo bhajana*

"The Śrutis all followed the *gopīs* and worshipped the son of the Queen of Vraja in the mood of the *gopīs*. When, in another creation, they attained *gopī*-bodies in Vraja, they played the Rāsa with Kṛṣṇa in these bodies. Kṛṣṇa is of a cowherd-caste, and the cowherd-girls are His sweethearts. Kṛṣṇa does not accept goddesses or other women. Lakṣmī wanted to unite with Kṛṣṇa in her present body, but she **did not worship Him in allegiance to the *gopikās*.**"

The Śrutis worshipped in allegiance to the *gopīs* and thus attained *gopī*-bodies and the right to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Vraja, that is proven by the *śruti stava* in Śrīmad Bhāgavata (10.87.23)–

nibhṛta marun mano'kṣa dṛḍha yoga yujo hṛdi yan munaya upāsate tad arayo'pi yayuḥ smaraṇāt striya uragendra bhoga bhujā daṇḍa viśakta dhiyo vayam api te samāḥ samadṛśo'ṅghri saroja sudhā

The Śrutis told Śrī Kṛṣṇa– "O Lord! The sages control their life airs, minds and senses to worship the principle of *brahman* within the heart, whereas Your enemies have attained the same destination simply by remembering You. Again, Your ever-beloved *gopīs* have carried the strong desire in their hearts to be embraced by Your snake-like arms, and we, who are equal-sighted, have attained the nectar of Your lotus feet by cherishing the same feelings. In other words, just as the *gopīs* have attained the right to serve You in Your form of Śrī Nanda-nandana, we have also attained *gopīs'* bodies by acting in allegiance to their feelings and thus attained the good fortune of relishing the sweet flavours of Your devotional service." *samadṛśaḥ śabde kohe sei bhāve anugati; samā śabde kohe śrutira gopī deha prāpti* (C.C.) "The word *samadṛśaḥ* (in the above-quoted Bhāgavata-*śloka*, Ed.) refers to allegiance to the *gopīs'* feelings, and the word *sama* means that the Vedas attained *gopī*-bodies." Therefore unless one accepts the shelter of the Vraja-vanītās or *gopīs* as the essence, there is no way to relish the mellows of the sweet amorous love of the Divine Pair.

The blessed author tells his own mind to take exclusive shelter of the lotus feet of the *gopikās*. Giving up the mind's absorption in and attachment to all other topics, and taking sole shelter of the lotus feet of the *gopīs* in all respects, with body, mind and words is taking exclusive shelter. The exclusive shelter of the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhārāṇī, who is the crown jewel of all *gopikās*, is the greatest love of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas who practice the service of Rādhā. Their exclusive loyalty is very wonderful. The pure devotees of Śrī Hari are greater than the devotees who worship Him for selfish purposes, hence they are called *ekāntis*, or exclusive devotees. After all, they are exclusively interested in spiritual matters. Of all those who worship Śrī Hari's different forms, the devotees whose hearts are attracted to His form of Vrajendra-nandana are again the greatest, for Śrī Hari has become subjugated by their intense love for Him. No other form of Śrī Hari but Vrajendranandana can steal their hearts and minds away. Śrīmad Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has written –

tatrāpyekāntinām śreṣṭhā govinda hṛta mānasāḥ yeṣāṁ śrīśa prasādo'pi mano hartuṁ na śaknuyāt

"Among all those who are exclusively devoted to one of the many forms of Śrī Hari, again the devotees whose hearts are stolen by Śrī Nandanandana are the greatest, for even the grace of Mahā Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Lord of the spiritual sky, cannot steal their

minds." Again the one-pointed loyalty of the devotees who are fixed in *mañjarī bhāva*, who have offered their hearts to the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhārāṇī, the crownjewel of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweethearts, is so wonderful that even the grace of Śrī Vrajendranandana cannot steal away their minds if Śrī Rādhārāṇī is not involved. When Śrī Rādhārāṇī wanted to give Śrīmat Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmīpāda to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, he said: *taṁ cet kṛpāṁ mayi vidhāsyasi naiva kiṁ me prāṇair vrajena ca baroru bakāriṇāpi* (Vilāpa Kusumāñjali- 102) "O nicely thighed Śrī Rādhe! If You do not bestow Your grace unto me, then what is the use of my life, my residence in Vraja or even Śrī Kṛṣṇa to me?" Their loyalty merely consists of – *tavaivāsmi tavaivāsmi na jīvāmi twayā vinā* (V.K.96) "O Rādhe! "I am Yours! I am Yours! I cannot live without You!" This kind of shelter-seeking is the limit of surrender– nothing can equal such complete giving of the heart! Hence the blessed author says: *vraja pura vanitāra, caraṇa āśraya sāra, koro mana ekānta koriyā* "O mind! Take one-pointed shelter of the lotus feet of the Vraja-gopīs!" One cannot take exclusive shelter of the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā, taking them to be the essence of everything, while remaining in bodily consciousness, considering oneself a mundane woman or man. It is necessary to awaken awareness of the *mañjarī svarūpa* bestowed by Śrī Guru. This identification with the spiritual body will not accept acquaintance with anyone within this mundane universe. For a practitioner who is absorbed in *mañjarī bhāva* the whole world is void without Śrī Rādhārāṇī's lotus feet. According to the amount of grace the great saints bestow and his practice of *bhajana*, the practitioner's *sādhana* is either bad, mediocre or intense and accordingly, the spiritual body, which is suitable to serve the Lord, is perceived dimly, slightly clearly or completely clearly and the practitioner's self esteem in that body also awakens accordingly. Accordingly also the shelter of the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhārāṇī, who is the crown jewel of the Vraja-vanitās, becomes more and more exclusive.

After this the blessed author says: *anya bol gaṇḍagol, nā śunaho utarol, rākho prema hṛdaye bhariyā* "All other words are simply noise– don't hear them and keep your swelling love safely within your heart." All other topics except topics on worship in allegiance to the Vraja-vanitās are just noise or vain words. There is no need to hear them at all. Let our hearts and minds instead be absorbed in what we are hearing and chanting. Therefore those who are deeply absorbed in meditating on their beloved deity are practising *rāgānugā bhajana*, and all other topics except discussions on their beloved deity are confusing and scattering the mind. Therefore those who practice *mañjarī bhāva* should give up heterogeneous company and give up hearing, chanting or thinking of other topics, only engaging in hearing and chanting topics of the beloved deity in the company of saintly, like-minded *rasika* devotees.

Then again the blessed author says: "Keep your surging love hidden within your heart". In other words, when the heart's love surges up and tries to come out into the open, one must attempt to keep the urge of love hidden within the heart. One should not show the eight *sāttvika* symptoms of *prema*, like tears, goosebumps, dancing or rolling on the ground, in the assembly of non devotees. Intelligent devotees should conceal the great jewel of *prema* from the non devotees. Again, when one shows signs of swelling love in the assembly of wise and good devotees, there is a diminution of humility, and fame and distinction will arise. Everyone will give the devotee honour, saying: "He is a great loving devotee!" Therefore in all places one must conceal one's *prema* within the heart. When steam is compressed within a steam engine an enormous force is created and an enormous engine can be pushed about. In the same way, when the most powerful *prema* is compressed within

the heart of the devotee it will forcefully push the body-engine of the devotee, so that he will swiftly arrive at the lotus feet of his beloved deity. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda has written about Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's mutual love in his *Prema Sampuṭa* (68) –

*premā dvayo rasikayor aji dīpa eva hṛd veśma bhāsayati niścala eva bhāti
dvārād ayaṁ vadanatas tu bahiskṛtaś cet nirvāti śīghram athavā laghutām upaiti*

"The lamp of *prema* illuminates the abodes of the hearts of the *rasika* hero and *rasikā* heroine in a motionless way. But if it comes out through the gate of the mouth it will either be swiftly extinguished or dimmed." In this example it is also mentioned that *prema* will become diminished when it is externally revealed. Therefore the grave-hearted, deeply realised devotees do not reveal their *prema* externally, but always keep it hidden within their hearts. (68)

*pāpa puṇyamaya deha, sakalei anitya eha,
dhana jana saba michā dhanda
marile yāibe kothā, ihāte nā pāo vyathā,
tabu niti koro kārya manda (69)*

"Everything connected with this material body, which is a collection of reactions to sinful and pious activities, is temporary. Wealth and friends are all simply illusory. You don't know where you will go after death, and you should feel pain and fear while contemplating this, but nevertheless you engage in wicked activities."

False illusion:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā– In the previous *tripadī* the blessed author has described that all other topics but loving topics of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa or topics about *bhajana* are actually just noise or useless talks, and that they should not be heard or discussed. Now the question will be put—"Then all philosophical discourses about how bodily matters are merely temporary, about the difference between matter and spirit, are also just noise and useless talks? Then why have the *ācāryas* propounded so many philosophical teachings and why do we see the deeply realised devotees discussing so much philosophy?" The answer to such questions is given in this *tripadī*.

As long as attachments remain to bodily matters like wife, children, money and friends, worship of Hari can never be accomplished, for it is never possible for the mind to attach itself to material things and to God simultaneously. In Śrīmad Bhāgavata it is seen – *viṣayān dhyāyatas cittaṁ viṣayeṣu viṣajjate; māṁ anusmaratas cittaṁ mayyeva pravīṇyate* (11.14.27) Śrī Kṛṣṇa tells Uddhava: "The heart of a sensual person will be attached to sense objects and the heart of a person who constantly thinks of Me will be immersed in Me." What's more, the Lord also says the following: *viṣayābhīniveśena nātmānam veda nāparam; vṛkṣa jīvikayā jīvan vyartham bhastreva yaḥ śvasan* (Bhāg. 11.19.22) "A person whose heart is absorbed in sensuality

can never know either his own self or the Supreme Self. He is only accepting sense objects that keep him alive, unconscious like a tree, and is simply breathing like the bellows of a blacksmith. Hence he is like a living corpse." If a person whose heart is absorbed in sensuality is not able to worship according to the rules of *vidhi mārga*, then what to speak of *rāga bhakti*, above all the most confidential worship of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa? Needless to say, that will never be possible! Therefore the temporary nature of bodily existence and the difference between matter and spirit should also be discussed.

The question may be put here, "The need for discussing this may be there in the first, beginning stages of *bhajana* but why do we see deeply realised devotees, who are absorbed in *bhajana*, engaging in this also?" The proper answer to this question is: "Those who, on the strength of saintly association and through discussing the scriptures, have learned that all but God is temporary, can also become attached to bodily matters again, by associating with sensual people or by contacting the sense objects. Therefore by occasionally discussing the temporary and false nature of all these things they can reduce their attachment to those matters. If *rāgānugā* practitioners feel that their minds are diverted from items of worship like *smaraṇa* and they become absorbed in bodily matters, and then go to the great saints to discuss with them how all these things are temporary, they can give up their attachment to these temporary matters and their minds can once again become absorbed in *smaraṇa*. Therefore those who practise *rāgānugā bhakti* are also sometimes discussing the temporary nature of material things, in between their discussions about their worship of the Divine Pair.

Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya propounds this principle by instructing his own mind— *pāpa puṇyamaya deha, sakali anitya eho, dhana jana sab michā dhanda*. "Everything connected with this material body, which is a collection of reactions to sinful and pious activities, is temporary. Wealth and friends are all simply illusory." As a result of sinful activities the soul must accept a scorching body that suffers pangs like poverty and constant disease and lamentation, and as a result of pious activities the soul will assume a body that is full of sensual enjoyment. All these bodies are temporary, however, bursting like bubbles on the water. An intelligent person must always be prepared to give up this temporary body and remember that wealth, friends, relatives and so are nothing else but false illusions. It is a complete illusion to give a spiritual conception to things that are mundane. False illusion makes us think that unsteady, temporary, miserable, uncertain and painful things that are the embodiments of illusion are eternal and steady and are abodes of bliss. Human beings who are in illusion say: "It is mine! It is mine!" to temporary things like friends and wealth that will never be theirs and that they are not entitled to either, and when they miss these things they become completely upset. In this way they waste their precious time in human life, a birth coveted even by the demigods, which is suitable for spiritual practice, in thinking about sense objects. The Lord Himself speaks about the poisonous results of contemplating the objects of the senses to Śrī Arjuna in the Gītā –

*dhyāyato viṣayān puṁsaḥ saṅgas teṣūpajāyate
saṅgāt sañjayate kāmaḥ kāmāt krodho'bhijayate
krodhād bhavati sammohaḥ sammohāt smṛti vibhramah
smṛti bhraṁśād buddhi nāśo buddhi nāśāt praṇāsyati (Gītā 2|62|63)*

"If a person meditates on sense objects, he will become attached to them. From attachment, lust arises to enjoy them and when lust is obstructed or frustrated, anger arises. From anger comes delusion, so that one forgets what is to be done and what is not to be done, from delusion comes loss of memory, so that one forgets one's own benefit as it is explained by the scriptures, from loss of memory comes loss of intelligence and when intelligence is lost, everything is lost – in other words, the living entity will continue to rotate in a highly miserable material existence, again and again."

Hence Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya is saying: *morile jāibe kothā, ihāte nā pāo vyathā, tabu niti koro kārya manda* "You don't know where you will go after death, and you should feel pain and fear while contemplating this, but nevertheless you engage in wicked activities." Nothing is as sure in life as death. Death can devour the living entity at any given moment– everyone is aware of that, and along with death everything and everyone that one is connected with in this world is wiped out, this is also not unknown to anyone. Still *māyā* has such a deluding power over all the living entities that although nothing in life is more certain than death, and although we have attained human bodies endowed with knowledge and intelligence, worldly people, that are captivated by the wonders of the world forget about death and are devoured by the gaping mouth of birth and death again and again. Where the living entity, who is bewildered by *māyā*, will go after death, in what condition he will fall in a dark kingdom, how terrible it is– the conditioned soul should ponder on this and he should give up his wicked ways when he learns from the scriptures what terrible suffering awaits him in hell. He should surrender to the lotus feet of Śrī Govinda, that will protect him from death.

When one is able always to remember death it will be impossible to commit any more sins. In this connection a beautiful example is heard – Some king was struck by various mortal pains and was about to die. Although he was treated in different ways he could not be cured from this insoluble disease and he gave up all hope for survival. Meanwhile a *sādhu* came to his kingdom and gave the king some juice from a tree-leaf to drink in order to cure him and make him strong again. In front of the king, the *sādhu* took the juice also, every day, but he drank three times more than the king did! Drinking the juice cured the king like a powerful *mantra*, gradually making him stronger and healthier; his body gradually became filled with power, but along with this increase of strength his mind became more and more impure. Indeed, his heart and mind became agitated as his bad desires increased in strength. One day, as he drank the juice, the king told the *sādhu*: "Bhagavan! Drinking this juice certainly freed me from the disease and gave my body its strength and vigour back, but now my mind has become truly impure and I am slowly progressing on the path of (moral) destruction. I am asking you– you are drinking thrice as much of this juice as I do, how can you remain unfailing in celibacy despite it?" Hearing the king's words, the *sādhu* at once said: "Mahārāja! I will answer that question later! Just now, after seeing the lines on your hands, I saw that you will die within exactly one month from now." Hearing of his imminent death within one month, the king became very scared and asked the *sādhu* what could be done to prevent this from happening. The *sādhu* said: "Mahārāja! Your death is certain, the only cure will be this juice– you will only have to drink four times as much of it from now on." On the order of the *sādhu* the king began to drink four times as much juice as he had done until then. The power of this substance gave strength back to his body, but the concomitant wicked desires no longer found a place within his mind, for his mind was

agitated by fear of death. After two or three days the *sādhu* asked the king: "Mahārāja! How are your bad desires misbehaving now? After all, you are now drinking four times as much juice as before?" The king replied: "Bhagavan! Now my mind is constantly agitated by fear of death, how can any bad desires still find a place in it now?" The *sādhu* said: "Mahārāja! Your death is still one more month away, and already your wicked desires have disappeared because of it, whereas I am facing death every day; then how can wicked desires ever find a place within my mind?" Due to the *sādhu*'s teachings the king not only got free from his physical disease, he now understood the temporary nature of the body and all that is connected to it, and took full shelter of Śrī Govinda's lotus feet. Thus he also became free from the disease of materialism. (69)

rājāra ye rājya pāṭa, yeno nātuyāra nāṭa,
dekhite dekhite kichu noy
heno māyā kore yei, parama īśvara sei,
tāre mana! sadā koro bhaya (70)

"A king and his royal lifestyle are just like the play of an actor. When you deeply contemplate it, you understand that it is actually nothing. O mind! It is the Supreme Lord, who is enacting this illusion, who is always to be feared."

The play of an actor:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā- In the previous *tripadī* the blessed author described how physical life is perishable and how intolerable suffering awaits in the next life in hell and so. Thus, on the pretext of instructing his own mind, he instructs the worldly people to give up bad activities. In this *tripadī* he explains that, what to speak of ordinary people, even the self-identification of a king with his royal opulence is like the play of an actor. Thus, on the pretext of instructing his own mind, he frightens those who perform evil acts of Śrī Hari, who is the Master of *māyā*, into not committing any more sins – *rājāra je rājya pāṭa, jeno nātuyāra nāṭa, dekhite dekhite kichu noy* "A king and his royal lifestyle are just like the play of an actor. When you deeply contemplate it, you understand that it is actually nothing." A person who enacts a king during a play, is dressed like a king in royal surroundings, issuing orders and speaking of his might and opulence. He shows pride and arrogance, speaks with his ministers, generals and counsellors and orders them around, but none of this is real; the actors know it and the audience also knows it. During the play they gain no royal opulences at all, and after the play they take off their costumes and become ordinary persons like Tom, Dick and Harry again– nobody is king or minister anymore. In the same way the kingdom and opulences of a 'real' king are all just like the play of an actor. The difference is that the play of an actor lasts for one night or for a couple of hours and the play of a 'real' king lasts for a couple of years. When the play of life is over or when the costume of the material body falls off, there is no relationship left with the kingdom and its opulences. Taking the burden of the reactions to fruitive activities on his head, he must continue the endless journey through the miserable desert of repeated birth and death. Although the king is just like an

actor in a play, *māyā* has such a spell on the conditioned souls that, although everyone understands that the actor is not a real king, *māyā* does not allow any of the conditioned souls that she deludes to understand that the king is an actor on her stage only. If she would make it clear to them then this play would not be properly enacted.

Another meaning of the words *nāṭuyāra nāṭa* is that it is just a trick of a magician. Just like the trick of a magician, all the king's might and opulences are just temporary and false. The great magician Śrī Bhagavān has tricked the whole creation with a huge trick through His illusory potency, that consists of three mundane modes. Whether *karmī*, *jñānī* or *yogī* – no one knows how to become free from this captivating power, which is so tricky and so illusory. Just as the relatives or surrendered servants of the magician cannot be deluded by his trickery, similarly the devotees who are surrendered to the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord do not experience the powerful workings of *māyā*. Śrī Bhagavān personally said:

*daivī hyeṣā guṇamayī mama māyā duratyayā
mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etān taranti te*

"This external illusion of Mine, that consists of three mundane modes and that deludes all conditioned souls, is very hard to overcome, but those who surrender unto Me, will be able to cross this ocean of illusion." The person who surrenders to Śrī Hari's lotus feet has given up everything to become forever blessed by gaining the treasure of *bhājana*. The Lord therefore advises us to give up attachment to all false matters and to surrender unto His lotus feet –

*sarva dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
ahaṁ tvām sarva pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*

"O Arjuna! Give up all forms of religion, such as *varṇāśrama dharma*, and surrender unto Me alone. I will free you from all sins – thus you should not sorrow." Here the fact that the royal opulence of a king is called the play of an actor or the trick of a magician, should not let anyone think that this universe is false like a juggling stunt or so – this is the philosophy of the *māyāvādīs*. This universe displays the opulence of the Lord's illusory potency, therefore it is not false, although it is temporary. We should understand, though, that thinking of bodily matters in terms of 'I' and 'mine' is false like a juggling stunt.

Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya is saying– *heno māyā kore jei, parama īśvara sei, tāre mana sadā koro bhoy* "O mind! It is the Supreme Lord, who is enacting this illusion, who is always to be feared!" Although the Supreme Lord is the master of illusion and a transcendental principle beyond illusion, *māyā* or illusion, who has taken shelter of Him, is able to exert her power over the living beings who are averse to His lotus feet. Because she is under the shelter of the Lord her activities are subordinate to His command as she deludes the living entities who are averse to Him. Hence it is said– *heno māyā kore yei, parama īśvara sei* "He who enacts this illusion, is the Supreme Lord Himself." In the four root verses of Śrīmad Bhāgavata (2.9.32-35) the Lord Himself ascertains the definition of *māyā*–

*rte'rtham yat pratīyeta na pratīyeta cātmani
tad vidyād ātmano māyām yathā bhāso yathā tamaḥ*

The Lord told Brahmā: "O Brahman! Whatever is perceived other than Me and whatever has an existence outside of Me, you should consider My *māyā*, like the reflection and darkness." Whatever appears outside of the constitutional principle of Godhead, or whatever appears other than this constitutional principle, that is *māyā*. There are two kinds of *māyā*, namely *jīva māyā* and *guṇa māyā*. By using the examples of the reflection and darkness, the Lord has indicated *jīva māyā* and *guṇa māyā*. The *jīva māyā* is like an *ābhāsa*, or reflection. Luminous things illuminate everything in a long distance from their position, and such a reflection is called *ābhāsa*. For instance, when the reflection of the sun falls into a mirror, this reflection is called *ābhāsa*. These reflections or *ābhāsa* shine far from the sun, but if the sun were not there (as their origin) they could never have been there. In the same way *jīva māyā* is situated on the outskirts of the principle of Godhead. It has jurisdiction over the living beings who are averse to the Lord, not over the principle of Godhead itself. Nevertheless if Śrī Bhagavān did not exist, this *māyā* could also not exist.

Anyone whose glance falls on the shimmering sunlight reflected in the aforementioned mirror, feels as if it is dark, since the power of sight has become covered over, and creates different colours like yellow or blue to the viewer. Sometimes these different colours also assume different special shapes. In the same way *jīva māyā* covers over the knowledge of the living entities and appears before him in the form of *guṇa māyā* consisting of *sattva*, *rajaḥ* and *tamaḥ guṇa*. These three modes of ignorance impose ignorance on the living entities' innate knowledge and thus creates this vast universe. Just as this darkness cannot spontaneously appear without taking shelter of its origin, light, even if it is not present in that original light, similarly *guṇamāyā* is not self-manifest without the transcendental Supreme Lord. *jīvamāyā* is endowed with causal power and *guṇamāyā* is endowed with the material causal power.

Hence Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: *heno māyā kore ye, parama īśvara sei, tāre mana! sadā koro bhoy* "O mind! Always fear this Supreme Lord, who is the Lord of *māyā*!" Those who do not fear God may engage in sinful acts, and those who do fear the Lord can never think of committing sins. The purport of this is that the all-pervading Supreme controller witnesses everyone's hearts, minds, intelligence and spiritual selves—no one who commits evil acts can evade His eyes! One may be able to play the *sādhu* and commit sins away from the eyes of the world, but no one is able to strew dust in the eyes of the all-seeing Śrī Hari. Therefore it is not possible to develop a sinful mentality as long as fear of God is there. (70)

pāpa nā koriho mana, adhama se pāpī jana,
tāre mui dūre parihari
puṇya ye sukhera dhāma, tāra nā loiho nāma,
puṇya mukti dui tyāga kori (71)

"Don't think of committing sins, for sinful people are very low. I cast such people far away. Also do not consider the blissful abode of pious activities; give up both piety and the desire for non-dual liberation."

Renunciation of sin, virtue and liberation:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā- In this *tripadī* Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya instructs his mind to give up desires for sin, virtue and even liberation, for they all obstruct progress in devotion. First he says: *pāpa nā koriho mana, adhama se pāpī jana, tāre mui dūre parihari* "Don't think of committing sins, for sinful people are very low. I cast such people far away." When the mind is absorbed in sinful activities it is contaminated and the holy names, attributes and pastimes of the Supreme Lord cannot manifest within contaminated minds. Sinful desires can never awaken within the mind of a faithful devotee. Although they may cherish desires for sense enjoyment, they will never generate sin. Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmī has written in his comment on the Bhāgavata-verse *jūṣamāṇas ca tān kāmān duḥkḥodakāṁś ca garhayan* (11.20.28) ("If a faithful person is unable to give up sense pleasures, he continues his gratification with self-condemnation, knowing that such gratification will result in suffering..." – *sahasā tyaktum asamarthatvāt kāmān juṣamāṇas ca garhayamś ca. garhaṇe hetuḥ duḥkḥodakān śokādi kṛd uttara phalān iti. atra kāmā apāpakarā eva jñeyāḥ śāstre kathaṅcid api anyānuvidhānāyogāt. pratyuta – 'parapatnī paradravya parahimsāsu yo matim. na karoti pumān bhūpa toṣyate tena keśavaḥ'. iti viṣṇu purāṇa vākyādau karmārpaṇāt pūrvam eva tanniṣedhāt.....'vikarma yac cotpatitam kathaṅcit dhūnoti sarvaṁ hṛdi sanniviṣṭaḥ (bhāg.11.5.42) ityatrāpi kathaṅcit śabda prayogeṇa labdha bhaktinām ca svatas tat pravṛtṭiyayogāt. 'nāmno balād yasya hi pāpa buddhir na vidyate tasya yamair hi śuddhiḥ'. iti pādma padye nāmāparādha bhaṅjana stotrādau hari bhakti balenāpi tat pravṛttāvaparādha pātāc ca. 'api cet sudurācāraḥ (gītā 9.30) iti tu tad anādara doṣapara eva, na tu durācārātā vidhānaparaḥ 'kṣipraṁ bhavati dharmāt mā (gītā 9.31) ityanantara vākye durācārātāpagamasya śreyas tvanirdeśād iti (Bhakti Sandarbhaḥ 172) "If a faithful person is unable give up lust immediately, he condemns himself, knowing that his lust will culminate into suffering. Here the word 'lust' is not to be understood as something emanating from sin, because the scriptures never prescribe activities emanating from sin. It is said: "Śrī Hari is satisfied with he who does not desire others' wives, others' wealth, and has no wish to commit violence to others." This verse from Viṣṇu Purāṇa forbids this before the offering of fruitive activities....."Even if a pure devotee, who is exclusively engaged in the worship of His lotus feet, performs some misdeed, Śrī Hari, who is situated within his heart, will extinguish that sin." The word *kathaṅcid* is used in this verse of Śrīmad Bhāgavata to indicate that devotees do not purposefully engage in sin⁴⁰. "Those who sin on strength of the chanting of the holy name, will not be purified by so many other rules and regulations", and other praises of the destruction of offences to the holy name clearly proclaim that sinning on strength of chanting the holy name is an **offence**. In the Gītā the Lord says in the verse *api cet sudurācāraḥ* that if a person who commits crimes worships Him he is still to be counted amongst the *sādhus*, but that statement does not condone the committing of crimes– it slights crime and defines it as faulty, for in the next (Gītā-) verse it is said: "He will swiftly become righteous", and that statement makes clear that it is better not to be a criminal."*

⁴⁰ *vidhi dharma chāḍi bhaje kṛṣṇera caraṇa; nisiddha pāpācāre tāra kabhu nohe mana*

ajñāne-o yadi hoy pāpa upasthita; kṛṣṇa tāre śuddha kore nā kore prāyaścitta ("A person who worships Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, giving up ritualistic conduct, will never think of committing any sin. If sin still comes to him, due to ignorance, Kṛṣṇa will purify him and he need not atone separately.") Here the words *ajñāne-o* (even in ignorance) shows that a devotee does not sin on purpose. (C.C. Madhya Ch. 22)

Therefore Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya very humbly considers himself to be a low and fallen sinner and tells his mind— *pāpa nā koriho mana*.

What to speak of personally committing sins— the practising devotee should stay far away even from those who commit sins— *adhama se pāpījana, tāre mui dūre parihari*. "I cast those fallen sinners far away". Sinners are fallen, false, low and most wicked. Just as a practising devotee surely becomes most elevated on the strength of saintly association, he certainly becomes greatly degraded by associating with the wicked. Because of the great power of their good qualities, the bodies and minds of the *sādhu mahātmās* are so pure that these physical virtues can be infused within the hearts of the surrounding people, and similarly the hearts and minds of sinners are so contaminated that on the strength of their association they also contaminate everyone who surrounds them. Hence a person who wishes to remain healthy always gives up a harmful diet, knowing that it will ultimately destroy his body, and similarly those practising devotees who have entered onto the path of *bhakti*, wishing to do *bhājana*, should stay far away from fallen sinners. Therefore the giving up of bad company is counted amongst the basic ways of Vaiṣṇava-conduct — *asat saṅga tyāga, ei vaiṣṇava ācāra* (C.C.) Therefore although one may a *sādhu*, one must always beware of such bad company.

One may ask here: "If the *sādhus* stay far away from the fallen sinners and do not rid them of their sins by giving them their association, then what will be the destination of such fallen sinners?" Truly spoken. *sādhus* must certainly give their association to the fallen sinners, to bring them to the path of devotion, but one must first be endowed with the necessary power to be able to do so. One should never associate with a black snake while relying on a serum against scorpion-bites, nothing but disaster will be gained from that. One should stay far away from the place where one's welfare does not lie, but rather where one will become injured. Although he is the embodiment of *prema*, Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya wants to stay far away from sinners, just to offer teachings to the world's practitioners.

After that he says: *puṇya ye sukhera dhāma, nā loio tāra nāma, puṇya mukti dui tyāga kori* Here the word *puṇya* means actions performed for becoming happy in this life and fruitive activities like performing sacrifices, giving charity and being compassionate, in order to become happy in heaven in the next life. This kind of virtue is the abode of sensual happiness, or it serves to accomplish sensual happiness. As a result of committing sins one suffers greatly and in the course of that suffering, one day repentance may awaken, great souls may be consulted and one may become favorable to the path of devotion, but as a result of virtuous acts one becomes so intoxicated by sense pleasures that repentance can never awaken and the heart which is absorbed in sensuality can never become absorbed in God-consciousness. In Śrī Viṣṇu Purāṇa the following statement is found: *viṣayāviṣṭa cittānām viṣṇvāveśaḥ sudūrataḥ. vāruṇī dig gataṁ vastu vrajan naindrīm kim āpnuyāt* "A person whose heart is absorbed in sensuality can never immerse one's consciousness in Lord Viṣṇu, for how can a person who goes to the east ever attain something which is situated in the west?" This statement makes clear that God-consciousness and sensuality are completely opposed to each other. Again, a person who is immersed in sensual happiness and who is blinded by pride over his wealth is completely deprived of the company and the mercy of the great souls. Śrīmad Bhāgavata says: *sādhūnām sama cittānām mukunda caraṇaiṣiṇām. upekṣaiḥ kiṁ dhana stambhair asadbhir asad āsrayaiḥ* "Why should those great equipoised saints who only yearn for the service of Śrī Mukunda's lotus feet ever associate with rich fellows who are

proud of their wealth, false, who always keep bad company, and are rejectable?" Hence Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya tells his own mind—*puṇya ye sukhera dhāma, nā loio tāra nāma*. "A faithful devotee should not even pronounce the names of those who consider virtue to be the abode of bliss". The practitioner of *rāgānugā bhajana* should not have any contact with either virtue or sin, and simply be deeply immersed in the worship of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in Vraja – *na dharmam nādharmam śrutigaṇa niruktaṁ kila kuru vraje rādhā-kṛṣṇa pracura paricaryām iha tanu* (Śrīmat Rāghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmīpāda's *Manaḥ Śikṣā*) "O mind! Certainly you should not engage in sin or virtue as they are described or condemned by the Vedas, rather you should intensely worship Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in Vraja-dhāma."

The devotees who desire their own welfare should also give up desiring liberation, abandoning it like an empty shell, just like sense gratification – *puṇya mukti dui tyāga kori*. What to speak of the desire for sense gratification, even the desire for liberation, which permanently terminates mundane sufferings like the cycle of birth and death, is an obstacle to the desire for devotion. Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has written – *bhukti mukti sprhā yāvat piśācī hṛdi vartate; tāvad bhakti sukhasyātra katham abhyudayo bhavet?* (B.R.S. 1.2.22) "As long as the witch of desires for enjoyment and liberation is still in the heart, how can the happiness of devotion ever awaken within it?" Especially persons who are devoid of the desire for liberation are blessed with the attainment of Bhakti-devī's grace— *tatrāpi ca viśeṣeṇa gatim aṅvīm anicchataḥ. bhaktir hṛta manaḥ prāṇān premnā tān kurute janān* (B.R.S. 1.2.23) "Especially the hearts, minds and senses of those who have given up the desire for liberation have taken away (the heart of) Bhakti devī with their love." Hence it is being said: ***puṇya mukti dui tyāga kori*** "I renounce both virtue and liberation". (71)

***prema bhakti sudhānidhi, tāhe ḍubo niravadhi,
āra yoto kṣāra-nidhi prāya
nirantara sukha pābe, sakala santāpa yābe,
para tattva kohinu upāya (72)***

"Always dive into the nectar-ocean of loving devotion! Everything else is like an ocean of alkali! You will always be happy and all suffering will go away. This is the highest truth and the highest means, I tell you!"

The nectar ocean of loving devotion :

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – In this *tripadī* Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya encourages his mind to give up all obstacles to devotion like piety and liberation and to become blessed by tasting the sweet nectar of loving devotion – *prema bhakti sudhānidhi, tāhe ḍubo niravadhi, āra joto kṣāra nidhi prāy* – Loving devotion is like an ocean of nectar. Devotion is a certain faculty of the essence of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's innate energy, the *hlādinī śakti*, therefore it is naturally most relishable. Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has written in Śrī Paramātma Sandarbha – *kim ca parama sārabhūtāyā api svarūpa śakteḥ sārabhūtā hlādinī nāma yā vṛttis tasyā eva sārabhūto vṛtti viśeṣo bhaktiḥ* "The most important faculty of the Lord's most essential innate energy is called *hlādinī*. The **essential** or **most important** agency of this *hlādinī* is called ***bhakti***."

In his book 'Siddhānta Ratna' Śrīpāda Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa has echoed the above statement by writing: *bhagavad vaśikāra hetu bhaktiḥ kiṁ svarūpeti; kiṁ prakṛta sattvamaya-jñānānanda rūpā kiṁ vā bhagavad jñānānanda rūpā athavā jaiva jñānānanda rūpā uta hlādinī sāra samaveta samvita sāra rūpeti?* *nādyah bhagavato māyāvāsyatvāśravaṇāt svataḥ pūrṇatvācca na dvitīya atīśayāsiddheḥ nāpi tṛtīya jaivayos tayoh kṣodiṣṭatvāt. kintu caturtha evāsau bhaved iti* "What is the **real form of devotion**, which is the only cause of the Lord's subjugation? Is she a form of ecstasy in the material mode of goodness, the form of the Lord's ecstatic knowledge, the form of the living entities' bliss or the form of the essence of the *hlādinī* potency linked with the Lord's knowledge potency? In other words, is devotion a matter of the heart, a matter derived from the Supreme Self, a matter of the real form of the individual soul, or of the limit of the essence of the Lord's innate pleasure potency linked to His knowledge potency? These are four doubts about devotion expressed in questions. The cause of this doubt is that in devotion there is happiness and realisation. In the material mode of goodness there is also happiness and realisation, so on the basis of this similarity the question is—*is devotion the form of the happiness of the material mode of goodness? Or is it the reflection of the Lord's innate bliss and knowledge reflected in the heart of the individual soul, and is named bhakti? Or is bhakti the bliss of the atomic soul, who is also spiritual by nature? Or is bhakti the culmination of the Lord's innate bliss- and knowledge potencies combined?*

When *bhakti* is called a faculty of the material mode of goodness within the heart then the Lord would be contaminated with the fault of being subdued by *māyā*. Bhagavān is subdued by devotion, that is seen in all the scriptures, but it is not seen in any scripture that He is subdued by the mundane mode of goodness. Therefore the first idea must be given up and the latter must be accepted. The second supposition is: "Devotion is the faculty of the Lord's innate bliss and knowledge, but how is that possible? Doesn't that bear the fault of exaggeration? Devotion bears even a greater bliss than the Lord's own innate bliss, for which He gives up His innate bliss and desires to relish the bliss of devotion to Him. The third supposition is also improbable, for the bliss and the knowledge of the individual soul is by nature minute and very insignificant. It is wholly impossible for the all-pervading, transcendental Lord to be attracted to such trifle bliss and knowledge. Then, when seeing improbabilities and impossibilities in these three suppositions, we must ultimately accept a fourth supposition: "***bhakti* is the combination of the essence** of the Lord's innate bliss- and knowledge potencies."

eṣā tu bhaktis tannitya parikara gaṇād ārabhyedānīntanaṣvapi tad bhakteṣu mandākinīva pracarati. atas tad bhakta kṛpāvalabhyeti bhāgavatādi samvādaḥ. sā tathābhūtā nitya dhāmnī nitya pārśadeṣu nityam cakāsti sura sarid iva tad bhakta praṇālyā prapañce'vatarati (Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa) "When the practitioners' hearts are purified by the process of hearing and chanting, the loving devotion that is present within the Lord's eternal associates descends to the phenomenal world through the succession of devotees (*guru paramparā*) like the current of the celestial Ganges and eternally perfect love of Kṛṣṇa appears in the hearts of the practitioners, blessing them forever with transcendental bliss."

There is no match to be found to the relish of loving devotion, still to give a slight idea of this extraordinary bliss to the people of the world it has been compared to nectar, which is the most relishable substance of the world. But not only the word nectar has been used, but ***prema bhakti sudhānidhi***, a nectar ocean of loving devotion! The relish of even

one drop of this bliss makes all other kinds of bliss seem insignificant. In the auspicious invocation of his Dig Darśinī-commentary of his own composition Śrī Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta, Śrīmat Sanātana Gosvāmīpāda has written –

*bhaktir yā nikhilārtha varga jananī yā brahma sākṣāt kṛter
ānandātiśaya pradā viśaya-jāt saukhyād vimuktir yayā
śrī rādhā ramaṇaṁ padāmbuja-dvayaṁ yasyā mahānāśrayo
yā kāryā vraja lokavad gurutara premnaiva tasyai namaḥ*

"I offer my obeisances unto the goddess of devotion, who bestows the fruits of all human pursuits, viz. religiosity, economic progress, sense enjoyment and liberation, who automatically gives the greatest bliss that is even greater than the bliss of the non-personal *brahman*, who makes all sensual happiness seem insignificant, who is the great shelter of Śrī Rādhā Ramaṇa's lotus feet and who is practised with the aid of the great love of the people of Vraja." In this verse the relish of devotion in practice is described. The relish of devotion in practice is not less either, for the nature of loving devotion is also present in devotion in practice. *sādhana bhakti*, *bhāva bhakti* and *prema bhakti* are all progressive stages of each other. The relish of devotion in practice is thin and the relish of loving devotion is deep and thick– that is the difference. Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya instructs his mind to dive into the ocean of loving devotion. *tāhe ḍubo niravadhi* – there is no need to constantly dive into this ocean; one single drop of loving devotion can inundate the entire world! In Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta (Madhya 2,49) these words of Śrīman Mahāprabhu are seen – *śuddha prema sukha sindhu, pāi tāra eka bindu, sei bindu jagat ḍubāy* – "Even a single drop of the boundless relish of pure *prema* makes all the sensual relish of the material world, riches, perfections and even the bliss of liberation appear most insignificant. Not only insignificant, it becomes very disgusting and bitter. Therefore Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has said: *āra joto kṣāra nidhi prāy*– "Everything else is like an ocean of alkali."

Then the blessed author says: *nirantara sukha pābe, sakala santāpa jābe, para tattva kohinu upāy* "The relish of loving devotion is eternal and it inundates the loving devotee in an ocean of complete relish. As a concomitant factor the threefold material miseries are also destroyed. This is the only means of attaining or relishing the supreme truth Śrī Śrī Rādhā Mādhava.

*pañcama puruṣārtha sei prema mahādhana; kṛṣṇera mādhyura rasa korāy āsvādana
premā hoite kṛṣṇa hoy nija bhakti vaśa; premā hoite pāi kṛṣṇa sevā sukha rasa (C.C.)*

"This great treasure of *prema* is the fifth goal of human life and helps one relish the sweet flavours of Kṛṣṇa. Through *prema* Kṛṣṇa is subdued by His own devotion and through *prema* the blissful flavour of Kṛṣṇa's devotional service is attained."

Another meaning of *para tattva* may be the self-perfect special innate potency that is propounded by the Vedic literatures as the Supreme. When this supreme truth is perceived in self-prominence it is called *puruṣottama*. When the prominence of the supreme potency is perceived it carries the name *dharma* (virtue, religion). For instance–the supreme potency itself appears in forms like knowledge, joy, compassion and sweetness and thus becomes manifest in the form of *dharma*. When it becomes manifest in the shape of

words it assumes the form of the holy name and **words** of the Lord, when it is manifest in terrestrial form it assumes the form of the **holy dhāma** and when it is manifest in the form of the jewel of women, embodying the essence of the Lord's pleasure- and knowledge-potencies, it shines in the form of Śrī Rādhā and others. (This is Govinda Bhāṣya's teaching of Vedānta darśana, *sūtra* 3.3.42). Through this the means of attaining the supreme truth is said to be the relish of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's sweet forms, names, attributes, abode and compassion, and this is automatically accomplished by being absorbed in loving devotion—this is also indicated here. (72)

anyera paraśa yeno, nahe kadācit heno,
ihāte hoibo sābadhāna
rādhā-kṛṣṇa nāma gāna, ei se parama dhyāna,
āra nā koriho paramāṇa (73)

"I will be very careful never to be (mentally) touched by others (*yogīs, sannyāsīs, karmīs* and *jñānīs*). The song of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's holy names is the supreme meditation. Don't accept any other authority or any other goal of life."

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *ṭīkā* – *anyera yogi nyāsi karmi jñāni prabhṛtinām.*
kadācit āpadyapi yathā sparśanaṁ na bhavet tathā sāvadhāno bhavāmi.

The supreme meditation :

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – In the previous *tripadī* the blessed author has instructed his mind in diving into the nectar ocean of loving devotion. There are two kinds of instructions: 1) Prohibitions and 2) Rules. First he gives the instruction in prohibition by saying— *anyera paraśa jeno, nahe kadācit heno, ihāte hoibo sābadhāna* "I beware never to be touched by others." 'Others' means those who practise other paths than devotion, like fruitive activities, non-dualistic knowledge or mystic *yoga*, in other words, *karmīs, jñānīs* and *yogīs*. The devotee-aspirant should keep far away from them, for there is plenty of possibilities of getting attracted to their way of thinking and acting by seeing or touching them, and thus of one's own pure devotional ways to be diminished. In the first chapter of the second Canto of Śrīmat Sanātana Gosvāmīpāda's 'Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta' it is seen that an innocent and simple person from the land of Kāmarūpa, named Jana-Śarmā, received the 10-syllable *mantra* of Śrīman Madana Gopāla deva in a dream from a goddess named Kāmākhya. Even though he had received such an *upāsana* (mode of worship) he became attracted to the practices of *karmīs* and *jñānīs* at the Gaṅgā Saṅgama and at Kāśī (Benares), as a result of associating with them. Thus he wished to take shelter of their paths also. He could only be stopped by the power of his own *mantra japa*, and by the warnings of Kāmākhya Devī and Śrīman Mahādeva (Śiva). Therefore the devotee-aspirant should stay far away from their touch. One must take constant care not to contact them even in times of need and danger, for they are always condemned by the pure devotees. Śrīmat Prabodhānanda Sarasvatīpāda condemns the *karmīs, jñānīs* and all others who are averse to the lotus feet of Śrī Gaura by saying:

*dhig astu brahmāhaṁ vadana pariphullān jaḍamatīn
kriyāsaktān dhig dhig vikāṭa tapaso dhik ca yamināḥ
kim etān śocāmo viśaya rasa mattān nara paśūn
na keṣāñcil leśo'pyahaha milito gaura madhuraḥ*

"Damned are the fruitive workers, damned are the severe ascetics, damned are the *aṣṭāṅga yogīs*, damned are the dull brained impersonalistic speculators who get goosepimples of ecstasy on the skin when they say 'I am *brahman*'. Aho! How much more should I lament for these human animals, who are mad after the taste of sensuality? None of them have even the slightest taste for the sweet honey that trickles from Śrī Gaura's lotus feet!" What doubt can there be that those who are thus condemned by the deeply realised saints should be kept far out of touch by the devotees?

After this the blessed author mentions his injunction by saying – *rādhā kṛṣṇa nāma gāna, ei se parama dhyāna, āra nā koriho paramāna*. In this half a *tripadī* Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya instructs his mind to perform *rāgānugā bhajana*. The greatest practice of those who practise *rāgānugā bhajana* is to chant the holy names of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and to meditate on Their forms, pastimes, etc.. In Śrī Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta Śrī Nārada instructs Gopa Kumāra to to Vraja-*bhajana* by saying:

*tad dhi tat tad vraja kṛṣṇa dhyāna gāna pradhānayā
bhaktyā sampadyate śreṣṭha nāma saṅkīrtanojjvalam*

ṭīkā – *adhunā sādhanam āha – tad dhīti. tāsām tāsām vraja kṛṣṇānām bhagavad gokula līlānām dhyānaṁ cintanaṁ gānaṁ saṅkīrtanaṁ te pradhāne mukhye yasyās tayā bhaktyā nava prakārayā prema sampadyate susiddhati. tatraiva viśeṣam ekam āha – preṣṭhasya niṣeṣatama devasya, preṣṭhānām nija priyatamānām bhagavan nāmnām saṅkīrtanena ujjvalam prakāsamānām śuddham vā. gānetyuktvā nāma saṅkīrtane prāpte'pi nija priyatama nāma saṅkīrtanasya premāntaraṅgatara sādhanatvena punar viśeṣeṇa nirdeśaḥ.*

"Through the nine kinds of devotion, that are predominated by the items of recollecting and glorifying Śrī Kṛṣṇa's Vraja-plays, love of Vraja is brought to perfection. Another special thing needs mentioning and that is that this kind of devotion is brightened by the congregational chanting of the glories of one's own dearmost Lord. Although the word *gāna* in the text already implies *nāma kīrtana*, still it is mentioned separately because the **glorification of the dearmost beloved is the greatly confidential means to attain prema**. Therefore Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya instructs the practitioners who are fixed in worship of the Divine Pair to sing the names of their dearmost **Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa**, on the pretext of instructing his own mind. In his Abhīṣṭa Sūcana Stava, Śrīmat Raghunātha Dās Gosvāmīpāda has written –

*rādheti nāma nava sundara sīdhu mugdham kṛṣṇeti nāma madhurādbhuta gāḍha dugdham
sarva kṣaṇam surabhi rāga himena ramyaṁ kṛtvā tad eva piba me rasane kṣudhārte*

"*rādhā*, this name is sweet like fresh beautiful nectar, and *kṛṣṇa*, this name is very tasty just like wonderful condensed milk. O my thirsty tongue! Make this very lovely and attractive by adding the fragrant ice of constant attraction and drink it constantly!" The great

ei se parama tattva dhana (74)

"O Mind! Do not become attached to false devotees who mix their *sādhana* with fruitive activities or non-dualistic knowledge - just engage in pure *bhajana*. Absorb your heart in the activities and customs of the people of Vraja. This is the treasure of the supreme truth."

The treasure of the supreme truth:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā- In this *tripadī* Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya again teaches the practising devotees expertise in the worship of Vraja by instructing his own mind with rules and prohibitions. First he gives the prohibition by saying: *karmī jñānī michā bhakti, nā hobe tāte anurakta*. In the previous *tripadī* the blessed author has forbidden contact with *karmīs* and *jñānīs* even in times of danger, and now again in this *tripadī* he gives the advise to give up attachment to *karmīs* and *jñānīs*. From this it seems that the *karmīs* and *jñānīs* mentioned in the previous *tripadī* are unadulterated *karmīs* and *jñānīs*; in other words those who think that the goals of *karma* and *jñāna*, namely heaven and liberation, can be attained independently, without the aid of *bhakti*. Actually it is said: *bhakti vinu kon sādhanā dite nāre phala; sab phal deya bhakti svatantra prabal. ajā gala stana nyāya anya sādhanā; ataeva hari bhaje buddhimān jana* (C.C.) "Without the aid of devotion, no practice can yield fruit, but devotion grants all fruits on its independent strength. All other practices are like the nipples of a goat. Therefore an intelligent person worships Hari." The practices of *karma*, *jñāna* and *yoga* are called *sādhana* because of their similarity to *sādhana*, but actually they do not enjoy the status of *sādhana*, since that which culminates in *sādhya* or perfection is worthy of being called *sādhana*. But without the aid of devotion, *karma*, *jñāna* and others cannot yield fruits independently. This is why all practices that go without devotion are called **like the nipples of a goat**. The mammary glands on the neck of goats are called the breasts of a goat, but actually they never yield milk. Similarly, mere *karma* and *jñāna* without the aid of devotion can never yield results. Because externally their practices resemble *sādhana*, they are called *sādhana*. Actually, *bhakti mukha nirīkṣaka karma yoga jñāna* (C.C.) "*karma*, *yoga* and *jñāna* all look at the face (depend on) *bhakti*."

For this reason, those *karmīs* and *jñānīs* who are relatively intelligent, look at the scriptures and thus practise *karma* or *jñāna* mixed with *bhakti* in order to attain their desired results. Seeing the worship of all these mixed devotees, Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya tells the practising devotees to stay clear from them, so that the pure devotees do not become attached or attracted to them, thinking them to be pure devotees, for their association harms the development of pure devotion. In some editions of this book the reading *karmī, jñānī, miśra bhakta, nā hobe tāy anurakta* can be found. *michā bhakta* means a hypocrite, who wears external signs of a devotee like neckbeads, *tilaka*, devotee dress and pretends to do *bhajana* but who is actually attached to women and money. A pure devotee should not become attached or attracted to such phony devotees, who hypocritically pretend to do *bhajana* on the outside, for their dreadful association such be kept far off. This has also been outlined as the conduct of a Vaiṣṇava – *asat saṅga tyāga- ei vaiṣṇava ācāra; strī-saṅgī eka asādhu, kṛṣṇābhakta āra* (C.C.) "Giving up bad company – such is the conduct of a Vaiṣṇava. One kind

of unsaintly person is he who is excessively attached to women and the other one is he who is not a devotee of Kṛṣṇa."

Another meaning of *karmī jñānī michā bhakta* is that if some amongst those who are performing fruitive activities and those who practice the development of knowledge of the non-dual *brahman* show any sign of devotion, then they should be known as ***michā bhaktas***, or false devotees. If the grace of a great devotee falls upon them, they may become devotees in the future, but still now they are in the abovementioned stage, and the practising devotee must keep their association far away, since their association will not now yield an increase of devotion.

After that the blessed author mentions the positive advise by saying – ***viśuddha bhajana koro mana*** – "Pure worship is performed by taking shelter of the path of pure devotion." The Śrī Gopāla Tāpanī Śruti gives the definition of pure devotion, saying: *bhaktir asya bhajanam tad ihāmutropādhi nairāsyena amusmin manaḥ kalpanam etad eva hi naiṣkarmyam* "Worship of the Personality of Godhead is called *bhakti*. For this one must concentrate the mind and senses on the Personality of Godhead, giving up all other desires for both this life and the next, in other words always be completely absorbed in remembering Him is called *bhajana* and *naiṣkarmya* (freedom from fruitive desires)."

Here *bhajana* and *naiṣkarmya* are mentioned in the same location because when *bhajana* is commenced, all the devotees' fruitive yearnings, from both this life and previous lives, are destroyed and his mind becomes free from the modes of nature and thus becomes absorbed in the service of the Personality of Godhead. This is known as pure worship. The Smṛti scriptures also say– *sarvopādhi vinirmuktaṁ tat paratvena nirmalam hṛṣikeṇa hṛṣikeśa sevanam bhaktir ucyate* (Śrī Nārada Pañcarātra)–"Giving up all personal desires, for both this and the next life, and only engaging the senses in the service of the controller of the senses, Hṛṣikeśa or Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is called paramount devotion."

Considering all these statements from Śruti and Smṛti, Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has revealed just one single verse in his Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu scripture, with which he has given the full definition of pure devotion, and this applies equally to *vaidhi bhakti*, *rāga bhakti*, *sādhana bhakti*, *sādhya bhakti*, *bhāva bhakti* or *prema bhakti*. This is that verse –

*anyābhilāṣitā śūnyaṁ jñāna karmādyanāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānuśīlanam bhaktir uttamā*

"The greatest type of devotion is devoid of all ulterior desires or motives, unmixed with fruitive activities or non-dualistic knowledge, and practiced solely for the favour of Śrī Kṛṣṇa." Like a verb the word *anuśīlana* only shows itself as a verbal root here. The meaning of this verbal root is twofold– the form of *pravṛtti* (injunctions) and the form of *nivṛtti* (prohibitions). These two kinds of verbs are manifest in physical, vocal and mental activities. Physical, mental and vocal activities in the positive sense of injunctions means using the body to worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa, using the voice to glorify His holy names, attributes and pastimes and using the mind to recollect these forms, attributes and pastimes and to cherish love for them always. Physical, mental and vocal activities in the negative sense of prohibitions include preventing offences to the holy name and to the deities.

Then again, devotion is divided in *sopādhika* and *nirupādhika*, with or without ulterior motives. There are two kinds of *upādhis* in *bhakti*–one is 'ulterior desires' and the

other 'mixture with other motives'. 'Ulterior motives' means desires for sense enjoyment and liberation and 'mixture with other motives' means being covered over by non-dualistic knowledge or fruitive activities. If the devotion to Kṛṣṇa (*śrī kṛṣṇānuśīlana*) is devoid of ulterior motives and mixture with other motives and is steeped only in the process of hearing and chanting, then it is called *nirupādhika bhakti*; this is *viśuddha bhajana* or pure worship.

The abovementioned word *karma* means the different rules and regulations prescribed by the Vedas, like fasts or charities, and *jñāna* stands for knowledge of the undifferentiated *brahman* or the oneness of the individual soul and *brahma*. The reason is that in pure devotion there is also *karma* in the form of deity worship and offering praise, and there is also *jñāna* about the means and the goal of devotion (*siddhānta jñāna*) – they are absolutely required, without them there is no question of *bhajana*. Such *karma* and *jñāna* is pure devotion.

