

Manah Śikṣā

Teachings for the mind

Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī



*with the commentary of
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TEACHING NR. 1:

*gurau goṣṭhe goṣṭhālayiṣu sujane bhū-sura-gaṇe
sva-mantre śrī-nāmnī vraja-nava-yuva-dvandva-smaraṇe
sadā dambhaṁ hitvā kuru ratim apūrvām atitarāṁ
aye svāntar bhrātaś caṭubhir abhiyāce dhṛta-padaḥ*

gurau - in the teacher; *goṣṭhe* - in the meadows; *goṣṭhālayiṣu* - in the residents of Vraja; *sujane* - the saints; *bhū* - earth; *sura* - gods (*brāhmaṇas*); *gaṇe* - in the group; *sva* - own; *mantre* - in the *mantra*; *śrī* - beautiful; *nāmnī* - in the name; *vraja* - of Vraja; *nava* - new; *yuva* - youthful; *dvandva* - Couple; *śaraṇe* - in the shelter; *sadā* - always; *dambhaṁ* - pride; *hitvā* - giving up; *kuru* - do; *ratim* - love; *apūrvām* - wonderful; *atitarāṁ* - great; *aye* - O!; *svāntar* - mind; *bhrātaḥ* - brother; *caṭubhir* - with flattering words; *abhiyāce* - I beg; *dhṛta* - holding; *padāḥ* - the feet.

O Mind! O brother! I hold your feet and I pray to you with flattering words:

Always give up your pride and develop wonderful love for your spiritual master, the abode of Vraja, the people of Vraja, the saintly devotees, the brāhmaṇas, my initiation-mantra, the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa and the shelter of the eternally youthful Couple of Vraja, Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa!

Commentary:

Although Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī is an eternal associate of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, he instructs his own mind, which is illuminated by *viśuddha sattva*, in the expertise of Vraja-*bhajana* in this Manaḥ Śikṣā, for the benefit of all the practicing *rāgānugā* devotees of the world.

When we are able to actually practice these essential instructions in Manaḥ Śikṣā, they will take us by the hand and bring us to the lotus feet of the beloved deity. It is the duty of a faithful and sincere devotee to follow these instructions and to make them a necklace to wear around his neck (meaning: One should memorize them and always remember them).

The main helper in *bhajana-sādhana* is the mind, the Lord of the senses. The mind of a materialistic person is by nature restless and attached to the sense-objects.

In the Bhagavad Gītā (6.34) Arjuna tells the Lord:

*cañcalaṁ hi manaḥ kṛṣṇa pramāthi balavad dṛḍham
tasyāhaṁ nigrāhaṁ manye vāyor iva suduṣkaram*

"O Kṛṣṇa! The mind is restless, disturbing the senses, powerful and tenacious. To control him seems to be as difficult as to control the wind (in our bodies, by means of *kumbhaka* and *recaka*-exercises)."

The Lord agreed with this and said:

*asañśayaṁ mahā-bāho mano durnigrāhaṁ calam
abhyāseṇa tu kaunteya vairāgyeṇa ca grhyate*

(Bhagavad Gītā 6,35)

"O mighty-armed one! Undoubtedly it is very difficult to subdue the naturally restless mind, but it can be accomplished through exercise and detachment."

By understanding how powerful and how hard to subdue the mind is, the *sādhaka* will slowly tread on the path of auspiciousness.

Any stream of thoughts which emanates from our minds keeps a *saṁskāra* (impression, mental conditioning) within our (sub-) consciousness, and the aggregate of these *saṁskāras* form our *svabhāva* (nature).

Just as our present nature is the result of previous *saṁskāras*, our future nature will be the result of our present thoughts and actions. By giving up our mundane *saṁskāras* and developing a spiritual *saṁskāra*, we can gradually control the mind and tread on the path of *bhajana*. There is no other way.

