

Sri Radha - the Absolute Power

(A Scientific Study of Sri Râdhâ)

Sri Râdhâ is the suprememost potency

In 'A Scientific Study of God' we have learnt about the internal potency of Sri Bhagavân. Hlâdini shakti or Blissful potency is the greatest internal potency. Srimati Râdhârâni is Hlâdini Shakti personified. Sri Krishna is Swayam Bhagavân; hence He is absolutely powerful. Srimati Râdhârâni is the crest-jewel of all His beloveds – therefore She is the absolute Shakti. She is the greatest and the source of all shaktis. She is the whole while all other shaktis are Her parts. Sri Nârad tells Srimati Râdhârâni in the Pâtâl-khanda of Sri Padma-Purân –

"O Devi, You are the source of all that is specially pure and good. You are the source of the hlâdini, sandhini and samvit potencies and You are the Supreme Power and Supreme Knowledge. You give supreme bliss to Sri Bhagavân and even Brahmâ and Rudra (Shiva) cannot understand You. Your opulence is remarkable in every aspect. The best of yogis cannot reach You with their meditation. I feel all the divine shaktis are Your parts as You control various shaktis such as ichchâ-shakti (will power), gyân-shakti (the power of knowledge) and kriyâ-shakti (the power of action). Swayam Bhagavân Sri Krishna, Who is the Supreme Personality, has countless majesty and They are also Your parts."

Srimati Râdhârâni is the embodiment of Sri Krishna's swarup shakti. She has each and every excellent quality and is the presiding Deity for all opulence. Srimat Jiva Goswâmpâd has written in Priti-sandarbhâ (120th chapter) –

"Sri Bhagavân's swarup shakti has countless wonderful properties, for example - excellent talents, wealth etc. This swarup shakti exists in two forms –

1. it is unmanifest and exists in Sri Bhagavân only as a 'power'.
2. it is manifest and expressed in the forms of Laxmis. The swarup shakti that is manifest and appears in the personal form is the source of all excellences and opulence. Srimati Râdhârâni is the root of all the Kamalâs¹.

¹ Kamalâ is another name of Laxmi.

"Srimati Râdhârâni is Sri Bhagavân's primeval potency; She is eternal, without any material quality and other shaktis such as Laxmi and Durgâ are Her parts." – (Gopâl-Tâpani-Shruti)

In fact, Sri Krishna is the topmost Tattva and at the same time He is the Causes of all causes. Srimati Râdhârâni too is the supreme shakti and is the Cause of all causes. Sri Gopâl-Tâpani-Shruti has called Her the 'primeval potency' because She is the cause of all causes. Sri Nârad-pancharâtra and Goutamiya-tantra have defined Her as 'the supreme shakti' because She is eternal and the topmost.

"laxmi Saraswati durgâ sâvitri râdhikâ parâ,
bhaktyâ namanti yat shashwat tam namâmparât-param."

Meaning - "I forever pay obeisance to Sri Krishna Who is more divine than the divine, and Whom Laxmi, Saraswati, Durgâ, Sâvitri and the 'parâ-shakti' or supreme shakti Sri Râdhâ worship with devotion."

– (Nârad-Pancharâtra)

It is evident from this verse that although Laxmi, Durgâ etc. are divine shaktis, only Srimati Râdhârâni is 'parâ'. What does 'parâ' mean?

"parânte shreshtha-vâchakâh"

Meaning - "When we use the word 'parâ' at the end, it indicates the superlative (greatest)".

It is easy to undersand from this that Srimati Râdhârâni is the supreme. Sri Nârad-Pancharâtra has used 'parâ' many times in connection with Srimati Râdhârâni. Example -

"rasikâ rasikânandâ swayam râseseshwari parâ".

Meaning - "Srimati Râdhârâni is the connoisseur of ras, She takes delight in the devotees of ras; She Herself is the controller of the Râs-dance and is the greatest of all."

"devi krishnamayee proktâ râdhikâ para-devatâ,
sarva-laxmimayi sarva-kântih sammohini para."

The author of Sri Chaitanya-Charitâmrita has explained this verse very beautifully –

"Srimati Râdhârâni is resplendent and supremely beautiful. She is like the altar of Sri Krishna-worship and the playground for His love-sports. She is Krishnamayee, meaning, She is full of Sri Krishna inside and outside. Sri Krishna appears wherever She casts Her gaze. Sri Krishna is love and ras personified and His shakti is non-different from Him. She worships Sri Krishna by fulfilling all His desires; hence the Purâns call Her 'Râdhikâ' (the worshipper). Therefore She is all-revered and is the

supreme deity. She is the all-protector and is the Mother of all the universes.

She is the source of all the Laxmis. The Laxmis are the six majesty of Sri Krishna. Srimati Râdhârâni is their source – the greatest of all shaktis. The entire beauty and splendour reside in Her. She dispenses beauty to all the Laxmis. Here 'splendour' may also mean all the desires of Sri Krishna – this indicates that all His desires reside in Srimati Râdhârâni. Râdhikâ fulfils His wishes. This is the meaning of 'Sri Râdhâ is all-resplendent'. Sri Krishna mesmerizes everybody and Srimati Râdhârâni holds Sri Krishna spellbound. Therefore we conclude that She is the Supreme Owner¹. – (C.C.)