The word *anukūlya* means 'favorable to the pleasure of Śrī Kṛṣṇa'. The word *ānukūlya* is being used to perfect the status of devotion, for although unfavorable conduct may please Śrī Kṛṣṇa, through it devotion becomes disreputable. In Śrīmad Bhāgavata is a description of how Śrī Kṛṣṇa had Himself bound by ropes. The hungry and dissatisfied Kṛṣṇa was seated on Mother Yaśodā's lap, but mother removed Him from her lap in order to stir the milk, which was about to boil. Although this act was not pleasing to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, it was done for His sake, and thus it became famous as an act of *bhakti*. On the other hand, during combat the demons made the great hero Śrī Kṛṣṇa relish the mellows of *yuddha rasa* or combat, but although it was pleasing to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, it was done with an unfavorable attitude, so it did not become known as *bhakti*. Therefore the practice of hearing, chanting, praising and temple worship is called **pure worship** since it is done solely for Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pleasure, without a whiff of desire for personal sense gratification.

After this the blessed author says: *vraja janera jei rīta, tāhāte ḍubāo cita, ei se parama tattva dhana*– Amongst the different types of pure worship the practice of *rāgānugā bhajana*, that follows in the wake of Vraja's *madhura rasa*-type of *rāgātmikā bhakti* is the gift of Śrīman Mahāprabhu in this particular age of Kali, and His beloved associates, like Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana, were both practising and teaching this confidential type of *bhakti yoga*. Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya says: *vraja janera jei rīta, tāhāte ḍubāo cita*. Here the words *vraja jana* means in the broader sense all the eternal associates of Kṛṣṇa in Vraja who are steeped in feelings of love towards Him, having given up all feelings of awe and reverence or God-head towards Him and seeing Him only as a good worldly friend in the sense of *mora putra, mora sakhā, mora prānapati* (C.C.) "He is my son, my friend or my lover". In the same way the practitioners must follow in their footsteps and be absorbed in the sweet 'Vraja-mode' of worship. The purport of that is that just as Kṛṣṇa's eternal Vraja-associates eternally render loving service to Him in the mood of His servants, friends, parents or lovers as if He is their good worldly friend, similarly those who worship in the mood of Vraja and who have gained some taste for it, by the association and the grace of the great saints, will worship in allegiance to the feelings of servanthood etc, of these eternal Vraja-associates of Kṛṣṇa, and when they have reached the perfection of their worship they will attain Śrī Kṛṣṇa's loving devotional service in Śrī Vṛndāvana in that particular mode. Such is the expertise of Vraja's

pure *rāgānugā bhajana!* In Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta, Śrīman Mahāprabhu told Venkṛṣṇa Bhaṭṭa –

*vraja lokera bhāve pāi tānhāra caraṇa; tāre 'īśvara' kori nāhi jāne vraja jana
keho tāre putra jñāne udūkhale bāndhe; keho tāre sakhā jñāne jini coṛe kāndhe
'vrajendranandana' tāre jāne vrajajana; aiśvarya jñāna nāhi– nija sambandha manana
vraja lokera bhāve yei koroye bhajana; sei jana pāi vraje vrajendranandana*

"The people of Vraja who attain His lotus feet do not know that Kṛṣṇa is God. Some bind Him to a grinding mortar, taking Him to be their son, others mount His shoulders, taking Him to be their friend. The people of Vraja know him as 'the son of the king of Vraja'. They do not see His majesty but consider Him to be one of their own. Anyone who worships Kṛṣṇa in the mood of the people of Vraja, will attain Vrajendranandana in Vraja."

The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas consider the worship of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in the mood of a maidservant of Śrī Rādhārāṇī or *mañjarī*, to be the ultimate goal, therefore they follow in the footsteps of Vraja's eternally perfect Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī and Rati Mañjarī etc. Being immersed in the flow of their feelings and inundating their consciousness in allegiance to their feelings, they worship Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava in *bhāvollāsa rati*, cherishing a greater love for Rādhā. This is the topmost stage of *rāga mārga bhajana*. Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya is intrinsically Śrī Rādhārāṇī's dearest Campaka Mañjarī, and thus an *ācārya* for *mañjarī bhāva*, and He says: *vraja janera yei rita, tāhāte dubāo cita*, encouraging everyone to immerse the mind in a mood of allegiance to Vraja's eternally perfect *mañjarīs*. This is the highest stage an individual soul can ascend to in the kingdom of devotion; hence it is said – *ei se parama tattva dhana* "This is the treasure of the supreme truth." (74)

*prārthanā koribo sadā, śuddha bhāve prema kathā,
nāma mantrē koriyā abheda
naiṣṭhika koriyā mana, bhajo rāṅgā śrī caraṇa,
pāpa granthi hobe pariccheda (75)*

"I will always pray for *prema kathā* with a pure, selfless heart, considering the holy name and the initiation *mantras* to be non-different. Fix your mind and worship the ruddy lotus feet of the Lord; in this way the knot of sin will be cut."

Fixation in worship:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā– In this *tripadī* the blessed author instructs his own mind to be fixed in the Lord's worship and thus reveals some truths on such worship. First he says: *prārthanā koribo sadā, śuddha bhāve prema kathā* "I always pray for loving topics with a pure heart." **With a pure heart** means: exclusively, without seeking personal pleasure. We may always speak about pure worship without personal motives, but actually such pure, selfless worship is very rarely attained and is dependent on the grace of Śrī Guru, Vaiṣṇavas and Śrī

Hari. Overcome with bodily consciousness, we are covered with many kinds of subtle desires for women, gold, profit, adoration and distinction, that dwell in the heart. At the end of Śrī Haribhakti Vilāsa it is written that the **desire for distinction** is present in the heart of even he who renounced everything.

*sarva tyāge'pyaheyāyāḥ sarvānārtha bhuvāś ca te
kuryu pratiṣṭhā viṣṭhāyāḥ yatnam asparsāne varam*

"The practitioner must be very careful not to touch the stool of the desire for distinction, which cannot be given up even by one who has renounced everything (else), and which is the root cause of all vice." Śrīmat Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmīpāda has called this desire for distinction a **dhṛṣṭā śvapaca ramaṇī**, a shameless dog-eating woman – *pratiṣṭhāśa dhṛṣṭā śvapaca ramaṇī me hṛdi naṭet katham sādhu premā spṛṣati śucir etan nanu manaḥ* (Manah Śikṣā-7) "O Mind! The shameless dog-eating woman of the desire for distinction is dancing in my heart. How can pure saintly love then ever touch that heart?" The great saints shed light on the different hidden desires for personal happiness in the hearts of the practising devotees, and thus benefit the practitioners. Śrīla Premānanda Ṭhākura has written in his Manah Śikṣā:

*ore mana! e tora bujhibāra bhula!
kohicho vedera pāra, koricho niṣiddhācāra,
bhāva dekhi āpanāra mūla.*

"O Mind! You just don't understand! You say that you are beyond the Vedic regulations, but you perform forbidden activities! When I see this I see your very essence."

*muktike aiśvarya boli, dūrete diyācho pheli,
iṅgite bujhāo ei tattva.
anītya asāra artha, se bhālo sadāi prārthya,
yā lāgi rajanī divā matta.*

"You call liberation a luxurious distraction and have thrown it far away. Give me a hint so that I can understand this truth. Fleeting, useless riches are always desirable and you are going mad thinking about it day and night."

*nirhetu yājana koro, hetu se chāḍite nāro,
kathāya virakta e saṁsāra
sarvasva bolicho yāra, dite eka baṭa tāra,
se cāhile koho āpanāra.*

"You outwardly perform rituals without desire for gain, but you are not able to free yourself from the same. In your speech you are detached from the material world. Who you call 'my everything' is the same everything you give only a lousy Banyan-leaf to. And you think that it is yours to give!"

koho bhaji vṛndāvana, ghare sukhavāsa mana,

bhālobāso vasaṇa bhūṣaṇe
santuṣṭa mānicho māne, mahākrodhe apamāne,
ātma-sukha ghucilo kemone?

"You say 'I worship Vṛndāvana', but you're happily staying at home - you love all exterior trappings. You're satisfied with praise, but are enraged when insulted. How did you manage to destroy the happiness of your soul?"

kohicho gopīra dharma, ki bujhicho tāra marma,
svabhāva chāḍite nāro tile.
dekhīyā pāicho sukha, prakṛti bāghinī mukha,
sarvātmā sahite yei gile.

"You say that you follow the *gopīs* but what do you understand about the meaning of that? You can't let go of your nature one iota. You get pleasure seeing the face of material nature (or women), who swallows you wholly."

kohe śuno premānanda, vicārule sab dhandha,
kohile śunile kibā hoy.
hari hari avirata, koho ei prema patha,
nirmala hoibe suniścaya.

"Listen", says Premānanda, "if you think about it, it's all a ball of confusion. What's to be gained by listening or flapping your mouth? Always chant 'Hari, Hari' while you traverse the path of love, and you will surely be cleansed of all impurities!"

Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya is saying: 'I will always pray to the lotus feet of my chosen deity that I can always hear, chant and remember the loving topics of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, which must be experienced within a desireless, pure heart, free from personal desires.' Prayer opens the shackles of the Lord's grace. The human beings, whose hearts are covered over by different customary lusty desires, cannot give up such personal desires and become pure hearted on the strength of their own practice. When Śrī Hari's grace descends after prayer, one will be easily blessed with the good fortune of becoming able to constantly study the loving topics of one's beloved deity with a spotless heart – that is understood from this statement.

After this the blessed author says: *nānā mantrē koriyā abheda* – The holy names of the Lord, like Kṛṣṇa and Govinda, have been placed in the dative case and linked to endings like *namaḥ* or *svāhā* by the sages of yore, and so they have become six-limbed *mantras*. Hence in principle there is no difference between the names of the Lord and His *mantra*. The question may now be asked: "If there is truly no difference between the Lord's holy name and His *mantra*, and if the holy name does not depend on initiation or the rite named *puraścaryā*, giving *prema* to those who perform its *kīrtana*, regardless, then what is the use of *mantra dikṣā*?⁴¹ In this connection Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has said: *nanu*

⁴¹ In the glorification of the holy name it is said: '*dikṣā puraścaryā vidhi apekṣā nā kore; jihvā-sparṣe ācaṇḍāla sabāre uddhāre*' (C.C.) "The holy name does not depend on initiation or *puraścaryā* — it redeems anyone, even the dog-eater, who makes it touch the tongue."

bhagavannāmātmakā eva mantrāḥ. tatra viśeṣeṇa namaḥ śabdādya laṅkṛtāḥ śrī bhagavatā śrīmad ṛṣibhiś cāhita śakti viśeṣāḥ śrī bhagavatā samam ātma-sambandha viśeṣa pratipādakāś ca, tatra kevalāni bhagavannāmānyapi nirapekṣānyeva parama puruṣārtha phala paryanta dāna samarthāni; tato mantreṣu nāmato'pyadhika sāmārthyelabdhe katham dikṣādyapekṣā? ucyate— yadyapi svarūpato nāsti, tathāpi prāyaḥ svabhāvato dehādi sambandhena kadarya śilānām vikṣipta cittānām janānām tat saṅkocikaraṇāya śrīmad ṛṣi prabhṛtibhir atrārcana mārge kvacit kācid maryādā sthāpitāsti. tatas tad ullaṅghane śāstraṁ prāyaścittam udbhāvayati (Krama Sandarbha *ṭīkā* on Bhāg. 7.5.18) "If it is said that since the *mantras* consist of the names of the Lord and that is their speciality, since the name of the Lord has been ornamented with affixes like *namaḥ* and by the will of the Lord have been granted special powers by sages like Nārada, then these *mantras* establish a special relationship between the Lord and those who practise them. The names of the Lord, however, do not depend on any of this and are able to grant all human perfections, up to *prema*, wholly by themselves. Therefore we can see that the name itself is more powerful than the *mantras*— why then do those who already perform *nāma kīrtana* still need to take *mantra* initiation?" The answer to this question is that although in theory, in view of the power and the glory of the holy name (see for instance Ajāmila) there is no need to take initiation into the holy name, still, since the conditioned souls are by nature engaged in abominable activities due to their attachment to physical enjoyment, and are thus very scattered-minded, the sages like Nārada have established the importance of the institutions of initiation, in order to curb the abovementioned tendencies and to engage the people in *arcana mārga*, the formal temple worship. If these rules are broken the scriptures prescribe certain atonements. For all these reasons initiation is to be taken." Especially taking initiation in the *mantra* from a bona-fide Guru who answers to the descriptions of the scriptures is able to remove the dirt of *māyā* from the human mind. Thus, by Śrī Guru's grace, the scattered mind will be pacified and one becomes absorbed in *bhajana*. The Original Personality of Godhead, Śrī Nandanandana, in the form of Śrī Gaurāṅga, had taken *mantra*-initiation from Śrīpāda Īśvara Purī and had personally told Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī in the beginning of His delineation of the 64 items of *bhajana*— '*śrī guru pādāśraya, dikṣā, gurura sevana; sad dharma śikṣā pṛechā, sādhumārgānugamana* (C.C.) "Taking shelter of Śrī Guru's lotus feet, taking initiation from him, serving him, inquiring about the teachings of true religion and following in the footsteps of the *sādhus*." In this verse it is shown that taking *mantra* initiation from Śrī Guru is coming in the bona fide disciple succession — it is shown by His teachings or His pure conduct. The conduct of the great saints shows the same.

Another meaning of *nāma mantrā koriyā abheda* is that there is no difference at all between the holy name and the *mantra*, since the holy name is also called a *mantra*. For instance, the 32-syllable holy name formula *hare kṛṣṇa* is called the *mahā mantra*. In this regard it is seen in the glorification of the holy name in Śrīmad Bhāgavata (6.2.19) —

*yathāgadāṁ vīryatamam upayuktāṁ yadṛcchayā
ajānato'pyātma guṇāṁ kuryān mantropyudāhṛtāḥ*

In connection with the redemption of Ajāmila the Śrī Viṣṇu-dūtas tell the Yamadūtas—"Just as one's disease is surely cured by a powerful medicine without even knowing its healing power, similarly one will certainly reap the results of chanting the holy name-*mantra*, even without knowing its power. A powerful substance does not depend on

accident or intent." In his Krama Sandarbha comment on this verse, Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has written – *mantra śabdenātra nāmoktiḥ mantrasya tathā prabhāve śraddhādyapekṣatvād asya tu tad anapekṣatvād atraiva mantra śabdasya mukhyāvṛttir ityabhiprāyeṇa jñeyā*. "Here the holy **name** is called **mantra**. Although intrinsically the holy name and the holy *mantra* are non-different, still the *mantra* depends on faith. Since the holy name does not depend on faith the word *mantra* must be seen as mainly meaning *nāma*."

After this the blessed author says: *naiṣṭhika koriyā mana, bhajo rāṅgā śrī caraṇa, pāpa granthi hobe pariccheda*-'O mind! Be fixed in your worship of the ruddy lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, then the fetters of your sins and your ignorance will be severed completely!" When *niṣṭhā* (steadiness) in *bhajana* is attained any kind of relaxation in *bhajana* will completely disappear and one will feel no fatigue in *bhajana* even if one practises it constantly, and vices like *laya* (drowsiness during the practice of hearing and chanting) *vikṣepa* (speaking on mundane things during *bhajana*) *apratipatti* (inability to do *bhajana* even in the absence of *laya* and *vikṣepa*), *kaṣāya* (inclination towards being angry, greedy or proud) and *rasāsvāda* (losing concentration on *bhajana* when sensual happiness arises) will no longer remain. Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has compared *dhruvānusmṛti* or uninterrupted recollection of the Lord with a flow of oil, *naiṣṭhikī bhakti* – *naiṣṭhikī bhakti dhyānākhyā dhruvānusmṛtir ityucyate* (Bhakti Sandarbha-198) Śrīmad Bhāgavata (1.2.17-18) says: The only means to attain *naiṣṭhikī bhakti* is to engage in the process of hearing and chanting topics of Śrī Hari –

*śṛṇvataḥ sva kathā kṛṣṇaḥ puṇya śravaṇa kīrtanaḥ
hṛdyantaḥ stho hyabhadraṇi vidhunoti suhṛt satām
naṣṭa prāyeṣvabhadreṣu nityam bhāgavata sevayā
bhagavaty uttama śloke bhaktir bhavati naiṣṭhikī*

"When the devotee engages in the pious hearing and chanting of the glories of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord travels on the path of his recollection and destroys all inauspicious sensual desires from his heart. In the same way all inauspiciousness is practically destroyed by constantly serving the Bhāgavata (the book or the saint) and *naiṣṭhika bhakti* for Lord Uttamaśloka or Śrī Kṛṣṇa arises.." Another reading of this *tripadī*, namely *āstika koriyā mana*, is also seen. *āstikyam asti vedaika gamyaṁ vastviti niścayaḥ*-"The truth is only found in the Vedas – this determination of faith is called *āstikya*." This means that one must worship Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa with faith in the scriptures and the teachings of the *mahājanas*. Some also interpret the word *āstikya* to mean establishing one's self esteem into one's own *siddha svarūpa* and one's relationship in connection with Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava. According to the context this is also to be known as a *sādhu vyākhyā* or beautiful and sacred interpretation. (75)

*rādhā kṛṣṇa sevana, ekānta koriyā mana,
caraṇa kamala boli yāo*

***doṅhāra nāma guṇa śuni, bhakta mukhe puni puni,
parama ānanda sukha pāu (76)***

"O Mind! Fix your mind completely on the service of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and praise Their lotus feet. Constantly hear of Their names and attributes from the mouths of the devotees and you will reach the pinnacle of bliss!"

Exclusive service:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – In this *tripadī* Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya reveals his desire for the exclusive service of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet and for attaining the pinnacle of bliss by hearing about the attributes and names of his beloved Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava from the mouths of the devotees. First he says *rādhā kṛṣṇa sevana, ekānta koriyā mana* "O mind! exclusively serve the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa!" Serve here means both practical and contemplative worship, or "With fixed mind I will worship both Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa". Exclusive worship means surrendering one's life to Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava alone and worship Them as such with deep devotional attachment. In Śrī Haribhakti Vilāsa four kinds of exclusivity are mentioned: 1) Disinterest in (*varṇāśrama*) *dharma*. 2) Unconditional independence from fruitive activities and philosophical, non-dualistic speculation, 3) Not losing one's devotional attachment even when obstacles arise and 4) Sole dedication to *prema*. Serving the beloved deity in this manner is called exclusive service. Heart's dedication without depending on other arrangements or relationships are the aims of *upāsanā* or contemplative service. *upāsanam tu yathā śāstra samāpitaṁ kiñcid ālambanam upādāya tasmīn samāna citta vṛtti santāna karaṇam– tad vilakṣaṇa pratyayāntaritam iti* (Introduction to commentary on Chāndogya Upaniṣad by Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya) "Taking shelter of a certain object of meditation according to the revealed scriptures and meditating on that in such an exclusive manner that it flows without interruption, like a stream of oil, so that it cannot be interrupted by any other unfavorable subject anymore." The target is to serve the beloved deity in such an exclusive manner. In his book *Siddhānta Ratna* Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa has said that service means rendering service with body, mind and words, and in *Pṛīti Sandarbha* (Paragraph 129) Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmī has written –*sevanam cittānuvṛttiḥ* "Understanding the mind of the person you serve is called service". This is truly exclusive service. Giving the heart to Rādhā-Mādhava in the external practitioner's body and passionately worshipping Them, praising Them, performing ritual worship of Them, hearing and chanting Their glories, and within the mind rendering service within the *siddha deha* according to the *aṣṭakāla līlā*, understanding the desires on Their minds.

After this the blessed author says: *caraṇa kamala boli yāu* "All glories to the sweetness of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's lotus feet!" In other words, "May the bumblebee of my mind, who is greedy after the sweetness of the lotus feet of the Divine Pair, always remain immersed in relishing the sweetness of this 'beauty-honey'!" Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's toes are the petals of the lotuses of Their feet, the luster of Their nails is the whorl, their splendour is their honey, their fragrance constantly pervades all directions and the eyes of the *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs* constantly relish the honey of their splendour with deep attachment and attraction, like bees.

Practitioners of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism soothe their afflicted hearts by constantly meditating on the 19 signs on Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. The meditation on these divine foot-marks runs as follows: Śrī Kṛṣṇa's right footsole bears the following 11 signs— At the base of the big toe a barleycorn, below that a disc, below that an umbrella, below the joint of the big toe and the second toe down to half of the feet an upward line, below the middle toe a lotus, below that a flag, below the small toe a goad (pike), below that a thunderbolt, at the heel an octagonal figure, all around that five *svastika*-signs and in its four corners four ripe Jambu-cherries. On the left footsole are the following eight marks: Below the big toe a conchshell, below the middle toe the sky, below that a bow, below that a cow's hoofprint, below that a triangle, on its four sides four jugs, below that a half moon, and below that a fish— totals 19 signs on both feet.

On the sole of Śrī Rādhārāṇī's left foot are 11 signs – below Her big toe a barleycorn, below that a disc, below that an umbrella, between the big toe and the second toe down to the middle footsole an upward line, below the middle toe a lotus, below that a flag, below that a flower, to the right of that a bangle, below that a vine, below that a half moon, and below the small toe a pike. There are eight signs on Her right footsole – below Her big toe a conchshell, below the middle toe a mountain, between Her fourth toe and the small toe an altar, below that an earring, below the mountain a chariot, to the right of that a club, left of the chariot a divine power (*śakti*), and at the heels a fish. In this way both Her feet also carry 19 marks. In the Skanda Purāṇa some special marks of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus-footsoles are mentioned along with the special reasons why He wears them –

dakṣiṇasya padāṅguṣṭha mūle cakram bibhartyajaj;
tatra bhakta janasyāri ṣaḍ varga cchedanāya saḥ
madhyamāṅguli mūle ca dhatte kamalam acyutaḥ; dhyātr citta dvirephānām lobhanāyāti śobhanām
padmasyādho dhvajam dhatte sarvānārtha jaya dhvajam;
kaniṣṭhā mūlato vajram bhakta pāpādri bhedanam
pārṣṇi madhye'ṅkuṣam bhakta cittebha vaśakāriṇam;
bhoga sampanmayam dhatte yavamaṅguṣṭha parvaṇi;
tathā vāma padāṅguṣṭha mūlatas tan mukhodaram; sarva vidyā prakāśāya dadhāti bhagavān asau
padmādīnyapi cihnāni tatra dakṣiṇa pādavat

"At the base of the large toe on His right foot, the unborn Lord carries the mark of the disc, which cuts down the six (mental) enemies of His surrendered devotees. At the bottom of the middle toe of that same foot, Lord Acyuta has a lotus flower, which increases the greed for Him in the minds of the bee-like devotees who meditate on His feet. Below this lotus He wears the sign of a flag which flies to proclaim the devotee's victory over all his bad habits. At the base of His small toe He wears the sign of a thunderbolt, which smashes the mountains of His devotee's reactions to past sins, and in the middle of His heel He wears the mark of an elephant goad, which brings the elephant of His devotee's mind under control. On the joint of His right large toe He bears the mark of a barleycorn, representing enjoyable opulences for His devotees. Below His left big toe He wears the mark of a conch shell, that reveals all transcendental knowledge to those who meditate on His lotus feet. In the same manner the different signs of His left foot are as glorious as the signs on His right

foot." Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: "All glories to the form, attributes and greatness of these lotus feet!"

After this he says: *donhāra nāma guṇa śuni, bhakti mukhe puni puni, parama ānanda sukha pāu*. "Constantly hear of Their names and attributes from the mouths of the devotees and you will reach the pinnacle of bliss!" The blessed author thus reveals his desire to become happy by hearing again and again about the names, attributes and pastimes of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava from the mouths of the devotees. Śrīmad Bhāgavata, which is the cream of all Vedānta literature, again and again glorifies the process of hearing topics of Śrī Hari from the mouths of the greatly realised devotees. Bhagavān Śrī Kapila deva told His own mother Devahūti—

*satām prasāṅgān mama vīrya samvīdo bhavanti hṛt karṇa rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ
taj joṣaṇād āśvapavarga vartmani śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramiṣyati (Bhāg.3.25.25)*

"O Mother! Whoever attains the excellent company of the *sādhus* and hears from them about My glories is very fortunate. These topics concerning Me serve as an elixir to the ears and the heart of the hearer, and as a result one becomes more and more interested, faithful, attracted and devoted to Me. As a concomitant factor to all this, all ignorance is also destroyed." Hearing the talks of the great devotees of Kṛṣṇa, that naturally concern the Lord, the heart of the living entity gains faith in God. The sheer purity that emanates from the body of the *sādhu* blesses the ordinary humans, that do not perform any *bhajana*, with the treasure of *bhajana* also. Gradually taste will develop for topics of Hari and from the practice of the nine kinds of devotion, like hearing and chanting, the supreme goal of life, eternally perfect (natural) love of Kṛṣṇa, is awakened within the heart. Śrīla Pṛthu Mahārāja wants no other boon from the Lord. He wants only to hear topics of Śrī Hari from the mouths of the great devotees— (Bhāg. 4.20.25):

*sa uttamāḥ śloka mahan mukha cyuto bhavat padāmbhoja sudhā kaṇānilaḥ
smṛtiṁ punar viśmṛta tattva vartmanām kuyoginām no vitaratyalaṁ varaiḥ*

"O You who is praised with choice verses! Even the air (breath) laden with drops of the nectar of Your lotus feet, emanating from the mouths of great saints, restores spiritual knowledge to us, fallen *yogīs*, who have forgotten the path leading to truth. Hence we require no more boons." But kindly bestow this boon (Bhāg. 4.20.24)—

*na kāmāye nātha tad apyahaṁ kvacin na yatra yuṣmac caraṇāmbujāsavaḥ
mahattamāntar hṛdayān mukha cyuto vidhatsva karṇāyutam eṣa me varaḥ*

"O Lord! I do not desire the boon of liberation at any time, when there is no chance to relish the nectar of Your lotus feet oozing from the innermost core of the heart of those realised souls through their mouths. Therefore please bestow me ten thousand ears, so that I can drink the nectar of Your exploits— this is the boon I seek!"

From this we can learn the supremely astonishing relish derived from hearing topics of Śrī Hari from the mouths of the devotees.

Another meaning of the first half of the *tripadī*, '*rādhā-kṛṣṇa sevana, ekānta koriyā mana, caraṇa kamala boli jāu*, is that in it he reveals his desire for relishing the sweetness of Śrī

Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet and for exclusively meditating on Their divine service. Now (in the latter half of the *tripadī*) he describes the means to that – *donhāra nāma guṇa śuni, bhakta mukhe puni puni, parama ānanda sukha pāu* – "If the holy names, attributes and pastimes of Śrī Rādhā-Govinda are repeatedly heard from the mouths of the *sādhu* with the most blissful mind or with gusto, then the pure service of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, both in the external body and in the mentally conceived spiritual body, will be achieved with deep attachment, and with body, mind and words. This is the most powerful and pure means to achieve *prema* and *siddhi* in *rāga bhajana*. (76)

***hema gaurī tanu rāi, āñkhi daraśana cāi,
rodana koribo abhilāṣa
jaladhara dhara dhara, aṅga ati manohara,
rūpe bhuvana parakāśa (77)***

"My eyes want to see the golden form of Rāi, and are crying out of this desire. Kṛṣṇa's very enchanting body shines in the world like a dripping raincloud."

Desire to see the beloved deity –

Sudhā kañikā vyākhyā – In this *tripadī* Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya passionately desires the *darśana* of his beloved Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, saying: *hema gaurī tanu rāi, āñkhi daraśana cāi, rodana koribo abhilāṣa*, meaning: "I am always weeping, desiring to see golden formed Śrī Rādhārāṇī". Poets compare Śrī Rādhārāṇī's bodily luster with gold, but is it actually possible to compare the divine luster of this *mahābhāvamayī* with some transitory luminous material object called gold? In 'Rādhā Rasa Sudhānidhi' Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatīpāda has said '*gātre koṭi taḍicchabi*', meaning that Śrī Rādhā's bodily luster resembles millions of lightning strikes. But even this is a material luminary, however magnificent it may be. The luster of lightning hurts the eyes, but the loving luster of Śrī Rādhārāṇī's body soothes the eyes of the viewer. Therefore Śrīla Prabodhānandapāda has used the word '*cchabi*'. Actually all these descriptions are only attempts to make people of this world understand that Śrī Rādhārāṇī's bodily luster is shining brightly yellow like gold, or is as brilliant as the lightning-strike – it was not meant to say that Śrī Rādhārāṇī's bodily luster is (literally) like gold or lightning. Śrīmatī's bodily luster of *mahābhāva* is matchless. Śrīla Prabodhānanda-pāda has written (Saiṅgīta Mādhava 1.2)–

*nava campaka gaura kāntibhiḥ kṛta vṛndāvana hema rūpatām
bhaja kām api viśva mohinīm madhura prema rasāhidevatām*

"Worship this inconceivable world-enchanting presiding goddess of sweet *prema rasa*, who turns the blue environment of Vṛndāvana into a golden Vṛndāvana with Her own golden luster, which shines like a fresh Campaka flower." Nothing can compare to the anxiety with which the loving devotees, that are exclusively surrendered to the lotus feet of

this young golden world-enchanting presiding goddess of fresh *prema rasa*, when they cannot see Her. What to speak of the Lord's eternal associates like Śrī Rūpa, Sanātana and Raghunātha, *sādhana siddha* resident of Śrī Govardhana, Śrīla Kṛṣṇa dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja has written out of eagerness to see Śrīmatī–

*hā hā prāṇeśvari! tuyā viccheda anale; niravadhi prāṇa mora dhiki dhiki jvale
e duḥkha sāgara hoite uddhāra koriyā; śrī caraṇe rākho more kiṅkarī koriyā
heno dina ki hobe tava śrī mukhera vāṇī; karṇete śunibo āra nūpurera dhvani
tomāra lāvanyāmṛta nayana caṣake; kobe vā koribo pāna parānanda sukhe
āghrāna koribo tava aṅga parimala; pulake pūrṇita hobe mora kalevara
kobe tavocchiṣṭāmṛta dībe kṛpā kori; pāiyā kṛtārthā hobe e nava kiṅkarī
tumi mora japa tapa tumi mora dhyāna; janmāvadhi tomā vinā nāhi jāni āna
kāntāli sahita tumi yathāya vihara; kṛpā kori sei sthāne more dāsī koro
kānde dina kṛṣṇa dāsa dante tṛṇa dhari; abhilāṣa pūrṇa mora koro **hemagauri***

"O Queen of my life! My heart is constantly burning in the fire of separation from You! Please save me from this ocean of sorrow by keeping me at Your lotus feet and making me Your maidservant! When will my ears hear the delectable words from Your beautiful mouth and the jingling of Your anklebells? When will I drink the nectar of Your indescribable beauty through the cups of my eyes in topmost ecstasy, and when will I smell Your bodily fragrance, making all the hairs of my body stand on end? Please bless this new maidservant by giving her the nectarean foodremnants that emanate from Your lotusmouth! You are my *japa*, You are my penance and You are my meditation, and since I was born I haven't known anyone but You! Wherever You sport with Your lover and Your girlfriends, please take me there also as Your maidservant. Thus the fallen Kṛṣṇa dāsa weeps, holding a straw between his teeth and praying: O golden beauty! Please fulfill my desires!"

Hence Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya, who is the embodiment of *prema*, vows to weep for want of *hema gaurī* Śrī Rādhā's *darśana*. The best means to get to see one's desired deity is to weep in great anxiety of separation. Such weeping is most relishable. Weeping out of separation from one's worldly friends is simply miserable, but weeping for *premamayī* Śrī Rādhārāṇī is most blissful and relishable. The Gosvāmīs have called *viraha* a **rasa**. *Prema* has two bodies – one is meeting and the other is separation. It is needless to say that if *prema* is an ingredient, then there must also be a special relish in separation. What's more, Śrīmat Sanātana Gosvāmī has defined the *viraha rasa* as even more relishable than the flavour of meeting–

*tathāpi sambhoga sukhād api stutaḥ sa ko'pyanirvācyatamo manoramah
pramoda rāśiḥ pariṇāmato dhruvaṁ tatra sphuret tad rasikaika vedyah* (B.B.1.7.126)

"Although at first the person who burns in the fire of separation is feeling deep misery and lamentation, still on deeper inspection this suffering of separation is more praiseworthy than the bliss of meeting, for in the ultimate end it reveals an indescribable amount of captivating bliss—only the *rasikas* who have experienced feelings of separation from Śrī Kṛṣṇa can know this." Hence Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya reveals his desire to weep for want of Śrī Rādhārāṇī's *darśana*.

Then he says: *jaladhara dhara dhara, aṅga ati manohara, rūpe bhuvana parakāśa* ("Kṛṣṇa's body is like an enchanting dripping raincloud manifest on the earth"). Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya does not only want to see Śrī Rādhārāṇī, he weeps for want of the *darśana* of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, the Adolescent Pair. That is why he ends the *tripadī* with a description of Śrī Śyāmasundara's sweet form. The beauty of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's body, who has a luster of a fresh monsoon cloud, is very brilliant, sweet and full of elegance. There have been some comparisons made to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's matchless bodily luster as if it shines like a fresh monsoon cloud. We can see in Śrīman Mahāprabhu's *pralāpa* (divine ravings):

*nava ghana snigdha varṇa, dalitāñjana cikkaṇa,
indivara nindi sukomala.
yini upamāna-gaṇa, hare sabhāra netra mana,
kṛṣṇa kānti parama prabala.*

"His pleasant lustre defeats the pride of a fresh monsooncloud, crushed glossy collyrium and a soft blue lotus flower. It defies all standards of comparison and steals everyone's eyes and mind, being most powerful."

*koho sakhi! ki kori upāya?
kṛṣṇādbhuta balāhaka, mora netra cātaka,
nā dekhi piyāse mori yāy.*

"O *sakhi!* Tell me, what should I do? Kṛṣṇa is like a wonderful monsooncloud and My eyes are like Cātaka-birds that die of thirst when they do not see Him!"

*saudāminī pītāmbara, sthira rahe nirantara,
muktā-hāra baka pāṅkti bhāla.
indra-dhanu śikhi pākhā, upore diyāche dekhā,
āra dhanu vaijayantī māla.*

"His yellow *dhoti* resembles a lightning-strike that always remains steady within this monsooncloud, His pearl necklace looks like a row of ducks and His peacockfeather-crown and Vaijayantī-garland both resemble rainbows."

*muralira kala-dhvani, madhura garjana śuni,
vṛndāvane nāce maura-caya.
akalanika pūrṇa-kala, lābaṇya jyotsnā jhalamala,
citra candrera tāhāte udoy*

"When the peacocks in Vṛndāvana hear the sweet thundering sound of His flute they begin to dance. A wonderful spotless full moon, distributing the shimmering moonlight of elegance, is rising above this Kṛṣṇa-cloud."

*līlāmṛta variṣaṇe, siñce caudda bhuvane,
heno megha yabe dekhā dilo.
durdaiva jhanjhā pavane, megha nilo anya sthāne,*

more cātaka pīte nā pāilo

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta Antya 15)

"This cloud showers the fourteen worlds with nectarean rains of pastimes. But when I see such a cloud the whirlwind of my ill fate takes it away elsewhere. When the Cātaka-bird of my eyes cannot drink its water it dies of thirst."

In other words, although the poets compare Śrī Kṛṣṇa's bodily luster with a fresh monsoon cloud, crushed eyeliner or blue lotus flowers, actually Śrī Kṛṣṇa's bodily luster is matchless. It defeats all these objects of comparison and steals the mind and eyes of the viewer with its own wonderful power. By comparing it to the clouds means that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is like a wonderful cloud, in which His *pītāmbara* is a lightning strike. However, the worldly cloud is endowed with a flickering lightning strike while the *pītāmbara*-like lightning strike in this wonderful cloud is stationary. The pearl necklace around His neck is like a captivating row of ducks lining this cloud, the peacock feather crown on His head and the Vaijayanti Mālā around His neck resemble the rainbows, while the sound of His flute, which enchants all the three worlds, represents the sweet rumbling of this amazing cloud. When Vṛndāvana's peacocks see this cloud and hear its rumbling they extend their tail feathers of ecstasy and begin to dance. Above this cloud a full moon **in the form of His face** is always residing, shining with the splendour of natural beauty and elegance. The cloud of this world moistens the soil by showering it with water, but this wonderful Kṛṣṇa-cloud sprinkles and moistens the fourteen worlds by showering them with the nectar of *līlā*. The thirsty eyes of the *gopīs* are like Cātakinī-birds that are ever-thirsty for a drop of this cloud's beauty.

Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: "Śrī Kṛṣṇa's body, whose luster resembles that of a fresh black cloud that drips with lovely elegance, is truly captivating!" It is His nature to steal the minds of everyone in the world— hence one of His names is **Śyāma**. *śyāyate gacchati mano'sminn iti śyāmaḥ* "He to Whom everyone's mind is going, is called Śyāma". *puruṣa yoṣit kibā sthāvāra jaṅgama; sarva cittākaraṣaka sāksān manmatha madana* (C.C.)—"He attracts everyone's mind – be they men, women, mobile or immobile. He is directly churning Cupid's mind." The relish of the transcendental beauty, sweetness and forms of Śyāmasundara, Who is the embodiment of blissful pastimes, and who is Himself the enchanter of Cupid, attracts the whole world. The sensitive *rasika bhaktas* of the world cannot stay calm anymore due to this strong attraction; when they see this transcendental cloud bank of sweetness Śrī Śyāmasundara coming to His playground Śrī Vṛndāvana, they see **śyāmera rūpe bhuvana parakāśa** (Śyāma's form manifesting on earth). They drown in the ocean of His form and they go to describe that form also, but words fail them. Still this world-illuminating Śyāma-form causes a great stir in their inner cores, so they cannot remain silent either. Then these *rūpa mugdha premikas* (loving devotees bewildered by His beauty) bathe in their own tears and say –

*madhuraṁ madhuraṁ vapur asya vibhor madhuraṁ madhuraṁ vadanam madhuram
madhu gandhi madhu smitam etad aho! madhuraṁ madhuraṁ madhuraṁ madhuram*

(Kṛṣṇa's form is sweeter-than-sweet, His face is sweeter than sweeter than sweet, His smile is like honey and His scent is like honey – aho! He is sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet!) (77)

*sakhī-gaṇa cāri pāśe, sevā kori abhilāṣe,
se sevā parama sukha dhare
ei mana tanu mora, ei rase sadā bhora,
narottama sadāi vihare (78)*

"All around, the *sakhīs* are desiring Their service and when they get that service they are most blissful!" Narottama says: "My mentally conceived body is always absorbed in this *rasa* and constantly wanders through the playgrounds with Them."

The bliss of devotional service :

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā- The blessed author shows that he weeps out of yearning for the sight of the sweetness of the Divine Pair. Śrī Rādhā's presence brings high waves in the ocean of Śyāma's sweetness and Śyāma's form causes an upsurge of Rādhā's sweetness! Śrī Kṛṣṇa says—

*yadyapi nirmala rādhāra sat prema darpaṇa; tathāpi svacchatā tāra bāṛe kṣaṇe kṣaṇa
āmāra mādhyure nāhi bārite avakāśe; e darpaṇera āge nava nava rūpe bhāse
man mādhyura rādhā prema donhe hoṛa kori; kṣaṇe kṣaṇe bāṛe donhe keho nāhi hāri*

"Although the mirror of Rādhā's true love is spotless, its clarity increases at every moment. There is no end to the increase of My sweetness, and in front of that mirror it floats in ever new shapes. My sweetness and Rādhā's love thus constantly compete with each other. They both increase at every moment without admitting defeat to each other."

Then again there are *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs* all around the Divine Pair that increase the ocean of Their sweetness with their different kinds of erotic laughter and joking and with their rendering of devotional service. In this *tripadī* Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya is immersed within the ocean of the Yūgala's sweetness and he reveals the yearning to be absorbed in the flavours of the devotional service of the Divine Pair and Their girlfriends, in his mentally conceived spiritual body. First he says: *sakhīgaṇa cāripāśe, sevā kori abhilāṣe, se sevā parama sukha dhare*. Although God is an all-pervading principle, He cannot find nourishment without the aid of His transcendental *cit* energy. Similarly, although the love of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa is all-pervading, it cannot be nourished without the aid of Their girlfriends. The *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs* are the branches and leaves of the wish-yielding vine of love for Kṛṣṇa, personified by Rādhā. Just as the branches and leaves beautify the vine by surrounding it on all sides, similarly the *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs* beautify the Tamāla tree Śyāma, that is entwined by the golden Rādhā-vine, by surrounding Them.

Śrī Lalitā, Viśākhā and the other *sakhīs* and Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī, Rati Mañjarī and the other *mañjarīs* surround Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa on all sides and always serve Them with great, ever-fresh yearning. If we want to understand the hierarchy of the *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs* in the

Divine Pair's service, we must first now about the division of their classes. Although Śrī Rādhā has innumerable girlfriends, they are divided into five classes. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has written –

*asyāḥ vṛndāvaneśvaryāḥ sakhya pañca vidhāḥ matāḥ
sakhyaś ca nitya sakhyaś ca prāṇa sakhyaś ca kāścana
priya sakhyaś ca parama preṣṭha sakhyaś ca viśrutāḥ*

"Śrī Rādhā, the Queen of Vṛndāvana, has five types of *sakhīs* – *sakhīs*, *nitya sakhīs*, *prāṇa sakhīs*, *priya sakhīs* and *parama preṣṭha sakhīs*. These are again divided into three different classes of moods – *kṛṣṇa snehādhikā*, *sama snehā* and *rādhā snehādhikā*. *sakhīs* are Dhaniṣṭhā, Vindhya and others who love Kṛṣṇa more than Rādhā (*kṛṣṇa snehādhikā*). *priya sakhīs* are Kuraṅgākṣī and others and *parama preṣṭha sakhīs* are Lalitā and the *aṣṭa sakhīs*, who are equal minded towards both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa (*sama snehā*). Although the eight *sakhīs* headed by Śrī Lalitā and Viśākhā bear an equal love for Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, they also cherish a feeling of 'we are Rādhā's'. Due to their paramount love for Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa they seem to show more love for one than for the other at certain short periods. For instance, when Rādhā is in *khaṇḍitā* condition (feeling loving pique when She sees the signs of loving enjoyment of another heroine on Kṛṣṇa's person) they show loving attachment to Śrī Rādhā, and when Rādhā is in *māna* condition (when She is angry with Kṛṣṇa with or without a reason) and She disregards Śrī Kṛṣṇa, they show loving attachment to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The *prāṇa sakhīs* and *nitya sakhīs* are Kasturī, Maṇi Mañjarī and others that have greater love for Rādhā and are also known as **mañjarīs**. Vṛndāvana Mahimāmṛta describes that of all the *sakhīs*, the *rādhā snehādhikā mañjarīs* are special –

*ananya śrī rādhā padakamala dāsyaika rasadhī hareḥ saṅge raṅgam svapana samaye nā'pi dadhāti
balāt kṛṣṇa kūrpaśakabhidi kim apy ācarati kāpy udāśrur meveti pralapati mamātma ca hasati*

"The maidservants, that are exclusively devoted to the service of Śrī Rādhā's lotus feet, that are like an ocean of nectar, do not enjoy with Śrī Hari even in their dreams. When Kṛṣṇa forcibly pulls at their bodices they cry out: 'No, no!', while my soul or very life, Śrī Rādhikā, watches and laughs." We must understand that Śrī Rādhārāṇī laughs here because of the *kiṅkarīs*' loyalty to Her service. Due to this *bhāva niṣṭhā* (fixation in a certain feeling) the *mañjarīs* are blessed with the good fortune of attaining confidential services that are not even attained or are rarely attained even by the *parama preṣṭha sakhīs* like Lalitā, what to speak of the ordinary *sakhīs*? Śrīmat Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmīpāda has written in his Vraja Vilāsa Stava (38):

*tāmbūlarpaṇa pāda-mardana payo dānābhisārādibhir
vṛndāraṇya maheśvarīm priyatayā yās toṣayanti priyāḥ
prāṇa preṣṭha sakhī kulād api kilāsaṅkocitā bhūmikāḥ
kelī bhūmiṣu rūpa mañjarī mukhās tā dāsikāḥ saṁśraye*

"I take shelter of Śrī Rādhikā's maidservants, headed by Rūpa Mañjarī, that always engage in serving betel leaves, massaging the feet, serving water, and arranging for the Divine Couple's secret trysts. These maidservants are even more dear to the great Queen of

Vṛndāraṇya (Śrī Rādhikā) than the *prāṇa preṣṭha sakhīs* (the girlfriends that are dearer to Her than life), and She is therefore not at all shy before them!" Śrīman Mahāprabhu and the *ācāryas* that have taken shelter of His lotus feet have preached this practice of *mañjarī bhāva* to the world. Their wholly selfless and pure service gives Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava the greatest happiness, and when they see Them happy, they also float in an ocean of bliss – ***se sevā parama sukha dhare***. The happiness they experience while seeing the Divine Pair making love as they render their service, is incomparable. Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatīpāda has written (Vṛndāvana Mahimāmṛta 1.54) –

*rādhā nāgara keli sāgara nimagnālī dṛśāṁ yat sukhaṁ
no tal leśa lavāyate bhagavataḥ sarvo'pi saukhyotsavaḥ*

"All the happiness experienced within the kingdom of God cannot be compared to even a drop of the happiness the *sakhīs* attain when their eyes drown in the ocean of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's love games!"

After this the blessed author says: *ei mana tanu mora, ei rase sadā bhora, narottama sadā vihare*. Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya prays: "May my mind-body, in other words my mentally conceived *siddha deha*, attain the good fortune of being immersed in the mellows of *mañjarī bhāva* and always wander through the playgrounds of the Divine Pair, constantly rendering service to Them." The practitioners of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism establish their self esteem into this mind-body, or spiritual body given by Śrī Guru, and mentally render service to Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava throughout the eight periods of the day; that is expertise in *rāgānugā bhajana*. In the external practitioner's body the nine devotional practices of hearing, chanting, praising, deity worship etc. are performed and in the mentally conceived spiritual body one constantly renders mental devotional service.

*bāhya antara ihāra dui to sādhana; bāhya – sādha dehe kore śravaṇa kīrtana
mane – nija siddha deha koriyā bhāvana; rātri dine kore vraje kṣṇera sevana (C.C.)*

The blessed author says: ***ei rase sadā bhora***, meaning that those who have established even the slightest self esteem into this spiritual body can understand that an astonishing relish is present in it. What to speak of those who became so fortunate to be able to establish their self esteem into their spiritual bodies and thus render mental service to Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, according to the Gosvāmīs *siddhi* is just around the corner for those who simply identify themselves with their spiritual bodies – *astu tāvad bhajana prayāsaḥ kevala tādṛśatvābhimānenāpi siddhir bhavati* (Bhakti Sandarbha 304th paragraph). Therefore the practitioners of *rāgānugā bhakti* must give up their awareness of their material body, that consists of five gross elements, and become absorbed into their mind-bodies or spiritual bodies. During any kind of devotional practice the practicing devotee must always be aware of the basic principle – "I am Śrī Bhagavān's eternal servant and Bhagavān is my eternal master". This servant-master relationship founds the principle of devotion, therefore establishment of self esteem into the spiritual body that suits service to Bhagavān is the characteristic of the devotee who is dearest to Lord Hari. (78)

*rādhā-kṛṣṇa koro dhyāna, svapne-o nā bolo āna,
prema vinā āna nāhi cāu
yugala kiśora prema, yeno lakṣa-bāna hema,
ārati pīriti rase dhyāu (79)*

"Meditate on Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and don't speak of anything else but Them, even in Your dreams! Don't desire anything else but *prema*. The *prema* of the Yugala Kiśora is like gold molten a hundred-thousand times. Meditate on the *rasa* of Their deep attachment and love!"

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *ṭīkā* – *ārati pīriti rase dhyāu– ārtiyā pīriti sukha svarūpatvena dhyānaṁ kuru. he mana! iti śeṣaḥ.*

Anxious meditation :

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – In this *tripadī* Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya mentions the internal practice of the *rāgānugīya mañjarī bhāva* practitioner. First he says: *rādhā kṛṣṇa koro dhyāna, svapne-o nā bolo ān*– "Meditate on Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and don't speak of anything else but Them." In Śrī Padma Purāṇa it is seen –

*dhyāyanti puruṣaṁ divyam acyutam ca smaranti ye
labhanti te'cyuta sthānaṁ śrutir eṣā purātani*

"It has been heard in the old days that anyone who meditates on the Divine Person Acyuta, or remembers Him, will attain Acyuta's abode." This verse is quoted in the 3rd Vilāsa of Śrī Haribhakti Vilāsa, in the glorification of meditation. Śrīmat Sanātana Gosvāmī writes in his commentary on this verse: *dhyāyanti śrī pādābja-talam ārabhya śrī keśāgra paryantaṁ tat tat saundaryādi sahitaṁ cintayanti; apy arthe cakāraḥ dhyāyantīty etad astu ye smaranty api - yathā kathaṁcit bhagavati manaḥ samyojayanti te'pi. evaṁ dhyāne smaraṇayor abhedaḥ kalpanīyaḥ dhyāyantīti smarantīti pṛthak prayogāt*–"Meditation means to deeply contemplate the Lord's beauty, from the soles of His lotus feet up to the crown of His hair. The word *ca* in the above-quoted verse's phrase *acyutaṁ ca* is joined to the word *api*, which means that even if one casually or accidentally thinks of Acyuta one attains His divine abode. There is no particular difference between meditation and *smaraṇa* here. When *smaraṇa* becomes deep, meditation comes to be. Hence they have been mentioned separately."

Deep and specific concentration of the mind is called meditation or *dhyāna*, and this meditation is the very life of spiritual practice. As a result of such deep contemplation and concentration of the mind, a very astonishing metamorphosis can take place, even of the external gross body. In Śrīmad Bhāgavata (11.9.23) it is seen–

*kītaḥ peśaskṛtaṁ dhyāyan kuḍyāṁ tena praveśitaḥ
yāti tat sātmatāṁ rājan pūrva rūpam asantyajan*

Śrī Avadhūta Mahāśaya told Yadurāja: "The grassworm, who gets trapped in a hole by a hostile cockroach, becomes a cockroach also by always being absorbed in thoughts of it, without even changing his previous body." The body of the meditator becomes like the one he meditates on – we should know this to be the inconceivable power of meditation! If the gross body can change like that as a result of meditation, then can there be any doubt that the practitioner receives a transcendental body by meditating on Śrī Kṛṣṇa's transcendental body? In Śrīmad Bhāgavata it is described that Śrīla Dhruva Mahāśaya's practitioner's body turned transcendental on the strength of his constant meditation on the Supreme Lord!