Śrī Raghunātha very tenderly addresses his mind by saying: "O mind, my brother! I hold your feet and I pray to you with flattering words, please listen! First of all, always give up *dambha*, or pride.

False ego, deceitfulness, and crookedness, these are all considered to be *dambha*. For innumerable births our *saṁskāra* has been the identification with our material bodies and everything related to it. This consciousness is a great obstacle in devotional practice.

abhimānī bhakti-hīna, jaga mājhe sei dīna, vṛthā tāra aśeṣa bhāvanā (Prema Bhakti Candrikā)

"The proud non-devotees are the lowest people in the world. Their endless thoughts are all in vain!"

To destroy false pride devotees practice humility; hence humility is called the life-force of devotional practice. Deceitfulness and duplicity (thinking in one way and acting in another) are other great obstacles in devotional practice.

The Lord will never want to bestow His mercy on a crooked person, therefore Śrīpāda says:

"O mind! Always give up *dambha*, or vanity, which is a powerful obstacle to *bhajana*, and instead become very attached to some other objects!"

First of all he says: "O mind! Show great and peerless attachment to the *guru*, meaning the initiating *guru* and the instructing *guru*."

The *guru* is the Lord's *kāruṇya ghana vigraha*, the embodiment of His great mercy. Just as water becomes ice when it is exposed to severe coldness, the Lord also appears on earth, assuming the tangible form of the *guru* when His compassion becomes condensed.

All the vices, which are so hard to give up by one's own endeavours can easily be conquered by serving a *guru*. In this way, a practicing devotee can attain perfection and thus become blessed and fulfilled. *tat prasādo hi sva sva nānā pratīkāra dustyajānārtha hānau parama bhagavat prasāda siddhau ca mūlam*

(Bhakti Sandarbhaḥ - 237 anuḥ):

"The cause of perfection, which consists of God's grace, is based on the satisfaction of the *guru*. By serving him different kinds of mischief, which are otherwise hard to give up, disappear."

There are many kinds of *anarthas* (vices), such as offenses, which are very powerful and they hinder the progressive devotee from advancing towards the attainment of *prema*.

Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya sings:

antarāya nāhi yāy; ei se parama bhaya

"My greatest fear is that these obstacles won't disappear".

In Śrīmad Bhāgavata it is seen that there is a particular way to give up each specific vice, but there is only one way to give up all these vices at once:

Devotion to the lotus feet of Śrī Guru.

*asaṅkalpāj jayet kāmān
krodhān kāmā vivarjanāt
arthānarthekṣayā lobhān
bhayān tattvāvamarsanāt
ānvīkṣikyā śoka mohau
dambhān mahad upāsayā
yogāntarāyān maunena*

*himsām kāmādy anihayā
kṛpayā bhūtajam duḥkham
daivam jahyāt samādhinā
ātmajam yoga-vīryeṇa
nidrām sattva niṣevayā
rajas tamaś ca sattvena
sattvam copasāmena ca
**etat sarvaṁ gurau bhaktyā
puruṣo hyañjasā 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 perfecting a vow of 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 *samādhī* (psycho-religious trance) and suffering caused by the own body and mind can be mitigated by practicing 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.**"

Here we will have a short discussion on having a special attachment to and love for the *guru*.

After describing the path of surrender, Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda writes in Bhakti Sandarbha (237):

*tatra yadyapi śaraṇāpattyaiva sarvaṁ siddhyati. śaraṇam taṁ prapannā ye dhyāna yoga
vivarjitāḥ. te vai mṛtyum atikramya yānti tad vaiṣṇavam padam. iti gāruḍāt tathāpi vaiśiṣṭya lipsuḥ
śaktaś cet tataḥ bhagavac chāstropadeṣṭṛṇām bhagavan mantropadeṣṭṛṇām vā śrī guru-caraṇānām
nityam eva viśeṣataḥ sevām kuryāt.*

"Although all worship reaches perfection by surrendering to the Lord, (since in the Garuḍa Purāṇa it is written:

"Those who surrender to the Lord will transcend the mortal world even without practicing *yoga* or meditation, and will attain the planet of Lord Viṣṇu. Of this there is no doubt."),

still someone who desires a special perfection in worship (or relishing transcendental flavours) will always particularly serve and worship the lotus feet of his *guru*. It is either the *guru* who teaches him the holy scriptures about the Personality of Godhead or the *guru* who initiates him in the sacred *mantras* of the Personality of Godhead."