When the great sage Parâshar mentioned 'parâ-shakti' (the Great Power), he said –

"The Great Power is always beyond description; it is extremely far from our mental speculation and it is a subject for only self-realized param-hamsas - I pray to That supreme Ishwari."

Although some refer that supreme shakti as Laxmi and some call her as 'Durgâ', she is Sri Râdhâ and resides as the absolute shakti in Vrindâvan. Sri Râdhâ is the height of the supreme shakti.

"Srimati Râdhârâni is the Supreme Power while Sri Krishna is the Supreme Personality. The scriptures prove that the two are non-different. Just as musk and its fragrance are inseparable, and so are fire and its burning property, similarly Râdhâ and Krishna are one. They assume two forms simply to relish ras." – (C.C.)

Just as the moon is inseparable from its moonlight and the milk is non-different from its whiteness, Râdhâ and Krishna are one. Although They are inseparable, Srimati Râdhârâni is always present besides Sri Krishna in the playground of Leelâ as the 'crest-jewel of all His beloveds'. In love She is Krishnamayee, in ras She is Gourângi (brilliant), in opulence She is all-Laxmimayee², in sweetness She is the foremost Gopikâ. Srila Shukamuni has realized Her immense importance over all other Gopikâs while describing the Râs-leelâ in Srimad-Bhâgavatam. He has placed Her on the highest pedestal amidst hundreds of crores of Gopis during the Râs-leelâ.

anayârâdhito nunam bhagavân harireeshwarah,
yanno vihâya govindah prito yâmanayadrahah.

- (S.B.10.30.24.)

Explanation – When Sri Krishna disappeared with Srimati Râdhârâni from amidst the Râs-dance, the Vrajadevis went mad with viraha. They

¹ Because She owns even Sri Krishna.

² The aggregate of all the Laxmis

started searching for Him. While searching, they first saw His footprints and when they started following those steps, they noticed Srimati Râdhârâni's footprints on the left side of His footprints. Then they realized that Srimati Râdhârâni is the most blessed of them all. A gopi said – "Dear sakhis, look, these are Râdhâ's footsteps. Sri Bhagavân destroys all miseries and fulfils the devotee's heartfelt desire; and Sri Râdhâ has subjugated Him by Her adoration. As a result Sri Govinda has forsaken us in this dead night in the forest and has taken Her in a secluded place unknown to us. Her good fortune is incomparable."

In Sri Chaitanya-Charitâmrita (8th chapter, Madhya Leelâ), Râmânanda Roy established Sri Râdhâ's prem as the crest-jewel of all achievable goals. He quoted this verse from Srimad-Bhâgavatam to prove that Sri Râdhâ is more important than all other Gopikâs. Then Sriman-Mahâprabhu objected to it saying –

"The Lord said – tell me more. I am enjoying your talk very much. It seems as if a wonderful river of amritam is flowing from your lips. However I do not approve of Krishna taking Râdhâ away stealthily to a secluded place. It appears He is afraid of the other Gopis. This does not show deep love at all. Had Krishna forsaken the Gopis outright for Radha's sake, then I would have accepted that He has deep anurâg for Her." – (C.C.)

Sri Krishna is entirely subordinate to love. His subjugation is proportional to the type and amount of love. When He stole Srimati Râdhârâni away from the Gopis, then we feel as if He was afraid to upset them. This means He does not love Srimati Râdhârâni openly. Had He taken Her right in front of the Gopis, then we would have appreciated His love for Her. This is why Lord Goursundar is objecting to Sri Govinda's behaviour.

Sri Râdhâ expressed mân during the Great Râs while the Gopis were proud of their good fortune. Sri Krishna wanted to alleviate Her mân and simultaneously crush the pride of the other Gopis. Therefore He disappeared. Had He taken Sri Râdhâ away in front of the Gopis, Her mân would have been assuaged. However, the other Gopis who were floating in the ocean of bhâv would have felt jealous. The Râs-dance is a sport of great ras; it has to be free from negative waves. All the participants should immerse in a great ocean of absolutely pure prem-bhâv. Therefore Sri Krishna disappeared with Srimati Râdhârâni without anyone's knowledge and not because He feared the Gopis. This is evident from Sri Jaydev's description of the vernal Râs, where we see that He has openly abandoned the Gopis in Srimati Râdhârâni's favour. Râmânanda Roy is an expert connoisseur of ras. He has logically overruled Sriman-Mahâprabhu's objection by citing evidence from Poet Jaydev's Râs. He said –

"Then please hear the glory of love. Sri Râdhâ's prem has no parallel in three worlds. Sri Krishna deserted the Râs-dance of the Gopis and wandered in the forest of Vrindâvan lamenting for Râdhâ.

Sri Geet-Govinda says (3.1.2) –

kamsarirapi samsâra-vâsanâ-baddha-shrinkhalâm,
râdhâ-mâdhâya hridaye tatyâja vraja-sundari.

itastatastâm-anusritya râdhikâm-ananga-bân-brana-khinâ-mânansah,
kritânu-tâpah sa kalinda-nandini tatânta-kunje vishasâda mâdhavah.