Nicely meditating on Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's forms, attributes, pastimes and service is called *dhyaṇa*. Thus there are four kinds of meditations – on a form, on attributes, on pastimes and on service. *rūpa dhyaṇa* (meditation on the form) – This is meditation on the beauty and sweetness of each of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's sweet limbs, from tip to toe. For instance, at the end of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha, Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has described the sweet forms of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava as follows –

*gaura śyāma rucojjvalābhir amalair akṣnor vilāsotsavair
nṛtyantībhir aśeṣa mādana kalā vaidagdhya digdhātmabhiḥ
anyonya priyatā sudhā parimala stomonmadābhiḥ sadā
rādhā mādhava mādhurībhir abhitaś cittam mamākramyatām*

"May the sweetness of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā and Mādhava, who are shining with a golden and bluish splendor, whose eyes are dancing in a spotless festival of play, who are anointed with endless cleverness in erotic artistry, and who are greatly delighted by the nectarean fragrance of Their mutual love, attack my mind in all respects." The purport is that Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's sweet forms are resplendent with bright golden and blue luster, which means that Śrī Rādhā's luster, that resembles molten gold, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa's blue luster, that resembles sapphires, illuminate the horizon! Śrī Rādhā's right eye and Śrī Kṛṣṇa's left eye are gladdened by wonderful movements due to meeting the beloved and it is as if Their indescribable bodily sweetness is dancing! Their wonderful bodies are both surrounded by the endless expertise of pastimes of *mādanākhyā mahābhāva*, which means that Their two bodies are entwined by the symptoms of *mādana* such as embracing and kissing, that are of endless wonderful sweetness. Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's bodies are anointed with mutual love just as the bodies of other heroes and heroines may be anointed with *kuṅkuma* and scents that enchant all the people. May the indescribable sweetness of Rādhā and Mādhava's combined form awaken in my heart in such a way that there will not be the slightest other perception. The word *ākrānta* means: may this sweet dual form not leave my heart even slightly!" From this it is to be understood that the self-manifest sweet forms of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava will automatically become revealed to the pure hearted meditator, out of sheer grace. *guṇa dhyaṇa* – Although Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa have innumerable attributes, the devotees who have taken shelter of *madhura rasa* meditate on twenty five of them, that are suitable to the *madhura rasa*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa's attributes – He is lovely, sweet, endowed with all good characteristics, powerful, endowed with fresh youthfulness, eloquent, speaking sweet words, intelligent, learned, lustrous, calm, clever, dextrous, happy, grateful, submissive, subdued by love, grave, great, famous, captivating to women, ever-fresh, peerless in His playfulness, beautiful and the greatest flute player. Śrī Rādhārāṇī's attributes are – She is

sweet, of fresh youthfulness, has restless eyes, is adorned with a sweet smile, endowed with beautiful and auspicious lines, Her bodily fragrance maddens Mādhava, She is expert in singing and speaks charmingly. She is expert in joking, humble, filled with compassion, clever, dextrous, bashful, respectful, grave, patient, very playful, filled with *mahā bhāva*, a resident of Gokula's love (loved by everyone in Vraja), Her fame pervades the whole universe, She is dedicated to Her superiors, subdued by Her girlfriends' love for Her, the best of Kṛṣṇa's sweethearts and Keśava is always subdued by Her⁴². Meditation on all these attributes is called *guṇa dhyāna*. ***līlā dhyāna*** – in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya there are methods and manuals on how to meditate on Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's eightfold daily pastimes, and this is called *līlā dhyāna*. On the basis of Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda's abridged descriptions of these pastimes, and after seeing Kavi Karṇapūra's book Kṛṣṇāhnikā Kaumudī, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī has composed a scripture named Govinda Līlāmṛta, in which he elaborately described the eightfold daily pastimes of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. After this, *gauḍīya vaiṣṇavācārya* Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda has elaborated on some brief parts of Govinda Līlāmṛta in his scripture Śrī Kṛṣṇa Bhāvanāmṛta, thus increasing the treasury of meditations on Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. After that Śrīla Kṛṣṇa dās Siddha Bābā, resident of Govardhana, received the merciful order of Śrī Rādhārāṇī Herself to compose the Gaura Govinda Aṣṭakālīya Guṭikā, in which he promulgated the meditation on Gaura-*līlā* along with the meditation on Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's pastimes. He also compiled a large anthology called 'Bhāvanā Sāra Saṅgraha' so that the pastimes described in the Guṭikā would be relishable also through the words of the greatly realised souls. *līlā dhyāna* automatically includes meditation on forms, attributes and services, therefore this is specially to be done by practitioners of *rāgānugā bhakti*.

sevā dhyāna – This is also called *mānasa sevā* or mental service. In the Gauḍīya Sampradāya it is the rule to render mental service to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava and Their girlfriends within the *yogapīṭha*. There are two kinds of *līlās* – 1) *svārasikī* and 2) *mantramayī*. The *svārasikī* version is like a stream and the *mantramayī* resembles a lake. The lake is situated within the stream and has no independence, still it is recognised and named as separate. The *aṣṭakālīn līlā* is *svārasikī* and the *yogapīṭha milana līlā* is *mantramayī*. This *mantramayī yogapīṭha milana līlā* means that Śrī Yuga is served with mentally conceived paraphernalia in full identification with one's *siddha svarūpa*. In his commentary on Śrī Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu, Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has revealed the glories of *mānasa sevā* by quoting a story from the Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa. In Pratiṣṭhāna Pura there was a poor *brāhmaṇa* who had a strong desire to render ritual devotional service, but who was unable to do so, for he was too poor to afford buying the required paraphernalia. One day he sat in an assembly of Vaiṣṇavas where he heard during a lecture about *bhāgavata dharma* that 'Even if one serves Śrī Hari only mentally, with mentally conceived paraphernalia, He will be pleased.' Hearing this he became determined to render mental devotional service. One day he went to bathe in the Godāvarī river and completed his daily rituals when he sat down in a lonely place, established a mental deity of Śrī Hari and began to serve it with mentally conceived regal ingredients. Thus he attained paramount bliss. In this way he would always serve new mentally conceived things every day and

⁴² Examples of these attributes of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa can be found in the scriptures Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu and Ujjvala Nilamaṇi.

attained great bliss in Śrī Hari's meditative service. In this way some time passed. One day he cooked excellent sweet rice within his mind and placed it on a golden tray for it to cool off, fanning the preparation with a palm leaf. After a while the *brāhmaṇa* stuck his (mental) finger in the preparation to gauge whether it had cooled off or not, and his physical finger got burned by the heat of the mental sweet rice. When he felt that his finger was burned and he thus realised that the sweet rice was unfit to be offered to Śrī Hari he became very unhappy and this feeling broke his *samādhi*. Then he saw that his physical finger was also burned and was giving him pain. But this did not make him unhappy at all. Rather, he began to lament that the Lord's offering was spoiled and he had been unable to complete his devotional service. Seeing the *brāhmaṇa*'s distress, Śrī Hari sent an airplane and had him brought to His spiritual abode.

Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: *svapne-o nā bolo ān* "What to speak of wakefulness, even in dreams you should not discuss any other topic than that of Śrī Hari." Discussing or hearing about any other topic than Kṛṣṇa simply confuses the mind, and when these ulterior topics disturb the mind it will never be possible to meditate on Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in deep concentration. For if one wishes to meditate on Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's pastimes with a concentrated mind one must give up all connections with all other topics and be devoid of any other desire but *prema*— *prema vinā ān nāhi cāu*. The practitioner who covets *prema* must give up all other desires but for *prema*. Devotion means service, therefore the practising devotee must desire nothing else but the service of his beloved deity. Without *prema* no kind of devotional service can make the beloved deity happy, hence the yearning for *prema* awakens within the heart of the pure devotee. He who desires *prema* is absorbed in practising *bhajana*, which is the means and the cause of *prema*, and rejects all factors that stop him from attaining *prema*. Therefore the thirst for the attainment of *prema* is one of the causes of the practitioner's attainment of the same.

Then the blessed author proceeds by saying: *yugala kiśora prema, jeno lakṣo bāna hema, arati pīriti rase dhyāu*. "The *prema* of the Yugala Kiśora is like gold molten a hundred-thousand times. Meditate on the *rasa* of Their deep attachment and love!" Goldsmiths place the gold into the fire in order to purify it and melt out all of its impurities and alloys. In colloquial language this is called *bān*. The more the gold is placed in the fire, the more it becomes *bān*. With each *bān* the gold becomes more shimmering and pure. After the *bān* has taken place five times there can be no more impurities left and it has become as pure as it can get. Therefore the *bān* process is never repeated 100,000 times. Hence the saying *lakṣa bāna hema*, gold molten 100,000 times, is used to show that it is peerless. The love of Śrī Yugala Kiśora is so pure and brilliant that nothing can compare to it. Just as gold is never molten 100,000 times over, similarly nothing can compare to the love of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava. Therefore it is easily understood that the worship of the Yugala does not take place as long as there is any other desire but the desire for *prema*.

Therefore only meditate Śrī-Śrī Rādhā Mādhava, the embodiments of love, must be meditated on, with loving eagerness. The devotee's eagerness will unlock sufficient grace of the Lord. Strong eagerness for Śrī Bhagavān is called *prema*, and the culmination of eagerness is found in the practice of Vraja-*rasa*, most of all *madhura rasa*. To increase this ocean of eagerness Śrī Rādhā Mādhava have accepted an extramarital relationship. Therefore

meditation filled with deep hankering is the proper practice to attain love for the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, Who are Themselves the embodiments of spiritual love-flavours. (79)

jala vinu yeno mīna, duḥkha pāy āyu-hīna
prema vinu ei mata bhakta
cātaka jalada gati, emata ekānta rīti,
yei jāne sei anurakta (80)

"Without *prema*, a devotee feels miserable and lifeless like a fish out of water. He is exclusively attached to *prema*, just as a Cātaka bird only lives on rainwater."

The ways of exclusive devotion :

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya advises all the practitioners who desire *prema* to give up all material desires and to become fixed in *prema*. Now in this *tripadī* he gives an analogy of the surrendered devotee to make a firm authoritative statement – *jala vinu jeno mīna, duḥkha pāy āyu hīna, prema vinu ei mata bhakta* – Those who were able to completely give up all desires but the desire for *prema* and who managed to become fixed in *prema*, are the qualified candidates for *prema*. Fishes love only water, their lives are surrendered to water. If they are taken out of the water they flap around in great misery and instantly lose their lives. Similarly a devotee who is fixed in *prema* has given his life to *prema*, and he wishes nothing in the world but *prema*. In Śrīmad Bhāgavata Nārada tells Śrī Vyāsa (1.5.18)–

tasyaiva hetoḥ prayateta kovidō na labhyate yad bhramatām uparyadhaḥ
lal labhyate duḥkhavad anyataḥ sukhaṁ kālena sarvatra gabhīra raṁhasā

"A learned and wise person will endeavour for that (*prema*) which is not attainable by wandering (reincarnating) through all species of life, from a demigod's body down to a tree's body. Due to one's previous activities sensual happiness as well as distress will come in any case." Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has written in *Prīti Sandarbha* – *tasmāt tat tad bhaktānām tat prīti manoratha evopādeyaḥ. tad anyas tu sarvo'pi heya' ityāha.....kim alabhyam bhagavati prasanne śrī nīketane. tathāpi tat parā rājan nahi vāñchanti kiñcana.yathavāha-punaś ca bhūyād bhagavatyanante rati prasaṅgāś ca tad āśrayeṣu. mahatsu yām yām upayāmi sṛṣṭam maitras tu sarvatra namo dvijebhyaḥ.ataevāha-'na vai mukundasya padāravindayoḥ rajo juṣas tāta bhavādṛśā janāḥ. vāñchanti tad dāsyamṛte'rtham ātmano yadṛcchayā labdhamaṇaḥ samṛddhayaḥ. yadṛcchayā anāyāsenaiva labdhā maṇaḥ samṛddhir yeṣām te. svato bhakti mahātmya balena sarva puruṣārtha pratikṣita kṛpā dṛṣṭi leśā apityarthaḥ.* The devotees of the Lord desire love of God, for they like it– except for that, they find everything insignificant. Śrī Śukadeva Muni told Parīkṣit – "When Lord Śrīnivāsa (the husband of the goddess of fortune) is pleased, then what else remains unattainable? Still the devotees of the Lord do not desire anything." After being cursed by a *brāhmaṇa* boy, Mahārāja Parīkṣit himself prayed to the sages: "O

brāhmaṇas! In whatever birth I may take next, let me be attracted to the Lord, let me associate with the devotees and let me be friends with all living beings. Bowing down to your lotus feet, I pray for this blessing!" Love of God is all what the devotees want, hence Śrī Maitreya ṛṣi told Vidura: "O my child! Devotees like you, who serve the dust of Śrī Mukunda's lotus feet, do not desire anything else but the nectar of His service! Whatever is easily available satisfies them. They feel no want of anything." Purport— *yadṛcchā* - Can those who are satisfied with anything easily attained, and whose merciful glance makes all the human pursuits automatically wait for a drop of the glories of devotion, desire anything else but *prema*?" The devotees are most thirsty for *prema*, the highest human pursuit, and their lives are given to *prema*; therefore the devotee without *prema* has been compared to a fish outside of the water.

After this it is said: *cātaka jalada gati emati ekānta riti, yei jāne sei anurakta* The Cātaka birds are attached to the drops of water released by the cloud. However thirsty they may be they will still not drink any water from lakes, ponds or rivers. In the heat of summer they gaze at the sky with parched throats, "When will the rainy season come?". When they can drink the drops of water released by the cloud they can quench their hearts' thirst for water. In the same way the pure devotees do not desire anything else but *prema* for the lotus feet of their beloved deity. Although mankind desires sense enjoyment, liberation, mystic perfection and so many other enjoyable things, the bird-like heart of the pure devotee will always and only remain thirsty after drops of *prema*.

In Śrī Garuḍa Purāṇa it is written about the characteristics of exclusive devotion: *ekāntena sadā viṣṇau yasmād eva parāyaṇāḥ. tasmād ekāntinaḥ proktā tad bhāva gata cetasaḥ.* "The devotees whose hearts are immersed in feelings towards the Lord are exclusively dedicated to that subject, and hence they are known as *ekāntī*." In Śrīmad Bhāgavata (8.3.20) the following words of the elephant king are seen— *ekāntino yasya na kañcanārtham vāñchanti ye vai bhagavat prapañṇāḥ* "Those who exclusively surrender unto Śrī Hari do not ask anything else from Him." The words of Śrī Rudra are also found (Bhāg. 4.24.55): *taṁ durārādhyam ārādhyā satām api durāpayā. ekānta bhaktyā ko vāñchet pādāmūlam vinā bahiḥ*—"O Lord! Having worshipped through exclusive devotion You, who are rarely attained even by the saints and who cannot easily be mollified (by any other means), who will seek anything else but Your lotus feet?"

In Śrī Haribhakti Vilāsa four kinds of exclusivity are mentioned, with examples: 1) Disinterest in (*varṇāśrama*) *dharma*. 2) Unconditional independence from fruitive activities and philosophical, non-dualistic speculation, 3) Not losing one's devotional attachment even when obstacles arise and 4) Sole dedication to *prema*.

1) **Disinterest in *dharma*** –

*ājñāyaiva guṇān doṣān mayādiṣṭān api svakān
dharmān santyajya yaḥ sarvān mām bhajet sa ca sattamaḥ* (Ś. Bhāg.11.11.32)
*sarva dharmān parityajya mām ekam śaraṇam vraja
aham tvam sarva pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ* (Gītā 18.66)

The blessed Lord said: "O Uddhava! He is the best of all saints, who, having completely neglected all his duties, although prescribed by Me (through the Vedic

scriptures), while knowing well the virtues (of following them) and the sins (of not following them), worships Me alone."

"O Arjuna! Give up all forms of religion and simply surrender unto Me. I will free you from all sins. Do not fear."

2) Unconditional independence from fruitive activities and philosophical, non-dualistic speculation.

*santo'napekṣā mac cittāḥ praśāntāḥ sama darśanaḥ
nirmamā nirahaṅkāra nirdvandvā niṣparigrahaḥ* (Bhāg.11.26.27)

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said: "O Uddhava! The saints are free from desires, their hearts are given to Me, they are peaceful, equiposed, free from possessiveness and false esteem and are averse to all personal accumulation."

3) Not losing one's devotional attachment even when obstacles arise—

*yasya kṛcchra gatasya'pi keśave ramate manaḥ; na vicyutā ca bhaktir vai sa vai bhāgavato naraḥ
āpad gatasya yasyeḥa bhaktir avyabhicāriṇī; nānyatra ramate cittam sa vai bhāgavato naraḥ*

"Anyone who does not give up his attachment to Keśava, no matter how much he is suffering, and who never fails in his devotion to Keśava, he is certainly a devotee of God. Again, anyone who is exclusively devoted to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, even in times of danger and whose heart is not attracted elsewhere, is called a *bhāgavata*, or devotee of God."

4) Sole dedication to prema.

*ye vā mad īse kṛta sauhṛdāṛthā janeṣu dehambhara vārtikeṣu
grheṣu jāyātmaja rātimatsu prīti yuktā yāvad arthās ca loka*

Śrī -ṣabha deva said (in Bhāgavata 5.5.3): "Those who place their love in Me and consider this the highest goal of life, who do not love materialists, their house, wife, children and friends, and who do not desire anymore money than is required to stay alive, are called saints." Those who thus know the ways of the exclusive devotees, will similarly become exclusively attracted to the supreme goal of life, *prema*. (80)

*lubdha bhramara yeno, cakora candrikā teno,
pativratā-janera yeno pati
anyatra nā cole mana, yeno daridrera hema,
eimata prema-bhakti rīti (81)*

"The devotee does not think of anyone else but the Lord, just as the bee is fixed in the honey, the Cakora-bird in the moonlight, the chaste wife in the husband and the poor man in gold. Such are the ways of loving devotion."

The ways of loving devotion :

Sudhā-kaṇikā vyākhyā- After speaking of the ways of exclusive devotion, Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya now speaks of the nature of the ways of loving devotion – *lubdha bhramara yeno, cakora candrikā teno, pativratā-janera yeno pati; anyatra nā cole mana, yeno daridrera hema, eimata prema-bhakti riti* – Those who have love for Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa within the heart have the nature of a bee thirsty for honey, a Cakora thirsty for the moonlight and the loyalty of a chaste wife towards her husband. Just as the body and mind of a honey-craving bee is constantly attached to the female lotus-flowers, similarly the bee-like mind of the devotee is constantly greedy after the honey-flavour of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, just as a thirsty Cakora bird is absorbed in relishing the flavours of the full moonlight, similarly the Cakora-bird of the devotee's heart is constantly absorbed in relishing the sweetness of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā Govinda's moon-like faces, and just as the chaste and dedicated wife does not know anything else but her husband, either in dreams, wakefulness or in deep sleep, not knowing when the day goes and the night comes out of absorption in the service of her husband, similarly the loving devotee is exclusively dedicated to Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's service with body, mind and words.

Another meaning is that just as the thirsty bee, Cakora and the chaste wife are exclusively fixed in the honey, moonlight and the husband respectively, similarly the loving devotee is exclusively fixed in the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava. In his Śrī Govinda Bhāṣya Śrīpāda Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa has written that the devotee who is dedicated to the worship of Śrī Hari is greater than the devotee who desires the harvest of fruitive activities. He is called an *ekāntī* for he is only fixed in spiritual matters. Greater even than these *ekāntī* is the devotee whose mind is attracted to the form of God known as Vrajendranandana – even the grace of Śrīman Nārāyaṇa cannot steal his mind away! The devotees who are fixed in the lotus feet of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava are again the greatest amongst the *ekāntī* devotees, for even Vrajendranandana cannot please their minds without the presence of Śrī Rādhārāṇī.

In his Prīti Sandarbha Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmī has shown the difference and gradations between the different *ekāntī* devotees and their loyalty – *ekāntinas tāvad dvividhāḥ, ajāta jāta prītis tvabhedena. jāta prītayaśca trividhāḥ eke tadīyānubhava mātra niṣṭhāḥ śānta bhaktādayaḥ anye tadīya darśana sevānādi rasamayāḥ parikara viśeṣābhīmāninaḥ svayaṁ parikara viśeṣās ca. tatra teṣu ajāta prītibhiḥ sarva puruṣārthatvena tat prītir eva prārthanīyā. atha jāta prītiṣu śānta bhaktādayas tu kadācid darśanādikam vā prārthayante sevādikam vinaiva tad vāsanāyā abhāvāt. sakṛd api kṛpā dṛṣṭyādi lābhena tṛptās ca bhavanti; 'nātikṣāmaṁ bhagavataḥ snigdghāpāṅga vilokanād iti śrī kardama varṇanāt ataeva tat sāmīpyādike'pi teṣāṁ anāgrahaḥ. ye tat parikara viśeṣābhīmāninas te khalu tat tat prīti viśeṣotkaṇṭhito yadā bhavanti tadā tat tat sevā viśeṣecchayā prārthayanta eva tat sāmīpyādikam. tat prārthanā ca prīti vilāsa rūpaiva puṣṇāti ca tām iti guṇa eva. yadā ca teṣāṁ dainyena tat prāptyasāmbhāvanā jāyate tadāpi ca tat prītyaviccheda mātraṁ prārthayante. so'pi ca guṇa eva. yat tu kevala saṁsāra mokṣa tat sāmīpyānanda viśeṣa prārthanam prīti vikāratā-sūnyam tat punaḥ sarvathā keṣāñcid apyekāntinām nābhirucitam* (Paragraph 51)

This means that there are two kinds of *ekāntī* devotees – *jāta prīti* (those whose love has awakened) and *ajāta prīti* (those whose love has not awakened) and there are three kinds of *jāta prīti* devotees – 1) Devotees like those who are in the peaceful mood (*śānta bhaktas*) who do nothing but experience the Lord and who are endowed with *niṣṭhā* (fixation), 2) Devotees who have a specific self-esteem when they see and serve the Lord and 3) Those who are personal, specific associates of the Lord. The devotees whose love has not yet awakened always pray for love of God, which is the highest human pursuit. The *śānta*

bhaktas who have awakened their love, sometimes only pray for the audience of the Lord without devotional service. They have no longing for devotional service; they are satisfied simply by attaining a single merciful glance from the Lord. In Śrīmad Bhāgavata it is seen—"When Śrī Kardama Muni attained the Lord's kind and pleasing glance and drank the lunar nectar of His words, he was not aware anymore how emaciated he had become through his penances." From this it is understood that he not always desired devotional service and the Lord's *darśana*. However, such persons always have an inner vision of the Lord. Factually they are not even eager to be near the Lord. When the devotees who consider themselves to be specific associates of the Lord are eager for love of the Lord as a servant or as a friend, they also pray for *sāmīpya* (a kind of liberation which brings one in the Lord's vicinity), which is favorable to the particular service they desire. Their prayers nourish the love which is called *prīti vilāsamayī*, filled with loving pastimes or manifestations. Therefore it is not a *dūṣaṇa* (contamination), but a *bhūṣaṇa* (ornamentation)! Again they sometimes humbly think that they are unable to attain the Lord and they pray for a love that will prevent them from being separated from Him. This also is a virtue, not a fault. On the other hand the *ekānti* devotees never have taste for prayers that will only grant them liberation from the material world or the particular bliss of being close to the Lord without love for Him." Therefore Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: *anyatra nā cole mana, jeno daridrera dhana, ei mata prema bhakti rīti* "The devotee's mind does not go elsewhere, just as a poor man always thinks of money – these are the ways of loving devotion." (81)

***viṣaya garala-maya, tā'te māno sukha-caya,
sei sukha duḥkha kori māno
govinda viṣaya rasa, saṅga koro tāra dāsa,
prema bhakti satya kori jāno (82)***

"You consider the poison of sense-gratification to be happiness, although you should know it to be miserable. Taste the nectar of the Govinda-subject, associate with His devotees and know loving devotion to be real!"

The taste of the Govinda subject:

Sudhā Kaṇikā vyākhyā – Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has described the ways or the nature of loving devotion. Here he tells those who are fixed in sense gratification how to attain pure devotion – *viṣaya garala-maya, tā'te māno sukha-caya, sei sukha duḥkha kori māno*. Sound, touch, form, taste, odour and so are the five enjoyable sense objects. These objects, like women and money, are filled with poison that is fiercely burning and instantly lethal. The human beings that are deluded by ignorance cannot understand the scorching of this poison, therefore they enjoy it as if it is delightful nectar.

*ajānan dāhārtim viṣati śalabho dīpa dahanam
na mīno'pi jñātvā vṛta baḍīsam aśnāti piṣitam
vijānanto'pyetān vāyam iha vipaj jāla jaṭilān*

na muñcāmaḥ kāmān ahaha gahano moha mahimā

"The fly does not know what lethal fire is like, hence he flies straight into the fire of the lamp, and the fish also does not know that the meat he eats on the hook of the fisherman contains his very death, hence he eats it, but we do know that the sense objects we enjoy are full of disaster, enjoying them will cause us to transmigrate through very painful animal species for millions of births, and will cause us to suffer in hell. Still we do not give them up. Aho! How terrible is the power of illusion! Ignorant souls perish after enjoying only one particular sense object, then what doubt is there that those knowledgeable persons who enjoy all five sense objects simultaneously will become entangled within a net of great poisonous suffering?" In the Garuḍa Purāṇa it is seen—

*kuraṅga mātaṅga pataṅga bhṛṅga mīnāḥ hataḥ pañcabhir eva pañca
ekam pramādi sa katham na hanyate yaḥ sevate pañcabhir eva pañca*

"The deer, the elephant, the fly, the bee and the fish – they are all enjoying one of the five sense objects, and if even that causes them all to perish, then why would a human being not perish by constantly enjoying all five of them simultaneously?"

The deer is captivated by the flute playing of the hunter. He becomes very unsteady to satisfy his ears with this sense object named sound, and, becoming bereft of all knowledge, he runs towards the hunter and dies after falling into his trap. Those who keep elephants take their home bred elephant along into the forest. When the wild forest-elephants become eager to touch that pet elephant they approach it and thus get caught, which is like death. When the fly sees the flame he becomes impatient and burns himself in it alive. The bumblebee is greedy after the scent of the lotus and lands inside the whorl. In the evening, however, the lotus flower closes its petals and when it opens up the next morning, when the lotus flowers blossom again it can be seen that the bee has died. The fish is eager for the taste of the meat on the fisherman's hook and when he swallows it he faces death. They are all killed due to attachment to a single sense object, and human beings are engaged in full enjoyment of all the five sense objects simultaneously. Can there, therefore, be any doubt that they will perish due to such sensual enjoyments?

The blessed author is saying – *viśaya garalamaya, tāte māno sukhaçaya*. Although the sense objects are naturally scorching the *sādhaka*, the sensually attached human beings consider them to be very blissful. There is poison within a snake, but the snake itself does not experience that scorching and poisonous sensation, rather it enjoys and even nourishes it. If it did not carry the poison it would be powerless and miserable. However, if they bite any other creature, then that creature would be in great agony from the poisonous snake bite. In the same way the sensually attached person does not experience the agony of sensual poison, but would even feel miserable if he could not enjoy it. When the *sādhakas* are bitten by the poisonous snake of sensuality, they do experience the resultant scorching agony. The agony of poisoning will dissipate after death, but the scorching of the poison of sense gratification gives agony to the mind and body birth after birth. In other words, as a result of enjoying the sense objects mankind takes the conditioning to subtle desires within the heart and wanders through different miserable species of life, or suffers in different terrible hells. Although the *sādhakas* have experienced this, the person who is attached to sense enjoyment experiences

happiness within such indulgence. Due to illusion he forgets the miserable consequences of indulging in sense gratification and experiences happiness in it; hence the blessed author has said: *viṣaya garalamaya, tāte māno sukhacaya, sei sukha duḥkha kori māno* – "The poison of sense gratification you consider to be great happiness. Consider this happiness to be misery." The illusion of sensual happiness is the only cause of the living being travelling through endless different miserable species and horrible hellish miseries. Can that be called happiness? Therefore all intelligent human beings should consider sense enjoyment to be miserable. The conditioned souls have been eager to relish the mellows of sense enjoyment since beginningless time. The devotees are very clever – *yei jana kṛṣṇa bhaje se boro catura*: "Anyone who worships Kṛṣṇa is very clever." Therefore they do not try to conquer the senses by means of harsh or dry development of knowledge and detachment like the *jñānīs* and the *yogīs*, and instead of enjoying the disgusting and despicable taste of sensuality they endeavour to relish the mellows of the **śrī govinda topic**, which is so excellent and pleasant. The great relish of a single drop from the billowing ocean of the five pleasant sense objects of Hṛṣīkeṣa Śrī Govinda's sound, touch, form, taste and scent make the taste of mundane sense objects seem greatly disgusting and despicable to the senses. Actually the human heart's love, the internal senses like the mind and the intelligence as well as the external senses like the eyes and the ears long for the taste of the Śrī Govinda topic, but since they do not get it they are polluted by desiring sordid sensual flavours, and these desires steal all good propensities away from the human heart, just like thieves. Brahmā prayed to Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the Bhāgavata (10.14.36): *tāvad rāgādaya stenās tāvat kāragrhaṁ grham; tāvan moho'ṅghri nigāḍo yāvāt kṛṣṇa na te janaḥ* "O Kṛṣṇa! As long as the people do not turn to You, their attachments will act like thieves on them, their houses will remain prisons for them, and their illusion will remain their shackles!" Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has written in his Vaiṣṇava Toṣaṇī commentary on this verse: *tatra nirupādhi premāspadasyātmano'py ātmatvena tvam eva rāgasya svābhāvika parama योगyāśrayaḥ. atas tal lakṣaṇa nija svāminam anupalabhyaiva bhramann asau janānām śubha vāsanā rūpāṁ tvad bhajana sāmāgrīṁ haraṁś caura eva. tatas tad anuvartino'pi tādrśāḥ*. "Everyone naturally loves You millions of times more than they love themselves, because You are the Self of selves. Therefore You are the most qualified shelter for everyone's love. When the living entities don't get attached to You as their master their attachments will act like thieves that steal the paraphernalia of their worship from them, and, following their inward attachments, their senses will also be polluted."

Therefore by just slightly relishing the sweetness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sound, touch, form and flavours and being immersed within the ocean of this peerless taste, the senses will be blessed forever. He is named Kṛṣṇa because He manages to attract everyone's minds with the sweetness of His own form, taste etc. Through the ecstatic talking of Śrīman Mahāprabhu the attractive power of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's forms, flavours etc. are learned.

*kṛṣṇa rūpa śabda sparśa, saurabhya adhara rasa, yāra mādhyura kohono nā jāy
dekhī lobhi pañca jana, eka aśva mora mana, coṛi pañca pañca dige dhāy
sakhi he! śuno mora duḥkhera kāraṇa
mora pañcendriya gaṇa, mahā lampāṭa dasyugaṇa, sabhe kore hare para dhana*

"The sweetness of Kṛṣṇa's form, sound, touch, scent and the taste of His lips cannot be described. When these five men see them they become greedy. My mind is a single horse

and these five senses mount it and force it to run in five different directions! O *sakhi*! Just hear of the cause of my suffering! My five senses are like powerful and wanton robbers that loot everyone's property!"

<i>eka aśva eka kṣaṇe,</i>	<i>pāñca pāñca dike ṭāne,</i>	<i>eka mana kon dige jāy?</i>
<i>eka kāle sabhe ṭāne,</i>	<i>gelo ghoṛāra parāṇe,</i>	<i>ei duḥkha sahana nā jāy</i>
<i>indriye nā kori roṣa,</i>	<i>ihā sabhāra kāhān doṣa,</i>	<i>kṛṣṇa rūpādi mahā ākarṣaṇa</i>
<i>rūpādi pāñca pāñce ṭāne,</i>	<i>gelo pāñcera parāṇe,</i>	<i>mora dehe nā rohe jīvana</i>

"One horse is being pulled in five directions at the time – in which direction will one mind go then? The horse will get killed if all five pull at him at the same time – this pain is intolerable! I am not angry at my senses, is it their fault? Kṛṣṇa's form and so are greatly attractive! These five sense objects are pulling, all five of them! If all five of them die, the life will not remain in my body!"

<i>kṛṣṇa rūpāmṛta sindhu,</i>	<i>tāhāra taraṅga bindu,</i>	<i>eka bindu jagata ḍubāy</i>
<i>trijagate joto nārī,</i>	<i>tāra citta ucca giri,</i>	<i>tāhā ḍubāy āge uṭhi dhāy</i>
<i>kṛṣṇera vacana mādhuri,</i>	<i>nānā rasa narmadhārī,</i>	<i>tāra anyāya kohona nā jāy</i>
<i>jagatera nārīra kāṇe,</i>	<i>mādhurī guṇe bāndhi ṭāne,</i>	<i>ṭānāṭāni kāṇera prāṇa jāy</i>

"A **drop** from the waves of the nectar ocean of Kṛṣṇa's form **can inundate the whole world**, inundating the high mountains of the hearts of all the women of the three worlds and causing them to run after it. The sweetness of Kṛṣṇa's words carries different flavours and humours. Its injustice cannot be described. Its sweet attributes bind up the ears of the world's women and through this tug-of-war the ears are killed."

<i>kṛṣṇa aṅga suśītala,</i>	<i>ki kohibo tāra bala,</i>	<i>chaṭāy jine koṭindu candana</i>
<i>sa śāila nārīra vakṣa,</i>	<i>tāhā ākarṣite dakṣa,</i>	<i>ākarṣaye nārīgaṇa mana</i>
<i>kṛṣṇa saurabhya bhara,</i>	<i>mṛgamada madahara,</i>	<i>nilotpālera hare garva dhana</i>
<i>jagata nārīra nāsā,</i>	<i>tāra bhitorā kore bāsā,</i>	<i>nārīgaṇera kore ākarṣaṇa</i>
<i>kṛṣṇera adharāmṛta,</i>	<i>tāte karpūra manda smita,</i>	<i>sva mādhuriye hare nārī mana</i>
<i>chāṛāy anyatra lobha,</i>	<i>nā pāile mane kṣobha,</i>	<i>vraja nārīgaṇera mūla dhana</i>

"What can I say of the power of Kṛṣṇa's cool body, whose luster defeats millions of moons and sandalwood pulp? It is expert in attracting the mountain-like breasts of the women and their minds as well! Kṛṣṇa's abundant fragrance destroys the pride of musk and the wealth of pride of the blue lotus flower. It attracts the women of the world as it resides within their nostrils! The nectar of Kṛṣṇa's lips with the camphor of His slight smile destroys the minds of the women with its sweetness. It makes them give up all other desires and when they don't get it their minds become attracted to its sweetness. Indeed, it is the root treasure of the women of Vraja!"

Another meaning can be that Śrī Govinda is the **object of the relish** of all expert *rasika* devotees, since He Himself is *rasa* or *rasa svarūpa*. '*raso vai saḥ*' (He is taste), '*rasānām rasatamaḥ*' (He is the greatest of all flavours), '*ānandam brahma*' (*brahman* is bliss), and other statements from the Upaniṣads proclaim Him to be the embodiment of

transcendental flavours. And by relishing Him the living entity can really become blissful—*rasam hyevāyam labdhānandī bhavati* (Śruti).

The question may be asked here "When the human inner and outer senses even slightly perceive the sweetness of the form, flavours etc. of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, they certainly start considering mundane sense objects to be sordid, but how is it possible for conditioned souls, who are attached to sense pleasure, to relish the transcendental sweetness of Govinda?" Expecting such a question, Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya tells us of the means to relish Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweetness – *saṅga koro tāra dāsa, prema bhakti satya kori jāno*: As the result of the association and the grace of the saints even the minds of ordinary human beings can relish Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweetness and develop distaste for things not related to Kṛṣṇa. The minds and bodies of the greatly realised Śrī Kṛṣṇa-*bhajanānandī* devotees have been purified so much by their relishing of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweetness that it radiates from their bodies on all sides and thus injects this power of relishing Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweetness also within the hearts of the surrounding people. Just as a touchstone can turn base metal into pure gold through its mere touch, similarly in the company of the great Vaiṣṇavas the contaminated minds of those who desire sense objects begin to radiate with the golden luster of devotional desires. Therefore the best means to get rid of sensual desires and to relish the transcendental flavours of 'Govinda-sense objects', namely Śrī Kṛṣṇa's form and flavours, is to associate with Śrī Kṛṣṇa's servants. Without loving devotion there is no real truth for the living entity, who is intrinsically Śrī Kṛṣṇa's eternal servant, hence it is said – *prema bhakti satya kori jāno* – "Know **loving devotion** to be real." (82)

madhye madhye āche duṣṭa, drṣṭi kori hoy ruṣṭa
guṇa viguṇa kori māne
govinda vimukha jana, sphūrṭi nahe heno dhana
laukika koriyā saba jāne (83)
ajñāna vimukha yoto, nāhi loy sata mata
ahaṅkāre nā jāne āpanā
abhimānī bhakti hīna, jaga mājhe sei dīna,
vṛthā tāra aśeṣa bhāvanā (84)

"There are also wicked people who become angry when they see the loving activities of the devotees, considering their virtues to be faults. People who are averse to Govinda cannot perceive the treasure of love for Kṛṣṇa and they consider it to be all worldly. Those ignorant persons, who are averse to Kṛṣṇa, do not have genuine opinions and do not recognize their (spiritual) self out of false ego. The proud are always bereft of devotion and they are the lowest people in the world. All their endless speculations are in vain."

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *ṭikā-dṛṣṭi kori-śrī kṛṣṇa bhaktānām*
premācaraṇam dṛṣṭvā.

Warnings:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā: In the previous *tripaḍī* the blessed author has advised us to associate with saints in order to relish the flavours of topics of Govinda and to become released from the flavour of mundane sense objects, and to consider loving devotion to be genuine. After this he issues a few warnings to protect us from wicked company. First he says: *madhye madhye āche duṣṭa, drṣṭi kori hoy ruṣṭa, guṇa viguṇa kori māne* – "Even if a devotee gives up wicked company, he may sometimes be entangled in another kind of wicked company. After revealing their definition the blessed author advises us to be careful to stay clear from them.

Here the word **duṣṭa** means greatly defective, wicked and evil people. When they see the devotional activities, their practise of *bhajana* and even the loving activities of a loving devotee, their ecstatic symptoms like shedding tears, having goosepimples on the skin, singing, dancing, laughing and weeping, they become envious or hostile. Taking all these glorious attributes to be faults they become angry—"guṇa viguṇa kori māne". When they see the devotee giving up his caste-duties or all lusty desires and instead engaging in *bhajana*-items like hearing and chanting etc., such sin-yearning wicked persons think that he has become stupid or lazy, and when they see the devotees' loving activities in the form of love-borne symptoms like dancing, singing and weeping they think that they have gone mad, and this makes them angry. The greatly realised devotees should keep far away from such wicked association, for their own defense. The devotees should cast such association far away. All these words of Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya come from his own experiences. An embodiment of love like him was attacked in this way many times, although he was the purely beloved of Śrī-Śrī Gaura-Nityānanda. This can be seen in his biography.

The question may now arise, if the greatly realised devotees cast this evil association far away, how will their wickedness ever go away unless someone preaches to them to purify them? Expecting this question, the blessed author says: *govinda vimukha jana, sphūrṭi nahe heno dhana, laukika koriyā sab jāne* – "Those who are averse to Govinda are atheists and heretics; they do not accept the authority of the Vedic literature". *pālanāc ca trayī dharmah pā śabdena nigadyate; ṣaṇḍayanti tu taṁ yasmāt pāṣaṇḍas tena kīrtitaḥ* "Following the Vedic religion is called *pā* and those who independently defy that are called a *pāṣaṇḍi* or atheist." Therefore it will serve no purpose to preach the scriptural version to them. Rather, if they hear scriptural instructions they will defy it or snub it. The only result the preacher will reap is misery and offence. That is why the scriptures forbid the *sādhaka* to even see the atheists, if not he will suffer dire consequences.

The wicked atheists who are hostile to Govinda will never be able to perceive the treasure of devotion, therefore this treasure must always be kept hidden from them. Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has written –

*phalgu vairāgya nirdagdhāḥ śuṣka jñānās ca hetukāḥ
mīmāṁsakā viśeṣeṇa bhaktyāsvāda bahirmukhāḥ
ityeṣa bhakti rasikaś caurād iva mahā nidhiḥ
jaraṇ mīmāṁsakād rakṣyaḥ kṛṣṇa bhakti rasaḥ sadā
sarvathaiva durūho'yam abhaktair bhagavad rasaḥ
tat pādāmbuja sarvasvair bhaktair evānurasyate*

"Those whose hearts are scorched by dry renunciation or indifference towards devotion, those who seek dry knowledge, who engage in false logic, who preach fruitive activities or who consider any kind of duality false – these persons are averse to relishing devotion. Just as a householder keeps his great jewel hidden from thieves, the *rasika* devotees hide their great jewel of relishing devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa from the abovementioned persons. It should always be especially hidden from those who practise *jara mīmāṃsa* (false logic) for they are always averse to relishing devotion and engage in snubbing devotion with the aid of mundane logic. The flavours of devotion are always incomprehensible by non-devotees. The only persons eligible to relish this are the devotees to whom Śrī Hari's lotus feet are everything." Hence there is no doubt that devotion is always concealed to wicked persons who are averse to Kṛṣṇa. They consider all this to be mundane, they think that the transcendental customs of the path of devotion are all ordinary activities of *karma*-bound conditioned souls. Therefore they cannot understand anything of the transcendental activities of devotion. (83)

The blessed author proclaims that it is futile to preach devotion to the ignorant and bewildered – *ajñāna vimugdha joto, nāhi loy sata mata, ahaṅkāre nā jāne āpanā* – The hearts of those who are bewildered by ignorance, fallen into the trickery of ignorance due to their aversion towards Kṛṣṇa, are always absorbed in thoughts of physical gratification. For persons endowed with the five faults of *ajñāna*, *viparyāsa*, *bheda*, *bhaya* and *śoka* are called ***ajñāna vimugdha***, bewildered by ignorance. *ajñāna* - forgetting one's constitutional position, *viparyāsa* - thinking in terms of 'I' and 'mine' in connection with the body; *bheda* - desires for enjoyment, *bhaya* - fear that desires for enjoyment are thwarted, *śoka* - thinking 'I have died' when desires for enjoyment are destroyed. Therefore an *ajñāna vimugdha* person is never able to understand the good advice of the great devotees of Kṛṣṇa.

Some may think: "Those who are bewildered by ignorance and attached to perishable bodily matters also perceive how perishable physical attachments are, therefore if the great souls give them an indication of eternal and immutable things like devotion and God, then why would they not accept it as genuine?" The answer to this is: *ahaṅkāre nā jāne āpanā* – "Maddened by false ego they have forgotten their own identity, they are out of their own habits due to the intoxication of false pride, therefore though they see how bodily matters are all temporary, they still do not see it. What to speak of realising the temporary nature of the body or seeking to find their own position, the heart of the proud person is a playground of some of the most inhuman vices. In the Udyoga Parva of the Mahābhārata it is written –

*mado'sṭādaśa doṣaḥ syāt purāḥ yaḥ sa prakīrtitaḥ; loka dveṣyaṁ prātikūlyam abhyasṛyā mṛṣā vacaḥ
kāma krodhau pāraṇtraṁ parivādo'tha paiśunam; artha hāni vivādaś ca mātsaryam prāṇi pīdanam
īṣyā moho'ti vādaś ca saṁjñā nāśo'bhyasūyitā; tasmāt prajāno na mādyeta sadā hyetad vigarhitam*

"Eighteen faults can be found in proud persons. The person who is overcome by pride is abhorred by the people. He imagines his pride to be challenged by others since long, therefore he always acts in different negative ways towards the people. He finds fault with the virtuous and issues different kinds of slander, and does not hesitate to lie in different ways, so that no one will be honoured like him. He becomes greatly attached to and eager

after the subject in which his pride lies, and if anybody speaks against his desired object his anger is ignited like fire. He becomes subservient to those who kindle the firewood of his pride. Proud people constantly slander others and are vessels of different kinds of deception. In order to preserve his pride he wastes a lot of money (on legal challenges and so), and is constantly engaged in quarrel. Envy of someone else's prosperity is always present in the heart of the proud, and he always inflicts pain on others. His heart always burns in the fire of envy and is thus bewildered by delusion and ignorance. The proud always violates protocol, is devoid of knowledge of good and bad and is always absorbed in violence against others. Because he has all these terrible vices an intelligent person always gives up false pride."

When considering the abovementioned eighteen faults of the proud, everyone can easily understand that the proud cannot even have a whiff of pure devotion, nor can there be any more miserable person in the world. Hence Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says— *abhimānī bhakti hīna, jaga mājhe sei dīna, vṛthā tāra aśeṣa bhāvanā* "The proud are bereft of devotion. They are the lowest people of the world and all their thoughts are in vain." Simply for the preservation of his honour all his thoughts are burned to ashes in the fire of his pride. Therefore the Lord has called proud people **bewildered souls** in the Gītā: *ahāṅkāra vimūḍhātmā kartāham iti manyate* (3.27) "Persons bewildered by false ego think themselves the doers of all activities." Therefore: "pride goeth before the fall."

Through their personal examples the great teachers have shown the people of the world how to give up false pride. When the five Pāṇḍavas ascended to heaven, Sahadeva was the first one to fall back to earth. When Bhīma inquired from Yudhiṣṭhira about the cause of Sahadeva's fall, the virtuous king replied: *ātmanah sadṛśam prājñam naiṣo'manyata kañcana; tena doṣena patitas tasmād eṣa nṛpātmajaḥ* "This prince did not consider anyone to be his equal, and this fault caused his fall down." After he spoke thus, the remaining four brothers continued. After a while Nakula fell down. When Bhīma inquired about the cause of Nakula's fall, Yudhiṣṭhira replied: *rūpeṇa mat samo nāsti kaścid ityasya darśanam; adhikaś cāham evaika ityasya manasi sthitam. nakulaḥ patitas tasmād āgaccha tvaṁ vṛkodara –* "He thought: 'No one is as handsome as me', and this pride caused his fall. O Vṛkodara! Come along!" After Nakula Arjuna fell down and when Bhīma questioned him like before, the virtuous king replied: *ekāhnā nirdaheyam vai śatru nityarjuno'bravit. na ca tat kṛtavān eṣa śūramānī tato'patat. avamene dhanu grāhān eṣa sarvāmś ca phālgunaḥ; tathā caitan na tu tathā kartavyam bhūtim icchatā* "This Arjuna was so proud of his bravery that he said: 'I will scorch the enemy within a single day'. Actually he could not make his words true, so he should not have claimed that, and since he disrespected other archers on the strength of being himself the greatest archer, he had to fall down. Anyone desiring his own welfare should never act like that." After placing a few more steps Bhīma himself fell down. After having fallen, Bhīma inquired after the cause of his own fall and Yudhiṣṭhira said: *atibhuktaṁ ca bhavatā prāṇena tu vikatthase. anavekṣa param pārtha tenāsi patitaḥ kṣitau* "O Bhīma! You ate too much and did not respect others' power, but only praised your own power. For this you too had to fall to earth." Only Yudhiṣṭhira, who was free from pride, was able to ascend to heaven.

Actually the five Pāṇḍavas are Śrī Kṛṣṇa's eternal associates, and not conditioned souls bound by their *karma*. Their could be no false pride in them, but still Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira taught the people of the world the valuable lesson that 'pride goeth before the fall' by letting Bhīma and others fall down to earth. By being very humble the practising devotee casts the great enemy of false pride far away. (84)

*āra saba parihari, parama īśvara hari,
sevo mana! prema kori āśa
eka vraja rāja pure, govinda rasika vare
koro ho sadāi abhilāṣa (85)*

"O mind! Give up everything else and serve the supreme Lord Hari, aspiring for prema! Always yearn for Govinda, the greatest rasika, in Vraja pura."

Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *ṭīkā* – *eka vraja rāja pure* – *martya vraja maṇḍala ityarthah* Eka Vraja Rāja Pure means the terrestrial Vraja Maṇḍala.

Aspiration for loving devotional service:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – By instructing his own mind Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya encourages the *sādhakas* of the world to aspire only for the loving service of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava and to give up all other aspirations. First he says: *āra sab parihari, parama īśvara hari, sevo mana! prema kori āśa* "O mind! Give up everything else and just hope for the loving service of Lord Hari!" Devotion means service— *bhaj ityeṣa vai dhātu sevāyām parikīrtitaḥ* (Garuḍa Purāṇa). Therefore a fixed up devotee does not desire anything else but the service of Śrī Bhagavān. As a result of beginningless forgetfulness of God, the conditioned soul is entangled within the material world, therefore different kinds of sensual desires have been harboured by souls that are in *māyā* since beginningless time. Therefore it is natural that a practising devotee who first enters into the life of devotion harbours also other desires than serving the Lord. As long as other desires remain one's devotion will simply be a semblance and will not yield the fruit of *prema*. Therefore by taking shelter of the saints and the scriptures one becomes aware of the true nature of devotion, gives up all other other desires than Kṛṣṇa and thus commences *bhajana*. Therefore the definition of devotion has been given in the Śāṅḍilya Bhakti Sūtra – *sā parānuraktir īśvare*. "Devotion means the utmost attachment to God." In his commentary on this aphorism, Śrīpāda Svapneśvarācārya has said: *anus tu na lakṣaṇāntargataḥ kintu bhagavan mahimādi jñānād anu paścāj jāyamānatvād anuraktir ityuktam*. "The word **anu** is not included in the definition, but Śrī Hari's glories and knowledge of the real nature of devotion in the wake of attachment to Him is called **bhakti**." (*anu*=following behind, *rakti*= attachment) Hence Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has said: **āra sab parihari** "The practising devotee should know that all ulterior motives are obstacles to pure devotion, so he should give them up and do *bhajana*."

The advise is given to worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Original Personality of Godhead, in the words **parama īśvara hari**. Śrīmad Bhāgavata, which is the cream of all Vedānta scriptures, describes Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the *sarva avatārī*, the fountain head of all forms of Godhead, or **svayam rūpa**. Not only Śrīmad Bhāgavata says that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the fountainhead of all *avatāras*, but all the Vedic scriptures say so: *kṛṣṇa eva paro devas taṁ dhyāyet taṁ raset* (Śruti)

kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam (Bhāgavata) mattaḥ parataram nānyāt kiñcid asti dhanāñjaya (Gītā) īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac cidānanda vigrahaḥ (Brahma Saṁhitā).

Also in another way Śrī Kṛṣṇa is known as the **Supreme Lord**– the Vedas say more about the constitution of God – *raso vai saḥ*: *rasa* is the constitution of God, in other words: He is full of taste. Although *rasa* forms God's constitution, some flavours are manifest in some *avatāras*, whereas in no single *avatāra* all flavours are simultaneously present. However, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Original Personality of Godhead, the Supreme Controller and the embodiment of all transcendental ambrosial flavours. All flavours are fully manifest within Him, because in Him there are some attributes that nourish *rasa*. The Gosvāmīs have described these attributes as His sweetness. All these extraordinary sweetnesses are revealed in His Vraja! Through this sweetness Śrī Kṛṣṇa steals everyone's minds and hearts immensely, and this is why Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya calls Him the Supreme Controller **Hari**.

After this he says: ***seva mana! prema kori āśa!*** We have already discussed that devotion means service, therefore the aspiration to serve the beloved deity will be cherished within the devotee's heart. But without love this service cannot please the deity, therefore the aspiration towards attaining *prema* takes root within the heart of the practitioner. The hope to attain *prema* is the hope to serve, because service bereft of love cannot delight Śrī Kṛṣṇa and thus service is also not attained. Hence it is said: ***premā hoite pāi kṛṣṇera sevā sukha rasa*** (C.C.) "From *prema* the relish of Kṛṣṇa's blissful service is attained." Prior to this Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has said (in *tripadī* nr. 80): *prema vinā āna nāhi cāu* "Don't wish anything else but *prema*."

Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas do not worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone, they worship Both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Earlier it was said: *yugala caraṇa sevā, yugala caraṇa dhyevā, yugalei monera pīṛīti* (43) "Serve the lotus feet of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, meditate on Them and love Them within the mind". *rādhā kṛṣṇa sevana, ekānta koriyā mana* (76) "Fix your mind on the service of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa", and *rādhā kṛṣṇa koro dhyāna, svapne-o nā bolo āna* (79) "Meditate on Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and don't discuss anything else, even in dreams!" Therefore the line of this *tripadī*: *parama īśvara hari, sevo mana! prema kori āśa* ("O Mind! Serve the Supreme Controller Hari, and desire His love") is followed by the line *eke vraja rāja pure, govinda rasika vare, koroho sadāi abhilāṣa* ("Always yearn for Govinda, the **greatest of relishers** in the abode of the king of Vraja"). We have already discussed that Bhagavān is the embodiment of *rasa*, and since He is the embodiment of *rasa*, He is also the relisher of that same *rasa*. Relishing the flavours of love is the Lord's own treasure. Time, activities, illusion and the living entity – none of them know how to relish the flavours of love. The extraordinary activity of the Personality of Godhead is to be a relisher. If the Lord did not relish *rasa*, no pastime could reach perfection, for it is not possible for a self-satisfied and self-delighted God to have any desire. God's self-perfect nature is to fulfill His own desires to relish love-flavours. Amongst them there are various Personalities of Godhead who are known as *rasikas* by relishing the reverential love in the hearts of Their devotees. But the Original Personality of Godhead Vrajendranandana is called *rasika śekhara*, the greatest of all relishers, because He relishes the pure love of the people of Vraja, which is completely free from all awe and reverence. Above all is the love of *premamaṃyī* Śrī Rādhārāṇī, known as the flavour of *mādana*, and because Kṛṣṇa relishes this He is called ***rasika vara*** or the crownjewel of relishers.

The blessed author says: "O mind! Always long for this *rasika vara* Śrī Govinda, in other words, Śrī Govinda, who is always engaged in pastimes with Śrī Rādhārāṇī, is your ever-coveted deity!" The worshipable principle of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas is Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, surrounded by Their playful girlfriends. They always carry the desire to personally serve and worship Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava within their hearts, and while they engage in the worship of hearing and chanting Their glories, they meditate on Their eightfold daily pastimes in the abode of Vraja, in which they serve Them, their chosen deities, with their mentally conceived spiritual bodies, and as they achieve perfection '*sādhane bhāvibo yāhā, siddha dehe pābo tāhā*', they receive a corresponding spiritual body. Following this unfailing psychological truth, they will be blessed with attaining their long desired devotional service in the *siddha svarūpa* that they have always contemplated during their worship. (85)

narottama dāsa kohe, sadā mora prāṇa dahe,
heno bhakta saṅga nā pāiyā
abhāgyera nāhi ora, michāi hoinu bhora,
duḥkha rahu antare jāgiyā (86)

"Narottama dāsa says: "My heart is always burning because I cannot attain the company of such *rasika* devotees. There is no limit to my misfortune. I am absorbed in the delusion that I am actually fortunate. Such misery has arisen within my heart."

Desiring the company of the devotees:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā— In the previous *tripadī* Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya instructed his own mind to give up all other aspirations and to take only the desire for *prema* within the heart, to serve *parama īśvara hari*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and to keep the aspiration for the greatest *rasika* Śrī Govinda, or Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava in Śrī Vṛndāvana always awake within the heart. Now humility awakens and he contemplates that there is no chance that all these attributes, that are easily attained by the devotees, will arise within his mind, that is so immersed in sensuality. But if he could attain the association of such a greatly qualified devotee, then on the strength of such company and such grace such divine qualities could also be infused within his mind. After all, without the association of such great souls the fault of aversion towards God and identification with the material body and its features could not be destroyed, and the strong desire to attain love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the relish of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's sweetness could also not arise. The grace of the Lord descends to the human world through the channel of the association with and the grace of great devotees, not in an independent way. The main mercy bestowed upon the afflicted conditioned souls is bestowed by the *sādhus*, the secondary mercy is bestowed by the Lord Himself. And again, the grace of the *sādhus* is not attainable without their association. Hence Mahārāja Mucukunda is heard to have spoken the following words to Śrī Kṛṣṇa –

*bhavāpavargo bhramato yadā bhavej janasya tarhyacyuta sat samāgamah
sat saṅgama yarhi tadaiva sad gatau parāvareṣe tvayi jāyate ratih*

"O Acyuta! When the time has come for the conditioned souls to free themselves from bondage, then they attain the association with great saints, and when this association is attained, love for You, the Supreme Controller, Himself the only goal of the saints, is awakened!" When the heart of the conditioned soul hears the topics of the Lord, that naturally emanate from the mouths of the great saints, faith in God naturally awakens, and gradually taste will develop for hearing such topics, and from the nine-fold process of devotion, starting with hearing and chanting, the fifth human pursuit known as *prema* awakens.

Humbly Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya condemns himself, saying: *narottama dāsa kohe, sadā mora prāṇa dohe, heno bhakta saṅga nā pāiyā* – "Narottama dāsa says: "My heart is always burning since I did not attain the company of such devotees." For want of the company of the devotees Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya feels urgently burning pangs within his heart, and he considers the company of the saints to be very rarely achieved. In this way the company of saints is the most coveted thing. Śrī Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna –

*mad bhakto durlabho yasya sa eva mama durlabhah;
tatparo durlabho nāsti satyaṁ satyaṁ dhanañjaya*

.....