The 'special perfection' mentioned here means that in some cases the hearing, chanting and remembering of the Lord's glories is the primary practice (*aṅgī*) and the service of the *guru* is one of its items (*aṅga*). This is called 'ordinary service to the *guru*', but even in this case, the satisfaction of the *guru* is considered to be the cause of the Lord's satisfaction.

But when the *guru* himself becomes the main object of worship and the hearing, chanting and remembering of the Supreme Lord merely become different parts or side effects of the worship of the *guru*, we call it '**special service to the guru.**' Here the satisfaction of the *guru* is the main goal and the satisfaction of the Lord is concomitant. In this way the disciple is blessed. Hence

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has written:

tasmād anyad bhagavad bhajanam api nāpekṣate

(Bhakti Sandarbha):

"A devotee who is thus attached to the worship of his *guru* doesn't need to practice any worship of the Supreme Lord."

In this special case the Lord will be more pleased with the devotee's service of his *guru* than of his service to Himself.

In this connection Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī quotes a verse from Devahūti's praises in the Padma Purāṇa:

*bhaktir yathā harau me'sti tad variṣṭhā gurau yadi
mamāsti tena satyena sandarśayat me hari*

"Surely Lord Hari will reveal Himself to me if I am even more devoted to my *guru* than to Him."

Hence Śrī Narottama Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has said:

*śrī guru caraṇa padma, kevala bhakati sadma,
bandoṅ mui sāvadhāna sane
yāhāra prasāde bhāi, ei bhava tariyā yāy
kṛṣṇa prāpti hoy yāhā hoite*

"The lotus feet of the *guru* are the abode of pure devotion, and I carefully praise them. O brother! By his grace you will cross over the ocean of material miseries and attain the mercy of Kṛṣṇa!"

*guru mukha padma vākya, hṛdi kori mahāśakya
āra nā koriho mone āśā
śrī guru caraṇe rati, ei se uttamā gati,
ye prasāde pūre sarva āśā*

"Let the words flowing from the lotus mouth of your *gurudeva* become fixed in your heart. Don't desire anything else!

The highest goal of life is to love the lotus feet of the *guru*, for by his grace all desires will be fulfilled."

We think that Śrīmat Dāsa Gosvāmīpāda also speaks about such an excessive love for Śrī Gurudeva when he speaks about *apūrva rati*.

Śrīpāda Raghunātha Das desires such an excessive attachment to Śrī Vraja-dhāma too.

Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī has taught that living in Vraja is one of the five most powerful items of devotion which will grant love to the lotus feet of the Lord (the others being: Associating with the devotees, worshipping the deity, hearing the Śrīmad Bhāgavata and chanting the Holy Name), because:

*anyeṣu puṇya tirtheṣu
muktir eva mahā-phalam
muktaiḥ prārthyā harer bhaktir
mathurāyān tu labhyate
aho madhupurī dhanyā
vaikuṅṭhācca garīyasī
dinam ekaṅ nivāsena
harau bhaktiḥ prajāyate*

(Padma Purāṇa)

"In other holy places liberation is the great benefit, but Hari-*bhakti*, which is prayed for even by the liberated souls, is attained in (the district of) Mathurā.

O! Blessed is Mathurā, which is even greater than Vaikuṅṭha! Simply by living there for one day devotion to Hari awakens in the heart!"

The Gosvāmīs have said that living in Vraja is an indispensable item for someone who wants to attain the perfection of love of God: *kuryad vāsam vraje sadā*.