When we analyse these two verses we stumble across an enormous mine of Amritam. Sri Krishna was indulging the Râs-dalliance with hundreds of crores of Gopis, while He remained with Râdhâ in one form. When Râdhâ saw that He is expressing equal love for everyone, She felt He was treating Her like an ordinary gopi, and Her love, which is naturally crooked became all the more so. She was angry and deserted the Râs-floor in a huff. When Sri Hari did not see Her, He was agitated. The Râs-leelâ is Sri Krishna's biggest desire and Râdhikâ is the main link in Râs-leelâ. He did not enjoy the Râs-dance in Her absence. So He left the group and went in search of Râdhâ. He wandered here and there, but could not see Her. Struck by the arrow of passionate love, He sat and lamented. Hundreds of crores of Gopis could not satisfy Him – from this we can easily guess Sri Râdhikâ's excellences." – (C.C)

Srimati Râdhârâni's excellences

Forget the living being, even Sri Bhagavân cannot count Srimati Râdhârâni's excellences. All Her good qualities arise from Mahâbhâv and hence they entirely subjugate Sri Bhagavân. If a particular quality does not spring out of love, howmuchevery good it may be, Sri Krishna could not care less. Bhagavân Sri Krishna is the absolute and intense form of sat, chit and ânanda. However Sri Râdhâ is more talented than He is. As a result Sri Krishna is so happy with Her. Srila Krishnadâs Kavirâj Goswâmi has written –

"Sri Krishna thinks in His mind - the wise call me absolute bliss, and absolute ras. All universes get joy from me. Is there anyone who can make me happy? Only someone who is hundreds of times more qualified than me can cause me pleasure. However it is impossible to find one who is more worthy than me. I realize only Râdhâ to be more competent than me. My beauty can defeat countless Love-gods, none can equal or surpass my sweetness and all universes are delighted to behold my handsomeness. Yet my eyes are soothed when they gaze at Sri Râdhâ. The song of my flute attracts the three worlds, yet Sri Râdhâ's speech is so sweet that it captivates my ears. Although the world is aromatic due to my fragrance, the sweet smell of Sri Râdhâ's body steals my heart and soul. Despite the fact that I am

**The effect of Sri
Râdhâ's excellences on
Sri Krishna**

the fountainhead of all the ras present in this world, the nectarine ras of Sri Râdhâ's lips enthrall me. Albeit, my touch is as cooling as innumerable moons, Râdhikâ's sweet touch soothes even me. Thus I am the cause of all happiness in the world, yet I continue to live only because of Râdhikâ's beauty and excellences." - (C.C)

Sri Râdhâ has innumerable qualities just like Sri Krishna; nevertheless Srimat Rupa Goswâmpâd has cited twenty-five special qualities that singularly mesmerize Sri Krishna.

"Sri Râdhikâ is –

- (1) Sweet – this means, in every situation Her expressions, movements and features are pleasurable.
- (2) eternally adolescent
- (3) Her side-long glances are very much restless
- (4) bright smile
- (5) She has beautiful symbols of fortune such as barley, discus etc. on Her palms and soles.
- (6) She maddens Mâdhav with the sweet aroma of Her body.
- (7) She is the topmost expert in singing
- (8) Her speech is highly attractive.
- (9) well versed in the art of witty speech
- (10) humble
- (11) compassionate
- (12) expert in various arts
- (13) extremely clever
- (14) bashful
- (15) extremely well mannered
- (16) patient
- (17) serious
- (18) charming expressions of love-making
- (19) she is immensely thirsty for Sri Krishna since She is at the height of Mahâbhâv
- (20) all the residents of Gokul love Her
- (21) all universe is resounding with Her fame
- (22) She is a pet of the elders
- (23) She is completely subjugated by the love of Her sakhis
- (24) the chief beloved of Sri Krishna
- (25) Sri Krishna is always in Her control

Sri Râdhâ is a treasurehouse of love. What to speak of ordinary beings, even the consorts of other divinities wish they had Srimati Râdhârâni's qualities.

"Srimati Râdhârâni is the personification of Sri Krishna's priceless especially pure love. She is full of exquisite qualities. Even Satyabhâmâ desires to have a good fortune like Her and the fair sex of Vraja learn the art of love-sports from her. The exalted devis such as Laxmi and Parvati wish they were beautiful like Srimati Râdhârâni. Arundhati who is famous for her chastity craves to be chaste like Her. When Krishna

Himself cannot conceive all Her excellences, how can this tiny worthless creature count them?" - (C.C)

Srimati Râdhârâni is the aggregate of all Laxmis and She is the proprietress of infinite majesty. Yet these opulences are immersed in the fathomless ocean of sweetness, hence Srimati Râdhârâni does not express a single drop of majesty – She is so very sweet! Therefore the mahâjans have only described Her sweetness. In fact sweetness is to be relished, we should feel it in the heart – it is beyond bhâv, language and metre. We cannot realize Srimati Râdhârâni's sweetness without performing the sâdhanâ of prem. Although the wise say we should meditate on the immaculate lotus-like radiance of Sri Râdhâ, 'immaculate lotus-like radiance' cannot give any clue of Her beauty. The lotus and the moon are material objects. They are just transformations of water and light, while Sri Râdhâ is made of Mahabhâv.

"Srimati Râdhârâni is prem personified and She is absorbed in prem – this is the reason why She is crowned as 'the greatest of Sri Krishna's beloveds'." – (C.C)

Dear devotees, please relish how the mahâjans have described That embodiment of prem –

"Srimati Râdhârâni is the wish-fulfilling gem of Mahâbhâv. Loving sakhis such as Lalitâ are Her expansions. She sports Sri Krishna's love for Her like a perfumed anointment on Her body. This makes Her all the more fragrant and brilliant.