*ye me bhaktajanāḥ pārtha na me bhaktās ca te janāḥ;
mad bhaktānāṁ ca ye bhaktās te me bhaktatamā matāḥ*

ye kecit prāṇino bhaktā mad arthe tyakta bāndhavāḥ; teṣāṁ ahaṁ parikṛito nānya kṛito dhanañjaya

(Ādi Purāṇa quoted in Śrī Haribhakti Vilāsa)

"O Pārtha! I rarely attain he for whom My devotee is rarely attained. Truly, truly no one is more rarely attained by Me in this world than he! Those who are only devoted to Me are not My real devotees, but those who are the devotees of My devotees are My best devotees. I am purchased by anyone who becomes My devotee and for this reason renounces his friends and relatives. I am never purchased by anyone else." One of the greatest means to attain the Lord's grace is to consider the company of the devotee to be very rarely attained, this is proven from the above-quoted words of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Through the company of the devotees the grace of those devotees is attained, and the more the grace of the great souls falls in the heart of fortunate candidate, and the more his grace-power works on him, the more the grace of the Lord will be attainable or the more he will qualify for attaining *prema*.

After this the blessed author says: *abhāgyera nāhi ora, michāi hoinu bhora, duḥkha rohu mora antare jāgiyā* "There is no limit to my misfortune, I am immersed in falsity and pain awakens within my heart." Although he is the embodiment of *prema*, great humility now awakens within Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya, and he speaks with certainty about his misfortune of being deprived of such devotee-association – *abhāgyera nāhi ora* "There is no *ora* or limit to my misfortune, still I am *bhora* or intoxicated by the false notion that I am very fortunate or that I am myself a devotee. Although I am factually unfortunate I am cheated, for I think myself to be very fortunate indeed. When this sorrow awakens within my heart and hurts it." From these humble words of Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya we can learn that we often consider

ourselves great devotees or *bhajanānandīs*, and this makes us very satisfied. But actually dissatisfaction is the nature of devotion. *premera svabhāva- yāhān premera sambandha; se-i māne- kṛṣṇe mora nāhi prema gandha* (C.C.) "It is the nature of *prema* that wherever there is a loving relationship, the devotee thinks: "I don't even have a whiff of love for Kṛṣṇa." Devotion awakens a feeling of insatiability within the heart of the practitioner, and that keeps humility, which is the very life of devotion, constantly awake. The practitioner then remembers his own fallen condition and anxiously prays to the Lord as follows:

*mat tulyo nāsti pāpātmā nāparādhī ca kaścana
parihāre'pi lajjā me kiṁ bruve puruṣottama*

"O Supreme Person! There is no such a sinful and offensive person as me anywhere in the world! What more can I say? I am even ashamed to pray to Your lotus feet: 'Please forgive me my faults!' Although he is the most qualified person of all, the practitioner prays like that, thus making the inner core of the Lord's compassionate heart tremble, thus attracting a limitless flow of the Lord's grace towards himself. Then nothing remains unattained for the practitioner. (87)

*vacanera agocara, vṛndāvana heno sthala,
svaprakāśa premānanda ghana
yāhāte prakāṣa sukha, nāhi jarā mṛtyu duḥkha,
kṛṣṇa-līlā-rasa anukṣaṇa (87)*

"A place like Vṛndāvana is simply indescribable! It is deep, selfmanifest ecstatic love itself! Here happiness is manifest and here there is no misery of old age and death. Rather, the flavours of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes can be relished here at every moment."

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *tīkā* – *śrī vṛndāvanam viśinaṣṭi 'vacanera agocara' ityādinā. vacanera agocara– anirvacanīyam nirvaktum aśakyam ityarthah.*

Śrī Vṛndāvana's real form:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā– In this *tripadī* Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya reveals the truth on Śrī Vṛndāvana, starting with saying: *vacanera agocara, vṛndāvana heno sthala* – "Vṛndāvana is indescribable." Just as the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas establish the spirituality and eternity of the Personalities of Godhead, Their pastimes, Their forms and Their associates, similarly they establish the eternality and spirituality of the holy abode of the Lord. The phenomenal world is a product of the external, illusory mundane energy, but the holy *dhāma* is a transformation of the internal, spiritual energy, though it may be present within the phenomenal world. The basis of the holy *dhāma* is the existence potency *sandhinī śakti*. Although Śrī Vṛndāvana is situated in the phenomenal world it transcends that phenomenal world and is always unscathed by its mundane aspect. There is much scriptural evidence for the fact that Śrī

Vraja-*dhāma* is beyond the phenomenal world, eternal, extraordinary, invisible to the gross eye, the mind or words. In the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (7.24) it is seen: *sa bhagavaḥ kasmin pratiṣṭhita iti sve mahimni* "Where is that Hari, who is known as *bhūma*, established?" The answer: "He is established within His own inconceivable prowess." Śrī Gopāla Tāpanī Śruti says: *sākṣād brahma gopāla purīhiti* "Gopāla's city Vraja-*dhāma* is transcendent *brahma* itself." Śrī Vṛndāvana-*dhāma* is described in Varāha Purāṇa as beyond the phenomenal world as such: *anyaiva kācit sā sṛṣṭir vidhātu vyatirekiṇa* "Brahmā has created all objects within the universe, but Mathurā is beyond Brahmā's creation. This creation is of a different kind." In the Pātāla Khaṇḍa of the Padma Purāṇa the eternality of Vraja is shown: *ṛṣir māthura nāmātra tapaḥ kurvati śāśvata iti* – "The sage named Māthura is forever performing penance here (in Mathurā)" There can be no doubt that the place where Māthura -ṣi is perpetually performing penances is itself eternal, for it is impossible to perform penance forever in a place which is itself not eternal. The extraordinary nature of Vraja is described in the Ādi Varāha Purāṇa– *bhūr bhuvah svas talenāpi na pātāla tale'malam. nordhva-loke mayā dṛṣṭam tādrk kṣetram vasundhare.* Śrī Varāha-deva tells Dharaṇī-devī: "O Vasundhare! I have never seen such a sacred place like Mathurā, either in the three planetary systems *bhū*, *bhuvah* and *svah*, nor anywhere between *pātāla* (hell) and heaven!" The Pātāla Khaṇḍa of the Padma Purāṇa describes how Vraja is invisible to the gross material eyes – *tejomayam idam ramyam adṛṣyam carma cakṣuṣā* "This radiant and lovely abode of Vṛndāvana, is invisible to the gross eyes." If it is invisible to the eyes it is also understood to be indescribable by words, hence Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: *vacanera agocara, vṛndāvana heno sthala* – "A place like Vṛndāvana is indescribable by words."

After this the blessed author says: *sva prakāśa premānanda ghana*. Just as Śrī Kṛṣṇa's form is self manifest, so is His abode of Śrī Vṛndāvana, which is a transformation of His *sandhinī śakti*, His existence potency. Therefore it is said: *sarvaga ananta vibhu kṛṣṇa-tanu sama; uparyadho vyāpi āche nāhiko niyama* (C.C.) "The holy *dhāma* is all-pervading, endless, spreads upwards and downwards without rule and is thus just like Kṛṣṇa's body." Śrī Vṛndāvana-*dhāma* is Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *svarūpa vibhūti* (manifestation of His true form), hence it is self-manifest like Śrī Kṛṣṇa's body. Since it is self-manifest it eternally manifests itself also on earth, although it resides at the summit of the spiritual sky. Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has written – *tad evam tad dhāmnām uparyadhaḥ prakāśa-mātratvenobhaya vidhatvaṁ prasaktam. vastutastu śrī bhagavan nityādhiṣṭhānatvena tac chrī vigrahavad ubhayatra prakāśāvirodhāt samāna guṇa nāma rūpatvenāmnā tattvālāghavāc caika-vidhatvam eva mantavyam.....eka vidhatvaṁ tasyācintya śakti svikāreṇa sambhāvitam eva* (Śrī Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha– Paragraph 106) "The abodes of the Lord are self manifest, therefore they are famous as being manifest both above (in the spiritual sky) as below (on earth). Actually we should consider them to be one in quality, since the Lord eternally dwells in both of them and because they are simultaneously manifest above and below. Just as the Lord's form is manifest in many places at the same time, so it is with His divine abode. The attributes, names and forms of the holy *dhāma*, which is manifest both above and below, should be known to be equal. The attributes, names and forms of both kinds of manifest abodes are well known as identical. If we accept another kind of abode the principle becomes reduced, if not, the existence of the innumerable *dhāmas* in the spiritual sky and in the innumerable mundane universes is acknowledged – that cannot even be imagined.

This transcendental abode of Vṛndāvana is the playground of Vrajendranandana, the Original Personality of Godhead, and of Śrī Rādhārāṇī, the embodiment of *mahābhāva*. Can there be any doubt then that this is *premānanda ghana*, deep ecstatic love? Śrīpāda Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī has said:

*premānanda rasāti vihvalatame nānā camatkārabhṛd
divyāneka maṇisthale bahu lasad vallī dru-gulmādike
divyaiḥ pakṣi mṛgaiḥ sarovara saric chailādibhiś cādbhute
śrī vṛndā vipine kadā nu lalitaikātmyam kiśoram bhaje (Vt.M.6.10)*

"When will I worship that Śrī Yugala Kiśora, who are one lovely soul in two forms, in this wonderful Śrī Vṛndāvana, which is always greatly overwhelmed by the flavours of ecstatic love, which is beautified by various astonishing divine jewelled places, which is decorated by various excellent trees and vines, permeated by divine birds and deer and filled with lakes, rivers and mountains?"

After this the blessed author says: *yāhāte prakāṣa sukha, nāhi jarā mṛtyu duḥkha, kṛṣṇa līlā rasa anukṣaṇa*—"Where happiness is manifest, where there is no pain of old age and death, and where the flavours of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes are always relished." Both the manifest and unmanifest forms of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's confidential playground Śrī Vṛndāvana are intrinsically filled with indescribable *sat cid ānanda* and deep ecstatic love, therefore transcendental flavours are always there. There the mobile and immobile creatures are all full of bliss and since they are beyond *māyā* no one suffers old age and death or other tribulations there. Everyone there is constantly relishing the sweet mellows of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's nectarean pastimes.

In the visible manifestation, in other words the Vṛndāvana we are seeing with the gross eyes, we can see old age, death, disease and all kinds of sorrow, but this is only shown so that those who are averse to the holy *dhāma* are being misled into a continuation of their misconceptions. This means that if the mundane people of this phenomenal world would not see the old age, death, disease and sorrow of the residents of Vṛndāvana, everyone would start to take up residence in Vṛndāvana in order to become immortal or to become freed from sorrow and pain. That would not be for their true benefit, for they are not qualified for devotion and residence in Vraja. The result would be that the misconceptions of the non-devotees would perish and the confidentiality and excellence of devotion would be destroyed as well. In the Padma Purāṇa we see the Lord Himself declare that all the human beings, animals, birds, trees and vines within the manifest form of Vraja, will certainly attain spiritual bodies and attain the vicinity of the Lord, through the power of the holy *dhāma* – *idaṁ vṛndāvanam ramyaṁ mama dhāmaiva kevalam. atra ye paśavo pakṣi vṛkṣāḥ kītā narāmarāḥ. ye vasanti mamādhiṣṇe mṛte yānti mamālayam*. Therefore we should know all the living beings in Vṛndāvana to be transcendental principles. Anyone who is so offensive to consider them ordinary conditioned beings of the phenomenal world, that are subjugated by old age, death and the reactions to their previous activities, cannot attain the supreme position of a maidservant of Śrī Rādhā. In Vṛndāvana Mahimāmṛta (17.83 and 84), Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī has written –

svānanda sac cid ghana rūpatā matir yāvan na vṛndāvana vāsi jantuṣu

*tāvāt pravīṣṭo'pi na tatra vindate tato'parādhāt padaviṃ parātparām
yadaiva sac cid rasa rūpa buddhir vṛndāvanastha sthira jaṅgameṣu
syān nirvyalikam puruṣas tadaiva cakāsti rādhā priya sevi rūpaḥ*

"As long as one is so offensive not to see all the creatures who live in Vṛndāvana as transcendently blissful and full of ecstatic love and transcendental flavours, that long the supreme position of Rādhā's maidservant will remain unattainable, even if one has already entered Vṛndāvana."

"When a man sincerely sees all the moving and non-moving creatures that live in Vṛndāvana as transcendental beings – then he will shine, having attained his *mañjarī svarūpa*, that is suitable for lovingly serving Śrī Rādhā." Then the practitioner will be blessed with the good fortune of constantly relishing the blissful flavours of the supremely blissful Śrī-Śrī Rādhā Mādhava. (87)

*rādhā-kṛṣṇa duhu prema, lakṣa bāṇa yeno hema,
yāhāra hilola rasa sindhu
cakora nayana prema, kāma rati kore dhyāna,
pirīti sukhera duhu bandhu (88)*

"The love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa is purer than gold molten a hundred-thousand times, and this love makes high waves in the ocean of *rasa*. O Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa! Your Cakora-bird-like eyes relish the sweet nectar of Each other's moon-like faces and Kāma and Rati constantly meditate on this, desiring to attain this ecstatic love! In this way You always nourish Each other's loving happiness!"

*Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's tīkā – yuvayor mukha candrayoś cakorāv iva ye
nayane tayoh premāṇaṃ rati kāmāu dhyāyataḥ. yāhāra hilola ityādi– śrī vṛndāvanasya sambandhe
līlā rasa eva sindhus tasya taraṅga rūpaḥ śrī rādhā kṛṣṇayoh premāḥ.*

Gold molten a hundred thousand times :

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – In this *tripadī* Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has described the purity of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's mutual love and the sweetness of Their *rasa*. First he describes the purity – *rādhā kṛṣṇa duhuṃ prema, lakṣa bāṇa yeno hema*. The mutual love of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa is pure like gold molten a hundred thousand times. The more molten the gold is, the purer it gets. No matter how much alloy or base metal is mixed in the gold, it has completely disappeared when it molten five times and it has become purer than anything. Therefore no one will ever melt gold a hundred thousand times over, since there is no need for that. Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: "If it was ever possible to melt gold a hundred thousand times over, then that could equal the purity of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's love. It is not possible to melt gold a hundred thousand times over, therefore there is no match to Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's love anywhere. In this particular Kali age Śrī Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu has taken Śrī Rādhā's

"I don't care about My own misery, I only desire His happiness! His happiness is My purpose! If He becomes very happy by giving Me misery, then that is My greatest happiness!"

ye nārī ke vāñche kṛṣṇa, tāra rūpe satṛṣṇa
tāre nā pāiyā kāhe hoy duḥkhī
mui tāra pāye poḍi, loiyā yāo hāte dhari,
kṛḍā korāiyā koro tāre sukhe

"When I see that Kṛṣṇa eagerly desires a certain woman and that He is unhappy because He cannot get her, I will fall down at her feet, catch her hand and bring her to Kṛṣṇa, so that He will become happy by playing lovegames with her."

kāntā kṛṣṇe kore roṣa, kṛṣṇa pāy santoṣa,
sukha pāy tāḍana bhartsane
yathā yogya kore māna, kṛṣṇa tāte sukha pān,
chāḍe māna alapa sādhanē
sei nārī jīye kene, kṛṣṇera marma vyathā jāne,
tabhu kṛṣṇe kore gāḍha roṣa
nija sukhe māne kāj, poḍu tāra śire bāj,
kṛṣṇera mātra cāhiye santoṣa!

"When a certain *gopī* is jealously angry with Kṛṣṇa and chastises Him, then Kṛṣṇa becomes very happy and satisfied. She shows her pride suitably and that makes Kṛṣṇa happy. Then, with some endeavour, she gives up her pique. Why does a woman continue to live who knows Kṛṣṇa's heartache, but who still continues her deep anger towards Him? She's only interested in her own happiness! Let a thunderbolt fall on her head! We only want Kṛṣṇa's satisfaction!"

ye gopī mora kore roṣa, kṛṣṇera kore santoṣa,
kṛṣṇa yāre kore abhilāṣa
mui tāra ghare yāiyā, tāre sevo dāsī hoiyā,
tabe mora sukhera ullāsa.

"When a *gopī* is angry with Me, but she satisfies Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa desires her, then I will go to her house and serve her like a maidservant. Then I will become very happy!"

kuṣṭhī viprera ramaṇī, pativratā śiromaṇī,
pati lāgi koilo veśyāra sevā.
sthambhilo sūryera gati, jiyāile mṛta pati,
tuṣṭa koile mukhya tina devā

"The wife of a leprotic *brāhmaṇa* was the crownjewel of dedicated wives. For the sake of her husband she served a prostitute, stopped the course of the sun, revived her dead husband and satisfied the three chief Gods (Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva)."

kṛṣṇa mora jīvana, kṛṣṇa mora prāṇa-dhana,

*kṛṣṇa mora prāṇera parāna
hṛdoya upore dharaṇi, sevā kori sukhī korāṇi,
ei mora sadā rahe dhyāna*

"Kṛṣṇa is My life! Kṛṣṇa is the treasure of My life! Kṛṣṇa is the life of My life! I keep Him upon My heart and make Him happy with My service. That is My constant meditation."

*mora sukha sevane, kṛṣṇera sukha saṅgame
ataeva deha den dāna.
kṛṣṇa more kānta kori, kohe tumi prāṇeśvarī,
mora hoy dāsī abhimāna*

"My happiness lies in service and Kṛṣṇa's happiness lies in sexual intercourse, therefore I give My body to Him. Kṛṣṇa thus makes Me His lover and says: "You are the Queen of My life!", but still I consider Myself to be a mere maidservant."

*kānta sevā sukhapūra, saṅgama hoite sumadhura,
tāte sākṣī lakṣmī thākuraṇī
nārāyaṇera hṛde sthiti, tabu pāda sevāya mati
sevā kore dāsī abhimānī*

"The service of My lover is the abode of happiness and it is much sweeter than intercourse with Him. That is shown also by the goddess of fortune. She is residing on Lord Nārāyaṇa's chest, but still she likes to serve His feet as if she is His maidservant."

*ei rādhāra vacana, viśuddha prema lakṣaṇa,
āsvādaye śrī gaura rāya.
bhāve mana asthira, sāttvike vyāpe śarīra,
mana deha dharaṇa nā yāya*

"Lord Gaura thus tasted the words of Rādhā, that showed the symptoms of pure love. In that mood His mind was unsteady, His body was studded with *sāttvika* ecstasies, and He could not sustain His mind and body."

*vrajera viśuddha prema, yeno jāmbunada hema,
ātma sukhera yāhā nāhi gandha
se prema jānāite loke, prabhu koilo ei śloke,
pade koilo arthera nirbandha.*

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta Antya 20)

"The love in Vraja is as pure as gold from the Jāmbu-river, and there is not a whiff of personal happiness in it. The Lord spoke this verse (*āśliṣya vā pada*) to teach this love to the world and explained its meaning also in this *pada* (song)."

These songs, that have been written down in the words of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, very clearly and naturally reveal the purity of Śrī Rādhā's love, which is matchless throughout the

world. The more a devotee loves Kṛṣṇa, the more Kṛṣṇa shows love to the devotee, this is the nature of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the transcendental principle. Therefore it should be known that Śrī Kṛṣṇa also shows the purest love for Śrī Rādhārāṇī, being fully subdued by Her love.

Then the blessed author says: *yāhāra hillola rasa sindhu*. In his commentary on this line Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda has written: *yāhāra hillola ityādi śrī vṛndāvanasya sambandhe lilā rasa eva sindhus tasya taraṅga rūpaḥ śrī rādhā-kṛṣṇayoḥ premāḥ*. The flavour of Vṛndāvana's pastimes is like an ocean and its constantly billowing waves are Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's mutual love. The ocean of Śrī Vṛndāvana's purely sweet loving flavours is boundless, deep and hard to cross, and the innumerable billowing waves within it are Śrī-Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's mutual love. A waveless ocean looks one way and an ocean with waves looks another way. The sounds produced by the countless billowing waves of an ocean captivate the minds and eyes of the beholder. The love of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa makes big billowing waves within the ocean of Śrī Vṛndāvana's purely sweet flavours of *lilā* day and night and thus greatly captivate the mind of the *rasika* devotee. Although these love-waves of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are very confidential and hard to enter into, nowadays in the age of Śrīman Mahāprabhu the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavācāryas who have surrendered to His lotus feet have revealed the secrets of these love-waves in different ways within their books and have offered the good fortune of entering into these waves even to the fallen and downtrodden. Hence none are more unfortunate in this world than those who have attained a human body in this particular Kali age and yet could not even get slightly acquainted with Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's love-waves.

After this Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya said: *cakora nayana prema, kāma rati kore dhyāna, pīriti sukhera duhuṅ bandhu* "O Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa! Your Cakora-bird-like eyes relish the sweet nectar of Each other's moon-like faces and Kāma and Rati constantly meditate on this, desiring to attain this ecstatic love! In this way You always nourish Each other's loving happiness!" In his comment on this line Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda has written: *yuvayor mukha candrayoś cakorāv iva ye nayane tayoh premāṇaṁ rati kāmāu dhyāyataḥ* "O Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa! Your eyes are like Cakora-birds that drink the sweet nectar of Each other's moon-like faces! Even Kāma and Rati constantly meditate on this, hoping to achieve such a type of love!" The purport of this is that love's activity is making the beloved relish the sweetness of the lover, for love is the promulgator of or gateway to sweetness. The main drinking vessel that causes Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa to relish Each other's sweetness through Their mutual love is Their eyes. Just as the gates of the eyes reveal different emotions, similarly sweet forms can be relished through the eyes. Hence it is said that Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa drink the sweet nectar of Each other's moon like faces through Their Cakora-bird-like eyes. In this Their mutual love is revealed through the eyes in such a way that even Kama and Rati constantly meditate on this, as to also attain such a love. This reveals Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the enchanter of Cupid. *rādhā saṅge yadā bhāti tadā madana mohanaḥ; anyathā viśva moho'pi svayaṁ madana mohitaḥ* (Govinda Lilāmṛta) "When Śrī Kṛṣṇa is with Śrī Rādhā then He is the enchanter of Cupid. Otherwise, although He may be the enchanter of Cupid, He remains enchanted by Cupid." Similarly, when Śrī Rādhā is not with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, She is also wilting and suffers the pangs of separation. Hence it is said: *pīriti sukhera duhuṅ bandhu* "Just as a friend tries to increase the happiness of his friend in various ways, similarly Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa cause the increase of Each other's loving, tasty happiness. In the field of relishing loving flavours, Śrī Kṛṣṇa cannot relish bliss even in billions of *gopīs* if Śrī Rādhārāṇī is not involved, and

similarly no other form of Godhead than Vrajendra-nandana can give the bliss of loving flavours to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, not even the Lord of Dvārakā. (88)

*rādhikā preyasī-varā, vāma dike manoharā,
kanaka keśara kānti dhare
anurāge rakta sādī, nīla paṭṭa manohārī,
mañimaya ābharāṇa pore (89)*

"Śrī Rādhikā is Kṛṣṇa's Dearest Beloved, She is generally in opposition to Him and She is very enchanting, having the lustre of a golden Keśara-flower. Her red *sārī* shows Her passionate love for Kṛṣṇa and Her silken blue outer-garments (that resemble Kṛṣṇa's complexion) are very enchanting, decorated with jewelled ornaments."

Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *ṭīkā*— *nīlapaṭṭa—kṛṣṇa varṇa sādṛśyena. anurāge—
anurāgeṇa hetunā. vāmya—vāma svabhāvā.*

Śrī Rādhā, the dearest beloved:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – Without Śrī Rādhārāṇī Śrī Kṛṣṇa cannot get happiness from even millions of *gopīs*, that has been explained in the part of the previous *tripadī*, running: *pīriti sukhera duhuṅ bandhu*. In this *tripadī* this is shown through a description of Śrī Rādhārāṇī. First the blessed author says: *rādhikā preyasī varā, vāma dike manoharā, kanaka keśara kānti dhare* 'Śrī Rādhārāṇī is the crown jewel amongst Śrī Kṛṣṇa's divine consorts, for all the Vraja-*gopīs*, who are Śrī Kṛṣṇa's divine consorts, are the phalanx-expansions of Śrī Rādhārāṇī, whose attributes, form and love are all peerless. In Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta it is described—

*kṛṣṇa kāntā-gaṇa dekhi trividha prakāra; eka lakṣmī-gaṇa, pure mahiṣigaṇa āra
vrajāṅganā-rūpa āra kāntā-gaṇa sāra; śrī rādhikā hoite kāntā-gaṇera vistāra
lakṣmī-gaṇa tāra vaibhava vilāsāṁśa rūpa; mahiṣi-gaṇa vaibhava prakāśa svarūpa
ākāra svabhāva bhede vrajadevī-gaṇa; kāya vyūha-rūpa tāra rasera kāraṇa
bahu kāntā vinā nahe rasera ullāsa; līlāra sahāya lāgi bahut prakāśa
tāra madhye vraje nānā bhāva rasa-bhede; kṛṣṇake korāya rāsādika līlāsvāde
govindānandinī rādhā govinda mohinī; govinda sarvasva **sarva kāntā śiromaṇi***

(Ādi Ch.4)

"There are three kinds of consorts of Kṛṣṇa: Firstly, the goddesses of fortune, and then the Queens of Dvārakā. The greatest consorts, though, are the Vraja-*gopīs*. All these consorts emanate from Śrī Rādhikā. The goddesses of fortune emanate from Her *vaibhava vilāsa* (manifestation of prowess) and the Queens belong to the *vaibhava prakāśa*-group (meaning about the same). There are differences in the Vraja-*gopīs*' forms and natures. They are the phalanx of Rādhā and are the cause of transcendental flavours. Without the presence

of many lovers there can be no delicious bliss, therefore there are many *gopīs* who are helping Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in Their pastimes. In Vraja they have different moods and flavours, and they make Kṛṣṇa relish the flavours of pastimes like the Rāsa-*līlā*. Rādhā delights Govinda and captivates Him. She is Govinda's all-in-all and the **crown jewel of all of His consorts.**"

Śrī Rādhārāṇī is Govinda's all-in-all and the crown jewel of all of Her consorts because in Her is the *mahābhāva* called **mādanākhyā** which maddens the transcendental youthful Cupid of Vṛndāvana Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This treasure of ecstatic love belongs to Śrī Rādhārāṇī alone. The extraordinary attributes that come forth from this *mādanākhyā mahābhāva* exist within Her alone, whereas this cannot exist within any other consort. Some of these attributes are listed in Bṛhad Gautamīya Tantra –

*devī kṛṣṇamayī proktā rādhikā para devatā
sarva lakṣmīmayī sarva kāntiḥ sammohinī parāḥ*

"Śrī Rādhikā is called *devī, kṛṣṇamayī, para devatā, sarva lakṣmīmayī, sarva kānti, sammohinī* and *parā*."

*devī kohi-dyotamānā paramā sundarī; kimvā kṛṣṇa-pūjā krīḍāra vasati nagarī
'kṛṣṇamayī' kṛṣṇa yāra antare bahire; yāhā yāhā netra pore tāhā kṛṣṇa sphure
kimvā premarasamaya kṛṣṇera svarūpa; tāra śakti tāra saha hoy eka rūpa
kṛṣṇa vāñchā pūrti rūpa kore ārādhane; ataeva 'rādhikā' nāma purāṇe vākhāne*

"The word *devī* means splendid, most beautiful or She who dwells in the abode of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes of worship. *kṛṣṇamayī* means that Kṛṣṇa is Her inside out. Wherever Her eyes fall there She perceives Kṛṣṇa. It can also mean that being the energy of Kṛṣṇa, who is the embodiment of love flavours, She shares one form with Him. She worships Kṛṣṇa as the form that fulfills all of His desires, hence the Purāṇas proclaim Her name as *rādhikā*."

*anayārādhito nūnam bhagavān harir īśvaraḥ
yan no vihāya govinda prīto yām anayad rahaḥ*

During the Mahā Rāsa dance Śrī Kṛṣṇa took Śrī Rādhārāṇī along, leaving all the *gopīs* behind. The *gopīs* frantically began to search for Kṛṣṇa and when they saw Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's footprints, adversaries like Candrāvalī became very upset and told the *gopīs* of Rādhā's friendly party: "Lord Hari has surely been worshipped by this girl, hence Govinda has abandoned us and lovingly taken Her to a lonely place."

*ataeva sarva pūjyā parama devatā; sarva pālikā sarva jagatera mātā
sarva lakṣmī śabda pūrve, koriyāchi vyākhyāna; sarva lakṣmī gaṇera teho hoy adhiṣṭhāna
kimvā sarva lakṣmī' kṛṣṇera ṣaḍ vidha aiśvarya; tāra adhiṣṭhātrī śakti- sarva śakti varya
sarva saundarya kānti boisaye yāhāte; sarva lakṣmīgaṇera śobhā hoy yāhā hoite
kimvā kānti śabde kṛṣṇera sab icchā kohe; kṛṣṇera sakala vāñchā rādhāte rahe
rādhikā korena kṛṣṇera vāñchita pūraṇa; 'sarva kānti' śabdera ei artha vivaraṇa
jagata mohana kṛṣṇa- tāhāra mohinī; ataeva samastera parā ṭhākuraṇī*

"Hence She is the most worshipable Supreme Goddess, the protectress of all and the mother of the universe. The word *sarva lakṣmī* has already been explained. All the goddesses of fortune reside within Her. Another meaning of *sarva lakṣmī* is that She is the presiding energy of Kṛṣṇa's six-fold prowess, the greatest of all energies. All the luster of beauty is seated within Her and all the goddesses of fortune attain their beauty from Her. However, the word *kānti* can also indicate 'all of Kṛṣṇa's desires, that reside within Rādhā'. Rādhikā fulfills all of Kṛṣṇa's desires. That is the extended explanation of the words *sarva kānti*. She is the enchantress of the universal enchanter Kṛṣṇa, hence She is the Goddess who is supreme over all others."

For all these reasons Śrī Rādhārāṇī is called Śrī Kṛṣṇa's **preyasī varā, or dearest beloved**. Then again the blessed author says **vāmā**, She who has a stood-up nature. *aher iva gatiḥ premaḥ svabhāva kuṭilā bhavet. ato hetor ahetos ca yūnor māna udañcati* – "Just as a snake has a crooked course of movement, so it is with *prema*. Hence the consorts of Vraja may be angry with Kṛṣṇa, with or without a reason." Śrī Rādhārāṇī is beyond them all, as is shown in Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta (Madhya Ch. 14) –

*gopīgaṇa madhye śreṣṭhā rādhā ṭhākuraṇī; nirmala ujjvala rasa prema ratna khani
vayase 'madhyamā'teho – svabhāve samā; gāḍha prema bhāve teho nīrantara 'vāmā'
vāmya svabhāve 'māna' uṭhe nīrantara; uhāra vāmye uṭhe kṛṣṇera ānanda sāgara*

"Amongst all the *gopīs* Rādhā ṭhākuraṇī is the greatest. She is the mine of jewels of the most brilliant and spotless love. She is of medium age and Her mentality is equipoised. However in deep loving emotion She is **constantly stood-up**. When She is in this mood, proud anger constantly arises within Her, and this creates an ocean of bliss within Kṛṣṇa's heart."

Then again Śrī Rādhārāṇī is **dik manoharā**, meaning that She enchants everyone in all directions, both moving and non-moving. In his book *Saṅgīta Mādhava*, Śrīpāda Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī describes how Śrī Rādhā enchants all the directions –

*vara sīmanṭa rasāmṛta saraṇī dhṛta sindūra surekhām
śrī vṛṣabhānu kulāmbudhi sambhava subhaga sudhākara lekhām
smaratu mano mama nīravadhī rādhām
madhupati rūpa guṇa śravaṇodita sahaja manobhava vādhām
surucira kabari virājita komala parimala malli sumālām
madacala khañjana khelana gāñjana locana kamala viśālām
mada karirāja virājad anuttama calita lalita gati bhaṅgīm
ati sukumāra kanaka nava campaka gaura madhura madhurāṅgīm
maṇi keyūra lalita balayāvali maṇḍita mṛdu bhujā ballīm
pratipadam adbhuta rūpa camatkṛti mohana yuvati matallīm
mṛdu mṛdu hāsa lalita mukha maṇḍala kṛta śaśi bimba viḍambām
kiṅkiṇī jāla khacita pṛthu sundara nava rasa rāśi nitambām
citrita kañculikā sthagītodbhaṭa kuca hāṭaka ghaṭa śobhām
sphurad aruṇādhara sīdhu sudhārāsa kṛta hari mānasa lobhām
sundara cibuka virājita mohana mecaka bindu vilāsām
sakanaka ratna khacita pṛthu mauktika ruci rucirojjvala nāsām
ujjvala rāga rasāmṛta sāgara sāra tanuṇī sukha rūpām*

*nīpatita mād̥hava mugdha mano mṛga nābhi sudhārasa kūpām
nūpura hāra manohara kuṇḍala kṛta rucim aruṇa dukūlām
pathi pathi madana madākula gokulacandra kalita padamūlām
rasika sarasvatī gīta mahādbhuta rādhā rūpa rahasyam
vṛndāvana rasa lālasa manasām idam upageyam avāśyam*

"My mind constantly remembers that Śrī Rādhā, who wears a beautiful stripe of *sindūra* (vermilion) in Her part, which is like a path of ambrosial flavours, and who has arisen from the ocean of Vṛṣabhānu's dynasty like a beautiful moonbeam. Hearing of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's form and attributes naturally awakens Cupid's aches within Her. She wears a most soft, fragrant jasmine garland within Her very beautiful braid, Her large lotus eyes defeat the playfulness of the wagtail birds in their restless intoxicated motions, Her captivating gait is as elegant as that of a love-stricken elephant, Her very tender and sweet body is yellow like a fresh golden Campaka flower, Her tender vine-like arms are decorated with jewelled bangles and armlets, She enchants every young girl with Her wonderful and greatly fascinating form, Her gently smiling face defeats the moon and Her large and beautiful buttocks, that embody an abundance of fresh flavours, are bound with a sash of bells. Her fabulous breasts are as beautiful as golden jugs and are covered with an embroidered blouse, Her red lips incite lust within Hari's mind with their ambrosial flavours, Her beautiful chin is beautified even more by a very captivating spot of musk and Her charming nose and Her golden, jewel-studded big nosepearl bears an enchanting luster and radiant beauty. Her body is the essence of the ocean of ambrosial and tasty brilliant passion, Mād̥hava's bewildered deer-like mind falls in the nectar-well of Her navel, the wearing of necklaces, anklebells and captivating earrings makes Her bodily luster even more radiant and She wears a red dress. Gokula Candra is agitated with lusty intoxication and runs down the pathways to take shelter of Śrī Rādhā's footsoles. Those whose hearts yearn for the flavours of Vṛndāvana sing this very confidential and highly astonishing song about Śrī Rādhā, composed by *rasika* (Prabodhānanda) Sarasvatī.

Another reading is *vāma dike manoharā*, and the meaning of that will be— Śrī Kṛṣṇa's dearmost beloved Śrī Rādhā beautifully stands on His left side in a very enchanting form. (In Saṅgīta Mād̥hava 2.43) Śrīpāda Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī has said:

*cetaḥ kām api kunda sundara sudhā niḥsyandi manda smita
jyotir mohana vaktra candra vigalat premāmṛtāmbho nidhim
pratyaṅgocchalitānurāga saḥajānaṅgotsavaikāvadhīm
śrī vṛndāvana candra durmada manaś caurīm kiśorīm smara*

"O mind! Remember the jewel-like adolescent girl who steals the turbulent mind of Śrī Vṛndāvana's moon, from whose very captivating, beam-illuminated moon-like face a nectarean love-ocean trickles in the form of a soft smile, that is as beautiful as Kunda-flowers and that emanates a stream of nectar, and whose every limb is a upsurge of constant passion and the limit of a natural festival of eros."

After this the blessed author describes the beauty of Śrī Rādhārāṇī's bodily luster and Her dress and ornamentation, saying: *kanaka keśara kānti dhare. anurāge rakta sārī, nīla paṭṭa manohārī, maṇimaya ābharaṇa pore*. Śrī Rādhārāṇī enchants everyone who beholds

Her with Her form that shines like a golden Keśara flower as She stands on the left side of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whose bluish luster resembles that of a brilliant sapphire. She wears Her heart's passion for Kṛṣṇa on Her body as Her red under-dress (underwear, petticoat). Red is the colour of passion, and Śrīmatī hides Her passion for Kṛṣṇa within Her heart, therefore She wears this red cloth as underclothes. *śyāmānurāgiṇī* Śrīmatī greatly loves all bluish shades, hence a very captivating blue silken upper-dress always beautifies Her divine body. For Śyāmasundara's happiness Śrīmatī wears different jewelled ornaments on Her body and that makes Her very beautiful. (89)

*koroye locana pāna, rūpa līlā duhu gāna,
ānande magana saha-carī
veda vidhi agocara, ratana vedīra para,
sevo niti kiśora kiśorī (90)*

"Their female companions drink Their nectarean forms and pastimes with their eyes and sing Their glories, absorbed in bliss! Nicely serve Kiśora-Kiśorī, who are unknown to the Vedic rules and who sit on a jewelled platform!"

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *ṭīkā* – *ānande ityādi-sakhya evaṁ kṛtvā ānande magnā bhavanti.*

The bliss of the *sakhīs* –

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – After describing the dual sweetness of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's love and beauty, Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya now describes the bliss and the *rasa* the *sakhīs* relish from the sweetness of the Divine Couple. On a jewelled bedstead in the *nikuñja mandira* of enchanting Śrī Vṛndāvana, *kiśora-kiśorī* Śrī Rādhā-Śyāma are dripping with *prema rasa*, filled with the natural beauty of elegance. *sakhīs* surround Them in all four directions. Each one of them is a matchless picture of *prema rasa*, beauty, sweetness, laughter and humour. When the oceans of *rasa* and *prema* spill over it is as if they play over all the horizons!! The bee-like eyes of the *sakhīs* drink the wonderful lustre of honey-*rasa* that drips from the blue and golden lotus of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's sweetness and beauty, with deep attachment. With sweet voices the *sakhīs* sing the honey-sweet erotic pastimes of the Divine Couple! In this way the *sakhīs* are immersed in paramount bliss as they swim in the *rasa*-ocean of the Yugala's forms, attributes and pastimes. Rādhā's maidservants are also a kind of *sakhīs*; though they also constantly swim in the inexhaustible *rasa*-waterfall of Yugala-sweetness, they are also engaged in the devotional service of the Yugala and Their *sakhīs*. They do not forget their service due to being absorbed in relishing Their sweetness—they are engaged in service and at the same time immersed in the sweet *rasa* of the Śrī Yugala. This makes them more special than the *sakhīs*. This is clearly perceived in Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya's Prārthanā Pada –

aruṇa kamala dale, seja bichāibo,

bosāibo kiśora kiśorī
alakā āvṛta, mukha pañkaja manohara,
marakata śyāma hema gaurī

"I will make a bed of red lotuspetsals and seat Kiśora and Kiśorī on that. Their enchanting lotus-like faces are covered with Their curly locks. Śyāma resembles an emerald and Gaurī (Rādhā) gold."

prāṇeśvari! kobe more hobe kṛpā dīṭhi?
ājñāya āniyā kobe, vividha phula vara,
śunibo vacana duhu miṭhi

"Prāṇeśvari! When will I get Your merciful glance? When will I, on Your order, bring different kinds of flowers, and hear Your sweet words?"

mṛgamada tilaka, sindūra bonāyabo,
lepabo candana gandhe.
gāñṭhi mālatī phula, hāra pahirāobo,
dhāoyābo madhukara vṛnde

"I will decorate You with musk-tilaka and a stripe of sindūra, I will anoint You with fragrant sandalwoodpulp, and I will string a garland of Mālatī-flowers that will make the bumblebees run (towards it)."

lalitā kobe more, vījana deyabo,
vījabo māruta mande
śrama-jala sakala, miṭabo duhu kalevara,
herabo parama ānande

"When will Lalitā give me a fan with which I can softly fan Them, drying up the sweatdrops from Their bodies? I will see all this in topmost ecstasy!"

narottama dāsa, āśa pada pañkaja,
sevana madhurī pāne
hobo heno dina, nā dekhiye kona cina,
duhu jana herabo nayāne

"**Narottama dāsa hopes he can drink the sweet beverage of service to Their lotus feet.** But alas! I see no signs that such a blessed day is going to come when I can see these Two with my own eyes." In this prayerful song we can clearly see how the sweetness of the Divine Pair is relished by the *mañjarīs* while they are rendering service. The *yugala bhajana* of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas consists of allegiance to these maidservants of Rādhā. Defining the status of Rādhā's maidservants Śrīmat Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī has written—

śrī rādhā pādapadma cchabi madhuratara prema cijjyotir ekā-
mbhodher udbhuta phena stavakamaya tanūḥ sarva vaidagdhyā pūrṇāḥ
kaiśora vyañjitās tad ghana-rug apaghana śrī camatkāra bhājo
divyālañkāra vastrā anusarata sakhe rādhikā kiñkarīs tāḥ (V.M.2.86)

"O friend! Follow the maidservants of Śrī Rādhikā, whose bodies are like clusters of foam emanating from the transcendental ocean of sweetmost love that is Her lotus feet, who are adolescent girls filled with all cleverness, whose bodies are the vessels of astonishment, shining with the deep radiance of youthfulness and decorated with divine garments and ornaments." Śrīpāda describes their transcendental bodies as follows – (V.M. 2.58-59)

*kiśora vayasah sphurat puraṭa rociṣā mohiniḥ sucāru kṛṣā madhyamāḥ pṛthu nitamba vakṣoruhāḥ
suratna kanakāñcita sphurita nāsika mauktikāḥ suveṇi paṭa bhūṣaṇāḥ smarata rādhikā kiṅkariḥ
suramyā dor vallī balaya gaṇa keyūra rucirāḥ kvaṇat kāñci mañjīraka maṇi sutātaṅka lalitāḥ
lasad veṇi vakṣoruha mukula hārāvalirucaḥ smarānanya snigdhāḥ kanaka ruci rādhāṅghryanucariḥ*

"Remember Rādhikā's maidservants, who are of adolescent age, have a radiant golden complexion, whose forms are captivating, whose waists are very beautiful and slender, whose buttocks and breasts are vast, whose noses are decorated with dangling nose pearls made of the best gold-studded gems, who have the best braids suspending from their heads and who wear beautiful silken dresses."

"Remember the exclusively loving, golden complexioned maidservants of Śrī Rādhikā, whose most captivating vine-like arms are decorated with armlets and bangles, thus rendering them very beautiful, whose waistbells, anklebells and jewelled earrings jingle, thus rendering them very tempting, who have very beautiful braids and the luster of whose necklaces, that dangle on their bud-like breasts, gives them a beautiful luster."

Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: "In their allegiance, or in the mood of Rādhā's maidservant, *veda vidhi agocara, ratana vedira pora, sevo niti kiśora kiśorī*. "Nicely serve Kiśora and Kiśorī, who are incomprehensible by following the Vedic rules, on a jewelled throne." The most confidential *bhajana* of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava takes place in Vraja, the abode of sweetness— *veda vidhi agocara*. Of the three sections of the Vedas, *karma kāṇḍa, jñāna kāṇḍa* and *upāsanā kāṇḍa*, usually the reverential compulsory worship of the Personality of Godhead can be seen in the *upāsanā kāṇḍa*. In this particular Kali-age Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu's unprecedented merciful gift is the *mañjarī bhāva upāsanā* of sweet Vraja. Śrīpāda Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī has written – (Caitanya Candrāmṛta – 111)

*śrīmad bhāgavatasya yatra paramaṁ tātpariyam uttāṅkitam
śrī vaiyāsakinā duranvayatayā rāsa prasāṅge'pi yat
yad rādhā rati keli nāgara rasāsvādaika sad bhājanam
tad vastu prathanāya gaura vapuṣā loke'vatirṇo hariḥ*

"Śrī Hari descended into the phenomenal world in the form of Gaura to bring the worship of relishing the pastimes of Rādhā's Rati Keli Nāgara (Kṛṣṇa, the hero of erotic pastimes), and the *prema* in *madhura rasa*, which is the cause of this relish, which is the ultimate purport of Śrīmad Bhāgavata, which is the essence of Vedānta, but which was only hinted at (and not clearly described) by Śrī Śukadeva Muni, the son of Vyāsadeva, who thought it to be too intimate, in his narration of the Rāsa *līlā*."

Therefore this confidential worship of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, who are seated at the base of a wish yielding tree of Vṛndāvana and who can not be perceived by following the Vedic rules, is the extraordinary treasure of fortune for the people of Kali. The people of Kali

must serve Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, who cannot be perceived by following the Vedic rules, in full surrender to the lotus feet of Śrī Gaura. Hence Śrīla Prabodhānandapāda has written (ibid.-34)-

*are mūḍhā gūḍhām vicinute harer bhakti padavīm
davīyasya dṛṣṭyāpyaparicita pūrvām muni varaiḥ
na viśrambhaś citte yadi yadi ca daurlabhyam iva tat
parityajyāśeṣam vrajata śaraṇam gaura caraṇam*

"O fools! Seek that confidential devotion to the lotus feet of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, which could not be discovered even by the greatly wise seers of yore (which is why it can also not be found in the Vedic literatures)! If you have no faith in this (since it was not even attained by the great sages, let alone you), or if you think this is too difficult to achieve, then give up everything and surrender to the lotus feet of Śrī Gaurāṅga!" If you do this you will certainly become qualified for this confidential worship – this is the purport suggested here! (90)

***durlabha bhajana heno, nāhi bhajo hari keno?
ki lāgi maraho bhava bandhe
chāḍo anya kriyā karma, nāhi dekho veda dharmā,
bhakti koro kṛṣṇa-pada-dvandva (91)***

"Why don't you worship Śrī Hari, whose worship is so rarely attained? What benefit do you get from dying in material bondage? Give up all other activities and do not look at the Vedic (*varṇāśrama-*) religion. Simply devote yourself to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet!"

Precious worship :

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā- In the previous *tripadī* Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya revealed how rare the worship of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa is by saying *veda vidhi agocara*. Now in this day and age of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, this rare worship has become easily attainable by the sinful and fallen souls of the age of Kali. The *ācāryas* of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition, that have taken shelter of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's lotus feet, such as the six Gosvāmīs like Śrī Rūpa, Sanātana, Raghunātha, and Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, as well as later *ācāryas* like Śrīnivāsācārya, Śyāmānanda Prabhu, Narottama Ṭhākura Mahāśaya, Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda, and Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, along with the great song-writing *mahājanas*, have made this path of worshipping Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa excellent and easily accessible.

On the pretext of instructing his own mind, Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has attracted the gaze of the people of the world on this easily attainable worship by saying: *durlabha bhajana heno, nāhi bhajo hari keno, ki lāgi moroho bhava bandhe* "Why don't you worship Śrī Hari, whose worship is so rarely attained? What benefit do you get from dying in material bondage?" Śrīman Mahāprabhu has kindly distributed the matchless relish of the *Vraja-rasa*, which in

other ages is rarely attained even by Brahmā and Śiva, to the afflicted living beings of the age of Kali. If someone takes human birth at this moment and does not take advantage of this golden opportunity, not taking to the path of *bhajana* and spending the rarely obtained human life enjoying eating and sleeping, due to being accustomed to sensual life, he will fall into the terrible grip of repeated birth and death and remains forever bound in material life—of this there is not even the slightest doubt! Śrīla Premānanda Ṭhākura has sung in his *Manah Śikṣā* :

e mana! mānuṣa hobe kī āra?

<i>vadana bhoriyā,</i>	<i>'hari hari' bolo,</i>	<i>śodha nā yamera dhāra</i>
<i>bhāvīyā dekho nā,</i>	<i>se hāre āpanā,</i>	<i>ihāte ye kore pāpa</i>
<i>āpanāra doṣe,</i>	<i>āpani pāy se,</i>	<i>janame janame tāpa</i>

"O Mind! By a stroke of good luck you have attained this human body, which is very rare. You will not get another chance! Therefore by filling your mouth with the holy names of Hari, now that you did attain this body, you will not have to go to the king of death (hell) again! Just see and consider: Anyone who forgets himself now and commits sin in this human body will suffer birth after birth, due to his own fault!"

<i>sei se catura,</i>	<i>bāpera ṭhākura,</i>	<i>je loy harira nāma</i>
<i>ihāte yāhāra,</i>	<i>ruci nā janmile,</i>	<i>vidhātā tāhāre vāma</i>
<i>e bodha bujhibe,</i>	<i>narake majibe,</i>	<i>śamana ruṣibe jabe</i>
<i>āṅkhira palake,</i>	<i>e ṭhāṭ bhāṅgibe,</i>	<i>ki boli eḍābe tabe</i>

"He who takes Lord Hari's holy name is clever, but those who have no taste for this are deprived by Fate! Understand that you will sink into hell when the god of death gets angry with you! This body of yours is perishing at every moment, and then you won't be able to escape Yama's torments."

<i>bhāi bandhu jāyā,</i>	<i>tanaya tanayā,</i>	<i>āpanā bolicho jāre</i>
<i>jāno nā mukhete,</i>	<i>anala bhejāye,</i>	<i>agādha jalete ḍāre</i>
<i>mūrati dekhīyā,</i>	<i>ḍare ḍarāīyā,</i>	<i>tile nā rākhibe ghare</i>
<i>kohe premānanda,</i>	<i>'hari hari' bolo,</i>	<i>tā vinu sakali para</i>

"You call brothers, friends and wife, sons and daughters all your own, and you are so attached to them that you forget to do *śrī hari bhajana*, but you don't know that they will place fire in your mouth (when you lie dead on the funeral pyre), and/or will dump you (dead body) into deep water. When they see your (ugly dead) body they will be frightened or disgusted and will not keep you at home for even one more moment! Premānanda thus sermons: "Chant Hari Hari! Everything else is alien (unimportant, false)!"

bhāi re! bhajo gorā cāṅdera caraṇa!

<i>e tina bhuvane āra,</i>	<i>doyāra ṭhākura nāhi,</i>	<i>gorā boṛo patita pāvana</i>
<i>heno avatāre jāra,</i>	<i>nahilo bhakati leśa,</i>	<i>bolo tāra ki hobe upāya</i>
<i>rabira kirāṇe jār,</i>	<i>āṅkhi parasanna noilo,</i>	<i>vidhātā vañcita bhelo tāy</i>

"O brother! Worship the lotus feet of Gorācānd! There is no more merciful Lord in the three worlds than Him! Gorā is the great saviour of the fallen! Anyone who has not even the slightest devotion to such an *avatāra*, tell me, what will aid him? A person who is not pleased by the sunrays is deprived by Fate!"

<i>hema jalada kāya,</i>	<i>prema dhārā varīṣaya,</i>	<i>karuṇāmaya avatāra</i>
<i>gorā heno prabhu peye,</i>	<i>je jana śītala noilo,</i>	<i>ki jāni kemon mana tāra</i>
<i>kali-bhava sāgare,</i>	<i>nija nāma bhelā kori,</i>	<i>āpane gaurāṅga kore pāra</i>
<i>tabe je dubiyā more,</i>	<i>ke tāre uddhāra kore,</i>	<i>e premānandera parihāra</i>

"The body of this merciful *avatāra* resembles a golden cloud, which showers torrents of *prema*. I don't know how the mind works of anyone who is not soothed after attaining a Lord like Gorā? Kali is an ocean of mundane distress, but Gaurāṅga helps anyone who chants His (Kṛṣṇa's) holy names to cross it. Therefore who will redeem he who dies by drowning (in this mundane ocean)? Thus Premānanda is abandoned."

After this Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya is saying: *chāḍo anya kriyā karma, nāhi dekho veda dharma, bhakti koro kṛṣṇa pada dvandve* "Give up all other activities and do not look at the Vedic (*varṇāśrama*-) religion. Simply devote yourself to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet!" Here 'other activities' means false endeavours for bodily happiness, that have nothing to do with worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and 'Vedic religion' means the caste and ashram-duties enjoined by the Vedas. Thus the advise is given here to take to the path of pure worship.

The living entity is intrinsically Śrī Kṛṣṇa's eternal servant, therefore the desire to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa is his intrinsic propensity. Because the conditioned souls, who are averse to Kṛṣṇa, have independent desires for the enjoyment of false objects, their intrinsic service propensity is revealed within the bodily senses and when they are dyed by the sensual propensities, they are transformed into the propensity to serve the senses instead. Hence we can see their endeavours in gratifying the senses with dull material objects. The conditioned souls want to become happy with sense enjoyment though ritual activities or upholding the principles of the Vedic *varṇāśrama dharma*, but the sense pleasures promised by the Vedic *karma kāṇḍa* (section dealing with fruitive activities) can never make mankind happy. There is not durability in sense pleasure, nor is there any genuine happiness in them, rather it results into one misery after the other. There is no way to become redeemed from this misery other than devotion to or worship of the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. Śrīmad Bhāgavata (3.9.6) says:

*tāvad bhayaṁ draviṇa deha suhr̥n nimittāṁ śokaḥ sprhā paribhavo vipulaś ca lobhaḥ
tāvan mamety asad avagraha ārti mūlaṁ yāvan na te'ñghrim abhayaṁ pravṛṇīta lokaḥ*

Brahmā told Śrī Bhagavān in the course of his praises: "O Lord! As long as mankind does not take shelter of Your lotus feet, that bestow fearlessness, they will maintain feelings of fear, lamentation, yearning, defeat and great greed in connection with wealth, the body, family and relatives, and they will continue to harbor feelings of 'I' and 'mine' towards bodily things and relationships, that are false shelters that are the root cause of misery and anxieties."

The first bondage of a conditioned soul who is deluded into aversion to Kṛṣṇa is—*avidyā* or ignorance, through which he forgets that he is pure spirit and a natural servant of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The second bondage is *asmitā*, through which he identifies his spirit self with his body, and cherishes feelings of possessiveness towards his wealth and relatives. The third bondage is *rāga*, through which one becomes attached to pleasurable things to the body and the senses, like wealth. The fourth bondage is *dveṣa*, through which one becomes averse to objects that are not favorable to the enjoyment of the senses and the body. The fifth bondage is *abhiniveśa*, through which the mind becomes absorbed in feelings of possessiveness towards the objects that are enjoyable for the body. Through these five kinds of ignorance the living beings become tightly bound and stuck in a quagmire of mundane sensual cravings. The natural spiritual propensities of the soul are thus transformed into mundane propensities of dull sensuality. Through the proper association, the attachment to auspicious and inauspicious activities, that both obstruct advancement in devotion to Kṛṣṇa, is given up, for there is no other recourse for the conditioned souls than to take shelter of devotion to Kṛṣṇa. Therefore Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: *chāḍo anya kriyā karma, nāhi dekho veda dharma, bhakti koro kṛṣṇa pada-dvandve* – "Give up all other activities and do not look at the Vedic (*varṇāśrama*-) religion. **Simply devote yourself to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet!**" (91)

viṣaya viṣama gati, *nāhi bhajo vraja-pati*
kṛṣṇacandra caraṇa sukha sāra
svarga āra apavarga, *saṁsāra naraka bhoga,*
sarva nāśa janama vikāra (92)

"The result of sense gratification is horrible. Why don't you worship the Lord of Vraja? The lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa-candra are the essence of transcendental bliss! Attainment of the heavenly planets, liberation, family life, suffering in hell - all these transformations of the eternal spirit soul are simply devastating!"