It has also been advised that those who are unable to live there physically should live there at least mentally, the condition being that one must be aware of the transcendental glories of the *dhāma* while living there.

One must live there with love, faith, and devotion. If this is not, possible, then one will consider the transcendental *dhāma* to be a material place and commit offenses there.

In this way one can't reap the devotional results of living in the *dhāma*.
Śrīla Kavirāja Gosvāmī has written:

*sarvopari śrī gokula vraja-loka dhāma;
śrī goloka śvetadvīpa vṛndāvana nāma
sarva-ga ananta vibhu kṛṣṇa-tanu sama;
uparyadho vyāpī āche - nāhiko niyama
brahmāṇḍe prakāśa tāra kṛṣṇera icchāya;
ekai svarūpa tāra nāhi dui kaya
cintāmaṇi bhūmi, kalpavṛkṣa-maya vana;
carma cakṣe dekhe tāre prapañcera sama
prema netre dekhe tāra svarūpa prakāśa;
gopa gopī saṅge yāhā kṛṣṇera vilāsa*

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta, Ādi 5)

"The topmost abode is Śrī Gokula, or Vraja-*dhāma*, which is also named Śrī Goloka, Śvetadvīpa and Vṛndāvana.

This abode is endless, all-pervading, and omnipresent and it is just like Kṛṣṇa's body. It spreads below and above without any rule, but by Kṛṣṇa's wish, it is manifest in the material world in one form. It has no two forms. The soil is made of Cintā-jewels and the forests are full of desire-trees. The material eyes see it as a material place, but eyes filled with love of God see it in its real form, where Kṛṣṇa plays with the *gopas* and *gopīs*."

Transcendence can never be perceived with material senses, therefore the Lord has mercifully revealed His abode in this world in a form which is visible with the senses.

With this faith, with love and devotion, we must live in the *dhāma*. If not, then we will certainly commit offenses to this holy place, finding faults in it or seeing it as an inferior place. We will be blessed if we can live in the *dhāma* with great devotion and full faith that it is a transcendental place, for love for the holy *dhāma* is the highest pursuit of life.

Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatīpāda has written:

*rādhā muralī manohara caraṇa vilāsena dhanyāyām
vṛndāvana bhuvī manye parama pumartho manāg api praṇayaḥ*

(Vṛndāvana Mahimāmṛta 4.65)

"If I even have a little love for Vṛndāvana, the place which is blessed with the pastimes of Rādhā-Muralī Manohara's lotus feet, I will consider myself to have reached the highest goal of life."

Śrīla Sarasvatīpāda, who is filled with love for Śrī Vṛndāvana, shows a wonderful fixation in devotion to and living in Vraja:

*śrī rādhā muralīdhara vara dhana
 vṛndāvane varaṁ krimikaḥ
 bhagavat pārṣada mukhyo'py
 anyatrā'haṁ na cotsahe bhavitum
 sarva duḥkha daśā ghorā
 varaṁ vṛndāvane'stu me
 prakṛtā'prakṛtā'seṣa
 vibhūtir api nānyataḥ
 paśur ekaḥ khaga ekas
 tṛṇam ekaṁ reṇur eko vā
 śyāma rasādbhuta vanye
 vṛndāraṇye bhavāmyahaṁ dhanyaḥ*

(Vṛndāvana Mahimāmṛtam 4.57, 61, 64)

"I would rather be a worm in Vṛndāvana, the greatest treasure of Śrī Rādhā and Muralī-dhara, than to be a chief associate of the Lord elsewhere. May I get into the worst trouble in Vṛndāvana, but still I don't pray for having all the material and spiritual opulence of the world elsewhere. I will feel blessed even if I become an animal, a bird, a blade of grass or even a speck of dust in Vṛndāvana, the wonderful forest which is endowed with Śyāma-rasa!"