Her first bath is with the nectarine shower of compassion; the next bath comprises of nectarine youth; the last bath is with nectarine lāvanya. She covers Herself with blue silk skirt (since Sri Krishna is blue) and wears a red upper garment which is made of deep love (anurâg) for Sri Krishna. Her bordice that covers Her bosom is made of pronoy and mân.

Then She is anointed with three pastes - the saffron of beauty, chandan of love and the camphor of sweet smile and radiance. She has beautiful designs on Her body with Sri Krishna's brilliant (erotic) ras which is like intoxicating musk. Her silken garment consists of hidden mân, vâmya, expressions of dhammila and the qualities such as dhira-adhirâ.

Her lips are sparkling with the rosyness of the tâmbul of râg, while Her eyes are dark with the kohl of crooked prem. Srimati Râdhârâni is decorated with all these bhâvs and Her jewellery consists of twenty types of bhâavs starting with kila-kinchit. The flower garlands She dons on all parts of Her body are none other than Her excellent qualities. The dot that dazzles on Her fair forehead is made of good fortune nad Her heart overflows with the liquid gem called 'prem-vaichitti'¹.

¹ Prem-vaichitti is a type of bhâv. Please see glossary.

She rests Her hand on the shoulder of an adolescent sakhi and young maidens who are absorbed in Sri Krishnaleelâ surround Her.

She is seated on the high pedestal of Her perfumed self and is forever absorbed in Her loving pastimes with Sri Krishna. Her ear-rings const of Sri Krishna's Holy Names and excellences while all She speaks are Sri Krishna's Holy Names and excellences. She makes Sri Krishna drink of the nectarine ras of His magnificent qualities and constantly fulfils His every desire - (C.C.)

My dear emotional readers! This is the true description of the Embodiment of eternal love! We have to feel Mahâbhâv with bhâv – there is no other way. Mahâbhâv is the greatest cause of Sri Krishna's happiness. This is why our Goswâmis have described Sri Râdhâ as 'the One Who pleases Sri Krishna' and then they have cited Her sweet qualities. We see in the 'Vishâkhâ-ânandad Stotra' (An ode that gives joy to Vishâkhâ sakhi) composed by Srila Raghunâth das Goswâmi –

"Sri Râdhâ is the sunray that makes Sri Govinda's lotus-like love bloom¹. She is the moonbeam that enables Sri Krishna's kumud-like heart blossom². She is the great Mânas Sarovar in which Sri Krishna's swan-like mind always swims happily and She is the shower of the fresh rain clouds that breathe new life into the châtak-like Shyâmsundar³. While Sri Krishna is like the Tamâl tree that blows serene breeze, She is like the golden creeper embracing Him. She is the static lightning that adorns the fresh cloud-like Govinda. In the summer She is like the extremely cool combination of camphor, chandan and moonlight smeared all over Govinda. In winter Sri Râdhâ is the attractive golden yellow woollen dress for Shyâm. In the spring She is the vernal beauty while Sri Krishna is like a tree. She makes Him exuberant just like the spring season makes a tree burst into greenery. In monsoon He is Shyâm (dark blue) clouds while She is the Manju-mallâr râg⁴ that enthuses Him with erotic ras. In the Sharad season, She is the Râs-beauty Who openly subjugates Sri Krishna–the-Râs-rasik with the help of Her sakhis, and love-sports with Him. The Autumn finds Her as Victory personified as She verily defeats Vrajarâj-nandan Sri Krishna Who is in the look out for a duel in the battle of love."

To sum up, Sri Râdhâ is all-in-all of the divine pastimes of Sri Krishna. Shyâmsundar is like the dark tamâl tree and Sri Râdhâ is like the golden creeper nestling close to His loving bosom, held tightly by His passionate embrace. The sakhi-manjaris are like the newly sprouting leaves on this creeper-like Sri Râdhâ and they are all swinging together in sweet loving ras.

¹ The lotus blooms in sunlight

² The kumud blossoms in moonlight

³ The châtak is fabled to drink only rain water directly from the clouds.

⁴ A râg is a particular combination of notes; Manju-mallâr is a type of râg that forces the clouds to shower rain.

If we, as the sâdhaks of ras are not able to see this scene, then the major part of our devotional practice in the mood of Vraja has gone waste.

Worshiping in Vraja-ras is in vain if we do not surrender to Sri Râdhâ

We have only one aim when we worship Vraja-ras – and that is to relish Sri Krishna’s sweetness, which is like a colossal upsurging ocean. We are tiny living beings. Even if we reach the stage of prem, howmuch can we relish with our miniscule love? Hardly a drop. If some tremendously powerful person can relish the entire sweetness of the almighty Sri Krishna with Her all-powerful prem, and mercifully She lets us also enjoy the entire delicious sweetness that She has relished, then it will be very nice for us. Then we will indeed feel blessed and our worship of Vraja-ras will be completely successful in all respects. However, to gain this bounty we shall have to surrender unto Her lotus-feet. But first let us find out who is this person? Sri Krishna says in Sri Chaitanya-Charitâmrita –

“My sweetness is wonderful, infinite and absolute. Nobody in the three worlds can conceive it. Râdhikâ alone completely relishes this nectarine sweetness due to Her prem.” – (C.C.)