The essence of happiness:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā— Although he is the embodiment of *prema*, the blessed and worshipable author gives some essential instructions to the worldly people about the worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the following *tripadīs*, on the pretext of instructing his own mind. In this *tripadī* he first discusses the poisonous effects of enjoying the mundane flavours and forms of this world and the bliss that ensues from worshipping Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet— *viṣaya viṣama gati, nāhi bhajo vrajapati, kṛṣṇacandra caraṇa sukha sāra* "The result of sense gratification is horrible. Why don't you worship the Lord of Vraja? The lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa-candra are the essence of transcendental bliss!" The *gati* or culmination of sensual life is extremely *viṣama* or severely miserable and poisonous! Mundane forms and flavours appear to be very blissful, but by nature they are very miserable. Therefore as the body, mind and life airs gradually start burning after drinking poison, thinking it to be nectar and death must swiftly be accepted, similarly as the result of enjoying sense objects as forms or flavours, the scorching sensation of the threefold miseries and the terrible agony of birth, death and hell are

suffered. Even if one knows the poisonous culmination of sense enjoyment, as a result of sense gratification the mind and heart become so strongly accustomed to sense enjoyment that there is no way to become free from it. Prahāda Mahāśaya instructed the children of the demons as follows (Bhāg. 7.6.9-13) –

*ko grheṣu pumān saktam ātmānam ajitendriyaḥ
sneha pāsair dṛḍhair baddham utsaheta vimocitum
ko nvartha tṛṣṇāṁ visṛjet prāṇebhyo'pi ya īpsitaḥ
yaṁ kṛṇātyasubhiḥ preṣṭhais taskaraḥ sevako vaṇik
kathāṁ priyāyā anukampitāyāḥ saṅgaṁ rahasyaṁ rucirāṁś ca mantrān
suhṛtsu tat snehasitaḥ śīsūnāṁ kalākṣaraṇām anurakta cittāḥ
putrān smaraṁś tā duhitṛn hṛdaryā bhrātṛn svasṛ vā pitarau ca dīnau
grhān manojñoru paricchadāṁś ca vṛttis tu kulyāḥ paśu bhṛtya vargān
tyajeta kośas kṛd ivehamānaḥ karmāṇi lobhād avitṛpta kāmāḥ
aupasthya jaihvyaṁ bahu manyamānaḥ kathāṁ virajyeta duranta mohāḥ*

"O Friends! In youth one becomes attached to household life, but later nobody is able to give up that attachment anymore. Which person of uncontrolled senses wishes to become free from the bondage of the tight ropes of sensual desires, friends and relatives? And which person is able to give up greed after money, which is more coveted than life itself? Thieves, merchants and laborers are engaged in acquiring money even with disregard to their own lives! Again, who is able to give up the affectionate wife or sweetheart after remembering her captivating and intimate prattling? Which attached heart, bound by the ropes of affection, can give up the connection with the children after hearing their unclear, sweet words? Who is able to give up affectionate sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, a helpless mother and father, a beautiful home, a captivating environment, profession, cows and other domestic animals and servants? Actually the silk worm is spinning its own cocoon around itself, but then gets trapped in it, unable to get out. In the same way, the attached householder whose lusty desires are not satisfied, is constantly engaged in material works for the family, greedy after ever more sense gratification. Considering the pleasures of his tongue and his genitals to be very important he is ever trapped in a net of illusion, that is hard to escape from. There is no way for them to become free from sensual cravings!"

Knowing the result of sense gratification to be so severe, any intelligent person who has attained this human body, which is coveted even by the demigods and which is suitable for *bhajana*, should engage it in the worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. Hence Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya is saying, *nāhi bhajo vrajapati, kṛṣṇa candra caraṇa susāra* – "O mind! Although you know the severe consequences of sense gratification, why do you still not worship the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇacandra, the Lord of Vraja? You seek happiness, but the root cause of that happiness lies in the two lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa!"

Mankind has a longstanding craving for happiness, and they are working so hard for attaining that happiness, but they don't know how to attain real happiness. The way shown by the scriptures is confidentially called *darśana*. Sensual happiness is a mere reflection of the bliss of the non-personal *brahman*, and it maddens most of the people in the material world. Therefore this great bliss makes the world, which is so full of misery, go round. If it were not like that, no one would be able to remain alive. Hence, the Upaniṣads are saying: *ko*

hyevānyāt kaḥ prāṇyāt yadyeṣa ākāśa ānando na syāt eṣa evānandayati and in the Purāṇas it is also written – *kas tiṣṭhate jīved vāpi yadyānando na vidyate*.

Here the question will naturally arise: "Where is the root cause of this great bliss?" Mahābhāga Śatakarṇi one time thought in a solitary *āśrama*: *kuto hyevāyam ānandaḥ* "From whence is this stream of bliss flowing?" That God, who eternally stands in this ever-mutating world, as the eternal supreme truth, that Śrī Bhagavān is full of honey, full of bliss, full of taste. He who stands unchanged in this ever-changing world, who is forever situated in His constitutional position, should be sought by the living entities – bliss will be everlasting if that great endeavour reaches perfection." Therefore the Upaniṣads say: *yo vai bhūmā tat sukham nālpe sukham asti* "He who is *bhūmā*, or eternally all-pervading, that God is the residence of all bliss, and not the shallow and meagre (temporary sensual happiness)." This *bhūmā* becomes manifest before the loving eyes of the Vraja-lovers in the form of **Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra**, Who is condensed bliss, the Original Personality of Godhead and the embodiment of all nectar-flavours. Then there are no words to describe how much bliss fills the heart of the loving devotee. Words are wholly unable to reveal this bliss, they fall silent here. The greatest lover of God, Śrīla Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura, could also not find the words to express this unprecedented experience of bliss, so he just stood there at the gate of unprecedented astonishment, and uttered, like one stupefied by a *mantra*– ***madhuram madhuram madhuram madhuram***. Hence Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: *kṛṣṇacandra caraṇa sukha sāra* – "Kṛṣṇacandra's lotus feet are the essence of bliss."

After that the blessed author says: *svarga āra apavarga, saṁsāra naraka bhoga, sarva nāśa janama vikāra*–"Attainment of the heavenly planets, liberation, family life, suffering in hell - all these transformations of the eternal spirit soul are simply devastating!" Previously it has been discussed that the worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet is genuine happiness, which cannot be found anywhere else. Someone may now say: "Can't we see the bliss of heaven described in the scriptures dealing with fruitive activities, and the bliss of liberation in the scriptures dealing with non-dualism?" The answer to this is given in this latter half of the *tripadī*. Those who attained the bliss of *bhagavad bhajana* have equal feelings towards household happiness, heaven, the bliss of liberation or the agony of hell. *svargāpavarga narakeṣvapi tulyārtha darśinaḥ* (Bhāg.) "The devotees of the Lord look equally upon heaven, liberation and hell." The 'happiness' of heaven etc., that causes the inherently purely spiritual living entity, who is intrinsically an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa, to remain in the grasp of repeated birth and death, is not really happiness. Rather, for them it is ***sarva nāśa***, wholesale destruction. (92)

dehe nā koriho āsthā, marile se yama śāstā,
duḥkhera samudra karma gati
dekhiyā śuniyā bhajo, sādhu śāstra mata yajo,
yugala caraṇe koro rati (93)

"Don't place your faith, identification, dependence or awareness in your material body, which is punishable by Yama at the time of death. The course of

fruitive activities is simply an ocean of suffering. Seeing how miserable this material existence is and hearing from the scriptures and the saints how important it is to use the opportunity of human life for worshipping Hari, you must develop loving attachment to the lotus feet of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa."

Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's tīkā – dehe nā koriho āsthā – dehe'smin āsthām mā kuru. dehābhīmānam mā kurvityarthaḥ.

Love for the lotus feet of the Divine Pair:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – The blessed author instructs his own mind in the worship of the Divine Pair by first describing the ill fate of bodily conscious human beings: *dehe nā koriho āsthā, morile se jama śāstā, duḥkhera samudra karma gati* "It is not proper to place one's faith in the perishable body, that consists of five gross elements, for the mind of a person who is absorbed in his body and those connected with it cannot become absorbed in worshipping Hari." The word *āsthā* has many synonyms like faith, endeavour, support, dependence and concentration. If one does not give up these attitudes towards the dull mundane body of five elements it is not possible to worship the Supreme Lord. It is not proper to put one's faith in this body. Many people think: "Now I am young, I have a lot of time left in life, let me now peacefully enjoy myself, and when I get old I will worship Lord Hari." It is not proper to place so much faith in the perishable body, for it is not sure when this body will perish. Death may be ready for us at any time. It is nothing but sheer foolishness to place one's faith in the mortal body, that can perish within a second, wasting one's youth in sense enjoyment, while the power is still there, and deciding to worship Hari in old age. Śrī Prahlāda Mahāśaya told the demons' sons—*kaumāra ācaret prajño dharmān bhāgavatān iha; durlabham mānuṣam janma tad apyadhruvam arthadam* (Bhāg. 7.6.1) "O friends! An intelligent person should follow the theistic path from childhood, for human birth is very rare, and although it can be finished at any moment, it can also bestow spiritual life."

Another meaning of *āsthā* is giving attention to the body. This is not proper, for it will awaken bodily consciousness and will not allow the mind to enter into the spiritual path. No matter how much attention we pay to the body, one day it will perish. Therefore one should only take care of the body sufficiently for it to survive. We should always remember: 'I must maintain this body merely for survival and I must survive in order to do *bhajana*, not for sense enjoyment.' Thus seeing the body as an instrument for *bhajana* it must be maintained according to its needs— not for eating nicely or other enjoyments.

Another meaning of *āsthā* is 'support or shelter'. An intelligent person does not waste the very valuable time of human life to seek shelter or support in his body. An intelligent person should always remember the condition of the spirit soul that has fallen in the well of material existence. Some person who entered into the deep forest to hunt may fall into a hidden well and be able to hold on to two blades of grass that grow on the sides of the well (representing his life span), he himself hanging in the middle. Below him, in the well water, is a terrible snake (hell) and above him is a tiger (heaven) that opens his mouth to swallow him. The two blades of grass, that form his only support, are slowly being eaten up by two mice, a black one and a white one (day and night in his life time). Although he is in such a terrifying condition he is intoxicated by honey dripping from a beehive situated in a clump of

grass, and bides his time peacefully, thinking himself to be very happy. Although he looks at death, he cannot see it. Aho! How great is the power of illusion!⁴³ Therefore an intelligent person will never maintain his shelter in this body peacefully.

Another meaning of the word *āsthā* is 'waiting, or depending'. Many people think: "Is it possible for me to enter or commence the harsh rules of engagement in *bhajana* such as renunciation, following regulative principles and the lot?" Therefore he will not be able to enter into the path of *bhajana* although he is willing to, since he is depending on his body. The Mahājanas tell him—"Don't be deprived of the golden opportunity of *bhajana* being afraid of bodily discomfort— however much you rely on this body, one day it will perish! Therefore by using the valuable time in this body in *bhajana* you will be blessed!"

Another meaning of *āsthā* is 'concentration'. Even after entering onto the path of *bhajana* some people are too much concentrating on the body to make any real progress. Their concentration on the body makes them constantly absorbed in mundane affairs. Although they perform *bhajana* neatly according to the rules they do not concentrate their minds and do *bhajana* **mechanically**. As a result *bhajana* will not bear fruit, even after a long time of practise. Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya is so wonderfully eloquent that he has given mankind many valuable instructions in this simple two-syllable word *āsthā*.

After that he says: *morile se jama śāstā* – Those who have attained this human body, which is rarely attained even by the demigods and which is a suitable vessel for *bhajana*, and still do not perform *bhajana* will surely have to suffer punishment by the god of death Yama after they die. In the fifth Canto of Śrīmad Bhāgavata is a description from which we can learn how terrible that punishment in hell is. Reading or hearing this causes shivers in the body and the mind!! Suffering the punishment of Yama is not the last word, though. *duḥkhera samudra karma gati* – even after suffering Yama's punishment follows forced birth in miserable species of life such as violent snakes and tigers. These births are endless like a boundless ocean. In this way the course of fruitive activities is very miserable.

Therefore *dekhiyā suniyā bhajo, sādhu śāstra mata yajo, yugala caraṇe koro rati* – seeing the perishable nature of the human body and the different miserable conditions of the living entity, and hearing from the *sādhus* and the scriptures that *bhajana* must certainly be done in the human body, which is tailor-made for doing Hari-*bhajana*, an intelligent person should certainly take shelter of the great saints and perform *bhajana* according to the advise of the saints and the scriptures. Especially in this age of Mahāprabhu an intelligent person should engage in the dual worship of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. For once in Brahmā's day, that is after 8,000 *yugas*, this worship of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa is distributed once during Śrīman Mahāprabhu's descent. In other ages this very precious *yugala bhajana* is rarely attained even by Brahmā, Maheśvara (Śiva), Kamalā (Lakṣmī), Uddhava and others, but in this particular Kali age it has become relishable to its afflicted people by the grace of Śrīman Mahāprabhu. Hence in taking shelter of this unprecedented gift of Mahāprabhu of the path of *yugala bhajana* the lives of the people of Kali become truly worthwhile and blessed. Thus Thākura Mahāśaya says: *sādhu śāstra mata yajo, yugala caraṇe koro rati* "The saints of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's tradition have collected all scriptural statements that are favorable to their

⁴³ See the description plus illustration in my most worshipable Śrīla Guru Mahārāja's book 'Bhavakūpe Jīvera Gati'.

opinion and thus advised the people to do *yugala bhajana*. Remaining attracted to the lotus feet of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa the people of the Kali age must do *bhajana* accordingly." (93)

jñāna-kāṇḍa, karma kāṇḍa, kevali viṣera bhāṇḍa
amṛta boliyā yebā khāy
nānā yoni sadā phire, kadarya bhakṣaṇa kore,
tāra janma adhaḥ pāte yāy (94)

"The portions of the Vedic literature that deal with non-dualistic philosophies and fruitive activities are simply vessels with poison. Anyone who eats from them, thinking them to be nectar, will constantly wander from one species of life to another, eating all kinds of rubbish. His birth will cause his falldown."

Vessels with poison:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā- The blessed author has described how one should make one's life a true success by not placing one's faith in the perishable human body, nor by being absorbed in awareness of it, but rather by worshipping Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa while taking shelter of the *sādhus* and *śāstras*. *karmīs* and *jñānīs* may think that human life is blessed by following the Vedic rules in fruitive activities or nondualistic knowledge and thus attaining the bliss of heaven or the bliss of liberation. Although the blessed author has already described in *tripadī* # 92 that the living entity perishes in household life, heaven, hell or in a state of liberation, still, understanding the above question may be put, the blessed author again presses the point: *jñāna kāṇḍa, karma kāṇḍa, kevali viṣera bhāṇḍa, amṛta boliyā yebā khāy*. Generally, the Vedas have two sections: *karma kāṇḍa* and *jñāna kāṇḍa*. *karma kāṇḍa* is the section which describes the rules in holding sacrifices and performing fruitive activities, and *jñāna kāṇḍa* consists of the *Āraṇyakas*⁴⁴ and the *Upaniṣads*, which deal with nondualistic knowledge. On the basis of *karma-* and *jñāna-kāṇḍa*, the philosophical treatises (*darśana śāstras*) named *pūrva mimāṃsa* and *uttara mimāṃsa* are composed. According to the *karma mimāṃsa* propounded by Mahārṣi Jaimini the Vedas promulgate *karma*, and *jñāna* is useless. In the Jaimini Sūtra it is written *āmnāyasya kriyārthattvāt ānarthakyamatad arthānām* "When *karma* is propounded by the Vedas, then all other Vedic teaches but *kriyā* (rituals) are useless. All Vedic rules consist of prohibitions. Therefore the Upaniṣad's teachings like *satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ brahma* are simply glorifications or exaggerations."

On the other hand we have the *brahma mimāṃsa* composed by Mahārṣi Bādarāyaṇa – *jñāna* is the issue of the Vedas! Although Śrīpāda Ācārya Śaṅkara defeated the *samuccaya vāda* of *jñāna* and *karma* (teaching that *jñāna* and *karma* are in one serial order, although they are mutually independent), Śrīpāda Rāmānuja established the desire to attain *brahma jñāna* after completing the course of *karma* and *jñāna*. For if mankind attains only mortality and little benefit from a huge practise of fruitive activities, and thus understands that after

⁴⁴ Philosophical treatises which were either composed in the forest or must be studied there.

performing difficult sacrifices and other fruitive activities he is elevated to the pleasure-park of heaven, only to be descending to the mortal world again after his merit has expired, then fruitive activities lead to sorrow, and consequently one wants to know about the eternal peace offered by *brahman*. The Upaniṣads also declare—*nirveda māyā nāstyakṛtaḥ kṛtena* "By performing fruitive activities liberation is not attained. Thinking like this, persons fixed in *brahma* will attain renunciation."

The Vedāntik practitioner Śrīpāda Bodhāyanācārya has said: *vṛttāt karmādhigamād anantaram brahmavividiṣā iti*, "When knowledge of fruitive activities is completed one wants to know about *brahma*, and the Śārīrika Sūtra (*brahma mīmāṃsā*) joined to the Karma Mīmāṃsā by Jaimini fills a full 16 chapters. The Pūrva Mīmāṃsā has 12 chapters and the Uttara Mīmāṃsā has 4 chapters. Actually both the Mīmāṃsās are one scripture, known under two different names with two different subjects, *karma* and *brahma*."

In the Gītā, the Lord has personally prescribed selfless *karma yoga* to mankind, for the purification of the heart. Because the conditioned soul has been bereft of spiritual knowledge since beginningless time, he cannot live without being active for even one moment, therefore he must act, and in such a way that he will not create any more bondage for himself. This has been called *yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam* in the Gītā. In other words, if a human being does not desire any positive or negative results of his actions, but accomplishes the eternal duties that were given to Him by the Supreme Lord, then such actions would bless the conditioned soul, who is averse to God, by giving him the most auspicious result. In other words, it would make him favorable to the Lord and would gradually awaken devotion within his heart, which is polluted by a customary attachment to fruitive activities.

The *jñānīs* also vow to merge with *brahma* and thus practise *jñāna*, but if by chance they attain the grace of the great saints they get taste for *bhakti* or *bhajana* and they can experience that *brahmānanda bhaved eṣa cet parārdha guṇīkṛtaḥ. naiti bhakti sudhāmbhodheḥ paramāṇu tulām api* "If the bliss of *brahman* is multiplied with ten billion, it would still not equal even one drop of the nectar ocean of *bhakti*." They will give up the intoxication caused by the bliss of *brahman* and become pure devotees instead. The Vedas only promulgate *karma* and *jñāna* to bring all practitioners of *karma* and *jñāna* into the temple of pure devotion. Therefore the real purpose of the benevolent Vedas and the sages who know the Vedas is to establish the path of devotion as the real benefit of all the living entities.

Those who think that the paths of fruitive activities and nondualistic knowledge are separately beneficial for mankind, not understanding the secret purpose of the Vedas, remaining dedicated to their different practices without taking shelter of the path of devotion, are to be known as so much in illusion that they take a pot of poison to be nectar, attaining the scorching of poison instead of transcendental bliss and attaining the ghastly grip of repeated birth and death instead of immortality. They are really the living entities who are deceived by illusion!

In Śrīmad Bhāgavata's Uddhava Samvāda (Bhāg. 11.14.1-2), Śrī Uddhava Mahāśaya inquired from Śrī Kṛṣṇa—

*vadanti kṛṣṇa śreyāṃsi bahūni brahma vādināḥ
teṣāṃ vikalpa prādhānyam utāho eka mukhyatā
bhavatodāhṛtaḥ svāmin bhakti yogo'napekṣitaḥ
nirasya sarvataḥ saṅgam yena tvayyāviṣen manaḥ*

"O Kṛṣṇa! The sages who promulgate the Vedas described various paths of welfare (*karma, jñāna, yogī, bhakti*, etc.) for mankind. Please tell me, does their importance vary according to the choice of the striver or is only one of them considered important? O Lord! The practice of devotion, which causes mankind to shake of all attachments and causes the consciousness to become absorbed in You, has been declared by You to be fully independent from all other practices!" To answer this question of Śrī Uddhava Mahāśaya Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:

*kālena naṣṭā pralaye vāñīyaṁ veda sañjñitā;
mayādau brahmaṇe proktā dharmo yasyāṁ madātmakeḥ
.....
man māyāmohita dhiyaḥ puruṣāḥ puruṣarṣabhaḥ
śreyo vadantyanekāntaṁ yathā karma yathāruciḥ*

"O Uddhava! By the force of time the Vedic teachings have become obsolete at the time of universal cataclysm, but at the beginning of the next creation it was once again taught by Me to Brahmā, in the form of the devotional religion.....O best of men! Persons whose hearts are deluded by My *māyā* call fruitive activities or nondualistic knowledge the best ways, according to their taste and conduct."

Persons who are thus deluded by *māyā* consider the poison-pots of *karma* and *jñāna* to be nectar and enjoy it thus. They are *nānā yoni sadā phire, kadarya bhakṣaṇa kore*, meaning that fruitive workers may sometimes attain the heavenly planets, and after they have enjoyed it they will return again to the mortal world, wandering through different species of life, taking birth as pigs and so to eat all kinds of rubbish. And although the *jñānīs* consider themselves liberated, they actually *kevala jñāna mukti dite nāre bhakti vine* (C.C.)— cannot attain liberation by just practising *jñāna*, devoid of *bhakti*. Therefore they cannot actually attain liberation. These people, who consider themselves liberated, will again attain the material world and eat all kinds of rubbish, incarnating in degraded species of life. Actually *tāra janma adhaḥ pāte jāy* "They will take degraded births." In other words, the human birth, which is rarely attained by the demigods, is meant to worship Śrī Hari, but this birth will become a cause of degradation for such persons. (94)

*rādhā-kṛṣṇe nāhi rati, anya deve bole pati,
prema bhakti rīti nāhi jāne
nāhi bhaktira sandhāna, bharame koroye dhyāna,
vṛthā tāra e chāra jīvane (95)*

"Wasted is the life of someone who does not love Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, who calls other gods 'Lord', who does not know the ways of ecstatic loving devotion, who does not seek devotion and who practises all kinds of false meditations."

Wasted life:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā– In the previous *tripadī* Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has explained the triviality of *jñāna* and *karma*. Here the worshippers of the different gods and goddesses may say that they are also devotees, and those who do not worship Śrī Hari but worship other gods are also blessed. Aiming at them, the blessed author says: *rādhā-kṛṣṇe nāhi rati, anya deve bole pati, prema bhakti rīti nāhi jāne* "Wasted is the life of someone who does not love Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, who calls other gods 'Lord' and who does not know the ways of ecstatic loving devotion." *bhakti* is the essence of the *hlādinī*- (joy) and *samvit*- (knowledge) aspects of the Lord's internal potency. Therefore devotion is transcendental, and not a mundane human mental transformation. Even in the stage of *sādhana* its constitutional position is not diminished, because although it may be the innate potency of the Supreme Lord, it may mercifully appear within the senses and mind of a devotee who is surrendered to Śrī Hari's lotus feet and manifest itself in the form of activities like hearing and chanting. Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has written in his definition of *bhakti* in his *Prīti Sandarbha* (paragraph 65) – *atha śrutau ca 'bhaktir evainam nayati bhaktir evainam darśayati bhakti vaśaḥ puruṣo bhaktir eva bhūyasīti śrūyate. tasmād evam vivicyate. yā caivam bhagavantam svānandena madayati sā kiṃ lakṣaṇā syād iti. na tāvat sāṅkhyānām iva prakṛta sattvamaya māyikānanda rūpā bhagavato māyānabhībhāvyatva śruteḥ svatas tṛptatvāc ca. na ca nirviśeṣa vādinām iva bhagavat svarūpānanda rūpā atīśayānupapatteḥ. ato natarām jīvasya svarūpānanda rūpā, atyantā kṣudratvāt tasya. tato 'hlādinī sandhinī samvit trayyekā sarva saṁśraye. hlādatāpakarī miśrā tvayi no guṇa varjita' iti śrī viṣṇu purāṇānusāreṇa hlādinīyākhya tādīya svarūpa śaktyānanda rūpaivetyavaśīsyate, yayā khalu bhagavān svarūpānanda viśeṣi bhavati.....tasyā hlādinīyā eva kāpi sarvānandatīśayinī vṛttir nityam bhaktavṛndeṣveva niṣpiyamānā bhagavat prītyākhyayā vartate. atas tadanubhavena śrī bhagavān api śrīmad bhakteṣu prītyatīśayam bhajata iti.* "In the Upaniṣads it is said: "Devotion takes the devotee to the Lord's abode and helps him to see the Lord. The Supreme Lord is subdued by devotion and devotion is the best means to attain the Lord. Here the following consideration is being made– what is the characteristic of that *bhakti* that delights the Lord in His own bliss? *bhakti* is not the illusory happiness arising from the mundane mode of goodness, as the *sāṅkhyavādīs* say, for it has never been heard anywhere that the Supreme Lord is subdued by *māyā*. *bhakti* is not the innate bliss of the Lord, as the non-dualists think, for in *bhakti* the Lord finds greater bliss than even in His own innate bliss. *bhakti* is not a kind of human joy either, for that is very trifle. Therefore, O Lord! This threefold innate energy consisting of three of Your innate faculties *sandhinī*, *samvit* and *hlādinī*, is naturally existent in You. The mundane modes of goodness, passion and ignorance are not present in You, who transcend these modes." Following this statement from Śrī Viṣṇu Purāṇa, the Lord's energy known as *hlādinī* has an outstanding, paramount transcendental and innate faculty named ***bhakti***. And although the Lord is the embodiment of bliss, through this faculty even He relishes special bliss, while it gives delight to others also. This pleasure potency is an overwhelming faculty of bliss and it is eternally present in the hearts of the devotees under the name of **love of God**. For this reason the Lord also worships His devotees with great love, just to experience this."

From this it has become perfectly clear that love for other gods and goddesses than Śrī Hari can not be called *bhakti*. Therefore those who call other gods 'lord' and worship them, calling themselves 'devotees', do not know the ways of loving devotion. When the devotees of Kṛṣṇa serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa they do so solely to make Him happy. When their worship is free from personal desires, Kṛṣṇa's innate energy *hlādinī* enters within the devotees'

hearts. The special condition that is then created, that gives delight to Śrī Kṛṣṇa is called **prema**. Apart from this *hlādinī*'s purpose cannot be fulfilled, for her task is to make Śrī Kṛṣṇa relish a delight named the ecstasy of His devotees' love, which is even more relishable than His innate energy itself. Therefore *hlādinī* will not come to those who worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa with some desire for current or future personal benefits, hence it is said: *bhukti mukti siddhi vāñchā mane yadi roy; sādhana korile-o prema utpanna nā hoy* (C.C.) "If the desire for enjoyment, liberation or mystic perfection is still in the heart, *prema* will not awaken, even if *sādhana* is performed." The worshippers of other gods and goddesses are solely interested in their personal benefit, either for the present or for the future. If they consider themselves to be 'devotees' by rendering such service, then it is needless to say that they don't know the ways or the nature of loving devotion.

Hence Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says— *nāhi bhaktira sandhāna, bharamē koroye dhyāna, vṛthā tāra e chāra jīvane* "Wasted is the life of someone who does not know the ways of ecstatic loving devotion, who does not seek devotion and who practises all kinds of false meditations." They have no idea what is the nature of devotion, or her constitutional position, still they continue to meditate erroneously on other gods and goddesses. The lives of such fruitive workers and nondualistic speculators are wholly **wasted** or insignificant. (95)

*jñāna karma kore loka, nāhi jāne bhakti yoga,
nānā mate hoiyā ajñāna
tāra kathā nāhi śuni, paramārtha tattva jāni,
prema bhakti bhaktagaṇa prāṇa (96)*

"People practise nondualistic knowledge or fruitive activities, not knowing **bhakti yoga**. In this way they are ignorant in different ways. I will not hear their talks, knowing the transcendental truth. Loving devotion is the very life of the devotees."

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *ṭikā* – *nāhi śuni – śravaṇam na kuryām. paramārtha tattva jāni – paramārtha tattvaṃ jñātavyam.*

Transcendental truth:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā– While defining the transcendental truths of *prema bhakti*, Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya first speaks of those who are ignorant of the devotional principles – *jñāna karma kore loka, nāhi jāne bhakti yoga, nānā mate hoiyā ajñāna* "People practise nondualistic knowledge or fruitive activities, not knowing *bhakti yoga*. In this way they are ignorant in different ways." Persons who are unaware of the devotional principles take shelter of fruitive activities, non-dualistic knowledge or mystic *yoga*. In the universal scripture Bhagavad Gītā, the Supreme Lord discusses *karma* and *jñāna* and so, but He defines the devotee who is fixed in *bhājana* as the **best of yogīs** –

tapasvibhyo'dhiko yogī jñānibhyo'pi mato'dhikah

*karmibhyaś cādhiko yogī tasmād yogī bhavārjuna
yoginām api sarveṣāṃ mad gatenāntarātmanā
śraddhāvān bhajate yo māṃ sa me yuktatamo mataḥ*

"O Arjuna! The *yogīs* are better than the fruitive workers, that are fixed in penances known as *cāndrāyaṇa*⁴⁵, ascetics, those who meditate on the unqualified *brahman* and the *jñānis*, hence, O Arjuna, be a *yogī*! And of all *yogīs*, he who performs *bhakti yoga*, worshipping Me with faith, is the greatest of all *yogīs*!" Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: ***nānā mate hoiyā ajñāna*** "Foolish and ignorant persons do not know what is the constitutional position of *bhakti*, nor what is her appearance, nature and result. Thus they give up the practice of *bhakti* and become dedicated to *karma*, *jñāna* and other practices."

In the previous *tripadī* we have slightly discussed that *bhakti* is the essence of the *hlādinī* and *samvit*-operations of the Lord's innate energy. Śrīpāda Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa quotes the Śrutis as he writes— *viñāna ghana ānanda ghana sac cid ānandaika rase bhakti yoge tiṣṭhatīti śruteḥ (gopāla tāpanī) itarathā bhagavad vaśikāra heturasau na syāt. tathābhūtāyās tasyā bhakta kāyādir vṛtte tādātmyanāvīrbhūtāyākriyākārātvam* "Deep realisations and deep bliss – they reside in *bhakti*, who is herself the very form of transcendental taste. If it were not so, then *bhakti* could never have been the cause of the Supreme Lord's subjugation. Although such a transcendental energy is the essence of the *hlādinī* and *samvit* aspects of the Lord's innate energy, it appears within the senses of a devotee who is surrendered unto the Lord's lotus feet, becomes identical with him and thus becomes active on its own strength." Śrīpāda Vidyābhūṣaṇa says: *sā tathābhūtā nitya dhāmi nitya pārṣadeṣu nityaṃ cakāsti sura sarid iva tad bhakta praṇālyā prapañce'vatarati*. "When the heart becomes purified through the process of hearing and chanting, loving devotion, which resides in the Lord's eternal associates, will descend to the material world like the current of the nectarean heavenly Ganges, through the drain of the *sādhu* devotees (the Guru Paramparā). When it thus enters into the heart of the individual it manifests eternally perfect love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa there." Therefore, while in the schools of *karma*, *jñāna* etc. the means and the goal are two separate things, in *bhakti* **the means and the goal are identical**. Someone may say: *sādhyate'nena*—That practice which results into a certain accomplishment is called ***sādhana***, and *sādhyate'sau*, the accomplishment of a certain activity is called ***sādhya***; then how can *sādhana* and *sādhya* be identical? From the abovementioned philosophical statement we can understand that the first manifestation of the self-manifest transcendental potency of the Lord named *bhakti* is named *sādhana* or the stage of practice and the second manifestation is its fruit named *sādhya*. This is the great speciality of the transcendental practice of *bhakti* that distinguishes it from all other practices.

In paragraph 78 of *Prīti Sandarbha* it is written about the appearance and the nature of *bhakti*—*nikhila paramānanda candrikā candramasi sakala bhuvana saubhāgya sāra sarvasva sattva guṇopajivyaṇanta vilāsamayāmāyika viśuddha sattvā nava ratollāsad asamordhva madhure śrī bhagavati katham api cittāvatārād anapekṣita vidhiḥ svarasata eva samullasantī viṣayāntarair anavacchedyā tātparyāntaram asahamānā hlādinī sāra vṛtta viśeṣa svarūpā bhagavad*

⁴⁵ In it, the daily quantity of food, which consists of fifteen mouthfuls at the full moon, is diminished by one mouthful every day during the dark fortnight till it is reduced to zero at the new moon, and is increased likewise during the bright lunar fortnight.

ānukūlyātmake tadanugata tat sprhādimaya jñāna viśeṣākārā tādr̥śa bhakta manovṛtti viśeṣa dehā pīyūṣa purato'pi sarasena svenaiva sva dehaṁ sarasayanti bhakta kṛtātma rahasya saṅgopana guṇamaya rasanā vāṣpa muktādi vyakta pariskārā sarva guṇaika nidhāna svabhāvā dāsikṛtāseṣa puruṣārtha sampattikā bhagavat pātivratya vratavarya paryākulā bhagavan manoharaṇaikopāya hāri rūpā bhāgavatī prītis tam upasevamānā virājata iti.

Love of God (*bhakti*) is the moon that releases the moonbeams of all paramount bliss, the essence of all good fortune in the world, the very livelihood of *sattva guṇa*, who naturally delights the Supreme Lord, who performs endless pastimes, whose sweetness is matchless due to His complete transcendental bliss, if she enters into His heart in any way, not waiting for any regulation. She cannot be fragmented by any other object, she does not tolerate any other motivation, she consists of the essence of the Lord's pleasure potency, her shape is the particular knowledge that consists of the desire to attain the Lord and follows all that is favorable to Him, her body is the mental faculty of the loving devotee, she makes her own body succulent with her own self, which is more succulent than the essence of nectar, the devotees' concealment of her confidential nature is her moon-necklace, the pearl-like tears of the devotee are the ornaments (gems) of her necklaces, her nature is to keep all her qualities within herself, she has turned the treasures of all human pursuits into her maidservants, she is always eager to remain fixed in her vow of chastity to the Lord and her only means (practice) is stealing the mind of the Lord. Thus this goddess of love of God is constantly engaged in the service of her Lord." After learning about these attributes of *bhakti* from the *sādhus* and the *śāstras*, which person would become dedicated to the practices of *karma* and *jñāna*, abandoning the practice of *bhakti*? Which thirsty person would give up an ocean of nectar to run after a mirage, and which person who thirsts for milk would give up the Kāmadhenu cow to take shelter of a she-ass? Therefore there can be no doubt about it that a person who gives up the shelter of devotion to the Personality of Godhead to become devoted to practising *karma* and *jñāna* is an ignorant fool who is deceived by *māyā*.

Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: *tāra kathā nāhi śuni, paramārtha tattva jāni, prema bhakti bhaktagaṇa prāṇa*—"A person who desires his own welfare never associates with those who have given up the nectarean practice of *bhakti* and have become dedicated to *karma* and *jñāna*." What to speak of associating with them, one should not even hear about them! They should know loving devotion to be the highest spiritual principle or the highest human pursuit. When Śrīman Mahāprabhu refuted the Vedāntik wisdom in the assembly of *sannyāsīs* in Kāśī (Benares), He established the devotional explanation with *prema* as the highest human pursuit –

*pañcama puruṣārtha sei prema mahādhana; kṛṣṇera mādhyura rasa korāya āsvādana
prema hoite kṛṣṇa hoy nija bhakta vaśa; premā hoite pāi kṛṣṇa sevā sukha rasa*

"This great treasure of *prema* is the fifth human pursuit, that makes one relish the sweet flavours of Kṛṣṇa's sweetness. *prema* causes Kṛṣṇa to be subdued by His own devotees and *prema* bestows the bliss of relishing Kṛṣṇa's service."

Hence loving devotion is the very life-support of the devotees. They are always agitated by thirst for loving devotion and spend their lives in a devotional way with topmost eagerness. Previously it has been said : *jala vinu jeno mīna, duḥkha pāya āyu hīna, prema vinu ei*

mata bhakta "The devotee who is deprived of *prema* feels like a fish out of water, flapping for want of life." (96)

***jagat vyāpaka hari,* *aja bhava ājñā-kārī,*
madhura mūrati līlā kathā
ei tattva jāne yei, *parama uttama sei,*
*tāra saṅga koribo sarvathā (97)***

"Lord Hari pervades the whole universe and He gives orders to Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva. Any person who knows the truth about the topics of His sweet form and pastimes is the greatest of all. I will always associate with such a great soul."

The principles of *svarūpa*, prowess and sweetness:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā- After this Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya covets the company of the greatest devotee, who worships the Lord in His aspect of sweetness and who is well experienced in the principles of *svarūpa*, prowess and sweetness, saying: *jagat vyāpak hari, aja-bhava-ājñākārī, madhura mūrati līlā kathā* "Lord Hari pervades the whole universe and He gives orders to Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva, etc." The *svarūpa* or constitutional position of the Lord is described with the words *jagat vyāpaka hari*, His prowess with the words *aja bhava ājñākārī* and His sweetness with the words *madhura mūrati līlā kathā*. In his Laghu Toṣaṇī comment on Śrīmad Bhāgavata 10.12.11, Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has written—*bhagavāms tāvad asādhāraṇa svarūpaiśvarya mādhuryas tattva viśeṣaḥ. tatra svarūpaṁ paramānanda aiśvaryaṁ asamordhvānanta svābhāvika prabhutā mādhuryam asamordhvatayā sarva manoharaṁ svābhāvika rūpa guṇa līlādi saṁsthavam.* "The principle of extraordinary constitution, prowess and sweetness is named ***bhagavān***. Paramount transcendental bliss is Śrī Bhagavān's constitution (***svarūpa***), His endless, unrivalled and natural lordship is his ***prowess (aiśvarya)***⁴⁶ and the unrivalled and natural charm and loveliness of His form, qualities and pastimes is called ***sweetness (mādhurya)***. With the words 'paramount bliss' Śrī Jīva hints at the universally pervading *brahma svarūpa*. The constitution of *brahma* is that it is *sac cid ānanda* or transcendental— this has been described in different places in the Upaniṣads – '*saccid ānandamayam para brahma*', '*sarva pūrṇarūpo'smi sac cid ānanda lakṣaṇaḥ*' '*satyam jñānam ānandaṁ brahma*' '*vijñānam ānandaṁ brahma*'. Therefore 'paramount bliss' refers to the allpervading principle of *brahma* – such is Śrī Bhagavān's constitution. By saying ***jagat vyāpaka hari***, Śrī Thākura Mahāśaya has defined Śrī Hari's the constitution.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa's matchless, limitless and natural lordship is called *aiśvarya*, the blessed author has revealed that in the words ***aja bhava ājñākārī. brahmādi paribhāvaka prabhāva hi***

⁴⁶ The burning power is natural to fire, unlike the burning power of (heated) iron that has become identical with fire, and who is a 'newcomer'.

aiśvarya (Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, meaning 'The power to control Brahmā, Śiva and others is called *aiśvarya*')

In the words of Śrī Jīva, the natural and universal loveliness and charm of one's form, attributes and pastimes is called *mādhurya* or sweetness. Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has revealed that in the words *madhura mūrati līlā kathā*. Actually within Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Original Personality of Godhead, there is a matchless *svarūpa* and *aiśvarya*, and *mādhurya* is established on the foundation of *svarūpa* and *aiśvarya*. The forms and pastimes are not sweet through mere loveliness and enchanting simplicity (*mugdhatā*), without the foundation of *svarūpa* and *aiśvarya*. If that were so, the enchanting simplicity of an ordinary child, who happens to be playful and naughty, could also be labelled as *mādhurya*.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda has written in his Rāga Vartma Candrikā (2nd Diffusion)—*mahaiśvaryasya dyotane vādyotane ca naralīlatvānatikramo mādhuryam. yathā pūtanā prāṇahāritve'pi stana cūṣaṇa lakṣaṇa narabālalīlatvam eva. mahā kathora śakaṭa sphoṭane'py ati sukumāra caraṇa traimāsikyottāna-śāyi bāla-līlatvam. mahā dīrgha dāmāśakya bandhatve'pi mātṛ bhīti vaiklavyam. brahma baladevādi mohane'pi sarvajñatve'pi vatsa-cāraṇa līlatvam. tathā aiśvarya sattva eva tasyādyotane dadhi payas cauryam gopa-stṛī lāmpatyādikam*. "Sweetness is there when the human feeling is never violated, regardless of whether Kṛṣṇa shows His divine prowess or not. For example, when baby-Kṛṣṇa killed the witch Pūtanā, He was playing a human child by sucking her breast. Although He smashed the very hard and gross cart-demon, He did so by kicking it with His tender footsoles while manifesting Himself as a baby of only three months, lying flat on His back. Although He could not be bound by mother Yaśodā even with the longest rope, He also showed great fear of Her. Although He bewildered Brahmā and Balarāma (by showing innumerable Viṣṇu-expansions of Himself) with His omniscience, He also tended the calves and cows, and searched for them everywhere in apparent ignorance of the fact that Brahmā had stolen them. Although He is possessed of endless prowess He did not display any of it when He stole the milk and curd from the cowherdwomen in an unseen way and so became known in the scriptures as 'the butter thief', and He became known as **'the debauch of the cowherd-wives'** by attracting the young cowherd girls with His flute playing." By Śrī Kṛṣṇa's inconceivable power He is simultaneously omniscient and a simpleton in one. This is not at all astonishing, for this mutual contradiction is combined in the Godhead, as Śrīpāda Līlāśuka has said – '*maugdhye ca sārvañe ca sārvaḥaumam idaṁ mahāḥ*'.

About the establishment of realisation of this *svarūpa*, *aiśvarya* and *mādhurya*, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has written— *tat tad anubhava sādhanam ca krameṇa jñānam jñeyam bhaktyākhyā gaurava miśrāprītiḥ śuddha prītiḥ ca* "Through the practice of *jñāna* one may realise the Lord's *svarūpa*, through the practice of reverential love one may realise the Lord's prowess and through the pure love of the people of Vraja one may realise the Lord's sweetness. The absence these three practices makes it impossible for a *māyā*-bound human being to realise anything of these principles. The Lord Himself has proclaimed: *nāhaṁ prakāśaḥ sarvasya yogamāyā samāvṛtaḥ* (Gītā 7.25) "O Arjuna! Being concealed by My mystic illusion, I am not manifest to everyone."

When the reverential devotees behold Śrī Hari's prowess they get a feeling of awe and reverence, and that slackens their feelings of (an intimate) relationship, but the nature of the purely sweet feelings of the Vrajavāsīs is that even if they behold hundreds of Kṛṣṇa's feats of prowess with their own eyes, their hearts do not feel even the slightest awe and

reverence towards Him, nor does it slacken their feelings of (an intimate) relationship. Rather, it even increases the depth of their relationship with Him! *dekhile nā māne aiśvarya kevalāra rīti* (C.C.) In His Vraja-pastimes Śrī Kṛṣṇa displayed inconceivably huge forms of prowess, from His baby-plays right up to the Rāsa dance, which is the crown jewel of all of His pastimes, but to the people of Vraja they were all manifest in a setting of endless sweetness. The killing of Pūtanā, Tṛṇāvarta, Bakāsura, Aghāsura and others, the bewilderment of Brahmā, the subjugation of Kāliya, the swallowing of the forest fire, the lifting of Mt. Govardhana and numerous other pastimes give splendid examples of that. Śrīpāda Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa has written in his book 'Siddhānta Ratna': *mādhurya jñāna niṣṭhānām aiśvarya jñānam triveṇyām sarasvatī pravāhavat gauṇatayāsti. virāhe vismaye vipadi ca tasyodaya parvaṇi sārsvatasyeva pravāhasya* "The *aiśvarya jñāna* (awareness of prowess) of the people of Vraja, who are fixed in *mādhurya*, is situated within them in a secondary, inferior way, like the Sarasvatī (who is not visible) within the Triveṇī (confluence of Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Sarasvatī at Prayāga). Just as the Sarasvatī is visible on certain auspicious days, like the Pūrṇimā, similarly the people of Vraja will sometimes show awareness of prowess for short periods of time during separation, astonishment or in times of danger, and only consolation can save their lives then. But this does not bring any kind of reverence or hesitation to their hearts, for even such displays of prowess by Śrī Kṛṣṇa cause the people of Vraja to drown in a bottomless ocean of sweetness, since it only serves to nourish their great awareness of His sweetness. They are always relishing the bliss of swimming around in the vast ocean of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweetness.

What to speak of the Lord's eternal associates in Vraja, even practitioners like Bilvamaṅgala Thākura experienced the ever-fresh sweetness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa with their love-anointed eyes. The book Śrī Kṛṣṇa Karṇāmṛta is still a luminous witness to this. This Karṇāmṛta-scripture can be mentioned as a fountainhead of endless relish of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweetness. Can a poet ever reveal Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweetness, that is manifest within his heart, through words? Perhaps he could express a part of a percentage point through words. But ultimately words fall silent and become stunned – the only verbal expression that remains is ***madhuram madhuram madhuram madhuram***.

This is the ultimate culmination of experiencing Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweetness. When Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweetness is manifest to the *rasika bhāgavata* devotees who are fixed in sweetness, the whole world becomes very beautiful, succulent and honey-sweet! Above them, below them, before them and behind them, everywhere is a great ocean of sweetness, with high billowing waves in it. The *premika bhāgavata* devotees forget about their bodies and everything connected with them and simply merge with these high waves of sweetness. This is the ultimate culmination of meditating on the flavours of Vraja. Here is the ultimate limit of experiencing Godhead, for ***mādhurya bhagavattāra sāra – sweetness is the essence of Godhead***. *mādhurya bhagavattā sāra, vraje koilo paracāra, tāhā śuka vyāsera nandane. sthāne sthāne bhāgavate, varṇiyāche nānā mate, jāhā śuni māte bhaktagaṇe* (C.C.) "Sweetness is the essence of Godhead, and it is preached in Vraja. Śuka, the son of Vyāsa, has described it in different ways in different parts of Śrīmad Bhāgavata, hearing which the devotees are mad with delight."

In different places in Śrīmad Bhāgavata, which is the essence of all Vedānta philosophy, Śrī Śuka Muni has described Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweetness, but until now this storehouse of sweetness has remained locked for the practitioners of this world. Greedy for the relish of

His own matchless sweetness, Vrajendranandana has accepted the feelings and the complexion of Śrī Rādhā and descended in the form of Śrī Gaurāṅga to plentifully relish Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweetness and to open the door of this secret storehouse of sweetness to those suffering the pangs of the age of Kali, making this sweet relish easily available. Again the sweet worship that makes an enhanced relish of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweetness possible through the Gosvāmīs like Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana, who are fully surrendered unto Śrīman Mahāprabhu's lotus feet, is like a jewelled temple they built on a steady foundation of scriptural injunction and authoritative statements, based on their own experiences. Through their own conduct they have taught the devotees of this world how to remain immersed in the flavours of such worship and stay in the realm of devotional ecstasy day and night, relishing the Lord's sweetness.

Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: *ei tattva jāne jei, parama uttama sei, tāra saṅga koribo sarvathā* "Those *rasika* devotees who are well versed and experienced in all these confidential principles are the greatest devotees who are most worthy of associating with. The practising devotees who yearn to relish this sweetness must always associate with such great devotees in order to relish the Lord's sweetness." (97)

parama nāgara kṛṣṇa, tā'te hao ati tṛṣṇa,
bhajo tāre vrajabhāva loiyā.
rasika bhakata saṅge, rahibo piriti raṅge,
vrajapure vasati koriyā. (98)

"Be very thirsty for the greatest amorous hero Kṛṣṇa and worship Him in the Vraja-mood! I will always lovingly stay with the *rasika* devotees and always live in Vraja (which is the best place to remember the loving discussions Rādhā and Mādhava have with Each other)!"

Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *ṭikā* – *bhajo tāre – śrī kṛṣṇam bhaja. piriti raṅge – yugala prema kathā raṅgeṇa.*

Worship of the feelings of Vraja :

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – Hereafter Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya discusses the essence of Vraja-*bhajana* – *parama nāgara kṛṣṇa, tāhe hao ati tṛṣṇa, bhajo tāre vraja bhāva loiyā* "O mind! Cherish a deep thirst towards the supreme amorous hero Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and worship Him while taking shelter of the feelings of Vraja!" Śrīpāda Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa calls **thirst** for Śrī Kṛṣṇa *bhakti* – *kṛṣṇa mātraika tṛṣṇā kṛṣṇa vinānya tṛṣṇā śūnyā bhaktiḥ*: "Thirst for Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone and nothing else but Him is called *bhakti*." This is great or deep thirst, because when thirst is just casual one will not only think of water but also of so many other things. <<But when thirst is really deep only absorption in thoughts of water remains. This deep thirst is called the intrinsic characteristic of *rāga bhakti* – *iṣṭe gādha tṛṣṇā* 'rāga'– *ei svarūpa lakṣaṇa; iṣṭe aviṣṭatā– ei taṭastha lakṣaṇa* (C.C.) "Deep thirst for the beloved deity is the intrinsic

characteristic (form and nature) of *rāga*, while deep absorption (devoid of any other subject but Kṛṣṇa) in the beloved deity is its marginal characteristic (result)."

Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: "We must cherish deep thirst for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the supreme amorous hero!" Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the clever gallant of the Vraja-sundarīs, therefore He is called *nāgara*, and when He is the lord of the life of Śrī Rādhārāṇī, the crown jewel of the Vraja sundarīs, then He is the *parama nāgara*. Therefore Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says *parama nāgara kṛṣṇa, tāhe hao ati tṛṣṇa* to instruct the practitioners of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, who worship Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, in the ways of *rāga bhajana*. The worship of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas in the mood of Rādhā's maidservants or *mañjarīs* is called *bhāvollāsā rati*. Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has written: *sañcārī syāt samonā vā kṛṣṇa-ratyāḥ suhrd ratiḥ adhikā puṣyamānā ced bhāvollāsā itiryate* "When the *sakhīs* love Rādhā (*suhrd ratiḥ*) as much as or less than Kṛṣṇa, then this is counted as a *sañcārī bhāva* in their *sthāyi bhāva* called *kṛṣṇa rati*. But if they always love Rādhā more, then it is called ***bhāvollāsā rati***. This is counted as a (new, separate) *sthāyi bhāva* of those who have greater love for Śrī Rādhā." Śrī Rādhārāṇī is the main shelter of those Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas who worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa. *āmāra īsvarī hon vṛndāvaneśvarī; tāra prāṇanātha boli bhaji giridhārī* "My mistress is the Queen of Vṛndāvana, Śrī Rādhā, and I worship Giridhārī because He is the Lord of Her life." *tavaivāsmi tavaivāsmi na jivāmi tvayā vinā; iti vijñāya devi tvam naya mānī caraṇāntikam* "I am Yours only! I am Yours only! I cannot live without You! O Goddess, knowing this, take me to Your lotus feet!" This is the *mūla mantra* or anthem of those who worship in the mood of the *mañjarīs*. If that is so, then why did Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya not call them deeply thirsty for Śrī Rādhā instead of very thirsty for Śrī Kṛṣṇa? Such a question may arise. The blessed author does not just say 'Kṛṣṇa', but ***parama nāgara kṛṣṇa***. There is a secret meaning hidden in these words '*parama nāgara kṛṣṇa*'. In some particular pastimes the practitioners of *mañjarī bhāva*, who love Rādhā more than Kṛṣṇa, must think of their service of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in such a way that they are deeply thirsty after Kṛṣṇa, in the framework of their service to Śrī Rādhārāṇī.

In his mentally conceived *siddha deha* the practitioner thinks of a pastime in which he/she helps Śrīmatī meet Kṛṣṇa (*abhisāra*). With the help of the maidservant Śrīmatī decorates the *kuñja* and stares down the road to see if Her hero is coming or not. The time of meeting has expired and Śrīmatī becomes impatient and starts weeping. The maidservant consoles Śrīmatī and goes out to seek out Śrī Kṛṣṇa, her heart filled with deep thirst for Kṛṣṇa. Searching for our hero, she cannot find Him anywhere, and finally she becomes despondent and cries out: "O Lord of Rādhā! O supreme amorous hero! Where are You? Reveal Yourself to me!" Your heart's beloved is very upset out of separation from You and is scorching severely due to this!" Now it seems that the *kiñkārī* is very thirsty for Kṛṣṇa – perhaps even a worshipper of Kṛṣṇa could not show such thirst for Kṛṣṇa! Due to the maidservant's great thirst, the greatest amorous hero Śrī Kṛṣṇa showed Himself to her. The maidservant took the king of amorous heroes along to the trysting grove and accomplished her matchless service to the Divine Pair there. Therefore it is understood that when it suits certain services to be rendered to the Divine Pair, the maidservant of Rādhā becomes very thirsty after Kṛṣṇa, the supreme amorous hero, although she loves Rādhā more than Him.