Śrīpāda Raghunātha Das then prays for having a wonderful attachment to the Vrajavāsīs, the residents of Vraja-*dhāma*. Here 'Vrajavāsīs' must be understood to mean those who live in Vraja-*dhāma* in the broadest sense of the word.

The scriptures and the saints say that although the *dhāma* is a transcendental place it assumes a material form out of mercy to the people of the world.

In the same way the residents of the *dhāma* are also assuming a material nature, although they are completely transcendental. Therefore, although some rough edges may be perceived on the behaviour of the Vrajavāsīs, we should consider this to be due to the contaminated state of our minds, senses, and intelligence and remain fully devoted to them.

vṛndāṭavī vimala cid-ghana sattva-vṛndā vṛndāraka pravara vṛnda munīndra vandyā
 (Vṛndāvana Mahimāmṛta 1.44)

"Those who reside in the forest of Śrī Vṛndāvana have all attained spiritual bodies, and they are praised by the demigods and the greatest sages."

Therefore Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī desires to serve all the moving and non-moving creatures of Vraja with the topmost devotion:

*sevā vṛndāvana-stha sthira cara nikareṣv
 astu me hanta keva devā brahmādayaḥ
 syu stuta uru mahitā vallabhā ye vrajendoḥ
 ete hy advaita saccid rasaghana vapuṣodūra
 dūrātidūra sphūrjjan mähātmyā vṛndā bṛhad
 upaniṣānandajānanda kandāḥ*

(Vṛndāvana Mahimāmṛta 1.61)

"May I attain the service of the moving and non-moving creatures of Vṛndāvana. Aho! They are naturally very dear to Kṛṣṇa, the moon of Vraja, and they are even more worshipable than the demigods, headed by Lord Brahmā. The glories of these exclusively transcendental forms, which consist of condensed *rasa*, can't be understood by tiny human brains, and they are the cause of bliss even to the Upaniṣads!"

In the same way Śrī Raghunātha begs his mind to show great attachment to the *sujana* (good people, or Vaiṣṇavas).

For someone who wants to attain loving devotion to the Lord's lotus feet it is compulsory to be attached to the association of His devotees.

mahat-kṛpā vinā kon karme bhakti noy (No activity can be devotional service without the mercy of the saints) *avaśya milaye kṛṣṇa vaiṣṇava kṛpāya* (Surely, Kṛṣṇa is attainable by the mercy of the Vaiṣṇavas).

From these words we can understand that loving devotion to the Lord's lotus feet can only be attained by the grace of the saints. The Lord's mercy uses the saint's mercy or association as a vehicle to infuse it into another living entity; it does not take place independently.

One may ask here:

"The Lord can directly bestow His mercy in the form of devotion to His lotus feet, why is it so dependent on *mahat-kṛpā* (grace of the saints), or *mahat saṅga* (association with the saints)?"

The scriptures and the saints answer to this:

"Although the grace of the Lord is the major and self-perfect cause of attaining devotion which brings us to the Lord, it takes shape before us in this phenomenal world in the form of the grace of the saints".

santa evānugrahaye yasya saḥ. tavānugraho yaḥ prāpañcike carati sa tad ākāratayaiva carati nānya rūpatayetyarthaḥ (Bhakti Sandarbha 180)

"O Lord! The saints are the embodiments of Your grace! Whatever mercy You reveal in this phenomenal world wanders around there in the form of the saints, and in no other form!" Therefore it is nothing but self-deception to reject the direct mercy of the Lord in the form of the saints and to seek the Lord's *parokṣa-karuṇā* (roundabout, indirect mercy).

Thus the Lord told His dear devotee Uddhava:

mad bhakta pūjābhyādhikā

(Bhāg. 11.19.21)

"My devotees are more worshipable!"

abhyādhikā mat santoṣa viśeṣaṁ jñātvā mat pūjato'pity arthaḥ

"You should be more attached to worshipping My devotee than to worshipping Me, for worship of My devotee particularly pleases Me."