All the sâdhaks who take the shelter of Srimati Râdhârâni in the mood of sakhi-manjaris – She enables them to relish the entire Sri Krishna-mâdhuri, since She is a fathomless ocean of compassion. Sri Chaitanya-Charitâmrita throws light on this –

“Srimati Râdhârâni is the wish-fulfilling creeper of Sri Krishna-prem, while the sakhis are its leaves and flowers. If we water the creeper with Sri Krishna’s nectarine talks, then the leaves and blossoms feel more joyous than the creeper itself.” – (C.C.)

Srimati Râdhârâni is the wish-fulfilling creeper of Sri Krishna-prem¹. When a creeper absorbs water, it transmits the nourishment to all its branches, leaves and inflorescence; similarly Sri Râdhâ is absorbed in the nectarine divine pastimes of Sri Krishna and She gives the entire relish to Her sakhi-manjaris. Therefore the mahâjans say that we can hardly appreciate Sri Krishna’s sweetness without surrendering unto Srimati Râdhârâni.

“râdhâ-dâsyam-apâsya yah prayatate govinda-sangâshayâ
so'yam purna-sudhâ-rucheh parichayam rākâm vinâ kânkshati.

¹ She grants our desire for Sri Krishna-prem

kincha shyâma-rati-pravâha-lahari-beejan na ye tâm vidu-
ste prâpyâpi marmita-ambudhim-aho bindum param prâpnuyuh."

Meaning - "Whoever rejects Sri Râdhâ's service and tries to gain Sri Krishna's association, wishes to enjoy a full moon without it being a full moon night. Those who do not know Sri Râdhâ – alas! – in spite of getting an enormous ocean of amritam they are able to savor hardly a drop!"

Srimati Râdhârâni is the original blissful potency. She is the fountainhead of Sri Krishna-prem. We can relish maximum Sri Krishna-mâdhuri in Her shelter. The devotees who are not so blessed as to worship and serve Sri Krishna under Srimati Râdhârâni's subservience, they are indeed unfortunate – if they serve Sri Krishna alone and even though they may get some relish, it is very little. Therefore Sripâd Raghunâth dâs Goswâmicharan had resolved to completely reject their association. He has said –

"The sages such as Sri Nârad and the Nigam scriptures forever glorify Her and She is Sri Krishna's Chief Beloved. Whosoever disregards Her and serves Govinda alone – he is a cheat and arrogant – I do not wish to be in his defiling presence even for a moment – this is my pledge."

The scriptures say –

"binâ râdhâ-prasâdena krishna-prâptir-na jâyate"

Meaning - "It is impossible to attain Sri Krishna without Srimati Râdhârâni's mercy."

Lord Shiva has told Devi Durgâ in Sammohan-Tantra –

"Who rejects Sri Râdhâ and worships Shyâmsundar, takes His Holy Name or meditates on Him, will verily fall down."

This is the result of differentiating between Sri Krishna and Sri Râdhâ. She is His eternal consort. Rik Parishishta says –

"radhayâ mâdhavo devo mâdhavenaiva râdhikâ
janeshwâvirbhrâjante"

Meaning - "Radha with Mâdhav and Mâdhav with Râdhâ resides eternally in this world."

Srimat Jiva Goswâmipâd has uttered in pain –

If a king does not serve Sri Hari he is a spear in my heart;
one who spends money, yet does not offer to Sri Hari is a

spear in my heart; who is a poet, yet does not extol the beauty, excellence and pastimes of the Lord is a spear in my heart; who is talented, yet does not surrender to Sri Hari, is a spear in my heart; whose heart is pure, yet does not serve Sri Krishna is a spear in my heart, and who worships Sri Krishna, but does not serve under the subservience of Vrajaramâ¹ Sri Râdhâ is a spear in my heart – these seven spears are smiting my heart and are excruciatingly agonizing.

Srila Narottam dâs Thâkur Mahâshai has regretted the misfortune of those who are averse to serving Sri Râdhâ –

“All glory to the Holy Name of Sri Râdhâ, Who resides in Vrindâvan and Who is the treasurehouse of Sri Krishna’s blissful love-sports. The hymns that extol Her excellences are so sweet – yet my ears are disinclined to hear them – alas! I am so unfortunate!

Whoever always associates with Her devotees and absorbs in the loving discussions about Her ras-ful divine pastimes gains the association of Ghanashyâm Sri Krishna. Whoever is indisposed to such conversation will never accomplish the highest goal of human life – I loathe hearing his name even.” – (P.B.C.)

It is possible for us to know the very deep confidential mellows of the divine pastimes of Sri Sri Râdhâ-Mâdhav only when we associate with the devotees who are surrendered unto the lotus feet of Sri Sri Râdhâ-Mâdhav. Srila Raghunâth dâs Goswâmi has written in his Swa-sankalpa-prakâsh Stotra (= A hymn to declare my resolution) –

“Whoever has not served the holy, fragrant and compassionate dust of the lotus feet of Srimati Râdhârâni, who has not taken the shelter of Sri Vrindâvan that is decorated with Her beautiful footprints, who has not associated with the rasik devotees whose heart is extremely thirsty for the confidential sevâ of Srimati Râdhârâni - he can never ever immerse in Shyâmsundar Who is the ‘ocean of ras’ personified.”