After this the blessed author says: *bhajo tāre vraja bhāva loiyā* – Kṛṣṇa must be worshipped in the mood of Vraja. Just as the eternal *rāgātmika* associates that live in Vraja

forget all of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's divine prowess and serve Him as the *laukika sad bandhu*, the good worldly friend with parental, fraternal or amorous love, as depicted in the verse *mora putra mora sakhā mora prāṇa pati* ("He is my son, my friend or my lover"), similarly the submissive practitioner also worships Kṛṣṇa as the good worldly friend, in his or her own way. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is a *bhāva* principle, and He cannot be captured without *bhāva*. The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas' *bhāva* (feelings) towards Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the **vraja bhāva** of **śrī rādhā's prāṇa bandhu, or heart's friend**. Śrīmat Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmīpāda has written in his Manah Śikṣā Stava:

*mad īsā nāthatve vraja vipina candram vrajavaneś-
varīm tan nāthatve tad atula sakhīve tu lalitām
visākhām śikṣāli vitarāṇa gurutve priya saro
girīndrau tat prekṣa lalita ratidatve smara manah*

"O Mind! Remember Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the moon of the Vraja-forests as the Lord of the Queen of Vṛndāvana Rādhā, remember Śrī Rādhā as Śrī Kṛṣṇa's most beloved girl, Lalitā as Their matchless girlfriend, Visākhā as the teacher of all the other girlfriends, and Śrī Rādhākunda and Girirāja Govardhana as two places the mere sight of which bestows charming love of Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa!"

After this the blessed author says to nourish the practitioner's *vraja bhāva*: *rasika bhakata saṅge, rohibo pīriti raṅge, vrajapure vasati koriyā* "I will lovingly stay with the *rasika* devotees and live in Vraja." Here association with a *rasika* devotee means association with a great saint who is dedicated to relishing devotional flavours, fixed in *sadācāra* (rules of pure conduct), endowed with the same background and aspirations, affectionate and more advanced than oneself. *sajātiyāsaye snigdhe sādhou saṅgaḥ svato vare. śrīmad bhāgavatārthānām āsvādyo rasikāḥ saha*. With such *rasika* devotees *rohibo pīritira raṅge* "I will live with love". In his commentary on this part, Śrīpāda Viśvanātha Cakravartī has written: *yugala prema kathā raṅgeṇa* "Being immersed in the marvel of discussing topics of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's love with each other, the practitioners spend their *bhajana*-time taking shelter of Their transcendental abode of Śrī Vṛndāvana, which is the most suitable place to remember Their pastimes. This is the best means for a practitioner of the flavours of Vraja to nourish His feelings for Vraja. (98)

śrī guru bhakata jana, tāhāra caraṇe mana,
āropiyā kathā anusāre
sakhīra sarvathā mata, hoiyā tāhāra yūtha,
sadāi vihare vrajapure (99)

"Since it is said (in the scriptures) that it is absolutely necessary (in order to destroy *anarthas* and to swiftly attain *prema*) to meditate on the lotus feet of Śrī Guru and the devotees, I act accordingly. I will always obey the *sakhīs*, being in one of their groups, and thus I will always enjoy in the abode of Vraja."

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *ṭīkā* – *kathā anusāre–śāstra kathānusāreṇa. hoiyā tāhāra yūtha–sakhinām yūtha vartinī bhūtvā. vihāre–vihāraṃ kuryām.*

Devotion to Śrī Guru and Vaiṣṇava –

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – *rāga mārgīya sādhana* is of two kinds—service like hearing and chanting rendered to Śrī Guru and Vaiṣṇava in the external body, and mental service rendered to Śrī-Śrī Rādhā Mādhava throughout the eight periods of the day within the mentally conceived *siddha deha*. Of these two kinds of *sādhana* Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya first mentions the service rendered to the lotus feet of Śrī Guru and Vaiṣṇavas in this *tripadī* – *śrī guru bhakata jana, tāhāra caraṇe mana, āropiyā kathā anusāre*, meaning that it is absolutely necessary to devote oneself to the lotus feet of Śrī Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas to destroy all evil habits and to attain *prema* during the process of hearing and chanting the *bhakti śāstras*. In this way the *sādhaka* must absorb his mind in the lotus feet of Śrī Guru and Vaiṣṇavas accordingly.

The grace of the Lord moves through the world in two forms, for its supreme benefit, namely Śrī Guru and Śrī Vaiṣṇava. Without taking shelter of the power of devotion to God, the living beings that are forgetful of the Lord and have been captured by ignorance since beginningless time, cannot find any means to get out of the terrible grip of ignorance. Through the gate of Guru and Vaiṣṇavas' grace the most merciful Lord is revealing the world the power of devotion in helping the conditioned souls in turning towards Him. Through the power of the association and the grace of the completely independent *sādhus* and the *guru* the conditioned souls, that have forgotten the Lord since beginningless time, attain taste for *śrī kṛṣṇa bhajana*. Those who take shelter of the path of *bhakti* and take the practical service of the *sādhus* and the *guru* as their main devotional practice always single-mindedly engage in such service. On the strength of such *guru-vaiṣṇava-bhakti* all their evil habits are swiftly destroyed and they will reach accomplishment in attaining the Lord along with *prema* for Him. This has been stated by all the scriptures. Śrīmad Bhāgavata's words prove that all evil habits are destroyed simply by serving Śrī Guru –

*asaṅkalpāj jayet kāmāṃ krodhāṃ kāmā vivarjanāt
arthānarthekṣayā lobhāṃ bhayāṃ tattvāvamarsanāt
ānvīkṣikyā śoka mohau dambhāṃ mahad upāsayā
yogāntarāyān maunena hiṃsām kāmādy anīhayā
kṛpayā bhūtajāṃ duḥkham daivaṃ jahyāt samādhinā
ātmajāṃ yoga-vīryeṇa nidrāṃ sattva niṣevayā
rajas tamaś ca sattvena sattvam copaśamena ca
etat sarvaṃ gurau bhaktyā puruṣo hyaṅjasā jayet*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavata 7.15.22-25)

Śrī Nārada told King Yudhiṣṭhira: "To give up lust one must give up one's determination to enjoy, to give up anger one must give up lust and to give up greed one must see the evil of money. Fear can be given up by considering the truth, lamentation and illusion can be given up by considering what is material and what is spiritual (rational thinking), pride can be given up by serving a great soul and obstacles in *yoga*-practice (which

serves the purpose of fixing the mind) can be overcome by practising silence. Violence is conquered by giving up endeavours for sense-gratification, suffering caused by other living entities can be mitigated by developing the quality of compassion, suffering caused by the elements can be mitigated by entering into *samādhi* and suffering caused by the own body and mind can be mitigated by practising the eight-fold path of mystic *yoga* (*aṣṭāṅga-yoga*). When the mode of goodness increases sleep is conquered, along with the modes of passion and indolence, and by controlling the senses the mode of goodness is transcended. **But all these vices and obstacles together can be conquered simply by being devoted to the guru.**" The scriptures say that the perfection of devotion is attained by serving Śrī Guru

—
*guru śuśruṣaṇaṁ nāma sarva dharmottamottamam
 tasmād dharmāt paro dharmah pavitro naiva vidyate*

"Service to Śrī Guru is the supreme religious practice, there is no purer religious practice than this anywhere in the world." Śrīmad Bhāgavata says: '*sa vai puṁsaṁ paro dharmo yato bhaktir adhokṣaje*', '*dharmā mad bhakti kṛt prokta*' "The highest religion for humanity is devotion to the transcendental Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa". "My devotion is known as the highest religion". All these statements show that devotion to the Personality of Godhead is the highest religion or virtue, and the highest virtue within this scope, viz. the highest limb of *bhakti*, is again **service to Śrī Guru**. In the Āgama it is said—

—
*yathā siddha rasa sparśāt tāmraṁ bhavati kāñcanam
 sannidhānād guror evaṁ śiṣyo viṣṇumayo bhavet*

"Just as copper turns into gold by being touched by *siddha rasa*, similarly the disciple becomes filled with Viṣṇu by being in touch with Śrī Guru." The meaning of this is that just as *siddha rasa* is not dependent on any other substance due to its inconceivable power, and can thus turn copper into gold merely by its own touch, similarly the service and the vicinity of Śrī Guru turn the disciple into a pure devotee of Lord Viṣṇu merely by its own inconceivable power. In the Vāmana Kalpa we can find the following words of Lord Brahmā

—
*yo mantrah sa guruḥ sākṣāt yo guruḥ sa hariḥ svayam
 gurur yasya bhavet tuṣṭas tasya tuṣṭo hariḥ svayam*

"The *mantra* is identical to the *guru* and the *guru* is identical to Śrī Hari Himself — there is no difference whatsoever between *mantra*, *guru* and *hari*. Śrī Hari is automatically satisfied with whom the Guru is satisfied." In the Padma Purāṇa these words of Devahūti are seen—

—
*bhaktir yathā harau me'sti tad variṣṭhā gurau yadi
 mamāsti tena satyena sandarśayatu me hariḥ*

"If I have more devotion to the Guru than to Hari, then may Śrī Hari grant me His *darśana* through this truth." Here the words *tad variṣṭhā* show that devotion to the Guru is more glorious than devotion to the Lord Himself. In Śrīmad Bhāgavata it is seen—

*nāham ijjā prajātibhyāṁ tapasopāsamena vā
tuṣyeyaṁ sarva bhūtātmā guru śuśrūṣayā yathā*

ijjā pūjā prajāti vaiṣṇava dīkṣā tapaḥ samādhiḥ upāśamo bhagavan niṣṭheti (Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī's *ṭīkā*) "The Lord told Śrīdāma Vipra, "I am the soul of all creatures, and I am more satisfied with service rendered to the Guru than I would be with Vaiṣṇava initiation, *pūjā*, fixation in the Lord, or *samādhi*."

There are also various scriptural statements that prove the importance of service rendered to the Vaiṣṇavas – In the Ādi Purāṇa Śrī Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna–

*ye me bhakta janāḥ pārtha na me bhaktās ca te janāḥ
mad bhaktānāṁ ca ye bhaktās te me bhaktatamā matāḥ*

"O Pārtha! Those who are only devoted unto Me, are not really My devotees. You should know, however, that those who are the devotees of My devotees are My greatest devotees." In the Skanda Purāṇa the Lord says: *vaiṣṇavā viṣṇuvat pūjyā mama mānyā viśeṣataḥ* – "The Vaiṣṇavas are as worshipable as Viṣṇu, and they are respectable especially by Me." In Śrīmad Bhāgavata Śrī Kṛṣṇa told Śrī Uddhava that the worship of His devotees is even greater than His own worship by saying: *mad bhakta pūjābhyādhikā* (Bhāg. 11.19.21) – "The worship of My devotees pleases Me even more than My own worship, hence you should worship My devotee more than you worship Me." In the Padma Purāṇa Śrīman Mahādeva tells Devī –

*ārādhanānāṁ sarveṣāṁ viṣṇor ārādhanāṁ param
tasmāt parataram devī tadīyānāṁ samarcanam*

"O Devi! Of all the gods, Viṣṇu is the most worshipable, but even more worshipable than Viṣṇu are His devotees." The reason for this can be found in the Śāṅḍilya Smṛti –

*siddhir bhavati vā neti saṁśayo'cyuta sevinām
na saṁśayo'tra tad bhakta paricaryāratātmanām*

"One may still doubt whether or not *prema siddhi* will be attained through the service of Śrī Acyuta, but there can be no doubt about it that *prema siddhi* will be attained through serving His devotees." In this way there are heaps of scriptural evidence that show the importance of *bhaktas* serving the Vaiṣṇavas.

After this Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya speaks about the internal worship of the *rāga-mārgīya bhaktas*– *sakhīra sarvathā mata, hoiyā tāhāra yūtha, sadāi vihare vraja pure*: "I will be following the opinions of the *sakhīs* in all respects and, belonging to a particular *yūtha* of *sakhīs*, I will always serve Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava and Their *sakhīs* in my mentally conceived *siddha deha*, as They enjoy in the kingdom of *līlā*." In the Sanat Kumāra Saṁhitā it is written–

*ātmānāṁ cintayet tatra tāsāṁ madhye manoramām
rūpa yauvana sampannām kiśorīm pramadākṛtīm
sakhīnām saṅginī rūpām ātmānāṁ vāsanāmayīm*

ājñā sevāparām tadvat ratnāṅkāra bhūṣitām

"An practitioner should think himself to be amongst them (the other *gopīs*), as an enchanting beautiful young adolescent female. As a female associate of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's girlfriends, such as Śrī Lalitā and Viśākhā and Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī, she is dedicated to the services to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava that are ordered to her and she is decorated with jewelled ornaments (that are given to her by Śrī Rādhā as remnants). In this way she renders service according to the time of day, from the early morning hours until the wee hours of the night, in a mentally conceived 'desire-body'. After the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas take shelter of the lotus feet of Śrī Guru they receive acquaintance from him with their own *mañjarī svarūpa* in *siddha praṇālī* with *ekādaśa bhāva* (an eleven-fold spiritual personality). Establishing his self esteem in this, the *sādhaka* proceeds in rendering mental service to Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Mādhava throughout the eight time periods of the day, and when he achieves *siddhi* he will be blessed with direct devotional service within that *svārūpa*. Previously we have also discussed this in detail. (99)

*līlā rasa sadā gāna, yugala kiśora prāṇa,
prārthanā koribo abhilāṣa
jīvane maraṇe ei, āra kichu nāhi cāi
kohe dīna narottama dāsa (100)*

"I will pray with the desire to always be able to sing about the *rasika* pastimes of the Yugala Kiśora, who are my very life. The fallen Narottama dāsa says: "In life or in death I don't want anything else!"

Desires in life and death :

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – In this *tripadī* Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya reveals his prayers for the fulfillment of three of his prayers, both in life and in death –*līlā rasa sadā gāna, yugalakiśora prāṇa, prārthanā koribo abhilāṣa* He will always sing of the *rasika* pastimes of the Yugala Kiśora, He wants the Adolescent Pair Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava to become His very life and He desires His long-coveted devotional service. Although these things are natural to Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya, who is the embodiment of *prema*, still, since *bhakti* is by nature insatiable or because he is naturally most humble, he reveals these three aspirations. He proclaims that these three prayers of his should be the means and the goal of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, or their aspirations in life and death.

The first of these three prayers is *līlā rasa sadā gāna*. Here the features of *līlā* are names, forms and attributes and the features of *kīrtana* are understood to be hearing and remembering. Śrī Kṛṣṇa's holy names, forms, attributes and pastimes are all *rasa* - most relishable. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the embodiment of ecstasy and flavour, and this flavour becomes manifest in His names, attributes and pastimes. After all, His attributes, pastimes and so are all inherent in Him. *kṛṣṇa nāma, kṛṣṇa guṇa, kṛṣṇa līlā vṛnda; kṛṣṇera svarūpa sama, sab cid ānanda* (C.C.) "Kṛṣṇa's names, Kṛṣṇa's attributes and Kṛṣṇa's pastimes are all inherent in

Kṛṣṇa, like His own body they are all transcendental." The tasty names, pastimes and attributes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the embodiment of divine flavours, are even more sweet and relishable when they join with the tasty names, form, attributes and pastimes of Śrī Rādhārāṇī, who is the embodiment of *mahā bhāva*. In the same way the attributes, pastimes etc of *premamayī* Śrī Rādhā are experienced in the most delicious ways along with the attributes, pastimes etc. of *rasarāja* Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Therefore the practising Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas take their identification with their *siddha rūpa* along to relish the flavours of the Divine Pair's forms, attributes and pastimes, thus experiencing bliss and delicacy that stands supreme throughout the spiritual world.

Here Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya does not mention 'forms or attributes' but only says *līlā rasa* because within *līlās* the forms, attributes and names are included. In other words, within the hearing and chanting of the Divine Pair's pastimes, the hearing and chanting of Their forms and attributes are included. Then again he does not mention hearing or recollecting, but only mentions *gāna* or singing, because with singing the process of hearing also reaches perfection. Another reason for saying *gāna* in stead of *kīrtana* is that if the flavours of the Divine Couple's pastimes, that are already ever-so-sweet, are sung with nice tunes and rhythms, it is a great cause of a melting of the heart. Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya promulgated the tune called *garāṇa hāṭī* and thus revealed such an attractive science of song that it astonished the most saintly audience who either saw or heard it, and caused their hearts to melt. Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya here reveals the aspiration to always be absorbed in the glorification of this *līlā rasa*.

Then he utters his second prayer: *yugala kiśora prāṇa*. Śrī-Śrī Rādhā are the Self of the selves or the Supreme Self, the Supreme Condition, hence They are naturally dearer than the dearest to everyone. The soul (self) is the object of everyone's love and it is only due to contact with the soul that one loves body, abode, wife, child or fortune. Śrīmad Bhāgavata (10.14.50-55) says—

sarveṣāṃ api bhūtānāṃ nṛpa svātmaiva ballabhaḥ; itare'patya-vittādyās tad vallabhatayaiva hi tad rājendra yathā snehaḥ sva svakātmani dehinām; na tathā mamatālambi putra vitta grhādiṣu dehātma vādināṃ puṃsām api rājanya sattama; yathā dehaḥ priyatamas tathā na hyanu ye ca tam deho'pi mamatābhāk cet tarhyasau nātmavat priyaḥ; yaj jīryatyapi dehe'smin jīvītāsā baliyasī tasmāt priyatamaḥ svātmā sarveṣāṃ api dehinām; tad artham eva sakalaṃ jagac caitac carācaram kṛṣṇam enam avehi tvam ātmānam akhilātmanām; jagad dhitāya so'py atra dehivābhāti māyayā

In the Brahma Vimohana *līlā* Śrī Śuka Muni described how the Vrajavāsīs loved Vrajendranandana even more than their own sons, and Mahārāja Parīkṣit asked: "Everyone loves their own child more than others' children, but the people of Vraja loved Vrajendranandana even more than their own children. Why is that?" To this Śrī Śuka Muni answered: "O King! Everyone loves the own self the most, and children, money and other things are only dear because or when they are dear to the self. O greatest of emperors! It is for this reason that no one loves children, wealth or abodes that are the objects of possessiveness, as much as one loves oneself. Even for those who proclaim the body to be the self the own body is dearer than the bodies of their children and other beloveds. Although the body is an object of possessiveness even this is not as dear as the self. For example, when the body grows old and is about to die, the desire to live is as strong as ever. Therefore for all the embodied

souls the self is dearest and the whole world with all its moving and nonmoving creatures is dear since it is connected with the self. O King! **Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Self of all the selves**, He is the Supreme Self or the Supreme Condition, who has appeared just like an embodied soul for the welfare of the universe."

Although Śrī Kṛṣṇa is naturally dearer to everyone than the self, still the conditioned souls, that have been averse to Him since beginningless time and whose hearts are polluted by illusion, do not experience this. When one takes refuge of the path of devotion and becomes favorable to Kṛṣṇa, this dearness will be realised according to one's stage of advancement. The loving devotees experience Śrī Kṛṣṇa as millions of times dearer than the own self. The great loving devotee Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya is Śrī Rādhā's beloved maidservant and Śrī Rādhā Mādhava is dearer to him than millions of hearts; that is why he says: **yugala kiśora prāṇa**.

After this he says: **prārthanā koribo abhilāṣa** "The devotional service of the Divine Pair is what I most pray and yearn for." *bhakti* means **service (sevā)** – *bhaj ityeṣa vai dhātuḥ sevāyān parikirtitaḥ*: From the verbal root *bhaj* the word *bhakti* comes. The verbal root *bhaj* means service; that is why *bhakti* means service. The service of the beloved is the devotee's ever-sought-for object. To them devotional service means happiness and everything else misery. Especially those who render service in *mañjarī bhāva* are wholly dedicated to service. Service is their very life sustenance and they are always immersed in desires for service. Therefore service is the only treasure they covet. Hence Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya reveals his prayers for service. His **Prārthanā Gītikā** is filled with his wonderful prayers for Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's service. To Śrī Rādhārāṇī he has prayed:

prāṇeśvari! ei bāra karuṇā koro more!
daśanete tṛṇa dhari, añjali mastake kori,
ei jana nivedana kore
priya saharāṇī saṅge, sevana koribo raṅge,
aṅge veśa koribeka sādhe
rākho ei sevā kāje, nija pāda pañkaje,
priya saharāṇī-gaṇa mājhe
sugandhi candana, mañimaya ābharana,
kauṣika vasana nānā raṅge
ei sab sevā yāra, dāsi yeno hoñ tāra,
anukṣana thāki tāra saṅge
jala suvāsita kori, ratana bhṛṅgāre bhari,
karpūra vāsita guvā pāna
e sab sājāiyā ḍālā, labaṅga mālati mālā,
bhakṣya dravya nānā anupāma
sakhīra iṅgita hobe, e sab ānibo kobe,
yogāibo lalitāra kāche
narottama dāsa koy, ei yeno mora hoy,
dāḍāiyā rahu sakhīra pāche

"O Queen of my heart! Be kind to me this time! Holding a straw between my teeth and keeping my hands folded on my head, I pray to You: I will blissfully serve You along with

Your dear girlfriends, dressing Your limbs. Please keep me among Your beloved companions for this service to Your lotus feet. May I always stay in the company of Your maidservants who joyfully serve You with fragrant sandalwood pulp, jewel ornaments and silken garments. On the indication of the *sakhīs* I will fill up a jewelled pitcher with scented water and I will bring camphor-scented betel leaves, garlands of cloves and jasmynes and different matchless edibles to Lalitā (so that she can serve the divine Pair with these things). Narottama dāsa says: "May I thus once stand behind the *sakhīs* (awaiting orders from the divine Pair)!"

Then again he prays:

prāṇeśvari! kobe more hobe kṛpā dīṭhi?
ājñāya āniyā kobe, vīvidha phula vara,
śunibo vacana duhu miṭhi

"Prāṇeśvari! When will I get Your merciful glance? When will I, on Your order, bring different kinds of flowers, and hear Your sweet words?"

mṛgamada tilaka, sindūra bonāyabo,
lepabo candana gandhe.
gāñṭhi mālatī phula, hāra pahirābo,
dhāoyābo madhukara vṛnde

"I will decorate You with musk-*tilaka* and a stripe of *sindūra*, I will anoint You with fragrant sandalwoodpulp, and I will string a garland of Mālatī-flowers that will make the bumblebees run (towards it)."

lalitā kobe more, vījana deyabo,
vījabo māruta mande
śrama-jala sakala, miṭabo duhu kalevara,
herabo parama ānande

"When will Lalitā give me a fan with which I can softly fan Them, drying up the sweatdrops from Their bodies? I will see all this in topmost ecstasy!"

narottama dāsa, āśa pada pañkaja,
sevana mādhuri pāne
hobo heno dina, nā dekhiye kona cihna,
duhu jana herabo nayāne

"Narottama dāsa hopes he can drink the sweet beverage of service to Their lotus feet. But alas! I see no signs that such a blessed day is going to come when I can see these Two with my own eyes."

In life this service is worth desiring and after death also the same service rendered in *siddha svarūpa* is most desirable— a pure devotee desires nothing else but this, hence it is said: *jīvane maraṇe ei, āra kichu nāhi cāi, kohe dīna narottama dāsa*. Previously (in song 42) he had said: *jīvane maraṇe gati, rādhā kṛṣṇa prāṇa pati, doñhāra pīriti rasa sukhe; yugala saṅgati yārā, mora prāṇa gole hārā, ei kothā rohu mora buke* "Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, the monarchs of my heart, are my shelter, in this life and in the next. Those who have become the eternal associates of the Divine Couple, having become overwhelmed by Their blissful mutual love, these *sakhīs*

and *mañjarīs* are the necklaces around my heart and around my neck. May this matter always remain in my heart." (100)

āna kathā nā bolibo, āna kathā nā śunibo,
sakali koribo paramārtha
prārthanā koribo sadā, lālasā abhiṣṭa kathā,
ihā vinā sakali anartha (101)

"I will not say or hear anything else, but I will live a completely spiritual life (devoted to Śrī Kṛṣṇa). I will always pray for this coveted topic, without which everything else is useless."

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī's *ṭīkā* – *paramārtha-śrī kṛṣṇa bhaktiḥ*.

Yearning for the beloved:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – In the previous *tripadī* the blessed author expressed the desire to make the lotus feet of the Yugala Kīśora, Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, the essence, in life or in death. In this *tripadī* he aspires to perform his external and internal activities out of devotion to the lotus feet of the Śrī-Śrī Yugala Kīśora, and to give up all activities that are not performed for Kṛṣṇa, knowing them to be vices. First he says: *āna kathā nā bolibo, āna kathā nā śunibo, sakali koribo paramārtha* All topics except for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, devotion to Him and the devotee himself, including topics of *karma, jñāna, yoga*, prosperity, mystic perfection, liberation, etc. etc. are all called *āna kathā*, ulterior topics. Hearing or talking about these topics causes the mind to become confused and to become absorbed in topics other than Kṛṣṇa. The conditioned souls have been averse to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, being forgetful of Him since beginningless time, and due to this ignorance of the supreme truth they have attained this miserable mundane condition. *kṛṣṇa bhūli sei jīva anādi bahirmukha; ataeva māyā tāre dey saṁsāra duḥkha* (C.C.) "Forgetting Kṛṣṇa, the individual soul has been averse to Him since beginningless time, and therefore *māyā* brings him the misery from the phenomenal world." The root cause of this material disease is forgetfulness of God, and to eliminate this the scriptures have preached the remembrance of the Lord. At the end of Śrīmad Bhāgavata (12.12.55) it is said—

avismṛtiḥ kṛṣṇa pādaravindayoḥ kṣiṇotyabhadraṇi ca saṁ tanoti
sattvasya śuddhiṁ paramātma bhaktiṁ jñāna vijñāna virāga yuktam

"Constant recollection of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet destroys the inauspiciousness of forgetting Him and all concomitant sensual desires, and awakens all auspiciousness, or a favorable attitude towards the Lord's lotus feet. Then one loses taste for anything else but Kṛṣṇa and devotion, characterised by *prema*, extends itself, along with realisations about the Lord." When realisations of God enter into the pure heart which is free from attachment and repulsion and which loses all taste for other things but Kṛṣṇa, uninterrupted remembrance of

Śrī Kṛṣṇa comes to pass. This is called *dhruvānusmṛti*, which is synonymous to *darśana* or direct perception and is the greatest means to have the direct meeting with the Supreme Lord. In the beginning of his Śrī-Bhāṣya, Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya elaborately explains this *dhruvānusmṛti*. There he says: *bhavati ca smṛter bhāvanā prakarṣād darśana rūpatā* – "When recollection becomes very deep, the stream of unrelated thoughts vanishes and concentration on related thoughts is gained; then the awareness of the recollection itself culminates into an awareness of direct experience." In the Gītā, the Lord personally glorifies the practice of *smaraṇa* again and again, as follows:

*ananya cetāḥ satataṁ yo māṁ smarati nityaśaḥ
tasyāhaṁ sulabhaḥ pārtha nitya yuktasya yoginaḥ* (8.14)

"O Pārtha! To the ever-engaged mystic who constantly remembers Me without thinking of anything else, I am easily attainable!" He also says:

*ananyās cintayanto māṁ ye janāḥ paryupāsate
teṣāṁ nityābhīyuktānāṁ yoga kṣemaṁ vahāmyaham* (9.22)

"To those who are ever engaged in worshipping Me by exclusively meditating on Me, I carry *yoga* (attainment of yet unattained matters) and *kṣema* (preservation of those things already attained)." Hence the Lord told Arjuna – *tasmāt sarveṣu kāleṣu māṁ anusmara* "O Arjuna! Always remember Me at every moment!" Speaking and hearing other topics is a complete barricade to such a glorious devotional practice as *smaraṇa* and thus the vow has been taken here to give this up in all respects.

After this Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya says: *sakali koribo paramārtha* Here the word *paramārtha* means the *parama puruṣārtha* or devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Here the blessed author vows to engage his whole physical life in this devotional service. The lesson for the practitioners is that they must try to keep their bodies, minds and words engaged in the worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The body should not act in ways unfavorable to *bhajana*, words should not be spoken that could harm *bhajana* and thoughts should never be thought that could diminish *bhajana*. The scriptures and *mahājānas* advise us that in the course of surrender one should engage the body and all that is connected to it in the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, like a sold cow. A person who purchases a cow takes over the responsibility of rearing and feeding it, and the cow will work for the person who purchased it, not the person who sold it. Similarly the surrendered practitioners offer everything, upto the purified soul, unto the Supreme Lord, filling all their physical activities with the worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Nothing will be unattainable if one takes the help from the Almighty God, giving up countless ways of self dependence and activities that are impossible to accomplish. A person who leaves all responsibility to the Almighty Lord can rest in peace and engage in his own activities, which means that Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the epicentre or supreme director of all activities, resides in his heart and he acts exactly in the way in which He (Kṛṣṇa) makes him act. Thus the practitioner surrenders: *tavāsmīti vadan vācā tathaiiva manasā vidan; tat sthānam āśritā tanvā modate saraṇāgataḥ* "The surrendered soul rejoices when he physically takes shelter of the Lord's abode, speaks and also thinks: "O Lord! I am Yours!" All his physical activities are

paramārtha, performed for the sake of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's devotion. First the practitioner must endeavour for this, later this becomes a natural custom.

After this the blessed author says: *prārthanā koribo sadā, lālasā abhiṣṭa kothā, ihā vinā sakali anartha* "I constantly pray that I may always hanker for topics concerning my most beloved Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, for anything other than these dearest topics is simply harming my *bhajana*." For the practitioners of *rāgānugā bhajana*, who are absorbed in *līlā rasa*, anything other than topics of the beloved deity is a mishap. Meditation on Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's *aṣṭakāliya līlā* in *svarūpābhimāna* (self identification with the Guru-given spiritual body) is the internal worship of the *rāgānugā* practitioners. The meditation on their mental devotional service is included within their meditation on the Lord's pastimes, and this will be attained at the time of accomplishment (*siddhi*) in the fashion of *sādhane bhāvibo yāhā, siddha dehe pābo tāhā* ("Whatever I think of during my practice, I will attain a spiritual body accordingly"). Thus the contemplated service with one's mentally conceived spiritual body will be attained in the kingdom of *līlā* and thus one is blessed. Therefore it is not proper in *rāga bhajana* to cherish the desire for other topics than topics of the pastimes of the beloved deity, for all these things will be a mishap for one's *bhajana*. Without the grace of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā Mādhava the practitioner will remain unable to become free from the grip of these vices and to cherish a craving for topics concerning the pastimes of his beloved deity. Therefore they always submit their prayers at the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava. The practitioner's anxious prayers unlock the grace of the beloved deity and the practitioner will swiftly be blessed with the attainment of that beloved deity. (101)

īśvarera tattva yoto, tāhā vā kohibo koto,
ananta apāra kebā jāne
vraja pure prema satya, ei se parama tattva,
bhajo bhajo anurāga mane (102)

"How can I describe all the transcendental truths of the Lord? Who can know these unlimited glories? The love of Vraja-pura is real, this is the supreme truth. Worship, oh worship this with an attached mind!"

The Supreme Truth:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā— Previously it was discussed: '*līlārasa sadā gāna*' (Always sing about *rasika līlās*) and '*prārthanā koribo sadā, lālasā abhiṣṭa kothā, ihā vinā sakali anartha*' ("I will always pray for a craving for the topics of my beloved deity, for without this everything is evil."). Now the question may be asked "When one constantly hears, chants and recollects Śrī Kṛṣṇa's tasty pastimes, then when will we hear and chant about His philosophical status (*tattva*) or His glorious might (*mahimā*)?" Nevertheless in the line: *jagat vyāpaka hari, aja-bhava ājñā kāri, madhura mūrati līlākathā, ei tattva jāne jei, parama uttama sei, tāra saṅga koribo sarvathā*, the relish of *rasa* or *līlā* is established on a foundation of philosophy and

glorification, isn't it? Expecting such a question to be raised, the blessed author reveals this *tripadī*.

First he says: *īśvarera tattva joto, tāhā vā kohibo koto, ananta apāra kevā jāne?* "How can I describe all the transcendental truths of the Lord? Who can know these unlimited glories?" The truth about the Personality of Godhead is unlimited and the ocean of His Almighty and glory is boundless and hard to cross or to enter into. No one can cross it. The Creator of the universe Brahmā praised the Lord as follows (Bhāg. 10.14.11)–

*kvāhaṁ tamo mahad ahaṁ khacarāgni vābhūr saṁveṣṭitāṇḍa ghaṭa sapta vitasti kāyaḥ
kvedrg vidhā vigaṇitāṇḍa parānucaryā vātādhva roma vivarasya ca te mahitvam*

"O Lord! Where am I, just seven times as small as this egg-like universe which envelops me with its eight layers nature, the *mahat tattva* (the aggregate of 24 material elements), *ahankāra* (self esteem), the sky, wind, fire, water and earth, and where is Your glory, since from each pore of Your hair a universe spins (emanates), just like specks of dust coming through a window? Therefore I am most insignificant compared to Your greatness!" In this way Brahmā describes the infinity of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's attributes and pastimes. About the Lord's attributes he says (Bhāg. 10.14.7):

*guṇātmanas te'pi guṇān vimātuṁ hitāvatīrṇasya ka īsire'sya
kālena yair vā vimitā sukalpair bhūpāṁśava khe mihikā dyu-bhāsaḥ*

"O Lord! Who can count the amount of Your attributes? You are the receptacle of all attributes and You have descended for the welfare of the universe. In due course of time the great mystics may be able to count all the specks of dust on the earth and the snowflakes or the stars in the sky, but even then they will remain unable to count Your attributes!" About Śrī Kṛṣṇa's endless pastimes Lord Brahmā says (Bhāg. 10.14.20):

*ko vetti bhūman bhagavan parātman yogeśvarotīr bhavatas trilokyām
kvāho katham vā kati vā kadeti vistārayan krīḍasi yoga māyām*

"O indivisible one, full of all prowess! O monitor and observer of all! O You of inconceivable powers! Who will be able to know how, where and how much You will reveal of Your wonderful pastimes, by extending Your inconceivable energy of Yogamāyā?" Finally Brahmā said (Bhāg. 10.14.38)–

*jānanta eva jānantu kiṁ bahūktyā na me prabho
manaso vapuṣo vāco vaibhavaṁ tava gocaraḥ*

"O Lord! What more should I say? Let those who know Your glories know them. My body, mind and words, however, are unable to conceive of them!"

If Śrī Kṛṣṇa's glories are inconceivable to the body, mind and words of Brahmā, the creator and first Guru of the universe, then it need not be said that they are inconceivable to others. The devotees who yearn to relish Kṛṣṇa's sweetness and who worship Him in the framework of this sweetness, should take care not to spend too much time pondering on

these philosophical truths, but should aim at relishing the sweetness of His form, attributes and pastimes. This does not mean that it is completely forbidden to discuss philosophical truths; any amount of philosophical discussion that nourishes the relish of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes is favorable to the worshipper of Kṛṣṇa's sweetness-aspect. If one gets too deeply engrossed in philosophical discussions, though, one is deprived of the bliss of relishing the mellows of the beloved deity's pastimes. This is the gist of the Sandarbhas' conclusion on this matter.

After this the blessed author says: *vrajapure prema satya, ei se parama tattva, bhajo bhajo anurāga mane* "The love of Vraja-pura is real, this is the supreme truth. Worship, oh worship this with an attached mind!" The simple meaning of **prema** is 'love', but let no one mistake this for ordinary worldly love. **prema means love of God**, for *prema* is the essence of the Lord's intrinsic potencies *hlādinī* (bliss) and *samvit* (knowledge). When this transcendental energy mixes with the mind and heart of a devotee it becomes known as *prema*. Therefore worldly love is indicated with words like *sva deśa prema* 'love for one's country', *pitṛ prema* 'love for one's father' or *bhrātṛ prema*, 'love for one's brother', but this is simply an insult to the word *prema*.

Anyway, love of God is named *prema* and this *prema* is a spiritual energy, not the mundane, temporary love of the world— this is the supreme truth or an imperishable principle. But here Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: *vraja pure prema satya*. This appears to show that the love in Vraja is real and genuine and the love elsewhere, like Vaikuṅṭha, Ayodhyā and Dvārakā is not genuine. But that is not why this statement was made. The love of all devotees of all kingdoms of God is genuine, but the love of Vraja is called *satya* here because the love in other abodes is mixed with feelings of awe and reverence, and creates hesitation and respect towards the Lord in their resident devotees. The pure love of the Vraja-devotees towards the Lord is free from all feelings of majesty and prowess and awakens feelings of *mora putra, mora sakhā, mora prāṇa pati* – 'He is my son, my friend or my lover'. Therefore all other kinds of love except the love of Vraja is stained with the designation of awe and reverence. Pure or *satya* love is only found in Vraja.

ei se parama tattva means that this principle of *prema* finds its full manifestation in Vraja, therefore the love of Vraja is the highest principle. Another meaning of *ei se parama tattva* is that the summit of *prema* is only genuinely manifest in Vraja-*prema* for as much as awe and reverence is shown as a result of a display of prowess, the less the joy of love can be felt. *prema* should be kept in the heart without hesitation. When hesitation and reverence enter, it is as if *prema*'s heart breaks. The devotees and the Lord constantly float in *prema*'s sweet currents and thus they hold each other in a tight embrace— this is what is so special about *prema*! There is no such *prema* anywhere except for in Vraja, and hence *prema* resides there as the supreme truth (*parama tattva*). Highest of all is Vraja's *madhura prema*. This *prema* is defined as follows— *sarvathā dhvaṁsa rahitaṁ satyapi dhvaṁsa kāraṇe; yad bhāva bandhanam yūnoḥ sa premā parikīrtitaḥ* "Prema is not destroyed even if there are hundreds of reasons why it may have been destroyed, and it binds the feelings of young boys and girls." Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's mutual love is the summit of *prema*, for there: *nā so ramaṇa nā hām ramaṇī; duhuṁ mana manobhava peśala jāni* – "He is not the gallant and I am not the ladylove. Cupid has merged the minds of these Two." It is as if *prema* has merged Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's minds and made them one. The goal of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas is to worship this supreme truth, the *yugala prema*, in the mood of Śrī Rādhā's maidservant, hence Śrīla

Ṭhākura Mahāśaya urges them to attain a life full of passionate worship (*rāgānugā bhajana*) by saying: ***bhajo bhajo anurāga mane*** – "Worship Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava at every moment with a passionate mind or with *anurāga*!" (102)

*govinda gokula candra, parama ānanda kanda,
parivāra gopa gopī saṅge
nandīśvara yāra dhāma, giridhārī yāra nāma,
sakhī saṅge tāre bhajo raṅge (103)*

"Govinda, the moon of Gokula, is the source of topmost transcendental bliss, and He always resides with His large family of cowherd boys and cowherd girls. His abode is named Nandīśvara and He Himself is named Giridhārī. Blissfully worship Him with His girlfriends!"

The joy of worship:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā– After discussing the passionate worship of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya now discusses the varieties of such worship – *govinda gokula candra, parama ānanda kanda, parivāra gopa gopī saṅge* "Govinda, the moon of Gokula, is the source of topmost transcendental bliss, and He always resides with His large family of cowherd boys and cowherd girls." **govinda** (*vid*=gain) means He whose *go* or senses have attained Śrī Rādhārāṇī. But Kṛṣṇa, Who is the embodiment of intense bliss, has become so eager to attain Śrī Rādhārāṇī in His *pūrva rāga* condition (when He falls in love with Her)! The Mahājanas have sung–

*cānda nehāri, candane tanu lepai
tāpa sahai nā pāro
dhavala nicola, bahoi nā pārai
koiche korobo abhisāra*

"(He is so afflicted that even) When He sees the moon He anoints His body with cooling sandalwood paste, for otherwise He cannot tolerate the heat. He cannot even wear a white cape, so how can He run out to meet Her (in the moonlit night)?"

*sundari! to vinu ākula kāna
virahe kṣīṇa tanu, anukhana jara jara
jīvaite vihi bhelo vāma*

"O beautiful girl! Without You, Kṛṣṇa is in great distress! His body is emaciated by separation and is constantly aching. In regard to His survival, Fate seems to be unfavorable to Him."

*jatanahi megha, mallāra ālāpai
timira payāna gati āse
āoto jalada, tatahi uḍi jāoto
utapata dīgha niśāse*

"(When the clouds appear in the sky it will be dark all around, and then He can come to meet You at night. Hence) He takes His flute and starts playing the *mallāra-rāga* (it is said that clouds appear when the *mallāra rāga* is being played). And indeed, clouds appeared in the sky, but then He blew them away with His deep outgoing breath, caused by Him suffering pangs of separation from You."

tuyā guṇa nāma, gāma japi jīvai
bahu pulakāyita dehā
govinda dāsa koho, iha aparūpa naha
jāhā iha nava nava lehā

"He keeps Himself alive by repeating Your names and glories, while many goosepimples of ecstatic love adorn His body. Govinda dāsa says: "This is not so astonishing—such are the ways of ever-fresh love!"

Another famous meaning of the name **Govinda** is the king (*indra*) of the cows (*go*). He who daily takes innumerable cows and cowherd boys to the base of Govardhana Hill for cow herding, then hands the responsibility for the cows down to His pals to come to the bank of Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa to meet Śrī Rādhārāṇī and Her girlfriends there, and who then becomes absorbed in different kinds of free, erotic pastimes with them, He is 'Govinda'. Govinda Himself acknowledges that He only goes out to herd His cows to meet Śrī Rādhārāṇī – *rākhāla loiyā vane, sadā phiri dhenū sane, tuyā lāgi vane vanacārī* (Pada Kalpataru) "I take My cowherd boys with Me into the forest and I constantly wander around there with My cows. Only for Your sake I am wandering in the forest." In this way the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas passionately worship Govinda. In other words, absorbed in their *siddha svarūpas*, the practitioners recollect the honey-sweet pastimes of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava as They are absorbed in Their tasty erotic pastimes. Thus they passionately meditate on their devotional services to the Divine Pair.

Again, He is called '**gokula candra**'. He is like a spotless full moon who cools off the *go* or senses of Śrī Rādhā, that are afflicted by feelings of separation from Him. In *pūrva rāga* the *sakhīs* describe Śrīmatī's condition to Gokula Candra –

kāñcana gaurī, bhorī vṛndāvane,
khelai saharāri meli
tuyā dīṭhi mīṭhi, garale tanu jāralo,
toikhone śyāmari bheli

"Vṛndāvana became permeated by golden light as She met there with Her girlfriends to play with them. Your sweet glances were like poison that scorched Her body, and thus She became black."

mādhava! so avicala kula rāmā
maramahi goi, roi dina yāminī
guṇi guṇi tuyā guṇa gāmā

"Mādhava! This unswerving housewife now feels heartache and weeps day and night, constantly singing Your glories!"

gurujana abudha *mugadha mati parijana*
alakhita viṣama veyādhī
ki korobo dhanī maṇi, *mantra mahauṣadhi*
locane lāgalo samādhī

"Her superiors are foolish and Her relatives are bewildered, so they do not see how much She suffers. Like gems, *mantras* or medicinal herbs, Śrī Kṛṣṇa's form, attributes etc. are the only cure for Her eyes. She has lost external awareness because Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweet form constantly arises before Her eyes."

kheṇe kheṇe aṅga, *bhaṅga tanu moḍai,*
kohoto bharamamaya vāṇī
śyāmara nāme, *camaki tanu jhāmpai*
govinda dāsa kiye jāni

"At every moment Her body trembles and contracts, and She speaks bewildered words. The name of Śyāma causes Her body to shiver in astonishment, and Govinda dāsa knows it."

When Govinda attains Śrī Rādhārāṇī, He floats in an ocean of bliss and when Śrī Rādhārāṇī attains Gokulacandra, She also swims in an ocean of bliss. The Mahājanas have sung—

tanu tanu milane upajala prema; marakata jaichana beḍalo hema
kaṅka latāye janu taruṇa tamāla; nava jaladhare janu bijurī rasāla
kamale madhupa jeno pāolo saṅga; duhuṅ tanu pulakita prema taraṅga
duhuṅ adharāmṛta duhuṅ koru pān; govinda dāsa duhuṅka guṇagāna

"When Their bodies met, *prema* arose, like an emerald embracing gold, a golden vine embracing a young Tamāla tree, a juicy lightning strike entwining a fresh raincloud, or a bee meeting a lotus flower. Their horripilating bodies were billowing on waves of *prema*. They drank the nectar of Each other's lips and Govinda dāsa sings Their glories."

In this way Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava are ***parama ānanda kanda***, the fountainheads of the greatest ecstasy. Endless streams of honey juice of topmost ecstasy trickle from Their lotus feet. Śrīman Mahāprabhu, the *avatāra* who sanctifies Kali, and the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* who have taken shelter of His lotus feet have pointed their finger at this fountainhead of the mellow of topmost ecstasy, for the benefit of the conditioned souls, who yearn for real ecstasy. Śrīmat Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī has written (Vṛndāvana Mahimāmṛta 6.30-32)—

mahāścaryāṅgī rītiṅ dṛśī vacasi gatyādiṣu dadhan mahāpremaṅmāda madana vaivaśya
madhuram
aho yatraivānandati sahaja kaiśorakam aho dvayaṅ gaura-śyāmaṅ tad udayati vṛndāvanam idam
vicinvantaṅ nīlānalakaṅkarāṅś cāru karajair
vijighnantaṅ phullad vadana kanakāmbhojam asakṛt

*vicumbantaṁ bimbādharam asaṅgd unnamya cibukam
nidhāyāṅke rādhāṁ smara madana mūrtiṁ madhupatiṁ
aho gaura śyāme madhura madhure divya sahasi kiṣore sarvāṅgotthita madana bādhāti vivaśe
rati kṛḍāmbhodhāvati viharati pāra rahite subhāvaiḥ śrī vṛndāvana nava nikuṅjeṣu bhajata*

"How beautiful is this Vṛndāvana, where the Divine Pair Gaura-Śyāma (Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa), who act in a very astonishing manner with Their eyes, words and gestures, whose greatly sweet forms are endowed with a naturally fresh adolescence, which is caused by Their great ecstatic love and Their erotic rapture, rejoice. O mind! Remember Madhupati (Kṛṣṇa), who is Cupid personified, who takes Śrī Rādhā on His lap and affectionately sorts out Her blue curly locks with His delicate fingers, who constantly smells at Her face, that resembles a blossoming golden lotus flower, and who lifts Her chin to kiss Her Bimba-fruit like lips time and again. Aho! This sweeter-than-sweet Divine Pair Gaura-Śyāma, is overwhelmed by erotic affliction, which arises on each and every one of Their limbs, and thus They commence Their intense enjoyments in a boundless ocean of erotic enjoyments. Worship this Śrī Yugala Kīśora, who enjoy in the fresh groves of Śrī Vṛndāvana, in a sweet mood!"

After this the blessed author says: *parivāra gopa gopī saṅge; nandīśvara yāra dhāma, giridhārī jāra nāma, sakhī saṅge tāre bhajo raṅge* "Śrī Govinda Gokula Candra is the source of paramount bliss— His abode is named Nandīśvara and one of His names is Giridhārī. Joyfully worship Him with His cowherd-boy and -girl-relatives." To nourish the *madhura rasa*, connections with mother, father, friends and relatives are all required. The practitioner must meditate on serving Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava along with Their associates. Each day Śrī Rādhārāṇī comes to Nandīśvara to cook for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The practitioner of *mañjarī bhāva* meditates on him/herself as being constantly with Her. The practitioner meditates on him/herself in mentally conceived *siddha deha* serving Kṛṣṇa's mother, father, friends, relatives, cowherds and cowherd-women in Nandīśvara, according to their status. Śrī Kṛṣṇa performs pastimes like lifting Govardhana Hill so that He can see Śrī Rādhārāṇī for a long time continuously. All the people of Vraja are present there, and Rādhā's maidservant cherishes respect, love and devotion for each of them according to their status. Rādhā's maidservant finds special joy in meditating on her service to Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava as They enjoy in the groves with Their girlfriends. The practitioner will be blessed with the direct attainment of the services he meditated on in his stage of practice when he reaches the stage of accomplishment (*siddhi*) in the kingdom of *līlā*. (103)

*prema bhakti tattva ei, tomāre kohinu bhāi,
āra durvāsanā parihari
śrī guru prasāde bhāi, e saba bhajāna pāi,
prema bhakti sakhī anucarī (104)*

"O brother, thus I told you of the principle of loving devotion! Now give up all other, wicked, desires. O brother, by the grace of Śrī Guru you can attain all this worship and loving devotion as a follower of the *sakhīs*."

Loving devotion as a follower of the *sakhīs* –

Sudhā-kaṇikā vyākhyā – Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya tells his own mind – *prema bhakti tattva ei, tomāre kohinu bhāi* "O brother mind! Until now I told you all about loving devotion and the principles of means and goal." Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya addresses his mind as **brother**. Just as two brothers share the same kinds of distress and poverty, or enjoy the same kind of opulence of their parents, similarly if the soul is deprived of the treasure of *prema* and suffers the afflictions of mundane existence like misery and poverty, then the mind also suffers along. And if the soul is qualified to relish the mellows of devotion and to attain the treasure of *prema*, then the mind also gives up its mundane dullness, becomes spiritual and is blessed by relishing the peerless sweetness of the Supreme Lord. Hence, by addressing his mind as 'brother', Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya teaches the *sādhakas* of the world that each *sādhaka* must similarly engage his mind in loving practices by making it clear that it will share his happiness and distress, for the mind, which is the king of the senses, is the greatest assistant in *bhajana sādhana*.

Until now Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has described the principles of means and goal of *prema bhakti* in this Prema Bhakti Candrikā. Thusfar he has discussed association with saints, the grace of the saints, turning towards God, faith, surrender, the shelter of Śrī Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas, the service of Guru and Vaiṣṇavas, *sādhana bhajana*, the nine kinds of devotion, obstacles to *bhajana*, fixation, taste, attachment (to Kṛṣṇa), *rati*, *prema*, *mahābhāva*, which is the essence of *prema*, *mañjarī bhāva sādhana*, the principle of the holy name, the principle of the holy abode, the principle of spiritual flavours etc. If some *sādhaka* studies this Prema Bhakti Candrikā with deep attention, he will be able to learn all secrets of *bhakti sādhanā* and get realisations about them, of this there is no doubt. In this book the author has explained such greatly confidential topics in such a simple and brief manner, that it looks as if he takes the *sādhakas* by the hand and leads them to the kingdom of loving devotion. Hence he tells his mind: "O brother mind! Now I have told you all the principles of loving devotion in a very simple manner, now you *āra durvāsanā parihari* – give up all evil desires, give up your wicked fruitive habits in the material world, that were learned from beginningless ignorance and which block the life devotional. All the bad habits that stick to the human mind, accrued in previous births, awaken within the human heart in the form of bad activities. They attract the mind to wicked acts in such a way that the human being is unable to escape from the grip of wicked desires on his own strength. Hence only one means has been said to give up these wicked desires and take shelter of the path of *bhajana* – *śrī guru prasāde bhāi, ei sab bhajana pāi* ("O brother, by the grace of Śrī Guru you can attain all this *bhajana*!").

"O brother mind! By the grace of Śrī Guru the human being can give up wicked desires and attain the good fortune of taking shelter of the path of pure *bhajana*. In his book 'Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu, Śrīmad Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has outlined 64 items of *bhajana*, with three items forming the gate to enter the path of devotion, namely: taking shelter of Śrī Guru's lotus feet, receiving initiation and instructions from him and serving the Guru with

faith. Devotion to God or *bhajana* can never reach perfection without the grace or satisfaction of Śrī Guru, this is the undisputed teaching of all the scriptures and all the great saints. Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has written – *tat prasādo hi sva-sva nānā pratikāra dustyajyānartha hānau parama bhagavat prasāda siddhau ca mūlam* (Bhakti Sandarbha- 237) "The satisfaction of the Guru is the only means to destroy all evil habits, that are hard to give up through various other means, and to attain the grace of God." Therefore, *śrī guru caraṇānām nityam eva viśeṣataḥ sevām kuryāt* (ibid.) "In order to give up wicked desires and to attain the treasure of *bhajana* one must always desire to satisfy the Guru."

The grace of Śrī Guru is not only the means to destroy all evil desires and habits and to attain the good fortune of *bhajana*, it is also the means to become blessed by swiftly attaining *prema* and the *sādhakas'* coveted treasure of devotional service – ***prema bhakti sakhī anucarī***, By the grace of Śrī Guru the *sādhaka* attains *prema bhakti* and takes birth with his own mentally conceived *mañjarī* body from the womb of a *Vraja-gopī*. There he attains the company and the grace of the *nitya siddha sakhīs* and *mañjarīs*, and, in allegiance to them, he/she will be blessed by attaining the confidential *nikuñja sevā* of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava as an *anucarī* (maidservant). King Birhambira of Ban Viṣṇupura attained the shelter of Śrīnivāsācārya Prabhu and, after receiving his grace, sang as follows –

prabhu mora śrīnivāsa, pūrāile manera āśa,
tuyā pade ki bolibo āra
āchinu viṣaya kiṭa, boṛoi lāgito miṭha,
ghucāile rāja ahañkāra

"My master Śrīnivāsa, what more can I tell your feet? You fulfilled the desires on my mind! I was a worm in the stool of sensuality and I took that stool to be very sweet. You, however, removed my false royal pride!"

koritu garala pān, se bhelo dāhina vāma,
dekhāilā amiyāra dhāra.
pibo pibo kore mana, sab lāge ucāṭana,
emati tomāra vyavahāra

"I used to drink poison, but now left has become right – you showed me a stream of nectar! You made my mind eager by saying : "Drink! Drink!" Such was your behaviour!"

rādhā pada sudhā rāśi, se pade korilā dāsī,
gorāpade bāñdhi dilā cita
rādhikāra gaṇa saha, dekhāilā kuñja gṛha,
śikhāilā duhuñ prema rita

"You gave me the position of Rādhā's foot-maidservant, which is like an ocean of nectar, you bound my heart to the feet of Lord Gaura, you showed me the bower-cottage with the associates of Śrī Rādhikā and you taught me their loving customs."

kāṇḍira kūle yāi, sakhī saṅge dhāoyā dhāi,
rāi kānu viharaye sukhe
e vīrahamvira hiyā, vrajapura sadā dheyā,
yāhā ali ure lākhe lākhe

"I will run to the bank of the Yamunā, where Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are blissfully enjoying, along with the *sakhīs*. Within his heart this Vīrahamvira always meditates on Vraja, where hundreds of thousands of bumblebees are flying." (104)

sārthaka bhajana patha, sādhu saṅge avirata,
smaraṇa bhajana kṛṣṇa kathā
prema bhakti hoy yadi, tabe hoy manaḥ śuddhi
tabe yāy hṛdayera vyathā (105)

"The path of *bhajana* is successful when one always associates with the devotees, engaging in remembering and glorifying topics of Kṛṣṇa. When loving devotion is attained the mind will become purified and all heartaches will disappear."