This is because the Lord desires the devotee even more than Himself. He is more attracted to the bliss of His devotee's devotion in the heart than to His own *svarūpānanda* (constitutional, internal, personal bliss), and He desires to relish that bliss more.

*nāham ātmānam āśāse mad bhaktaiḥ sādhubhir vinā
śriyaṁ cātyantikīm brahman yeṣāṁ gatir ahaṁ parā*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavata 9.4.64)

The Lord told Durvāsā Ṛṣi: "O *brāhmaṇa*! I covet My devotees and the saints for whom I'm the only shelter even more than I covet Myself or My six-fold opulence!"

Therefore it is said in the Śāṅḍilya Smṛti:

*siddhir bhavati vā neti saṁśayo'cyuta sevinām
na saṁśayo'tra tad bhakta paricaryāratātmanām*

"It may be doubted whether a devotee of Acyuta attains perfection or not, but there's no doubt about it that someone who is dedicated to serving Acyuta's devotee attains perfection!"

tasmād viṣṇu prasādāya vaiṣṇavān paritoṣayet

"Therefore, in order to get Lord Viṣṇu's mercy, one must please the Vaiṣṇavas with loving devotion."

Śrīmad Bhāgavata says:

*yat sevayā bhagavataḥ kuṭasthasya madhudviṣaḥ
ratirāso bhavet tivrāḥ pādayor vyasanārdanaḥ*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavata 3.7.19)

"By serving the saints, a festival of love for Madhusūdana, the destroyer of material miseries, becomes firmly established within the heart."

Associating with saints and serving them means to lovingly worship them with body, mind, and words, hearing topics of Kṛṣṇa from them, remembering these topics, following their exemplary behaviour and doing *bhajana* according to their instructions.

Nowadays, *mahat-sevā* or *vaiṣṇava-sevā* has become known as 'giving some money, food, or clothes, feeding them some *khichuri* (hotchpotch)' or whatever the donor can think of and thereby treating the Vaiṣṇavas with contempt as if they are beggars.

An intelligent person will understand whether or not all of it is in adherence to the above-quoted holy words

mad bhakta pūjābhyādhikā or *ratirāso bhavet tivrāḥ*.

The Nārada Pañcarātra says:

vaiṣṇavānām parā bhaktiḥ

"One must serve the Vaiṣṇavas with the greatest devotion".

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī writes in *Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu*:

*yāvanti bhagavad bhakter aṅgāni kathitān iha
prāyas tāvanti tad bhakta bhakter api budhāḥ viduḥ*

The wise understand that each item of devotion to the Lord discussed in this book has a corresponding item of devotion to a devotee."

On the pretext of teaching his own mind, Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa teaches all the devotees that the flawless way to attain love for the lotus feet of the Lord is to serve the pure devotees with love.

After this Śrī Raghunātha instructs his mind to love the *brāhmaṇas* with *apūrva rati*.

By devotion to *brāhmaṇas*, one awakens the grace of the Lord, Who is called *brahmanya deva*, the Lord of the *brāhmaṇas*. When there is a statement like:

śvapākam iva nekṣete loke vipram avaiṣṇavam

(One should not look at a non-devotee *brāhmaṇa*, he is just like a dogeater), it is only meant to attract such a non-devotee *brāhmaṇa* to devotion.

Such statements are not intended to blaspheme *brāhmaṇas*, for Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself gives instructions in *vipra-bhakti*:

*vipraṁ kṛtāgasam api naiva druhyata māmakaḥ
ghnantaṁ bahu śapantaṁ vā namaskuruta nityaśaḥ*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavata 10.64.41)

"O My kinsmen! Do not harm a *brāhmaṇa*, even if he offends you! Even if He assaults You or abuses you, you must always bow down to him."