Sri Râdhâ is Vrindâvan-mâdhuri personified

Rukmini dwârâvatyantû râdhâ vrindâvane vane

¹ The Lady of Vrajadhâm

The supreme Truth has two aspects – shakti (potency) and shaktimân (potent). Sri Krishna is Shaktimân while Sri Râdhâ is Shakti. The Supreme Being is intense bliss. His attribute is joy. Similarly 'shakti' is the descriptive term and it describes 'Shaktimân'. When Shakti and Shaktimân sport with one another – we call this opulence as 'Leelâ'.

Shakti is of three types –

- Swarup-shakti
- Jiva-shakti
- Mâyâ-shakti

Likewise Leelâ too is of three types –

- Nitya-leelâ (eternal divine pastimes) – these constitute Sri Bhagavân's pastimes with His swarup-shakti. These pastimes are countless, infinitely variegated, always exultant and supremely ras-ful.
- Samsâr-leelâ (pastimes in the material world) – Sri Bhagavân performs these leelâs with the living entity.
- Srishti-leelâ (the pastime of creation) – He performs these pastimes with Mâyâ-shakti.

We can further classify the Nitya-leelâs into two –

1. Unmanifest (aprakat leelâ) – Sri Bhagavân's leelâs are flowing continuously since time infinite in the transcendental world. It is an eternal, conscious and blissful abode. It is topmost and beyond material conception. This is the 'unmanifest leelâ'. These pastimes are the source of all other leelâs. When Leelâmai Sri Bhagavân wishes to reveal His unmanifest leelâ to everybody, He expresses these divine pastimes in the material world – we call this 'Manifest or prakat leelâ'.
2. Manifest (prakat leelâ) – These pastimes are manifest in the material world. Sometimes they are more wonderful and contain more ras than the unmanifest leelâs.

In both manifest and unmanifest leelâs, Sri Bhagavân mainly sports with His swarup shakti. Although swarup shakti comprises of sandhini, samvit and hlâdini, the leelâs that He performs with Hlâdini shakti are the most wonderful.

What is Hlâdini shakti?

“yayâ hlâdayate hlâdayati cha sâ hlâdini”

Meaning - "Although the supreme Being is bliss personified, He relishes supremely blissful ras and also gives its taste to His devotees; He does this by using a certain Shakti and this is called Hlâdini shakti."

"Hlâdini shakti enables Sri Krishna to relish bliss and He makes His devotees enjoy the same by using Hlâdini shakti." – (C.C)

The Supreme Being is intense bliss and Hlâdini exists as potency in Him¹, while She is also present eternally in Bhakti-tattva. (Since Bhakti results in joy and Hlâdini means joy). However she is also present in a personal form to serve That Supreme Being Who is Shringâr-rasa-râj (the King of Erotic Ras). Hence she exists outside the Swarup shakti as well. Now She becomes famous as 'Bhagavad-priyâ' or 'Beloved of Sri Bhagavân'. There are many such beloveds. They reside in Golok, Vaikuntha etc. we can classify these beloveds into three types –

1. Parama-sweeyâ – eg. The Laxmis of Vaikunthas
2. Swakiyâ – eg. Sitâ in Ayodhyâ, Rukmini, satyabhâmâ and the other queens in Dwâarakâ
3. Parakiyâ – eg. The Gopikâs in Vrindâvan

We find that sweet ras is the most exultant in prakiyâ bhâv. Sri Chaitanya-Charitâmrita says – "Ras is maximum in Parakiyâ bhâv and it does not exist anywhere other than in Vrajadhâm."

– (C.C.)

"The love affair in which the lover and the beloved faces numerous obstacles in meeting one another, their love is hidden, and they find it extremely difficult to get each other - that love is the most erotic and the topmost". – (U.N.)

As a result the beloveds in Parakiyâ bhâv (the Gopis) are famous as 'samarthâ nâyikâ' or 'self-independent beloveds'. Amongst these self-indepent and most capable Vraja-beauties, Srimati Râdhârâni is the greatest because She is the embodiment of the famous 'Mâdanâkhya Mahâbhâv'. Just as Sri Krishna is the personification of total nectarine ras, Srimati Râdhârâni is absolute Mahâbhâv. Bhâv is expressing itself through ras and ras is relished in bhâv – in this manner Sri Krishna and Srimati Râdhârâni are uniting with one another and there is unparalleled deluge in the enormous relish of sweet ras. Hundreds of crores of Gopis are present only to assist in His sweet meeting with Srimati Râdhârâni. They bring about variety in Their love-union.

¹ She is a part of His swarup shakti or internal potency.

"Sri Krishna relishes the ras of love-sports because of Srimati Râdhârâni; all the other Gopis are the ingredients of ras." (C.C.)

This indicates the Râs-dance. All sweetness reaches the zenith during the Râs-leelâ. Sri Râdhâ alone is Râseshwari.

"Govinda does not like the Râs-leelâ without Her." – (C.C.)

The enormous deluge of erotic ras that comprises of immensely wonderful songs and dances delights Sri Krishna, Who is the Embodiment of intense ras and absolute bliss – this is the remarkable function of Leelâ-shakti. We realize it only when we enter the leelâ – such realization is prohibited for the outsiders.

The words of the Shrutis are worthwhile only when we understand them in the context of leelâs and the Râs-leelâ is the best incident that proves them true. Although Sri Govinda is Absolute and intense bliss, the sweetness of the Râs-leelâ drives Him crazy. In spite of being âtmârâm, âptakâm and 'raso vai sah', His heart becomes full of countless desires to relish Râs-leelâ!