Success in *bhajana* :

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – In this *tripadī* Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya gives instructions on how the path of *bhajana* can be fulfilled and how a devotee's life can be blessed with the ripening of *prema*. First he says: *sārthaka bhajana patha, sādhu saṅge avirata, smaraṇa bhajana kṛṣṇa kathā* "The path of *bhajana* is successful by always associating with the devotees, engaging in remembering and glorifying topics of Kṛṣṇa." Those who transmit the message of devotion and come to the doors of the conditioned souls, are overcome with compassion towards the souls who have fallen into the ditch of sense enjoyment and are locked up in the shackles of illusion. Those who shower the conditioned souls with a stream of ambrosial topics on the Supreme Lord, thus cooling them off and lifting them out of the well of household life with the ropes of their compassion, eager to take them to the Lord – these are the truly saintly *mahā puruṣas*. Association with such great souls is as valuable as a touch stone. Just as iron turns into gold due to contact with a touch stone, similarly by the association of great saints the hearts of mankind, that are polluted by lusty desires, become shining like gold with devotional aspirations. Just as by the association and the grace of the saints mankind becomes inclined towards Godhead and takes to the path of *bhajana*, similarly by the constant association of *sādhus* the practitioner's seal of *bhajana* becomes brightened he and swiftly develops *prema*, since the constant association of *sādhus* bestows the good fortune of engagement in hearing, chanting and remembering topics of Kṛṣṇa. The devotees who are fixed in *rāgānugā bhajana* cannot find relish in anything but *kīrtana* and *smaraṇa*. At the end of Śrī Haribhakti Vilāsa (20.382) it is written –

*evam ekāntinām prāyaḥ kīrtanam smaraṇam prabhoḥ
kurvatām parama prītyā kṛtyam anyan na rocate*

"Exclusive *rāgānugā* devotees are engaged in recollecting and chanting with paramount love—they lose taste for any other activity." Hence Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: *smaraṇa bhajana kṛṣṇa kothā* Through the process of hearing, chanting and remembering topics of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, loving devotion swiftly awakens within an offenseless heart. When loving devotion has appeared the mind and heart are purified and all the miseries due to conditioned life are destroyed – *prema bhakti hoy jadi, tabe hoy mana śuddhi, tabe jāy hṛdayera byathā*."

In the devotional scriptures it is seen that in the stage of *anartha nivṛtti* (cessation of personal vices) the heart of the practitioner is purified and when the purified heart experiences its constitutional position all heartaches are destroyed. The purified heart will gradually cross over the following stages of *niṣṭhā*, *ruci*, *āsakti* and *rati* and then *prema* will awaken. Nonetheless Ṭhākura Mahāśaya speaks here of the heart getting purified after the awakening of *prema*, and the destruction of all heartaches coming after that. The purport of this is that when one attains the good fortune of constantly engaging in hearing, chanting and remembering the topics of Kṛṣṇa in the company of the *sādhus*, *prema* will awaken within the practitioner's heart so swiftly that it seems as if *prema* first awakens within the heart which is not yet purified, thereafter the heart is purified, and then the heartaches due to ignorance are destroyed. In the same manner Śrī Śuka Muni has offered the following benediction at the end of his description of the Rāsa Līlā, the crown jewel of all *līlās* in Śrīmad Bhāgavata –

*vikṛīditam vraja-vadhūbhir idam ca viṣṇoḥ śraddhānvitam nu'śṛṇuyed atha varṇayed yaḥ
bhaktim param bhagavatim pratilabhya kāmam hṛd rogam āśv apahinoty acirena dhīram*

"Anyone who faithfully hears and describes (and afterwards recollects) the Rāsa- and other erotic pastimes of Lord Viṣṇu (Kṛṣṇa) with the ladies of Vraja (the *gopīs*) will become calm, attain supreme devotion to God, in the wake of the love of the *śrī gopikās*, in a form which is ever-fresh, and will swiftly become free from the heart's disease of lust."

In this verse also the attainment of paramount devotion in the wake of the *gopikās* is mentioned first and after that the destruction of the heart's disease of lust and the attainment of equilibrium is mentioned. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī comments as follows on this: *atra tu hṛd-rogāpahānāt pūrvam eva parama bhakti prāptiḥ tasmāt parama balavad evedam sādhanam iti bhāvaḥ* (Laghu Toṣanī Ṭīkā): "Normally the destruction of the heart's disease of lust as a result of the practice of *bhajana* is mentioned before the awakening of *prema*, but the fact that the attainment of the highest *bhakti* is mentioned before the destruction of lust shows that hearing and chanting of the Rāsa-pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* is the most powerful spiritual practice." Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda has written – *parām prema lakṣaṇām prāpyeti ktvā pratyayena hṛd roga vatyapy adhikāriṇi prathamata eva premnaḥ praveśas tas tat prabhāvenaivācīrato hṛd roga nāśa iti premāyam jñāna yoga iva na durbalaḥ paratantras ceti bhāvaḥ* (Sārārtha Darśinī) "Devotion is characterised by *prema*. The suffix *ktvā* shows that *prema* first arises in the hearts of the practising devotee devotees who are not yet free from lust, and that on the strength of this *prema* lusty desires will swiftly vanish (just as the darkness is

destroyed after a lamp is kindled). Hence the practice of *bhakti* is completely independent, it is not weak or dependent like the practice of *jñāna* and so."

Some persons think that "This benediction is only meant for those with firm faith, not for an ordinary audience with feeble faith; after all, the original text says *śraddhānvita*? But this is not what the Gosvāmīs are saying. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has written: *śraddhayā viśvāsenānvita iti. tad viparītāvajñārūpāparādha nivṛttyartham ca nairantaryārtham ca* "Here the word *śraddhayānvita* is used to indicate the cessation of offences that are adverse to faith and the constancy in the process of hearing and chanting." In other words, a person who disrespects these pastimes, taking them to be mundane dalliances between ordinary heroes and heroines and who cease to continuously hear and chant these pastimes, will not have faith in these pastimes. Those who consider themselves to be unqualified for or deprived from such a powerful devotional practice, in the name of this word *śraddhānvita*, although they have in principle taken shelter of the path of *yugala bhajana*, the worship of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, are understood to be simply unfortunate. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda has written: *ataeva śraddhānvita iti śāstrāviśvāsinam nāmāparādhinam premāpi nāṅkarotiti bhāvaḥ* – "prema never accepts those who do not have faith in the scriptures or who commit offences to the holy name." Therefore those who chant the holy name must have faith in the scriptural judgement that these holy names and pastimes are transcendental. In this way they avoid offending the holy name and by chanting the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are able to attain *prema*. Therefore those who make the improper noises: "(I am) Unqualified! (You are) Unqualified!" while the Rāsa Līlā is being discussed, and thus instill fear within the hearts of those who wish to hear these topics with faith, is to be known as simply unintelligent and unfortunate.

Anyway, hearing, chanting and remembering the pastimes of the Divine Pair Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa is considered the most powerful practice. Thus Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya first mentions the attainment of loving devotion and after that the purification of the mind and the destruction of heartaches. (105)

viṣaya vipatti jāno, saṁsāra svapana māno,
nara tanu bhajanera mūla
anurāge bhajo sadā, prema bhāve līlā kathā,
āra yoto hṛdayera sūla (106)

"Know sense gratification to be a disaster and consider material life (family life) to be just a dream. The human body is the root cause of *bhajana*, therefore always do *bhajana* with great passionate love, discussing Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in a loving way. Everything else is just a javelin in the heart."

The human body, root cause of *bhajana*:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – In the previous *tripadī*, Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has revealed his heartache. The root cause of that heartache is attachment to sense gratification,

and remembering this within his heart he says in this *tripadī – viṣaya vipatti jāno, saṁsāra svapana māno, naratanu bhajanera mūla* "Know sense gratification to be a disaster and consider material life (family life) to be just a dream. The human body is the root cause of *bhajana*." The five mundane sense objects – forms, sounds, flavours, scents and touch, are served by the following respective senses – the eyes, ears, tongue, nostrils and skin. The result of serving these sense objects is that mankind becomes attached to them, and the result of that is the arising of intense desire that keeps one constantly absorbed in sense enjoyment. People perform various good and bad activities in order to collect their favorite sense objects and take this custom of activities along to wander (transmigrate) through 8,400,000 species of bodies. The only cause for suffering lamentation, the threefold miseries (caused by the elements, the body and other creatures) birth, death, old age and disease in numberless species of bodies, life in hell and other terrible sufferings is this **servicing the sense objects**. Hence Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: *viṣaya vipatti jāno* – 'Know sense gratification to be a disaster'. Although we have attained this human body, which is coveted even by the demigods and which is suitable for worshipping the Lord and for developing discriminating intelligence, those who did attain this human body are so accustomed to sensual attachments that they perform evil acts to collect their beloved sense objects, just like animals. Any person who desires his own welfare should know this sense gratification to be a disaster and always remain disinclined towards sense gratification.

Again the blessed author says: *saṁsāra svapana māno* – "Consider family life to be a dream." *saṁ dehaṁ samyak prakāre smarati cintayatīti saṁsārah* The material body, which consists of five material elements, is called **saṁ**. The conditioned souls have forgotten their own constitutional position due to *māyā* and call this body, that has been manufactured by *māyā*, "I". Although he is a purely spiritual entity he still is happy when the body is happy and is unhappy when the body suffers. In this way he has been wandering around since beginningless time, suffering the pangs of mundane existence. Such is the living entity's condition of bondage in *saṁsāra*. In Śrīmad Bhāgavata the advice is given to give up the false ego through intelligent distinction. There the adjective of false ego is *māyāmaya* (full of delusion). This adjective has been used to distinguish it from **genuine ahaṅkāra or self esteem**. If it were not like that this adjective would have been useless. It is like saying "Bring white flowers!" when there are many types of flowers in a garden. The constitutional position of the living entity is that he is the eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa. Forgetting this, he becomes engrossed in bodily consciousness and thinks in terms of 'I' and 'mine'. Then he considers the happiness and distress, old age and death of the mundane body to be his own happiness and distress, old age and death and becomes a *saṁsārī* or mundane person. This mundane life is like his dream. The only difference between this and a dream is that a dream lasts for just a few hours while the dream of mundane life continues for some years. Along with the destruction of the body the dream of this mundane life will collapse. Taking the heavy load of innumerable fruitive activities along and wandering around through various species of life, the conditioned and deluded soul suffers intolerable miseries.

Therefore it is said: "O mind! Consider this mundane life to be false and temporary like a dream and take shelter of the saints and the scriptures to seek your true identity, so that you can worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa!" After all, *naratanu bhajanera mūla* – "The human body is the root cause of *bhajana*." Due to ignorance and foolishness the **animal's** body is

unsuitable, and due to an excess of enjoyment the **demigod's** body, although it may be endowed with knowledge, is also unsuitable for practising *bhajana*. Only the **human body** is suitable for *bhajana*. Śrīmad Bhāgavata (11.7.74) says: *yaḥ prāpya mānuṣaṁ lokam mukti dvāram apāvṛtam. grheṣu khagavat saktas tam āruḍha-cyutaṁ viduḥ*. This verse means that the living entity has now, after wandering through 8,400,000 species of life, attained a human body which is rarely attained even by the demigods. It is as if in this birth the door of the bird cage (of material conditioning) is being opened. If the desire is there one can easily become liberated from the cycle of birth and death and attain the kingdom of God. But unfortunately the bird has been in the cage for so long, that he does not want to fly out even if the door is opened, since he is so accustomed to staying in there and he is very greedy after the few grains of food that are placed there for him. In the same manner, the human being who is attached to household life has attained this human body that is the gateway to liberation from delusion, but he is so used to the enjoyment he has had for so many lifetimes that he does not endeavour to become free from delusion out of greed for insignificant mundane happiness. Such a person who is attached to household life is like a bird that has reached a high position but falls down very deeply – *ārūḍhācyuta*. Those who do not endeavour to cross over the ocean of repeated birth and death, despite attaining this human body, which is the root cause of *bhajana*, by taking shelter of the path of *bhajana*, are really committing suicide. In Śrīmad Bhāgavata (11.20.17) Śrī Kṛṣṇa tells Uddhava :

*nṛ deham ādyaṁ sulabhaṁ sudurlabhaṁ plavaṁ sukalpaṁ guru karṇadhāram
mayānukūlena nabhasvateritaṁ pumān bhavābhim na taret sa ātma-hā*

"Anyone who was so fortunate to easily attain the human body, which is like the best boat to cross over the ocean of repeated birth and death, endowed with a Guru who serves as the captain, whose sails are provided with favorable breezes in the form of My blessings, which is the root cause of all the fulfillment of all aspirations, which is rarely attained and firm, and who still does not endeavour to cross the ocean of repeated birth and death, is truly committing suicide!" The Lord furthermore tells Śrī Uddhava (Bhāg. 11.9.29) –

*labdhvā sudurlabham idam bahu sambhavānte mānuṣyam arthadam anityam apīha dhīraḥ
tūrṇaṁ yateta na pated anumṛtya yāvan niḥśreyasāya viṣaya khalu sarvataḥ syāt*

"An intelligent person who has attained this temporary human body, which is attained after many births, which is rarely attained in this world, which bestows the highest welfare, and that dies at every moment, should not delay but endeavour for the highest welfare before death arrives. Sense gratification is available also in the animal species, but spiritual perfection is not possible in any other body than the human body." Śrīla Premānanda Thākura sings in his *Manaḥ Śikṣā* –

e mon! tu boṛo kalira bhūt!

<i>koro bolo jāri,</i>	<i>sūnye diyā bāri,</i>	<i>hāsaye tapana suta</i>
<i>bhūter bāper,</i>	<i>śrāddha koro niti,</i>	<i>bhūtera begāra khāta</i>
<i>lāja nāhi mukhe,</i>	<i>kāla kāta sukhe,</i>	<i>colicho yamera bāta</i>
<i>kāminī kāñchana,</i>	<i>hṛdaya rañjana,</i>	<i>tāhāte magana thāko</i>
<i>o dike tomāra,</i>	<i>ki daśā ghaṭeche,</i>	<i>tāra kichu khoñja rākho?</i>

<i>caurāṣī narake,</i>	<i>jābe eke eke,</i>	<i>patha pariṣkāra prāy</i>
<i>kapālera jora,</i>	<i>boṛo baṭe tora,</i>	<i>bāhādūrī hobe tāy</i>
<i>mūrakha barbarā,</i>	<i>suyukuti dhara,</i>	<i>jadi taribāre cāo</i>
<i>kohe premānanda,</i>	<i>monera ānanda,</i>	<i>sadā hari guṇa gāo</i>

"O mind! You are a great ghost of the Kali age! The son of the sun (Yamarāja, the god of death) laughs with pleasure as your home is emptied by force! You are nicely offering oblations to your ancestors, in selfless service to the ghosts. You have no shame in blissfully wasting your time, while you are treading the path of Yama (death). You remain immersed in money and women, that please your heart. Are you keeping any count of what happens to you in the meantime? You will go to one after the other of all the eighty-four hells that exist – the way is all cleared for you! By good luck you have gotten a great asset – and you make it show also! Use your intelligence if you want to transcend barbarism and foolishness. Premānanda says: "Always blissfully sing the glories of Lord Hari!"

Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: *anurāge bhajo sadā, prema bhāve līlā kathā, ār joto hṛdayera śūla*—"Always do *bhajana* with great passionate love, discussing Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in a loving way. Everything else is just a javelin in the heart." *anurāga bhajana* means doing *bhajana* with eagerness, yearning and anxiety. Intense eagerness for the Lord is called *prema*. The *bhajana* of a practitioner should also be filled with as much eagerness as possible. When the Lord sees the eagerness of a pure devotee He cannot remain calm. He considers those who worship Him with a heart-felt eagerness to be exclusively His and He is also exclusively theirs – *samo'ham sarva bhūteṣu na me dveṣyo'sti na priyaḥ; ye bhajanti tu mām bhaktyā mayi te teṣu cāpyaham* (Gītā 9.29) The Lord said: "O Arjuna! I am equal to all living beings. I hate no one and no one is dear to Me, but those who do My *bhajana* with *anurāga* are attached to Me and I am attached to them." As a result of such passionate worship feelings of loving devotion will become more and more prominent within the heart of the practitioner and the practitioner will be forever blessed with the attainment of the paramount human pursuit (*prema*). The way Śrīman Mahāprabhu's beloved associates and Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* such as Śrīla Rūpa, Sanātana and Raghunātha have taken shelter of *Vraja-dhāma* and have performed *bhajana* with extraordinary eagerness and anxiety, **is the best example of passionate *anurāgamaya bhajana*.**

Practitioners of *rāgānugā bhajana* always recollect the pastimes of their beloved deities with paramount love. Whatever else there may be is like a javelin within the heart and must be given up as being most miserable. (106)

rādhikā caraṇa reṇu, bhūṣaṇa koriyā tanu,
anāyāse pābe giridhārī
rādhikā caraṇāśraya, ye kore se mahāśaya,
tāre mui yāi bolihārī (107)

"Anyone who decorates the body with Rādhikā's footdust easily attains Giridhārī. I praise any great soul who takes shelter of Rādhikā's lotus feet!"

Rādhā's footdust :

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – In the next three *tripadīs* from this, Śrīla Narottama Thākura Mahāśaya speaks of the worship of Vṛndāvanēsvārī Śrī Rādhārāṇī. The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas that surrender to Śrīman Mahāprabhu's lotus feet have greater love for Śrī Rādhā, therefore these *tripadīs* are most beneficial to them, working on them like reviving nectar elixirs. Śrīla Narottama Thākura Mahāśaya first says: '**śrī rādhikā caraṇa reṇu, bhūṣaṇa koriyā tanu, anāyāse pābe giridhārī**' By accepting Śrī Rādhārāṇī's footdust as the ornaments of the body, Giridhārī Śrī Kṛṣṇa will be easily attainable. The only means to attain Śrī Kṛṣṇa is *prema* – that is propounded by all the scriptures. In scriptures like Śrīmad Bhāgavata we can find a lot of examples of the power of the footdust of the saints in bringing about the attainment of devotion or the attainment of God. The great sage Bharata told King Rahūgaṇa :

*rahūgaṇaitat tapasā na yāti na cejyayā nirvapaṇād grhād vā
na cchandasā naiva jalāgni sūryair vinā mahat padarajo'bhīṣekam* (Bhāg. 5.19.12)

"O King Rahūgaṇa! Without being sprinkled by the footdust of the saints, penances, performance of Vedic duties, donations of food, charitable building of houses, studying the Vedas or worship of water, fire or the sun will not help to attain the truth about God." Śrīla Prahlāda Mahāśaya also said (Bhāg. 7.5.32):

*naiṣāṃ matis tāvad urukramāṅghrīm sprśatyarthāpagamo yad arthaḥ
mahīyasāṃ padarajo'bhīṣekam niṣkiñcanānām na vṛṇīta yāvāt*

"As long as one is not showered by the footdust of the saints that are totally free from material identification, no one can become aware of the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. All personal faults and mischief will automatically go away by becoming fixed in these lotus feet." A saint is great according to the amount of his *prema* – *prema tāratamyenaiva bhakta mahattāratamyam mukhyam* (Bhakti Sandarbha– Paragraph 187) Therefore we must understand that the greater the love of the saint is, the greater is the power of his footdust in bestowing devotion. Śrī Rādhārāṇī has the greatest love, therefore there is no comparison in the power of Her footdust in bestowing devotion and thus causing the subjugation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatīpāda has written–

*yo brahma rudra śuka nārada bhīṣma mukhyair ālakṣito na sahasā puruṣasya tasya
sadyo vaśīkaraṇa cūrṇam ananta śaktim tāṃ rādhikā caraṇa reṇum anusmarāmi*

"I constantly remember the footdust of Śrī Rādhikā, whose unlimited power instantly subdues even the Supreme Person (Śrī Kṛṣṇa), Who Himself cannot be easily seen even by the greatest devotees like Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, Śukadeva Muni, Nārada Muni and Bhīṣma." (Rādhā Rasa Sudhānidhi–4) Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatīpāda has spoken of the *prema rasa siddhi* (perfection of loving mellows) of Śrī Rādhā's footdust as a 'wishyielding cow' since Her love causes Śrī Kṛṣṇa's complete subjugation – *bhāvotsavena bhajatām rasa kāma dhenum tāṃ rādhikā caraṇa reṇum ahaṃ smarāmi* (ibid.–5)

Here the question may be asked: How can the practitioners serve the footdust of Śrī Rādhā, and how must the body be decorated by it? This Vraja dhāma is Śrī Rādhārāṇī's

eternal playground. With Her girlfriends and with Her heart's lover Śrī Govinda Śrī Rādhārāṇī eternally plays in this Vraja. Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatīpāda has written – *rādhā padāṅka vilasan madhura sthālīke* "The sweet place named Śrī Vṛndāvana is beautified by Śrī Rādhā's footprints" Hence the dust of Vraja is Rādhikā's footdust. If it was not like that, then why would associates of the Lord like Śrī Uddhava Mahāśaya, who was the very embodiment of transcendental knowledge, have prayed for taking birth as even a blade of grass or a shrub in this Vraja, so that he could serve its dust? In Śrīmad Bhāgavata (10.47.61) this statement of Uddhava is found–

*āsām aho caraṇa reṇu-juṣām ahaṁ syāṁ vṛndāvane kim api gulma latauśadhīnām
yā dustyajāṁ svajānam āryapatham ca hitvā bhejur mukunda padavīm śrutibhir vimṛgyām*

"Aho! I desire something very precious! All the shrubs, vines and herbs here in this Śrī Vṛndāvana are most fortunate, for they are constantly bearing the footdust (Vraja-dust) of the Vraja-*gopīs*, who have given up their relatives and the path of virtue and chastity to worship Mukunda, a position which is coveted even by the Vedas. Aho! Will I ever be so fortunate to take my birth as one of these shrubs or blades of grass of Śrī Vṛndāvana?" With such paramount devotion the body must be decorated with Śrī Rādhikā's footdust by living in Vraja and serving Vraja's dust. Here the highest devotion is desired to be said in Śrī Rādhārāṇī's lotus feet. Through this Giridhārī is easily attained – ***anāyāse pābe giridhārī***.

We have already discussed that as a result of serving the footdust of the great souls *prema* is attained and through *prema* Kṛṣṇa is attained. Endless streams of *mahābhāva* honey flow from Śrī Rādhārāṇī's lotus feet and wherever She places these lotus feet, there the specks of dust become saturated with the love-juice known as *mahābhāva*. There can be no doubt about it that Giridhārī Śrī Kṛṣṇa is attainable by serving these specks of dust, since they have the great power to deliver this. There is a *rasika* secret about why Śrī Kṛṣṇa has been named **Giridhārī** and not anything else. On Śrī Kṛṣṇa's advice Śrī Nanda and the people of Vraja gave up their long-practised sacrifice to Indra and commenced the sacrifice to Śrī Govardhana. This made Indra blind with rage and caused him to shower Vraja profusely with huge clouds, so as to destroy the whole place. Śrī Kṛṣṇa could also have used other means to destroy Indra's pride, but to preach Śrī Girirāja's glories and to see Śrī Rādhā and the other *gopīs*, who were otherwise hard to see, without hindrance for a long time, He lifted Girirāja Govardhana on His left little finger for seven days and nights. He became so very happy to see Śrī Rādhārāṇī for seven long days and nights, that he became most satisfied when the great offender Indra offered Him some mediocre prayers and began to talk casually with him. Brahma is more qualified than Indra; he is Śrī Kṛṣṇa's son and the creator of the world, but in the *brahma mohana līlā* he got the desire to kidnap Śrī Kṛṣṇa dear cowherd boy friends and His calves. Nevertheless, in order to beg forgiveness for his offence, Brahmā offered lengthy praises full of prowess and sweetness, but Śrī Kṛṣṇa did not speak to Brahmā at all. Kṛṣṇa forgot about eating and sleeping, holding the large Girirāja for seven days and nights out of eagerness to see Śrī Rādhārāṇī. It is needless to say that if anyone devotedly decorates his body with the footdust of that Śrī Rādhā, then he will easily attain that Giridhārī – ***anāyāse pābe giridhārī***. Here the word *pābe* ("he will get") means that along with the relish of Śrī Rādhā-Giridhārī's sweetness one also attains the fortune of Their

devotional service, for the fortune of relishing Giridhārī's sweetness is the true attainment of Him.

On the other hand, there is no other means to attain to relish Śyāma's sweetness than worshipping Śrī Rādhārāṇī's footdust. Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa writes in his Sva Saṅkalpa Prakāśa stotram (1):

*anārādhyā rādhā padāmbhoja reṇum anāśritya vṛndātavīm tat padāṅkām
asambhāṣya tad bhāva gambhīra cittān kutaḥ śyāma-sindho rasasyāvagāhaḥ*

"Without worshipping the dust of Rādhā's lotus feet, without taking shelter of Vṛndāvana, where Her footprints are lying, and without conversing with those whose hearts are filled with deep love for Her, how can anyone enter into the Śyāma-ocean?" After this Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya says: *rādhikā caraṇāśraya, ye kore se mahāśaya, tāre mui jāi bolihārī*. Anyone who takes shelter of Śrī Rādhārāṇī's feet is **mahāśaya** which means a great soul or *mahātmā*, or someone of very fine intelligence. (See the comment on Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta-2.5.178) Anyone who offers his mind to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and who is Śrī Kṛṣṇa's devotee is a *mahātmā* or *mahā manā*. But Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself has said: *na me bhakta janāḥ pārtha mad bhaktāś ca ye janāḥ. mad bhaktānām ca ye bhaktāś te me bhaktajanāḥ matāḥ* "O Pārtha! He who is only My devotee is not My devotee, but he who is the devotee of My devotee, he is My true devotee." If the Lord's pleasure potency only slightly arises within the individual soul then that soul attains the title of *bhakta*, and the presiding goddess of that pleasure potency is Śrī Rādhā. Therefore Śrī Kṛṣṇa is subjugated to the utmost by one who takes shelter of Śrī Rādhā's lotus feet. Hence a devotee who takes shelter of Śrī Rādhārāṇī's lotus feet is the true *mahāśaya*.

Another meaning of the word '*mahāśaya*' is 'relisher of the mellows of devotion'. Those who are eager to relish the mellows of devotion will be blessed with that relish by taking shelter of the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhārāṇī, who is the presiding goddess of *prema*. They are called *mahāśaya*. Seeing how Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya was such a relisher of devotional flavours, and knowing that he was exclusively surrendered to Śrī Rādhā's lotus feet, Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda granted him the title '*thākura mahāśaya*'. *tāra mui jāi bolihārī* – Those *mahāśayas* who have taken shelter of Śrī Rādhārāṇī's lotus feet are truly praiseworthy in this world. I praise them hundreds of times! (107)

*jaya jaya rādhā nāma, vṛndāvana yāra dhāma,
kṛṣṇa sukha vilāsera nidhi,
heno rādhā guṇa gāna, na śunilo mora kāna,
vañchita korilo more vidhi (108)*

"Glory, glory to the holy name of Rādhā, that resides in Vṛndāvana, and that is the ocean of Kṛṣṇa's blissful pastimes! Fate has deprived me by not letting me hear the glorification of such a Śrī Rādhā!"

The ocean of Kṛṣṇa's blissful pastimes :

Sudhākanikā vyākhyā– The blessed author now reveals the glory of Śrī Rādhā's holy name by saying: *jaya jaya rādhā nāma, vṛndāvana yāra dhāma, kṛṣṇa sukha vilāsera nidhi*. The word *jaya* indicates superiority and an obeisance. Why is Śrī Rādhā's holy name so glorious and superior? Śrīla Prabhodhānanda Sarasvatīpāda has written –

*yaj jāpah sakṛdeva gokulapater ākarṣakas tat kṣaṇād
yatra premavatām samasta puruṣārtheṣu sphuret tucchatā
yan nāmāṅkita mantra jāpana paraḥ prītyā svayam mādhabaḥ
śrī kṛṣṇo'pi tad adbhutam sphuratu me rādheti varṇa-dvayam ⁴⁷*

"May the two wonderful syllables '**Rā-dhā**', that immediately attract the Lord of Gokula (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) after even one single utterance, that makes all goals of human life seem futile when love is developed for it, and that mark the *mantra* that is lovingly repeated by Lord Mādhava (Viṣṇu) and even by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, always be manifest to my tongue!" (Rādhā Rasa Sudhānidhi-95) The holy name of Rādhā is a *mantra* that most attracts Vrajendranandana, who is Himself the Original Personality of Godhead, and the most worshipable in the entire universe – that is what makes the holy name of Rādhā so glorious and superior! In the Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa it is seen –

*rā śabdoccāraṇād eva sphīto bhavati mādhabaḥ
dhā śabdoccārata paścād dhāvatyeva sasambhramaḥ*

"If anyone pronounces the syllable **rā**, then Śrī Mādhava gets up to approach him, blossoming with joy, and when someone also pronounces the syllable **dhā**, He promptly runs after the pronouncer with respect!"

Śrī Vṛndāvana *dhāma* is the abode of that Rādhā-name – *vṛndāvana yāra dhāma*. Śrī Rādhārāṇī's most sweet playground Śrī Vṛndāvana is the ever-so-sweet abode of Śrī Rādhā-name! Knowing it is the *mantra* that mostly attracts Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the people of Śrī Vṛndāvana see it as the object of their worship. The holy name of Śrī Rādhā is to be chanted, to be practised in *japa*, to be heard and to be remembered! The holy name of Rādhā is in the mouth of everyone in Vṛndāvana. People call each other with Śrī Rādhā-name, respectfully speak with each other, buy and sell and use it in all dealings. Śrī Rādhā-*nāma* is written on the walls of the houses and even on the trees!! It is said that when the famous poet Śrī Tulasī dāsa, the author of Śrī Rāma Carita Mānasa, came to Śrī Vṛndāvana he was astonished to hear Śrī Rādhā-*nāma* from everyone's mouths. Remembering Ayodhyā, the abode of Śrī Rāmacandra, he thought 'The holy name of Rāma is on everyone's mouth in Ayodhyā; no one chants just the name of Sītā, although the names 'Sītā-Rāma' are heard there. The special thing about Śrī Vṛndāvana is that everyone just chants Rādhā-*nāma* in all their dealings – *jaya jaya rādhā nāma vṛndāvana yāra dhāma*'.

One day a Bengali lady came to see Śrī Vṛndāvana, and her name was Rādhā. When she came off the road and heard the people of Vṛndāvana addressing and calling each other with '*jaya rādhe, jaya rādhe*' she looked in that direction in a startled way– is anybody calling

See the 'Rasa Varsinī'-commentary in my publication of Śrī Rādhā Rasa Sudhānidhi.

her? Later she could understand that here all women and men, everyone addresses everyone else with *rādhe rādhe*, and everyone uses *rādhā-nāma* in all activities and in all discussions. One day she asked a *mahātma* for the reason of this and the Vaiṣṇava told her, "Is there a place anywhere on earth where it is a rule to first pronounce the sweet topic and later all the other topics? In other words, if someone there rebukes someone else, he will still first pronounce the sweet words and then only the rebuke. Vṛndāvana is such a place— here there is no sweeter thing than *Rādhā-nāma*. Hence here everyone first tells everyone else the name of *Rādhā* before saying anything else or doing anything else." Truly there is nothing sweeter in the whole universe as the holy name of *Rādhā*. Śrīmat Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmīpāda has said – *rādheti nāma nava sundara sīdhu mugdham* "The holy name of *Rādhā* is fresh and beautiful nectar". Hence the residents of Vṛndāvana love *Rādhā-nāma* more than their lives – ***jaya jaya rādhā nāma vṛndāvana yāra dhāma***.

After this the blessed author says: *kṛṣṇa sukha vilāsera nidhi* – "Śrī Rādhārāṇī is like the ocean of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's blissful pastimes." Even though Śrī Kṛṣṇa also enjoys with His other consorts, like Candrāvalī, still Śrī Rādhārāṇī is the ocean of Kṛṣṇa's blissful pastimes, and an ocean is simply the source vessel of all river, rivulets, ponds and lakes (the other consorts). The other *gopīs* exist to nourish the mellows of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes with Śrī Rādhārāṇī. Śrī Rādhārāṇī is the unlimited storehouse filled with ingredients for the pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who is Himself the embodiment of deep transcendental erotic flavours – *kimvā kṛṣṇa kṛīḍā pūjāra vasati nagarī* (C.C.). Śrī Rādhārāṇī's holy name is similarly the ocean of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's blissful pastimes, for She and Her holy name are non-different. In the sixth Act of Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda's "Vidagdha Mādhava" drama we can see that Śrī Kṛṣṇa ran to embrace golden Jhinti-flowers and land-lotuses while wandering through Vṛndāvana in search of *Rādhā*, mistaking them to be Her. Then his dearest friend Madhumaṅgala joked with Him and promised Him that he would give Him *Rādhārāṇī* from within his fist, where he had a petal with the name 'Rādhā' written on it. Saying that this was *Rādhā* Herself he offered the petal with the syllables of Her name written on it to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Seeing this name 'Rādhā' Śrī Kṛṣṇa told Madhumaṅgala: "O friend! Certainly the present you have given Me gives Me the topmost satisfaction, for –

*kramāt kakṣām akṣnoḥ parisara-bhuvanāṁ vā śravaṇayor
manāg adhyārūḍhāṁ praṇayi jana nāmākṣara padam
kam apyanyas toṣāṁ vitarad avilambād anupadam
nisargād viśveṣāṁ hṛdaya padavīm utsukayati* (V.M.VI,45)

"If the syllables of the beloved's name are visible or audible in any way, then naturally these syllables will satisfy the heart of the faithful and inject great eagerness within the heart." The Mahājanas sing in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's words—

*śuno rādhe ei rasa, āmi ye tomāra vaśa,
tomā vine nāhi bhāy mone
japite tomāra nāma, dhairaya nā dhare prāṇa,
tuyā rūpa koriye dheyāne*

"Hear Me, O Rādhe! I am under Your control! I don't think of anyone else with pleasure than You! My heart cannot remain peaceful when I do *japa* of Your name and I meditate on Your form."

śrī rādhe śrī rādhe vāñī, *ye dike yāra mukhe śuni,*
sei dike dhāy mora man
cātaka phukāre jeno, *ghana cāhe variṣaṇa*
teno heri o cāñda vadana

"My mind runs to any place where I hear someone saying 'Śrī Rādhe, Śrī Rādhe'. Just as a Cātaka bird stares at the raincloud, similarly I stare at Your moonlike face."

karete muralī thāke, *ghana rādhā boli dāke,*
jotokṣaṇa nā pāy dekhite
tomāra nūpura-dhvani, *āpana śravaṇa śuni*
tabe mora kṣamā hoy cite

"My flute is staying in my hand and is loudly crying out 'Rādhā!' as long as I don't see You. When I hear the sound of Your anklebells with My own ears then My heart comes at ease."

rādhā-kṛṣṇa duṭī nāma, *tāhe tumi āguyāna*
āmi kori tomāri bhorasā
tabe se saphal hobo, *tuyā pada parasibo*
dāsa vṛndāvanera e āśā

"Of the two names Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa You are the first one, and I long for You. Everything will become perfect if I can touch Your feet. Such is (also) the aspiration of Vṛndāvana dāsa."

May this paramount sweet and nectarean holy name of Rādhā constantly be manifest on my tongue – this desire is thus indicated. After this he said: *heno rādhā guṇa gāna, nā śunilo mora kāna, vañcita korilo more vidhi* ("Fate has deprived me because my ears did not hear the glorification of that Rādhā"). Although Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya is totally surrendered to Rādhā, out of humility, or because *bhakti* is by nature inexhaustible, he says: "My ears did not hear the glorifications of the attributes of that Rādhā, whose holy name is so glorious. Alas! This is nothing else but deprivation by Fate of an unfortunate soul like me!" Actually Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya teaches the *sādhakas* of the world: "The glorification of the holy name and attributes of Śrī Rādhā, who is the presiding goddess of *prema*, and whose names, attributes and pastimes completely attract and subdue Śrī Kṛṣṇa, are the greatest pursuit of the *sādhakas* and they really fulfill the tongue, ear and so. Whoever is deprived of the hearing and chanting of the holy names, attributes and pastimes of Śrī Rādhārāṇī must be known to be a soul who is really deprived by Fate. (108)

tāra bhakta sañge sadā, *rasa līlā prema kathā,*
ye kore se pāy ghanaśyāma
ihāte vimukha yei, *tāra kabhu siddhi nāi,*

nāhi yeno śuni tāra nāma (109)

"Anyone who associates with Śrī Rādhā's devotees and speaks about Her *rasa*, Her pastimes and Her love, will attain Ghanaśyāma (Kṛṣṇa), but anyone who is against this will never attain perfection. Let us not even hear these people's names."

Loving discussions of delicious pastimes –

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā– Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya glorifies the service of Śrī Rādhārāṇī's footdust, the shelter of Her lotus feet and the hearing and chanting of Her holy names and attributes. Some may say – "Then doesn't he covet the worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa? Or doesn't his heart yearn to attain Śrī Kṛṣṇa?" To that the answer is: *tāra bhakta saṅge sadā rasa līlā prema kathā, ye kore se pāy ghana śyāma*. "Anyone who constantly speaks about the glories of Śrī Rādhikā's great love and Her *rasika* pastimes in the company of Her devotees, will certainly attain Ghanaśyāma Śrī Kṛṣṇa". The question may be put here: "The scriptural injunction is that the deity that is worshipped is also attained – it isn't possible to attain one Godhead by worshipping another, is it?" To this it may be answered: "This is the glory of Śrī Rādhārāṇī's love and Her pastimes, that it includes Śrī Kṛṣṇa! It is not possible to talk about Śrī Rādhārāṇī without involving Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Therefore hearing and chanting about Śrī Rādhārāṇī and performing Her *bhajana* automatically accomplishes Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *bhajana*. Not only that, the bliss that Śrī Kṛṣṇa attains when Śrī Rādhārāṇī is worshipped, or the satisfaction He feels with anyone who worships Her can never be matched by the bliss and satisfaction He feels with someone who just worships Him. Śrīmat Sanātana Gosvāmīpāda has written in Śrī Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta (his *ṭikā* on *śloka* 2.7.11) – *śrī rādhājñā pratipālanenaiva śrī kṛṣṇasya vaśikaraṇāt svayam evādhikādhika tat saṅga sukha saṁsiddher iti dik* "Although Śrī Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta's Gopa Kumāra is a devotee in Vraja's fraternal relationship, he did not wait for the bliss of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's company and acted on the order of Śrī Rādhā. Here the Gosvāmīs explain that following Śrī Rādhārāṇī's orders fully subdues Śrī Kṛṣṇa, therefore even by not waiting for His company, the bliss of His company will be accomplished, and even more so! Similarly if one worships Śrī Rādhārāṇī Śrī Kṛṣṇa is even more subdued than when one worships Him personally, and thus the worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is automatically accomplished.

Hearing and chanting of Śrī Rādhārāṇī's *līlā kathā*, that is, the most succulent topics of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's erotic pastimes, and the loving topics of Śrī Rādhārāṇī, that is, Her topmost display of *mahābhāva*, which is the paramount essence of *prema*, both in meeting and in separation, in endless varieties of manifestation like *mohana*, *modana* and *mādana bhāva*, in the company of exclusively and whole heartedly dedicated *surasika* Rādhā-*bhaktas*, is most relishable and succulent. By living in Vraja and hearing and chanting such confidential topics in the company of like-minded saints that are more advanced than oneself and that are exclusively fixed in Rādhā's lotus feet (that conceive of themselves as Śrī Rādhārāṇī's maidservants in spiritual bodies) is the most confidential form of worship for the *rāgānugīya bhakta* and is most coveted by the *rāga bhakta*. What to speak of the devotee – when the Original Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa accepted the feelings of Śrī Rādhā and descended as

Śrī Gaurāṅga he was immersed in relishing Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's *rasa kathā* and *prema kathā* in the company of *rasika* devotees, day and night.

caṇḍi dāsa vidyāpati, rāyera nāṭaka gīti,
karṇāmṛta śrī gīta govinda
svarūpa rāmānanda sane, mahāprabhu rātri dine
gāya śune parama ānanda

"Day and night Mahāprabhu was most blissfully engaged in singing and hearing the songs of Caṇḍidāsa and Vidyāpati, the drama of Rāmānanda Rāya, Kṛṣṇa Karṇāmṛta and Śrī Gīta Govinda in the company of Svarūpa Dāmodara and Rāmānanda Rāya."

Then the blessed author states: *ihāte vimukha yei, tāra kabhu siddhi nāi, nā śuniye tāra jeno nāma* ("Whoever is against this will never attain perfection – let us not even hear their names"). Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has already properly outlined that whoever takes shelter of Śrī Rādhā's lotus feet and exclusively worships Śrī Rādhā will justly attain Ghanaśyāma Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Now he says: "Those who desire or attempt to relish Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweetness while being averse to worshipping Śrī Rādhā or taking shelter at Her lotus feet, will never attain perfection"; in other words, they will never be fortunate enough to relish Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweetness. The best means to attain Śrī Kṛṣṇa and to relish Him as the embodiment of deep erotic flavours is to worship Śrī Rādhārāṇī. No one can find other means to relish Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweetness than this. We will have nothing to do with those who attempt to relish Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweetness while ignoring or slighting Śrī Rādhārāṇī. What to speak of conversing with them or touching them – let us never even hear their names – *nā śuniye tāra jeno nāma*. Śrīmat Raghunātha dās Gosvāmīpāda has written in his Svaniyama Daśakam Stotra (6):

anādrtyodgītām api muni-gaṇair vaiṇika mukhaiḥ
pravīnāṁ gāndharvām api ca nigamais tat priyatamām
yā ekaṁ govindāṁ bhajati kapaṭi dambhikatayā
tad abhyarṇe śirṇe kṣaṇam api na yāmi vratam idam

"Not even for a moment will I go near that impure place where a proud hypocrite worships Govinda alone without worshipping His most expert lover Śrī Gāndharvā (Rādhā), whose glories are sung by the Vedic scriptures and great sages like Nārada Muni, who carries the Viṇā. That is my solemn vow!" (109)

kṛṣṇa nāma gāne bhāi, rādhikā caraṇa pāi,
rādhā nāma gāne kṛṣṇa candra.
saiḅṣepe kohinu kothā, ghucāo monera byathā,
duḅkhamaya anya kathā dhanda (110)

"O brother! When you sing Kṛṣṇa's name you will get Rādhikā's lotus feet and when you sing Rādhā's name you will get Kṛṣṇa-candra. I told you this shortly, so now extinguish the pain in your mind. All other topics are simply miserable!"

The style of Yuga worship:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – In the previous *tripadī* the blessed author expressed his wish not to hear the name of those who simply worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa while slighting Śrī Rādhā. Śrīpāda Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmīpāda has also defined such persons as proud and deceitful and has accepted the vow to stay far away from their impure association. Now here the question may be raised: "Is the company of those who only worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but who follow the *nitya siddha* people of Vraja in pursuit of servanthood, fraternal love or elderly love, also rejectable then?" Expecting such a question the blessed author now says – ***kṛṣṇa nāma gāne bhāi, rādhikā caraṇa pāi*** – Those who truly take shelter of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's worship can never slight Śrī Rādhā or be averse to Her, for by singing Śrī Kṛṣṇa's name Śrī Rādhikā's lotus feet are attained; everyone in their own mood, of course. Here the words *rādhikā caraṇa* are to be read in a devotional way, therefore it means here the attainment of Śrī Rādhārāṇī Herself. Those who are devotees in Vraja's servant mood or fraternal mood are all devoted to Śrīmatī, knowing Her to be Śrī Kṛṣṇa's greatest worshipper. Amongst the devotees in fraternal love there are the *priya narma sakhās* like Subala and Madhumaṅgala who have a special place in serving Śrī Rādhārāṇī as Kṛṣṇa-priyā in *madhura rasa*. The devotees in parental love, that follow Nanda and Yaśomatī, are understood to have equal parental love for Śrīmatī as for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, those who worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa but who slight Śrī Rādhārāṇī or are averse to Her will never meet with success in their worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa – that is for sure! After all, the Mahājānas say: *kṛṣṇa nāma gāne bhāi, rādhikā caraṇa pāi* ("O brother! By singing Kṛṣṇa's name you will attain the lotus feet of Rādhikā!")

Then again, if someone worships Śrī Rādhā and not Śrī Kṛṣṇa, then their worship of Śrī Rādhārāṇī is also not understood to be proper, for those who sing the name of Rādhā will most certainly attain Kṛṣṇa – ***rādhā nāma gāne kṛṣṇacandra***. The *yugala nāma* is the *mantra* that is mutually attractive to them. In this age of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Mahāprabhu and the Vaiṣṇava-*ācāryas* that have surrendered unto His lotus feet have blessed the people of this era by preaching the most intimate worship of the Divine Pair, that was not attainable by the people of the previous ages. For them this worship is very easily attainable through the chanting of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's holy names. The 16-word, 32 syllable '*hare kṛṣṇa nāma bhajana*' that was preached by Śrīman Mahāprabhu's divine mouth day and night, is the Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa 16-name *āhvānātmake mantra* (*mantra* in fourth, vocative, case). This we have previously mentioned.

After this the blessed author says: *saṅkṣepe kohinu kothā, ghucāo moner byathā, duhkamoy anya kothā dhanda* – "I told you all this briefly. The *yuga dharma* (religious duty) for the age of Kali is *nāma saṅkīrtana*, this is the essence. The holy name of the Lord is transcendental, just like the Lord Himself, since the holy name and the holy named are non-different from each other. In that respect all the names of the Lord are equal, but when we consider the *nāma mātmya* (the glories of the holy name) we can understand that the **name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa** is the best. It is known that the holy name of 'Rāma' is greater than the names of Matsya, Kūrma, Nṛsimha and Vāmana, for the name of Śrī Rāma is equal to the Śrī Viṣṇu Sahasra Nāma (1,000 holy names of Viṣṇu). In the Padma Purāṇa Śrī Mahādeva tells Gaurī devī – *sahasra nāmabhis tulyaṁ rāma nāma varānane* "O fair faced girl! The holy name of Rāma is equal to the entire 1,000 names of Viṣṇu." In the Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa it is seen: "The

result of reciting the Viṣṇu Sahasra Nāma Stotram three times equals the result a person gets when reciting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa – *sahasra nāmanāṁ puṇyānāṁ trir āvṛtṭya tu yat phalam. eka vṛtṭyā tu kṛṣṇasya nāmaikam tat prayacchati*. Hence Śrīman Mahāprabhu has said: **param̐ vijayate śrī kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtanam**. Thus the instruction to perform congregational chanting of the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the most essential teaching. And even more essential is the instruction to perform congregational chanting of the dual names of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, the holy name of Śrī Rādhā, which attracts even Śrī Kṛṣṇa, along with the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Therefore to give up all the mental distress accruing from bodily conditions or all the mental distress in connection with the means and the goal of *bhajana*, in other words, all despair about the possibilities to perform the means and to reach the goal, as well as all the false experiences of distress and to sing the names of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa to attain the desired results—these are the essential instructions. (110)

ahaṅkāra abhimāna, asat saṅga asat jñāna,
chāḍi bhajo guru pāda padma
kori ātma nivedana, deha geḥa parijana,
guru vākya parama mahattva (111)

"Give up bodily consciousness, false pride, bad company and nonsense philosophies (mundane knowledge) and worship the lotus feet of the Guru. Offer your pure heart, your body, your home and your relatives to the Lord, considering the words of the Guru to be the supreme glory."

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *ṭīkā*: *ahaṅkāra abhimāna ityādi –'vidyā dhanāgāra kulābhimānino dehādi dārātmaja nitya buddhayaḥ iṣṭānya devān phala-kāṅkṣiṇo ye jīvan mṛtās te na labhante keśavam' 'tato duḥsaṅgam utsrjya satsu sajjeta buddhimān' iti śrīmad bhāgavatokteḥ.*

The paramount glory of Guru's words –

Sudhākaṇikā vyākhyā – In this *tripadī* the blessed author gives another valuable instruction for those who wish to have their aspirations fulfilled. First he says: *ahaṅkāra abhimāna, asatsaṅga asat jñāna, chāḍi bhajo guru pādapadma* "Give up false *ahaṅkāra* and *abhimāna*, bad company and bogus knowledge and worship the lotus feet of the Guru." Here the words *abhimāna* and *ahaṅkāra* do not carry the same meaning. *ahaṅkāra* means that the purely transcendental *jīva* (individual soul) thinks in terms of 'I' and 'mine' in connection with the material body and bodily things, and *abhimāna* means identification with the wealth, social standing and caste that accrue from such self esteem. Śrīmad Bhāgavata (11.11.10) says:

*daiṇdhīne śarīre'smin guṇabhāvyena karmaṇā
vartamāno'budhas tatra kartāsmīti nibadhyate*

"The ignorant soul is situated in a body that is formed by his previous activities and remains bound to his bodily condition through his fruitive activities that are propelled by the modes of nature and the belief that 'I am the doer'." In Śrī Gītā (3.27) it is also said— *prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ. ahaṅkāra vimūḍhātmā kartāham iti manyate* "A person who is bewildered by false ego thinks 'I am the doer' in activities that are actually urged by the modes of material nature." As a result he is mad of pride of his wealth and social connections. This is the conditioned state of the living being. Those *sādhakas* who desire their own welfare in awakening their *svarūpābhimāna* must give up their false self esteem. In his comment on this *tripadī* Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda writes the following verse about the wicked results of *ahaṅkāra* and *abhimāna*:

*vidyā dhanāgāra kulābhimānino dehādi dārātmaja nitya buddhayaḥ
iṣṭānya devān phala-kāṅkṣiṇo ye jīvan mṛtās te na labhante keśavam*

"Persons who are proud of their mundane knowledge, wealth, home or family lineage, who consider their bodies, wives and children to be eternal and who seek benefits from other gods, are living corpses, and they will not attain Keśava." Previously it was also said: *abhimānī bhakti hīna, jaga mājhe sei dīna, vṛthā tāra aśeṣa bhāvanā* "Those full of self esteem are devoid of devotion. They are the lowest people of the world and their endless thoughts are all in vain."⁴⁸

Just like *ahaṅkāra* and *abhimāna*, the *sādhaka* who desires his own welfare must also renounce bad company. *asat saṅga tyāga – ei vaiṣṇava ācāra* (C.C.) Such is the conduct of the Vaiṣṇavas. Śrīmad Bhāgavatā says: *tato duḥsaṅgam utsṛjya satsu sajjeta buddhimān; santa evāśya chindanti manovyāsaṅgamuktibhiḥ*. "An intelligent person will give up bad company in all respects and associate with the saints, for through their instructions the saints cut asunder the contrary attachments of the mind." *santa evetyevakāreṇa sukṛta tīrtha deva śāstra jñānādinām na tādrśam sāmāthyam iti jñāpitam* (ṭīkā Śrīla Viśvanātha) The words *santa eva* and *eva* indicate that in the company of the wicked one is unable to perform pious activities, pilgrimages, worship of the demigods, or develop scriptural knowledge. Hence the *sādhaka* should give up bad company and associate with saints. When one gives up bad company without taking to saintly association the path of devotion will not be elevated, nor will it be degraded in any way. In connection with this it is to be known that by associating with likeminded saints rapid advancement on the path of devotion will be accomplished.

In the same way the *bhakta sādhaka* must also give up bogus knowledge. From the verbal root *as* the word *sat* is created. The meaning of the verbal root *as* in the context of *asti* means that that which exists is *sat*. Without the power of the Lord and His spiritual potency, the holy abode, devotion and the devotee, unreal (*māyika*) objects have no real existence in the three phases of time (past, present and future). Therefore knowledge about *māyā*'s creation of perishable objects is bogus knowledge. When the consciousness is absorbed in such bogus knowledge, absorption in real knowledge, that is, knowledge God, the devotee and devotion will not awaken. Hence the *sādhaka* who desires his own welfare should also renounce the study of all this unreal knowledge.

⁴⁸ See the Sudhā Kaṅikā vyākhyā on *tripadī* nr. 84.

Then the blessed author says: *chāḍi bhaja guru pāda padma. koro ātma nivedana, deha geḥa parijana, guru vākya parama mahattva*. "The *bhakta sādḥaka* should give all these things up and worship the lotus feet of Śrī Guru, that are the root of both the means and the goal (of spiritual life)." First of all Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has said: *śrī guru caraṇe rati, ei se uttama gati, ye prasāde pūre sarva āśā*. (See the *Sudhā-kaṇikā vyākhyā* of this *tripadī*) "By being exclusively devoted to the lotus feet of Śrī Gurudeva the *sādḥaka* will understand the paramount glory of Śrī Guru's words, and by exclusively surrendering to the lotus feet of the Lord as is instructed by Śrī Guru, offering ⁴⁹ body, abode, friends, relatives and even the pure soul to the lotus feet of the Lord one can become carefree in all respects and always worship Śrī Hari. (111)

śrī kṛṣṇa caitanya deva, rati mati tāre seva,
prema kalpataru dātā
vraja rāja nandana, rādhikāra prāṇa dhana,
aparūpa ei saba kathā (112)

"Serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya deva with loving attachment, for He gave us the wish-yielding tree of love of God. How wonderful are all these topics of the prince of Vraja, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the treasure of Rādhikā's life (as He descended in His Gaurarūpa)!"

The giver of the wishyielding tree of *prema* :

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – In this Prema Bhakti Candrikā scripture Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has elaborately described the paramount, brilliantly elevated *rasātmikā bhakti* called *mañjarī bhāva sādhanā*, which is Śrīman Mahāprabhu Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya deva's unprecedented merciful gift. Without His grace or without worshipping Him no one is able to attain this kind of *Vraja-bhakti*. Hence the blessed author is discussing Śrīman Mahāprabhu in the following three *tripadīs*.