The sages experience Sri Sri Râsleelâ as the great divine sport of ras - that expresses the extremely ecstatic union and immensely agitated separation of the Lover and the Beloved, the Supreme Being and the Transcendental Nature, the Almighty and the Absolute Power Personified, Supreme God and Supreme Goddess.

This ras is so relishing that Sripâd Shukadev Muni who is completely liberated, has himself drowned in it and has immersed Parikshit Mahârâj as well. This ras has maddened Jayadev, Bilwamangal, Vidyâpati and Chandidâs who have themselves floated in it and has set all world afloat. What to speak of others, even Sri Bhagavân has accepted defeat in this sweet ras at the hands of the Râs-nâyikâs and has declared that He is in debt –

"I can remain manifest in the world for as long as Brahmâ lives and continue to reciprocate your love, yet I shall not be able to repay your debt. The manner in which you have broken all invincible shackles to serve me is incomparable. May your goodness itself be the compensation for this!" – (S.B.10.32.22)

Rasa-râj is bowing down on His own at Mahâbhâv's feet. And Mâdan-âkhya Mahâbhâv reigns supreme in the realm of Mâhâbhâv.

"Mâdan is the highest of all divine bhâvs. It is greater than supreme bhâvs such as modan and mohan even. It is the source of all bhâvs and takes the Divine Couple to the height of exultation. Only Srimati Râdhârâni Who is Hlâdini Personified possesses mâdan bhâv." – (U.N.)

As a result the wise glorify Srimati Râdhârâni as the supreme ideal of love. Although all the Vraja-beauties manifest Mahâbhâv to a great extent, Srimati Râdhârâni is its source. Her love too is the maximum. Hence Sri Krishna is greedy to relish Sri Râdhâ's sweet love. He has accepted Sri Râdhâ's bhâv and splendour and has appeared as Sri Gourânga. He has Himself savoured Srimati Râdhârâni's sweet love and has immersed the world in that love. He has declared – "Sri Râdhâ alone is the embodiment of Vraja-mâdhuri". The Goudiya Vaishnav preceptors are surrendered unto the lotus feet of Sri Goursundar. They have showered the bounty of Sri Râdhâ's sweet love in many ways and made us fortunate.

Sri Sri Yugal-mâdhuri
- the only object of worship for the
Goudiya Vaishnavs

**Srila Raghunâth dâs
Goswâmi takes a vow**

Sri Sri Râdhâ-Mâdhav is the sole Object of worship for the devotees sheltered at Sriman-Mahâprabhu's lotus feet. And they serve Sri Krishna only under Srimati Râdhârâni's subservience. We have already quoted howmuch the Goudiya Vaishnav preceptors grieve when we adore Sri Krishna alone and not serve Sri Râdhâ. Srimat Raghunâth dâs Goswâmpâd has called the one who worships Sri Krishna sans Sri Râdhâ as a fraud and arrogant; he has vowed to reject them instantly - in the same breath he has also declared his heartfelt reverence for the worshipers of the Divine Couple –

"Srimati Râdhârâni's name is so sweet that as soon as a living being hears it, he is bathed in love. Whoever lovingly worships Sri Krishna in accompaniment with Sri Râdhâ – I pledge to wash his feet, drink that water and carry it on my head forever."

If we analyse these two pledges of Srila Dâs Goswâmi we can easily appreciate how much important it is to serve Srimati Râdhârâni along with Sri Krishna. Srimat Jiva Goswâmpâd has written at the end of Sri-Krishna-Sandarbha –

"Amongst all the divine manifestations, Sri Krishna is God Himself. Again we see that he expresses Himself in three forms – in Dwâarakâ, Mathurâ and Vrindâvan. Amongst these, He expresses extraordinary sweetness in His Vrindâvan-manifestation; therefore the Vrindâvan-manifestation is the topmost. In Vrindâvan He expresses various moods in his pastimes as a child with His parents and as a boy with His friends. However when He performs love-sports in the kishor form with Sri Sri Râdhârâni, who is the crest-jewel of all Vrajânganâs, He is indeed supremely wonderful. Therefore the worship of Sri Sri Râdhâ-Mâdhav is the suprememost."

Srimad-Bhâgavatam (1.1.1) describes Sri Krishna's absolute majesty. And Srimat Jiva Goswâmpâd explains it as follows –

"Sri Râdhâ is Sri Krishna's supremely blissful potency. Although Sri Sri Râdhâ-Krishna are one soul, They have accepted eternal and different bodies to relish leelâ-ras. Hence Sri Râdhâ is non-different from Sri Krishna. He is forever in deep love with Her. The divine Couple is the source of the primeval ras or erotic ras. They are very much expert in performing various sports of the primeval ras. No one can describe Their pastimes without Their mercy. They showed immense mercy to Lord Veda-Vyas when They revealed Srimad-Bhâgavatam that is luxuriant because of Their leelâs. However in spite of Srimad-Bhâgavatam being revealed in our heart, we cannot describe Sri Râdhâ without Her mercy, since even great persons such as Shesh are overcome with illusion when they try to define Her. But Veda-Vyâs definitely had Srimati Râdhârâni's mercy for he was able to describe Their sweet Râs-leelâ.