First of all he speaks about Śrīman Mahāprabhu's worship and His pastime of bestowing *prema* – *śrī kṛṣṇa caitanya deva, rati mati tāre seva, prema kalpataru dātā*. Mahāprabhu is here described with the name **Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Deva** because *kṛṣṇa jānāiyā yei jagata koilo dhanya; ataeva nāma hoilo śrī kṛṣṇa caitanya* (C.C.) "Because He blessed the whole universe by teaching them about Kṛṣṇa He is named Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya ('Śrī-Kṛṣṇa-consciousness')." Although Śrī Vyāsa, Śuka, Nārada and other teachers of the path of devotion have also taught things about Śrī Kṛṣṇa, still no one other than Śrīman Mahāprabhu is thus named **Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya**, because although different *ācāryas* taught about Śrī Kṛṣṇa that knowledge can only culminate into *prema* through the practice of *bhajana*. But simply by seeing Śrīman Mahāprabhu that knowledge instantly culminates into *prema*

⁴⁹ See the comment on the item *ātma nivedana* in *tripadī* nr.11

without the practice of *sādhana*. This goes for everyone who sees Him. Hence he is *deva*, in His body the luster Śrī Rādhā's *divya kānti* (*div*= *jyotiḥ* or light) resides.

Service or *bhajana* must be rendered by remaining lovingly attracted to Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya deva's lotus feet, otherwise it will be impossible to attain Vraja-*bhāva* in any case – *rati mati tāre seva*. In the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya there is a simultaneous, dual worship of both Śrīman Mahāprabhu and His associates in Navadvīpa and of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava and Their *sakhīs* in Vraja. In the end of Śrīla Kavi Karṇapūra's Śrī Caitanya Candrodaya Nāṭaka Śrīman Mahāprabhu personally blessed Sītānātha (Advaita Prabhu), saying:

*vṛndāraṇyāntarasthaḥ sarasa vilasitenātmanām ātmānam uccair
ānanda syanda vandīkṛta manasam urīkṛtya nitya pramodaḥ
vṛndāraṇyaika niṣṭhān svaruci sama tanūn kārayiṣyāmi yusmān
ityevās te'vaśiṣṭam kim api mama mahat karma tac cātaniṣye*

(Śrī Caitanya Candrodaya Act X, 74)

"O *ācārya*! I'm always absorbed in My blissful luscious pastimes, residing in Vṛndāvana, and I will give you all (spiritual) bodies suitable for joining Me (according to your own taste) in these Vṛndāvana-pastimes. That one remaining great duty I will swiftly perform!" Śrīman Mahāprabhu is the combined form of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, in the form of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa He is always absorbed in sweet pastimes in Śrī Vṛndāvana and in His Navadvīpa-pastimes He is bestowing the relish of this sweet taste in Vraja's *nikuñjas* to His associates in their mentally conceived forms of Rādhā's maidservants – this is Śrīman Mahāprabhu's final duty! Hearing Mahāprabhu's blessing Śrī Advaitācārya replied:

*nijecchayā prāpaya yad yad eva sthalāntaram no vapur antaram vā
tavaitad āścarya caritram eva jāti-smarā eva ciram smarāmaḥ*

"By Your wish we may attain whatever You want, in any other abode or body. We will eternally remember our origin in Your wonderful pastimes!" Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has said: *mano vāñchā siddhi tabe hao pūrṇa tṛṣṇa; hethāy caitanya mile sethā rādhā-kṛṣṇa* (Prārthanā-43) "When all desires are fulfilled thirst is quenched; here we will meet Śrī Caitanya and there Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa".

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya deva is *prema kalpataru dātā*. Śrīman Mahāprabhu is Himself the wishyielding tree of *prema* and through His own inconceivable potency He is also the gardener, or the donor of the *prema kalpataru*'s fruits. – *nijācintya śaktye māli hoiyā skandha hoy* (C.C.) In connection with His bestowal of *prema* it is written –

*uḍumbara vṛkṣa yoiche phale sarva aṅge; ei mata bhakti vṛkṣe sarvata phala lāge
mūla skandhera sākhā upasākhā gaṇe; lāgilo ye prema phala amṛta ke jine
pākilo ye prema phala amṛta madhura; vilāya caitanya māli nāhi loy mūla
trijagate joto āche dhana ratna maṇi; eka phalera mūlya kori tāhā nāhi gaṇi
māge vā nā māge keho pātra vā apātra; ihāra vicāra nāhi jāne dibo mātra
aṅjali aṅjali bhori phele caturdiṣe; daridre kuṛāyā khāy mālākāra hāse*

(C.C. Ādi Ch.9)

"Just as an Urumbara tree fructifies in its full body, similarly the tree of devotion fructifies everywhere. The roots, trunk, branches and twigs yield the fruits of *prema* whose relish defies the taste of nectar. When this fruit of *prema* ripens it becomes as sweet as nectar, and Śrī Caitanya is the gardener who does not ask for any price. All the jewels, gems and money of the three worlds cannot pay for even one of these fruits. He simply gives, without considering who asked for it and who didn't, and who was qualified and who wasn't. He threw handfuls of fruits in all directions and the beggars went around to collect them and eat them, making the gardener laugh."

Not only that, the gardener ordered the trunks Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrī Advaita Prabhu and the branches and subbranches, that spread all over the world –

*ekalā mālākāra āmi kāhā kāhā jābo; ekalā vā koto phal pāṛiyā vilābo
ekalā uṭhāiyā dite hoy pariśrama; keho pāy keho nā pāy rahe mone bhrama
ataeva āmi ājñā dilo sabākare; jāhā tāhā prema phala deho jāre tāre*⁵⁰

"I am only one gardener – where shall I go? How many fruits can I distribute alone? It will be too tiring to do it alone – some will get it and some will not get it and thus the mind remains confused. Thus I order everyone – give the fruit of *prema* to everyone you meet!"

In this way this wonderfully magnanimous wishyielding tree of *prema* and the donor of the fruits of *prema*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, gave Vraja's sweet amorous love or *mañjarī bhāva prema* in the form of service to Śrī Rādhā to the whole world without considering who was qualified and unqualified and who performed *sādhana* or not. Therefore those who do not worship Him cannot relish the sweet love of Vraja. Śrīla Kavirāja Gosvāmīpāda has written –

*adbhuta nigūḍha premera mādhyura mahimā; āpani āsvādi prabhu dekhāilo sīmā
adbhuta doyālu caitanya, adbhuta vadānya; aiche doyālu dātā loke nāhi śuni anya
sarva bhāve bhajo loka! caitanya caraṇa; jāhā hoite pābe kṛṣṇa premāmṛta dhana*

(C.C. Antya Ch. 17)

"The glory of the sweetness of this intimate *prema* is wonderful – the Lord relished it Himself and showed its limits. Śrī Caitanya's compassion is wonderful and His generosity is also wonderful – such a compassionate donor cannot be heard of anywhere else in the world. O people! Worship the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya in all respects, and from that you will attain the nectarean treasure of love for Kṛṣṇa!"

After this the blessed author said: *vraja-rāja nandana, rādhikāra prāṇa dhana, aparūpa ei sab kothā* "Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Śrī Rādhā's life has descended as Śrī Gaurāṅga, accepting the feelings of a devotee to personally relish the sweetness of the love of Vraja and to give it also to the world – this is all very wonderful and astonishing! In Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta (Ādi Ch.17) it is written –

*tenho śyāma vaṁśī mukha gopa vilāsī; ihoṅ gaura – kabhu dvija kabhu to sannyāsī
ataeva āpane prabhu gopī bhāva dhari; vrajendranandana kohe – 'prāṇanātha' kori
sei kṛṣṇa sei gopī – parama virodha; acintya caritra prabhura – ati sudurbodha*

⁵⁰ See Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta, Ādi līlā chapter 9

Śrīla Kavirāja Gosvāmīpāda describes Śrīman Mahāprabhu's wonderful *bhāvalāṅkāras* (ornaments of ecstasy) as he described how the Lord danced in front of Lord Jagannātha's chariot in Nīlācala–

*uddaṇḍa nṛtye prabhura adbhuta vikāra; aṣṭa sāttvika bhāvoday hoy samakāla
māṁsa braṇa saha roma vṛnda pulakita; śimulira vṛkṣa jeno kaṇṭake veṣṭita
eeka danter kampa dekhi lāge bhoy; loke jāne - danta sab khosiyā poṛoy
sarvāṅge prasveda chuṭe - tāte raktodgama; jaja gaga jaja gaga gadgada vacana
jalayantra-dhārā jeno bohe aśru jala; āśā pāśa loka joto bhijilo sakal
deha kānti gaura kabhu dekhiye aruṇa; kabhu kānti dekhi jeno mallikā puṣpa sama
kabhu stabdha kabhu prabhu bhūmite poṛoy; śuṣka kāṣṭha sama hasta pada nā coloy
kabhu bhūmi poṛe kabhu hoy śvāsa hīna; jāhā dekhi bhakta gaṇera hoy prāṇa kṣīṇa*

"While the Lord leapt high He showed wonderful transformations – the eight *sāttvik* ecstasies arose all simultaneously. His flesh was as if blistered and His hairs stood on end, like the Simulī tree being surrounded by thorns. Each of His teeth were clattering so violently that people feared that they would fall out of His mouth. Sweat poured from His whole body and mixed with blood that oozed from His pores. He could not say 'Jagannātha' anymore, but could only stutter *jaja gaga jaja gaga*. Tears squirted from His eyes like water from a syringe, and they showered all the surrounding people. Sometimes His complexion was golden, sometimes it was ruddy and sometimes it looked like the (creme colored) Mallikā-Jasmine. Sometimes the Lord became stunned and sometimes He fell to the ground, and sometimes His hands and feet became stunned as if He became a dry log of wood. Sometimes He fell to the ground and stopped breathing, seeing which the devotees stopped breathing of grief."

After this the blessed author describes the reason of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's descent as Gaura, accepting Śrī Rādhā's mood and complexion – *tin vāñchā abhilāṣī, śacī garbhe parakāśī, saṅge sab pāriṣada-gaṇa*. In his notebook, Śrīman Mahāprabhu's 'Second Form', Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, has described the three desires which were the main causes of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's descent–

*śrī rādhāyāḥ praṇaya mahimā kīdṛśo vānayaiivā-
svādyo yenādbhuta madhurimā kīdṛśo vā madīyaḥ
saukhyam cāsyā mad anubhavataḥ kīdṛśam veti lobhāt
tad bhāvādhyāḥ samajani śacī garbha sindhau harīnduḥ*

"How glorious is the love of Śrī Rādhā? How does Śrī Rādhā relish My wonderful sweetness through Her love for Me? How is that sweetness and how much happiness does Śrī Rādhā feel when She relishes My sweetness?" Being eager after these three objectives and being enriched with Śrī Rādhā's mood, Śrī Kṛṣṇa arose like the moon within the ocean of mother Śacī's womb." These three aspects of Śrī Rādhā's love awoke a great yearning within Śrī Kṛṣṇa's heart. Although He tried it diligently, He could not fulfill these three desires within His Vraja-līlā. Hence He became firmly determined to descend as Gaura, accepting the feelings and complexion of Śrī Rādhā –

rasa āsvādite āmi koilo avatāra; prema rasa āsvādilo vividha prakāra

"Accepting the feelings and complexion of Rādhikā You have descended to relish Your own flavours. Your own secret aim is to relish *prema*, and as a concomitant objective You fill the three worlds with *prema* also. (C.C. Madhya Ch.8)"

It is not hard at all for Śrīman Mahāprabhu to fill the world with *prema*, for He is 'Gaura Hari'. *hari śabdera nānā artha, dui mukhyatama; sarva amaṅgala hare, prema diyā hare mana* (C.C.) "The word Hari has different meanings, of which two are predominant: He destroys all inauspiciousness and steals the mind with His love." With His own body Gaurahari has shown the greatly loving golden complexion of Śrī Rādhā, and thus He instantly destroys all the inauspicious sensual cravings within the hearts of the conditioned souls and steals everyone's minds by giving *prema*. Just as the monsoon clouds shower rain in all directions to soothe and moisten the heated affliction of the world, similiary loving Gaurahari makes a cloud of *prema* rise in the universal sky and soothes the conditioned souls' heated affliction of the three kinds of material misery and inundates everyone in an ocean of *prema*. In the words of the Mahājanas it is seen – ***hema jalada kāy, prema dhārā bariṣoy*** ("A golden raincloud showers torrents of love"). This deluge of *prema* Śrī Gaurahari inundates the world and this *prema* is the sweet *rasa* of Vraja known as *mañjarī bhāva's prema*, which is hardly attained by Brahma and Śiva. Hence the Mahājanas have sung –

patita heri kānde, thira nāhi bāndhe
karuṇa nayāne cāy
nirupama hema jini', ujora gorā tanu,
avanī ghana goṛi jāy
gaurāṅgera nichani loiyā mori
o rūpa mādhurī, piriti cāturi
tila ādha pāsarite nāri
varaṇa āśrama, kiñcana akiñcana
kāro kon doṣa nāhi māne
kamalā śiva vihi, dulaha prema nidhi
dāna koroye jaga jane
aichana saday, hṛdaya rasamoy
gaura bhelo parakāśa
prema dhanera dhanī, koyolo avanī,
vañcita govinda dāsa

"Seeing the fallen souls the Lord wept. Unable to remain calm He glanced with His merciful eyes. So He came to earth with a matchless golden form. I would die for that Gaurāṅga! I cannot forget His sweet form and His clever love for even half a moment! He did not mind about caste and *āśrama*, haves or have-nots or any fault anyone might have. **Rather He bestowed the treasure of *prema*, which is rarely attained even by Lakṣmī, Śiva or Brahmā, on all the people of the world.** Thus Gaura appeared, with such a compassionate and *rasika* heart, making the world rich with the treasure of *prema* which is coveted by Govinda Dāsa."

After this the blessed author says: *rādhikāra prāṇapati, ki bhāve kāndaye niti, ihā bujhe bhakata samāja* –The Original Personality of Godhead Vrajendranandana accepted the feelings of Śrī Rādhā, and although He was Himself the Lord of Śrī Rādhā's life He simply

wept in Śrī Rādhā's mood – *kāhāṅ koroiṅ kāhā pāw vrajendranandana; kāhāṅ mora prāṇanātha muralī vadana. kāhāre kohibo, kebā jāne mora dukha; vrajendranandana vinu phāṭe mora buka* (C.C.) "What shall I do, where can I get Vrajendra nandana? Where is the Lord of My life, who plays the flute? What shall I say to whom? Who will know My distress? Without Vrajendranandana My heart breaks!" Śrīman Mahāprabhu's main aim was to relish the sweetness of Śrī Rādhā's love, taking shelter of Śrī Rādhārāṇī's feelings of separation. For separation is most capable of stirring the ocean of *prema*, and thus its relish is also most astonishing.

Human words are unable to reveal all the amazing feelings of separation from Śrī Kṛṣṇa that arose in loving Śrī Rādhārāṇī's heart. Out of separation from Śrī Kṛṣṇa Śrī Rādhārāṇī became mad—Her heart became filled with Kṛṣṇa, inside out. Her knowledge was about Kṛṣṇa, Her meditation on Kṛṣṇa, Her heart given to Kṛṣṇa—Her whole heart was filled with Kṛṣṇa! The external world even ceased to exist for Kṛṣṇamayī (Rādhā, Who is full of Kṛṣṇa-consciousness). She wanders through Vraja's deep forests like a mad-woman, exclaiming: "Hā Kṛṣṇa! Hā Kṛṣṇa!"; She does not lift an eyebrow when Her tender flower-feet are pierced by thorns. When a poisonous snake sticks up its hoods and hisses She does not look at it, although She sees it. She is simply absorbed in Kṛṣṇa-consciousness and is very anxious to attain Kṛṣṇa!! Her *sakhīs* are somehow saving Prema Pāgalinī (Rādhā, Who is mad with love)'s life.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa accepts Śrī Rādhā's mood and relishes this ecstatic condition of Divyonmādatī (Śrī Rādhā, who is mad with love for Kṛṣṇa) in His form of Śrī Gaurāṅga in His Gambhīrā-līlā in Nīlācala (Puri). No one is able to understand these deep feelings, only devotees can experience it according to their capacity. *śrī rādhikāra prāṇapati, ki bhāve kāndaye niti, ihā bujhe bhakata samāja*. Even Śrī Kṛṣṇa cannot fully understand the loving activities of His devotees, what to speak of others? Who then has the power to understand the loving activities of *mahābhāvamayī* Śrī Rādhārāṇī? Just to understand these loving activities Śrī Kṛṣṇa has taken the mood of Śrī Rādhā and has become Gaura. Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta (Antya līlā Ch. 18) describes—

*bhaktera prema vikāra dekhi kṛṣṇera camatkāra; kṛṣṇa yār nā pāy anta kebā chāra āra
bhakta premera joto daśā je gati prakāra; joto duḥkha joto sukha joteko vikāra
kṛṣṇa tāhā samyak nā pāre jānite; bhakta bhāva aṅgī kore tāhā āsvādite
kṛṣṇere nācāy prema bhaktere nācāy; āpane nācaye – tine nāce ek ṭhāi
premera vikāra varṇite cāhe jei jana; cānda dharite cāhe jeno hoiyā vāmana
vāyu joiche sindhu jalera hare eka kaṇa; kṛṣṇa premā kaṇera toiche jivera sparśana
kṣaṇe kṣaṇe uṭhe premāra taraṅga ananta; jīva chāra kāhā tāra pāibek anta
śrī kṛṣṇa caitanya jāhā kore āsvādana; sabe eka jāne tāhā svarūpādi gaṇa
jīva hoiyā kore jei tāhāra varṇana; āpanā śodhite tāra choy eka kaṇa*

"Even Kṛṣṇa is astonished when He sees the loving transformations of His devotees. If Kṛṣṇa cannot find their end, what to speak of any insignificant person? Kṛṣṇa cannot fully know all the different stages and courses, all the misery, happiness and transformations the devotee's *prema* goes through. He relishes it by accepting the mood of a devotee. *prema* makes Kṛṣṇa dance, it makes the devotee dance and it dances itself—all three dance in one place. Anyone who wishes to describe the transformations of love is like a dwarf who wishes

to catch the moon. Just as the wind is able to carry just one drop from the ocean, similarly only a drop of Kṛṣṇa-prema is able to touch the living entity. Moment after moment innumerable waves of *prema* arise—how can a conditioned soul find the end to this? What Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya relishes can only be known by His devotees like Svarūpa Dāmodara. A conditioned soul who wishes to describe this can only do so for his own purification. Thus he can touch just a mere drop." (114)

gupate sādhibe siddhi, sādhana navadhā bhakti,
prārthanā koribo dainye sadā
kori hari saṅkīrtana, sadāi ānanda mana,
kṛṣṇa vinā āra saba bādhā (115)

"Attain perfection in secrecy, by practising the nine kinds of devotion (hearing, chanting, remembering, etc.). I will always pray in humility and blissfully perform Hari *saṅkīrtana*. Without Kṛṣṇa everything (all mundane things) is just an obstacle."

External and internal practice :

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – In this *tripadī* the blessed author reveals the essential objective of the *rāgānuṅgiya sādha*'s *bhajana*. First he says: *gupate sādhibe siddhi, sādhana navadhā bhakti, prārthanā koribo dainye sadā* – "Attain perfection in secrecy, by practising the nine kinds of devotion (hearing, chanting, remembering, etc.). I will always pray in humility." "Attaining perfection in secrecy" means that the *sādha* meditates on his mentally conceived spiritual body and thus renders loving service to Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa day and night. Along with that the nine types of conventional, external forms of devotion, like hearing and chanting the glories of the Lord, are practised in the external physical body. *bāhya, antara ihāra dui to sādhana; bāhya sādha dehe kore śravaṇa kīrtana. mane – nija siddha deha koriyā bhāvana; rātri dīne kore vraje kṛṣṇera sevana* (C.C.). The ultimate speciality of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas' *rāga bhajana* is that the *sādha* is fully acquainted with his *siddha* condition even during the stage of *sādhana*. In the stage of *sādhana* the *sādha*'s *svarūpāveśa* (absorption in his spiritual self esteem) is mixed with bodily consciousness and he is thus unable to relish too much astonishment during his mentally conceived devotional service in *svarūpāveśa*. The more the consciousness is purified by the practice of the nine conventional types of *bhakti* within the *sādha deha*, the more sensual desires and bodily consciousness vanish and the stronger *svarūpāveśa* gets. Accordingly, the absorption in the *siddha deha* becomes stronger and the astonishment due to this relish becomes manifest. Hence Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya speaks of mental devotional service rendered to Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava within the mentally conceived *siddha deha* throughout the eight parts of the day, along with the nine conventional types of devotion, such as hearing, chanting, deity-service etc.

Another meaning of *gupate sādhibe siddhi, sādhana navadhā bhakti* may be that the *sādhaka* should not reveal his realisations in *bhajana* to every Tom, Dick and Harry, but proceed towards *bhāva siddhi* in great secrecy. Prior to this it has been said: *rākho prema hṛdoya bhoriyā* ("Keep your love in your heart") and later it will also be said: *āpana bhajana kothā, nā kohibe yathā tathā* ("Don't speak about your *bhajana* to every Tom, Dick and Harry"). *prema* or experience in *bhajana* is like steam-power. When it is compressed within a steam engine its power increases tremendously, and as a result it can perform work that even thousands upon thousands of human bodies cannot perform. In the same way, if the swelling of *prema* or experiences in *bhajana* are confined or compressed within the heart its power will enhance unlimitedly and quickly bring the *sādhaka*-soul to the kingdom of God. Actually insatiability is the very nature of *bhakti*, hence the more the *sādhaka* advances in *bhajana* the more he considers himself a very fallen soul who does not perform any *sādhana bhajana*, and he will humbly and anxiously pray to the Lord's lotus feet for the attainment of the fortune of permanent *bhajana*. Such anxious and hankering prayers of the *sādhaka* will unlock the Lord's compassion and will cause the streams of His nectarean grace to flow towards him by the hundreds. Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya wishes to make this clear by using the words *prārthanā koribo dainye sadā* ("I will always humbly pray").

After this the blessed author says: *kori hari saṅkīrtana, sadāi ānanda mana, kṛṣṇa vinā āra sab bādhā* ("I will always blissfully perform congregational chanting of *harināma*, for other than Kṛṣṇa everything is an obstacle.") Although *kīrtana* was already included in the aforementioned *sādhana navadhā bhakti* ("Nine fold devotion I will practise"), still in this particular age of Kali Śrīman Mahāprabhu personally acted to give the example to the *sādhakas* of this world that *saṅkīrtana* is the main form of worship, and here again the special mentioning is made of *hari saṅkīrtana – bhajanera madhye śreṣṭha nava vidhā bhakti; kṛṣṇa prema kṛṣṇa dite dhare mahā-śakti. tāra madhye sarva śreṣṭha nāma saṅkīrtana; niraparādha nāma hoite hoy prema dhana* (C.C.) – "Of all forms of *bhajana* the nine forms of *bhakti* (as named by Śrī Prahlāda in Ś.B. 7.5.23, Ed.) are the best. They are very powerful and can bestow Kṛṣṇa and *kṛṣṇa prema*. **Amongst them the best of all is *nāma saṅkīrtana***, for the treasure of *prema* is attained by doing *nāma* without offences." Here *saṅkīrtana* means many people meeting in congregation with cymbals and drums to loudly sing the names of the Lord. *atra ca bahubhir militvā kīrtanaṁ saṅkīrtanam ityucyate. tat tu camatkāra viśeṣa poṣāt pūrvato'pyadhikam iti jñeyam* (Bhakti Sandarbha-269) "Here the congregational chanting of the holy name by many assembled persons is called *saṅkīrtana*. Because this *saṅkīrtana* nourishes a special type of astonishment it is greater than regular *kīrtana*." In the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition *kīrtana* which is linked to the remembrance of a certain pastime of the Lord and meditation on the holy names, forms, attributes and pastimes of the Lord is called *saṅkīrtana* or complete glorification. There is more relish and astonishment in this than in regular *kīrtana* which is devoid of concentration of the mind.

Anyway, since the holy name and named are non-different, the mind of the *bhakta* will always be blessed with the relish of the flavours of the holy name within *nāma saṅkīrtana*. Just as the tongue which is polluted by jaundice naturally experiences sweet rock candy as tasting bitter, similarly the tongue which is polluted by offences cannot experience the delicious taste of the holy name, but the holy name will extend its endless tastiness to the tongue of an inoffensive devotee. Hence it is said: *kori hari saṅkīrtana parama ānanda mana*

"With a most blissful mind I perform *hari saṅkīrtana*." After this it is said: *kṛṣṇa vinā ara sab bādḥā*, which means that a *sādhaka* who desires his own welfare must consider attachment to all mundane objectives that have nothing to do with Kṛṣṇa to be obstacles to his *bhajana*. Attachment to mundane objects causes the spirit soul, who is Kṛṣṇa's eternal servant, to forget his pure liberated nature in connection with Kṛṣṇa and causes him to suffer mundane anguish since beginningless time. The *sādhaka* should consider such attachments to mundane objects to be great obstacles to his *bhajana* and leave them far behind. Just as a sick person desiring good health will give up all unhealthy habits while at the same time taking a powerful medicine that can destroy the disease, similarly the *sādhaka* who desires *bhakti* and who relishes the nectarean flavours of the holy name, that is the best medicine against the material disease, simultaneously gives up his attachment or possessiveness to all objects that have nothing to do with Kṛṣṇa, for *kṛṣṇa vinā āro sab bādḥā*. (115)

*e saṁsāra bāṭuyāre, kāma pāśe bāndhi māre,
phukāra koroḥo hari dāsa
koroḥo bhakata saṅga, prema kathā rasa-raṅga,
tabe hoy vipada vināśa (116)*

"The bandits of material desires are binding and killing me with the ropes of lust. Cry out for Hari's servants, associate with the devotees and enjoy topics of *rasa* and *prema* with them. Then all mishap will be destroyed."

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's *ṭīkā* – *asac ceṣṭā kaṣṭa-prada vikāṣa pāśālibhir iha prakāmaṁ kāmādi prakāṣa patha-pāti vyatikaraiḥ; gale baddhvā hanye'ham iti bakabhid vartmapa-gaṇe kuru tvam phutkāraṁ avatī sa yathā tvam manāḥ itaḥ*

Destruction of danger –

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – In the previous *tripadī* Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya advised the *sādhaka* who aspires for *bhakti* to give up attachment to all other things but Kṛṣṇa, and to engage in the nine kinds of devotion, headed by *saṅkīrtana*, in the *sādhaka deha*, and in mental devotional service within the *siddha deha*. Thus it may seem that an ordinary *sādhaka* is able to give up his attachment to the mundane, bodily things that mankind is so strongly attracted and naturally attached to, such as money and women, and become exclusively attached to Kṛṣṇa? Hence in this *tripadī* Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya defines to the *sādhaka* the way in which he can lose interest in sensual cravings and finally become completely released from that.

First of all he says: '*saṁsāra bāṭuyāre, kāma phāṁsi bāndhi māre, phukāra koroḥo haridāsa*' "The bandits of lusty desires are binding me in a noose and are trying to kill me. When you loudly call out the names of Hari's servants, the Vaiṣṇavas, they will become scared and flee." *saṁsāra* means cherishing feelings like 'I' and 'mine' towards bodily relationships. Although the *jīva* is intrinsically transcendental, he is forgetting his eternal Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and, as a result of desiring material sense objects, cherishes feelings of 'I' and 'mine' towards bodily

relationships that have been provided by the Lord's external energy *māyā*. Thus he is forgetting his transcendental status and suffers the intolerable threefold miseries, like birth, death, disease and lamentation in different species of life. The root cause of this material disease is cherishing feelings of 'I' and 'mine' towards bodily relationships, hence it is the *jīva's saṁsāra*. This is like a bandit or highwayman that binds him with the ropes of lusty desires and steals his treasure of all good intentions away from his heart. Just as highway men steal everything from a traveller and also kill him, afraid of being arrested afterwards, similarly the bandit of *saṁsāra* is stealing everything from the *jīva* and gradually tries to destroy him completely by tying the noose of lusty desires around his neck. Just as travellers that are attacked by highway men loudly cry out to powerful soldiers or police constables and thus lose their fear of the robbers as the robbers flee, similarly if *sādhakas* who tread the path of *bhakti* loudly call out the names of the Vaiṣṇavas, the highway-men-like *saṁsāra* will flee in fear. Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī has also written in his *Manaḥ Śikṣā* (5):

*asac ceṣṭā kaṣṭa-prada vikaṣa pāśālibhir iha
prakāmaṁ kāmādi prakāṣa patha-pāti vyatikaraiḥ
gale baddhvā hanye'ham iti bakabhid varṭmapa-gaṇe
kuru tvaṁ phutkāraṁ avati sa yathā tvaṁ manaḥ itaḥ*

"O Mind! Anxiously cry out to the highwaypolice of Bakabhid (Kṛṣṇa's devotees): "In this world am bound around the neck by the painful ropes of the highwaymen of lust and so and they are killing me!", so that they will save you from their grip" By loudly calling the Vaiṣṇavas the attachment to *samsāra*, which is the root cause of all sin, is removed. What's more, Śrīmad Bhāgavata says: *yeṣāṁ saṁsmaraṇāt puṁsa sadyaḥ śudhyanti vai grhāḥ. kiṁ punar darśana sparśa pāda śaucāsanādibhiḥ* (1.19.33) 'Simply by remembering a Vaiṣṇava the body and the house are purified, what to speak of seeing him, touching him, washing his feet and speaking with him?'"

After that it is said: *koroho bhakata saṅga, prema kothā rasa raṅga, tabe hoy vipada vināśa* – some may think that although the bandit of *saṁsāra* may flee for the time being as soon as the Vaiṣṇavas are called by name, he will attack again some other time. Hence it is advised to always associate with the devotees and to engage in hearing and chanting *prema kathā*. If instead of travelling alone one travels with a big group, constantly engaging in different talks, the bandits will not be able to approach. In the same way *saṁsāra* cannot enter into the heart if one always spends time doing *bhajana* with the Vaiṣṇavas. When worship of the Lord becomes deep in the company of the devotees the *sādhaka* will gradually ascend to the kingdom of *prema*. In the same way all bad habits will be wiped out and saintly qualities like freedom from lust, disinterest in matters that do not concern Kṛṣṇa, modesty and humility will become manifest in the heart of the *sādhaka* as a concomitant factor. Through the association and the illuminating grace of powerful saints the darkness in the heart is wiped out and the bright light of devotion starts shining there. When the spotless example of the great pure hearted saints who are fixed in *bhajana* always stays before the eyes, the hearts of even the ordinary people can become freed from sensual desires and are swiftly blessed with

the attainment of *prema bhakti*. Prior to this Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya had said: *mārjana hoy bhajana, sādhu saṅga anukṣaṇa, ajñāna avidyā parājaya*'⁵¹ (116)

*strī putra bāndhava yoto, mari yāy koto śata,
āpanāre hao sāvadhāna
mui se viṣaya hata, nā bhajinu hari pada,
mora āra nāhi paritrāṇa (117)*

"How many of hundreds of wives, children and friends aren't dying? Always remain aware of that. I am afflicted by the effects of sense gratification and I did not worship the lotus feet of Hari. There is nothing else that can save me."

Humble utterances by the blessed author :

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – Now the blessed author warns us that the sense objects, to which human society is so attached, are utterly perishable by saying: '*strī putra bāndhava joto, mori jāy koto śata, āpanāre hao sāvadhāna*'. How many hundreds of wives, children and friends, that are like puppets of illusion, by which human society is so captivated that it wastes its time within the rare human body, which is meant for worshipping Lord Hari and which is the vessel of a superior intelligence, but which is consequently wasted in animal-like enjoyment, are not dying at every moment? The power of illusion is so great that the conditioned souls can not see this, although they are looking. The attachment to these temporary and perishable illusory objects causes human beings to waste their time, which is actually meant for doing *bhajana*. All enjoyable things like wife, children, sensual enjoyment and wealth are giving misery and are temporary. Bhagavān Buddhadeva sums them up to Chandaka as He says:

*alan̄ chandaka anityāḥ khalvete kāmā adhruvā aśaśvatā vipariṇāma dharmāṇaḥ
pradrutāscapalā giri-nadī vega tulyāḥ avasyāya binduvad acira-sthāyina ullāpanāḥ rikta muṣṭivad
asārāḥ kadali skandhavad durbalā, āma bhojanavad vedanātmakaḥ śarad-abhra-nibhāḥ kṣaṇādbhutā
na bhavanti.....sāgara iva duṣpūrāḥ lavaṇodaka iva tṛṣṇākarāḥ sarpa śiro-vastuḥ sparśanūyā mahā
pratāpavat parivarjitaḥ paṇḍitaḥ sabhayāḥ saraṇāḥ sādinaḥ sadoṣa iti jñātvā vivarjitaḥ prājñair
vigarhitaḥ vidvadbhiḥ jugupsita āryaiḥ vivarjitaḥ budhaiḥ parigrhita abudhaiḥ nisevitaḥ bālaiḥ.*

"O Chandaka! All enjoyable sense objects are temporary and transitory; they ultimately result in misery. They remain for only a moment, they are restless and flow away as fast as a river stream flows from a steep mountain. They do not stay, just like dewdrops, and produce deep sorrow. When a person balls his fist without putting anything in it, one wonders what may be within the fist, but when he opens his fist one sees only empty space. This enjoyment is as feeble as the trunk of a banana tree and gives pain as if one has eaten something raw. It is as temporary as an autumn cloud, and insatiable like an ocean. Just as drinking salt water simply increases one's thirst, similarly this sense enjoyment simply increases one's craving for it. This enjoyment should never be touched, just like the hoods of

⁵¹ See the explanation of verse nr. 7.

a snake and it is rejected by the learned, just like a powerful waterfall. Since it is full of faults, anxiety, lamentation and false identification the wise men reject this, the learned loathe it, the aristocrats are disgusted by it and the wise discard it. The fools take it and childish folks enjoy it."

Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: *āpanāre hao sābdhāna* "Beware! Wise men give up their attachment to temporary wives, children and friends and invest their heart's attachment in the lotus feet of their eternally beautiful and sweet Lord Śrī Śrī Govinda, worshipping Him with great devotional passion!"

After this the blessed author, although he is the embodiment of *prema*, humbly considers himself to be very fallen, unfortunate, struck by sensual life and devoid of all kinds of *sādhana*. *–mui se viṣaya hata, nā bhajinu haripada, mora āra nāhi paritrāṇa* From these humble words of Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya the *sādhakas* can learn that there is some difference between being *viṣayāsakta* (attached to sense objects) and *viṣaya hata* (struck by the sense objects). Those who are bewildered by sense enjoyment, who attained a condition of forgetfulness of God through their attachment to the same, and thus spend their lives without doing *bhajana*, are called 'attached to sense enjoyment'. When they attain the association and the grace of the saints they will also be blessed by attaining a devotional life. But those who had already taken shelter of the path of *bhajana* and are still attached or attracted to mundane forms and flavours, due to committing offences and so, and are thus unable to keep their minds attached to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, are called '**struck by the sense objects**'. Their attachment to sense objects, which is cherished in full knowledge, should be known as a disease which is hard to cure. It won't be easy for them to find a path of redemption. (117)

*rāmacandra kavirāja, sei saṅge mora kāja,
tāra saṅga vinā sab śūnya
yadi janma hoy punaḥ, tāra saṅga hoy yeno,
tabe hoy narottama dhanya (118)*

"With Rāmacandra Kavirāja I engage in hearing, chanting and remembering the sweet pastimes, forms and qualities of Śrī Hari. Without his association everything is void. If I must take birth again, then let it be in his company. Then Narottama will be blessed."

Separation from a friend –

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – Devotees' friendships are centered around the Lord. Such friendships are not temporary and mortal like the mundane friendships of this world. They are transcendental, eternal and true. Through the association of such a transcendental friend the relationship with the Lord is deeply realised, relished and nourished. Thus this is a real heart's friend. No suffering in this mundane world can match the intolerable pain which is felt when such a friend is lost. Śrīman Mahāprabhu inquired from Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya–

duḥkha madhye kon duḥkha hoy gurutara? and Śrīla Rāmānanda Rāya replied—'*kṛṣṇa bhakta viraha vinu duḥkha nāhi āra.*'

An example of such transcendental friendship we find in Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī. There was an extraordinary friendship between Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda and Śrīla Dāsa Gosvāmīpāda. From the latter's own descriptions we learn that he cultivated extraordinary devotion for Śrī Vṛndāvanēśvarī Śrī Rādhārāṇī by attaining the association and the mercy of Śrīla Rūpa—

*yad avadhi mama kācin mañjarī rūpa pūrvā vrajabhuvī bata netra dvandva dīptim cakāra
tadavadhi tava vṛndāraṇya rājñī prakāmaṁ caraṇa kamala lākṣā saṁdidṛkṣā mamābhūt*

(Vilāpa Kusumāñjali –14)

"O Queen of Vṛndāvana! Ever since some indescribable Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī opened my eyes by teaching me Your service, I have had a strong desire to see the lac that adorns Your lotus feet." Just as the wonderful relish of the Lord's sweetness and the flavour of His *prema* are attained in the company of a transcendental friend, similarly the scorching agony of his separation when that friend passes away, is completely intolerable. Agitated by feelings of separation from Śrī Rūpa, Śrīpāda Dāsa Gosvāmī writes about his heartache in the following verse—

*apūrva premābdheḥ parimala payaḥ phena nivahaiḥ sadā yo jīvātur yam iha kṛpayā siñcad atulam
idānīm durdaivāt pratipada vipad dāva balito nirālambaḥ so'yaṁ kam iha tam ṛte śaraṇam*

"Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, who is my very life, kindly showered me with an abundance of the fragrant foam on the ocean of *prema*. Now unfortunately he has passed away. Of whom but him can I, now helplessly burning in a forestfire of calamity, take shelter?"

When Śrī Gaurāṅga disappeared from this world, Raghunātha was so afflicted by feelings of separation that he came to Vraja to commit suicide by jumping from Govardhana Hill. However, by the grace of Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana he had the *darśana* of Śrī Vraja-dhāma, Girirāja Govardhana and Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa, Vraja's crownjewel. Thus his feelings of separation from Śrī Gaurāṅga were somewhat mitigated and he became absorbed in *bhajana* in the shelter of Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa. But when Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda also passed away everything became averse to him –

*śūnyāyate mahā goṣṭham girindro'jagarāyate
vyāghra tuṅḍāyate kuṇḍam jīvātu rahitasya me*

"Now that my very life support, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has disappeared, this great meadow of Vraja seems empty to me, Śrī Govardhana Hill appears like a coiling serpent to me and Rādhākuṇḍa appears like a tiger with widely spread open mouth to me." With greatly suffering heart, agitated by great feelings of separation, he said – *gaurāṅga candram iha rūpa yugam na paśyān hā vedanāḥ kati sahe sphuṭa re lalāṭa*: "Alas! How much agony must I tolerate when I cannot see Śrī Gaurāṅga-candra and Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana anymore? O forehead! Burst in two!"

It is known that Śrīla Narottama dās Ṭhākura had a similar transcendental friendship with Śrīla Rāmacandra Kavirāja. How severely Śrī Ṭhākura Mahāśaya's heart was burning in the fire of separation after he lost Śrī Rāmacandra Kavirāja, he indicates in this *tripadī* – '*rāmacandra kavirāja, sei saṅge mora kāja, tāra saṅga vinā sab sūnya*' "Without the association of Rāmacandra Kavirāja everything is void to me." Rāmacandra Kavirāja was the son of Śrī Cirañjīva Sena, an associate of Śrīman Mahāprabhu. He was the elder brother of *padakartā* Śrī Govinda Dās and the disciple of Śrī Śrīnivāsācārya Prabhu. He was a great scholar, a great poet and a great devotee. The speciality of such transcendental friendships is that by relishing *bhagavat kathā* with such a friend, the sweetness of Śrī Hari's forms, attributes and pastimes directly crystallise before the eyes. Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya indicates this with the words *tāra saṅge mora kāja*. Even in the material world the separation from a friend covers the heart with the darkness of sorrow and lamentation, but the separation from a transcendental friend illuminates the heart with the light of *prema* and pulls one towards the lotus feet of the Lord. Then there is nothing in the world that can comfort the separated friend, thus it is said: *tāra saṅga vinā sab sūnya*. Nothing in the world can fill up such a void. It will take the separated person directly to the kingdom of *līlā*, where he will be reunited with his friend in his *siddha svarūpa* and remain immersed in the relishable service of the Lord.

But Śrīla Ṭhākura is either very humble or he is naturally unsatiated in *bhakti*, thus he thinks that perhaps he may have to take another birth. If such a birth takes place, then he wants the association with a great *premika* and *rasika* like Rāmacandra Kavirāja - "*yadi janma hoy punah, tāra saṅga hoy jeno, tabe hoy narottama dhanya*". (118)

āpana bhajana kathā, nā kohibo yathā tathā,
ihāte hoibo sāvadhāna
nā koriho keho roṣa, nā loiho keho doṣa,
praṇamahu bhaktera caraṇa (119)

"I will take care not to reveal my *bhajana*-realisations to every Tom, Dick and Harry. May no one become angry or find fault in me because of writing this book. Let me offer my obeisances to the lotus feet of the devotees."

The secrets of experiences in *bhajana* –

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – Now Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya concludes this Prema Bhakti Candrikā by explaining how a devotee conceals his realisations in *bhajana*. The light of the moon of loving devotion must always be kept hidden within the heart, and by doing so the heart will be illuminated and cooled off, and the Cakora-bird-like life-air will be blessed with the relish of the sweet nectar of *prema*. The devotee should take care that he does not reveal his realisations in *bhajana* to every Tom, Dick and Harry. When it is necessary the practitioner will reveal them to Śrī Gurudeva and his own intimate *rasika* devotee-friends, but never to anyone else. It would harm his humility and would inevitably damage his *bhajana*. Prior to this Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has repeatedly warned the practitioners about this in verses like: '*rākho prema hṛdaye bhariyā*' ("Keep your love hidden in your heart"),

and 'gupate sādhibe siddhi' ("By secretly practising you attain perfection"). We can understand how important this point is because it is repeatedly mentioned.

Śrīmad Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has written in the end of his Bhakti Sandarbha (339)– *atra ca śrī guroḥ śrī bhagavato vā prasāda labdham sādhana sādhyagataṁ svīya sarvasva bhūtaṁ yat kim api rahasyaṁ tat tu na kasmaicit prakāśanīyam yathāha (Bhāg. 8.17.20) naitat parasmā ākhyeyaṁ pṛṣṭhayāpi kathañcana. sarvaṁ sampadyate devi deva guhyaṁ susaṁvṛtam* "Whatever confidential experiences are attained in connection with the practice and the goal given by the grace of Śrī Guru or Śrī Bhagavān, and that are one's very own treasure, should not be revealed to anyone. In Śrīmad Bhāgavata Śrī Viṣṇu tells Śrī Aditi-devī–'O devi! Whatever secrets I told you, should never be revealed to anyone, even if someone inquires after it! All secrets of the gods in the sky will yield fruit only when kept secret." *veda guhya kathā ei ayogyā kohite (C.C.)* – "It is improper to speak about these matters, that are secret even to the Vedas!"

After this the blessed author says: *na koriho keho roṣa, nā loio keho doṣa, praṇamahū bhaktera caraṇa* –"Let no one get angry, let no one find fault with me. I offer my obeisances unto the devotees' lotus feet". In this Prema Bhakti Candrikā the pure devotional *siddhānta* has been established and so many truest yet beneficial words have been uttered, which may not have been liked by everyone. For instance, worshippers of other gods may be unhappy when it is said '*anya devāśraya nāi*' ("do not seek shelter of other gods") or *nā pūjibo devī devā* ("I will not worship other gods and goddesses"), but these words have been spoken because such things jeopardise exclusive devotion. Statements like: "*karmī jñānī bhakti hīna, ihāke koriho bhin*" "I will stay away from non-devotees like fruitive workers and mental speculators", '*yogī nyāsī karmī jñānī, anya deva pūjaka dhyānī, iha loka dūre parihari*' "I will cast the association of mystic *yogīs*, *sannyāsīs*, fruitive workers, mental speculators and those who meditate on other gods, far away". '*jñāna kāṇḍa, karma kāṇḍa, kevali viṣera bhāṇḍa*' "The paths of mental speculation and fruitive works are all just reservoirs of poison", may well make *karmīs*, *jñānīs*, *sannyāsīs* and *yogīs* unhappy, but they have been spoken just to show that pure devotion, unmixed with *jñāna* and *karma*, is completely independent from these influences. Concluding Prema Bhakti Candrikā, Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya lets it be known that all statements in this holy book are following the guidelines of the Vedic literatures, Śrīmad Bhāgavata, which is the essence of all Vedānta, Nārada Pañcarātra and so on. Let no one find fault in this or become angry, rather let everyone who seeks the truth and one's own *svarūpa* become blessed by thus taking shelter of the path of pure devotion to Kṛṣṇa. Then the blessed author says: ***praṇamahū bhaktera caraṇa*** At the end he offers his obeisances to the lotus feet of the devotees who are like Cakora birds that drink the nectar of this moonlight of loving devotion (*prema bhakti candrikā*). When they drink the sweet nectar of Prema Bhakti Candrikā, the natural purpose of this publication will reach accomplishment – that is the purport. (119)

***śrī gaurāṅga prabhu more ye bolāna vāñī
tāhā vinā bhālo manda kichui nā jāni
lokanātha prabhupada hṛdaye vilāsa
prema bhakti candrikā kohe narottama dāsa (120)***

"Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu has made me speak these words. I myself cannot distinguish between good and bad at all. Thus Narottama dāsa speaks Prema Bhakti Candrikā, while the lotus feet of Lokanātha Gosvāmī shine in his heart."

Who is the actual author of this book?

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā – In this conclusion of Prema Bhakti Candrikā Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya introduces us to the actual author of the book – 'Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu has made me speak these words. I myself cannot distinguish between good and bad at all.' The worshipable author says: "The actual author of Prema Bhakti Candrikā is Śrī Gaurāṅga Prabhu. I am speaking whatever He makes me speak. I have no independence in this. Therefore this book Prema Bhakti Candrikā is not a purposely compiled book, using the distinction that normal authors make between good and bad, so that all the people will be satisfied and the book will become popular. Śrī Gaurāṅga sits on my tongue and, just like a machine, I say what He tells me to. Therefore, knowing that Śrī Gaurāṅga Prabhu is the actual author of the book, may the devotees relish its sweet flavours."

In the beginning of his *grantha* Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu (1.1.2) Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmī has written – *hṛdi yasya preranayā pravartito'ham varāka-rūpo'pi. tasya hareḥ padakamalaṁ vande caitanya devasya* "I offer my obeisances unto the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Deva, from Whom I have received inspiration within the heart to compose this book, although I am insignificant and wholly unqualified to define the grave truths on *bhakti rasa*."

While explaining the reason for his composing of Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta, Śrīmat Kṛṣṇa dās Kavirāja Gosvāmīpāda has written: *ei grantha lekhāya more madana mohana; āmāra likhana yeno śukera paṭhana. yei likhi, madana gopāla ye likhāy; kāṣṭhera puttālī jeno kuhake nācāy* (Ādi Ch.8) "Madana Mohana made me write this book, and I am writing like a dictated parrot. I am writing whatever Madana Gopāla makes me write and I am dancing to his strings like a wooden doll." Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda wrote his books on the instigation of Śrī Caitanya Deva, and Śrīla Kavirāja Gosvāmīpāda was instigated by Śrīman Madana Gopāla-deva Himself to write Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta. Similarly, Prema Bhakti Candrikā was revealed on the instigation of Śrī Gaurāṅga Prabhu. Thus we think that the *siddhāntas* in the books of Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmī, who appeared to establish Śrī Caitanya's heart's wish on this earth, and the books of all the other Gosvāmīs, that contain the essence of Śrīmad Bhāgavata, are available in this Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta and Prema Bhakti Candrikā.

Finally the blessed author remembers the lotus feet of his Śrī Guru in the conclusion of this book, saying: *lokanātha prabhupada hṛdaye vilāsa; prema bhakti candrikā kohe narottama dāsa* – "Thus Narottama dāsa, in whose heart the lotus feet of Śrī Lokanātha Gosvāmī dwell, speaks this Prema Bhakti Candrikā". Just as he opened the book by offering his obeisances to the lotus feet of his Guru, he also closes the book by offering his obeisances to the lotus feet of his Guru. The jewels of *prema bhakti* attained by the grace of Śrī Gaurāṅga Prabhu were carefully kept in the box of Śrī Guru's grace by Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya. Just as there are strong lids above and below a box to store the jewels in, similarly the jewels of *prema bhakti* are kept in this book, which is like a sturdy box to which Śrī Guru's grace is the key. Resorting to the grace of the Guru the *bhakta sādḥaka* puts on the necklace of these jewels

of *prema* and is thus blessed. *jaya śrī śrī guru gaurāṅga deva! śrī śrī rādhā mādharma!! jaya śrī śrī gaura bhakta vṛnda!!!* (120)

Thus ends the Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā-commentary on Śrī Śrī Prema Bhakti Candrikā by Rādhākuṇḍa Mahānta Paṇḍita Śrī Ananta Dās Bābājī Mahārāja.

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Bengali texts are partially spelled phonetically.

Prema Bhakti Candrikā verse index
on Roman alphabetical order

nameverse number–page number

ābharaṇa maṇimoy	47–130
ahaṅkāra abhimāna.....	111–301
ajñāna timirāndhasya	1–9
ajñāna vimugdha yoto	84–233
āpana bhajana kothā	119–306
āpani pālābe saba.....	25–82
āna kothā āna vyathā.....	40–113
āna kothā nā bolibo.....	101–278
anya abhilāṣa chāḍi	13–50
anyathā svatantra kāma	23–78
anya vrata anya dāna	41–116
anyera paraśa yena.....	73–204
āpana bhajana patha	28–88

āpani pālābe sab	25–82
āra sab parihari	85–236
asat kriyā kuṭi nāṭī	27–86
asat saṅgati sadā	15–57
bhāgavata śāstra marma	11–41
cakṣu dāna dilo ye	5–24
daśanete tṛṇa dhari	44–123
dehe boise ripugaṇa	20–71
dehe nā koriho āsthā	93–258
devaloka, piṭṛ-loka	30–92
durllabha bhajana heno	91–253
e sab anugā hoiyā	53–144
e saṁsāra bāṭuyāre	116–311
gaurahari avatari	114–307
govinda gokula candra	103–282
govinda śarīra satya	66–184
gupate sādhibe siddhi	115–309
guru mukha padma vākya	4–21
hema gaurī tanu rāi	77–216
hṛṣīke govinda sevā	19–67
iṣat madhura smita	64–175
iśvara tattva joto	102–280
jagat vyāpaka hari	97–266
jala vinu yeno mīna	80–226
jalada sundara kānti	62–169
jaya jaya rādhā nāma	108–295
jaya sanātana rūpa	8–32
jīvane maraṇe gati	42–118
jñāna kāṇḍa karma kāṇḍa	94–260
jñāna karma kore loka	96–264
kāma krodha lobha moha	21–73
kāme mora hata cita	37–108
kanaka ketakī rāi	45–125
karaye locana pāna	90–251
karmī jñānī michā bhakta	74–206
krodha vā nā kore kibā	24–80
kṛṣṇa bhakta aṅga heri	18–65
kṛṣṇa nāma gāne bhāi	110–299
kṛṣṇa sevā kāmārpaṇa	22–75
kṛṣṇaṁ smaran janaṁ cāsya	59–160
līlā rasa sadā gāna	100–274
lubadha bhramara yeno	81–228

madhye madhye āche duṣṭa.....	83–233
mahājanera jei patha.....	14–54
manera smarāṇa prāṇa.....	61–166
mo sama patita nāi.....	38–110
mṛgamada candana.....	63–172
nā koriho asat ceṣṭā.....	26–84
narottama boḍo duḥkhī.....	39–111
narottama dāsa kohe.....	86–238
narottama dāse koy.....	57–156
navadvīpe avatāra.....	113–305
nūpura marāla dhvani.....	65–178
parama nāgara kṛṣṇa.....	98–269
pāpa nā koriho mana.....	71–199
pāpa puṇyamoya deha.....	69–194
patita pāvana nāma.....	35–104
prārthanā koribo sadā.....	75–209
prema bhakti rīti yoto.....	9–37
prema bhakti sudhānidhi.....	72–202
prema bhakti tattva ei.....	104–285
pṭhak āvāsa yoga.....	31–94
rādhā-kṛṣṇa duhu prema.....	88–243
rādhā-kṛṣṇa koro dhyāna.....	79–222
rādhā-kṛṣṇa nāhi rati.....	95–262
rādhā-kṛṣṇa sevana.....	76–213
rādhikā caraṇa reṇu.....	107–292
rādhikā preyasī varā.....	89–247
rādhikāra sakhī yoto.....	49–134
rāgera bhajana patha.....	48–131
rājāra je rājyā pāṭa.....	70–197
rāmacandra kavirāja.....	118–314
sadā sevā abhilāṣa.....	32–97
sādhane ye dhana cāi.....	56–153
sādhu śāstra guru vākya.....	12–49
sakhīgaṇa cāri pāṣe.....	78–220
sakhīnām saṅginī rūpam.....	58–159
sama snehā viṣama snehā.....	51–138
sārthaka bhajana patha.....	105–287
śītala kiraṇa kara.....	67–188
śrī caitanya mano'bhīṣṭam.....	2–14
śrī gaurāṅga prabhu more ye bolāna vāṇī.....	120–317
śrī guru bhakata jana.....	99–271
śrī guru caraṇa padma.....	3–18

śrī guru karuṇā sindhu	6-27
śrī kṛṣṇa caitanya deva.....	112-302
śrī mukha sundara vara	46-128
śrī-nāthe janakī nāthe.....	29-90
śrī rūpa mañjarī sāra	52-140
strī putra bāndhava joto	117-313
tāra bhakta saṅga sadā.....	109-298
tīrtha yātrā pariśrama.....	17-62
tumi to doyāra sindhu	33-99
tumi to parama devā	36-106
tuṅgavidyā indurekhā.....	50-134
vacanera agocara	87-240
vaiṣṇava caraṇa reṇu.....	7-29
viṣaya garalamaya.....	82-230
viṣaya vipatti jāno.....	106-289
viṣaya viṣama gati.....	92-256
vrajapura vanitāra	68-191
vṛndāvane dui jana.....	54-147
yāvat janama mora	34-102
yogī nyāsī karmī jñānī.....	16-59
yugala caraṇa sevā	43-121
yugala caraṇa sevi	55-151
yugala caraṇe prīti	60-162
yugala kiśora prema	10-39