Sri Sri Râdhâ-Govinda are so immensely amazing that when water, fire and water come in their contact, they behave strangely. Their splendour puts brilliant objects in the shadow while non-luminous articles become radiant. The river flows upwards and the rocks melt. Their association breathes life into the non-conscious. They even change each other's characteristics – that is, the Lover behaves like the Beloved and the Beloved acts as the Lover – na so ramana nâ ham ramani, duhun mana manobhava peshala jâni. Sri Krishna is relishing the ras of all the beloveds only through Sri Râdhâ. He has used His shakti Yogmâyâ to create the parakiyâ bhâv, then He has got rid of all the obstacles in the path of leelâ, and has sported freely in supreme bliss. Such Sri Sri Râdhâ-Govinda alone are the goal of meditation for the rasik devotees. Srila Veda-Vyâs, along with his intimate disciples such as Shukadev has meditated on Sri Sri Râdhâ-Govinda and he has proved that They are the topmost objects of worship. The highest result of devotional practice is to relish the ras of seva along with the ras of sweetness. Nothing can compare with Sri Râdhâ-Govinda's sweetness. Srimat Jiva Goswâmpâd has written –

"Sri Sri Râdhâ-Mâdhav's sweetness is resplendent with fair and dark brilliance; it is dancing in the pure feast of lovesporting eyes, it is rich with the extreme expertise in the art of lovemaking and it is supremely charming due to the nectarine love for each other. May that sweetness attract my innermost heart in all respects."

Explanation – Sri Râdhâ's molten-gold complexion is looking shining white due to the proximity with Shyâmsundar's brilliance. He has gained an emerald hue because He is close to Her golden color. The Sweethearts have come so close to each other and hence Sri Krishna's left eye and Sri Râdhâ's right eye have become jubilant. It seems as if Their inexpressibly sweet beauty is dancing

in celebration. They are decorated with countless expressions of love-sports arising out of mâdan-âkhyā mahâbhâv. Mâdan bhâv exists only in Srimati Râdhârâni. This bhâv is the fountainhead of all other bhâvs; therefore it contains the bhâvs of the devotees, His associates and the beloveds. As a result Rasik-shekhara Sri Krishna can savor the ras of innumerable devotees and the ras of infinite leelâs just by enjoying the mâdan bhâv of Srimati Râdhârâni.

When the sweetness of Sri Mâdhava and Sri Râdhâ Who is the embodiment of Mâdan-âkhyā Mahâbhâv, reveals in our heart we realize our topmost goal. This is why Srimat Jiva Goswâmpâd is praying for a revelation of Sri Sri Râdhâ-Mâdhava's expert love-making arising out of Mâdan.

In addition, this sweetness is rich with the all-captivating fragrance of love for each other. The love-sporting Lover and His Beloved anoint Their bodies with saffron and other perfumed unguents whose fragrance spreads in all directions when They embrace each other – this enchants other sakhis also. The signs of love-making arouse Their passion for each other even more and this pleases the sakhis and drowns them in the ras of love for the Divine Couple. When our heart is absorbed in the pure nectarine sweet ras of the

We, as sâdhaks, too should pray for the same because this will make us accomplish our topmost goal - that is - the confidential seva in the secluded love-grove and give us the complete relish of ras.

Divine Couple's love for each other, it remains delirious with the aromatic love for Sri Sri Râdhâ-Krishna. Sripâd Jiva Goswâmicarana is saying – may my chitta be attracted by all this sweetness.

Sri Sri Gourânga Mahâprabhu has given us this hitherto unoffered gift of Manjari-bhâv-sâdhanâ. This is His immense magnanimity.

By performing this Manjari-bhâv-sâdhanâ we can relish Sri Sri Râdhâ-Mâdhava's sweetness and at the same time we can reach the highest achievable goal – that is – confidential nikunja-sevâ.

This Sri Yugal-mâdhuri alone is the only Object of worship for the Goudiya Vaishnavs. Our preceptors too have given us the same instruction. Srila Narottama dâsa Thâkura Mahâshai has sung in Manjari-swarup –

“râdhâ-krishna prân mor jugala kishor,
jibone morone gati âr nâhi mor.

kâlindiro kule keli kadambero bon,
ratana bedir upor boshâbo dujon.

shyâm-gouri ange dibo (chuwâ) chandanero gandha,
châmara dhulâbo kobe heri mukha-chandra.

gânthiyâ mâlotiro mâlâ dibo donhâr gole,
adhare tuliyâ dibo karpooro tâmbule.

lalitâ bishâkhâa âdi joto sakhi-brinda,
âgyâya koribo sebâ charanârobindo.

shri-krishna-chaitanya-prabhur dâser anudâs,
sebâ abhilâsh kore narottama dâs."

Meaning –“The Divine Couple - Srimati Râdhârâni and Sri Krishna are my life and soul. I have no refuge in life or death other than They.

I shall seat Them on the gem-studded altar in the loving woods of Kadamba trees on the banks of the Kâlindi and anoint Them with fragrant chandan paste. O when will I fan Them with a châmar, all the while gazing at Their sweet and radiant moon-like faces?

When shall I sew Mâlâti garlands and put around Them? When will I offer camphor-scented betel leaves to their sweet lips?

When will I serve Their lotus-feet under the command of Lalitâ, Vishâkhâ and all other sakhis?

Thus prays Narottam dâs - the servant of the servant of Sri Krishna-Chaitanya Mahâprabhu, since his heartfelt desire is to serve the Divine Couple in this confidential manner."

– (Srila Thâkur Mahâshai's Prârthanâ)