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda has described five levels of *rāgānugā-sādhana*, namely *svābhīṣṭa bhāvamaya* (practice that is full of the desired mood), *svābhīṣṭa bhāva sambandhī* (practice

that is related to the desired mood), *svābhīṣṭa bhāvānukūla* (practice that is favorable to the desired mood), *svābhīṣṭa bhāvāviruddha* (practice that is not unfavorable to the desired mood), and *svābhīṣṭa bhāva viruddha* (practice that is unfavorable to the desired mood).

Of the five, the practice that is not unfavorable to the desired mood contains items like honouring the cows, the *brāhmaṇas* and the Banyan-trees. These practices can be beneficial to the practice of *rāgānugā bhajana*.

After this, Śrīpāda declares his wonderful love for his own initiation-*mantra*. In the Brahma Purāṇa the following definition is given of a *mantra*:

*omkārādi samāyuktaṁ namaskārānta kīrtitam
sva nāma sarva sattvānām **mantra** ityabhidhīyate*

“A *mantra* is given by the Lord and the great sages, it starts with an invocatory syllable like ‘OM’, and it ends with a sign of obeisance, which is decorated with *bījas* (root-syllables such as *namaḥ* or *svāhā*). Furthermore it contains the names of the Lord and the special power to establish a certain relationship between the practitioner and the Lord: It blesses the practitioner in freeing him or her from the bondage of physical life and bestows a spiritual body which is suitable for serving the Lord.

As the *mantra-dīkṣā* emanates from the mouth of the *sad-guru*, a special divine *mantra*-power is then infused into the heart of the aspirant devotee which gives him the ability to do *bhajana*.

*dīkṣā kāle bhakta kore ātma samarpaṇa;
sei kāle kṛṣṇa tāre kore ātma sama
sei deha tāra kore cid-ānanda-maya;
aprākṛta dehe tāra caraṇa bhajaya*

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta Antya ch.4)

"At the time of initiation the devotee surrenders himself, and at that time Kṛṣṇa makes him equal to Himself, giving him a transcendental body, in which the devotee can worship His lotus feet."

Of all the *mantras*, which are discussed in the scriptures in connection with initiation, the Śrī-Kṛṣṇa-*mantra* is most prominent.

And again of all these the king of *mantras*, the 18-syllable or 10-syllable ‘*gopī-jana-vallabha*’-*mantra* which contains all the pastimes within *madhura-rasa*, is the crown jewel of all *mantras*.

The wonderful result of practicing this *mantra* will be experienced by someone who practices it with the greatest love and who learns its meaning from his initiating *guru*.

Only a reader of Sanātana Gosvāmī’s Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta knows how the hero, Gopa Kumāra, was able to travel through the entire spiritual sky by devoutly practicing this *mantra*.

Then Śrī Raghunātha dāsa prays for wonderful attachment to the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa.

The chanting of the Holy Name by a devotee who is genuinely attached to the Lord brings all perfection.

The chanting of the Holy Name is both the means and the goal of a devotee’s life, for there’s no difference between the Name and the Named:

*nāmaś cintāmani kṛṣṇaś caitanya rasa vighrahaḥ
pūrṇa śuddho nitya mukto bhinnatvān nāma nāmīno*

(Padma Purāṇa)

"The Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa is a Cintāmaṇi-jewel and is the very form of consciousness and transcendental flavour. It is completely pure and eternally liberated, and there is no difference between the name and the named."

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī writes the following commentary to this verse:

nāmaiva cintāmaṇiḥ sarvārtha dātṛtvāt. na kevalam tādṛśam eva api tu caitanya lakṣaṇo yaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sa eva sākṣāt. tatra hetur abhinnatvādītīti.

"The Holy Name is like Cintāmaṇi, a touchstone which is able to bestow all which is desired. It is not just able to bestow everything because it is equal to the Lord, but it is Kṛṣṇa Himself, who is endowed with the characteristics of *caitanya*, or consciousness. This is the meaning of the nondifference between the name and the named."

In other words, it is not that the Holy Name has been emancipated with the Lord because it has equal potency, but the Holy Name is Kṛṣṇa Himself. Not only that, but according to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī the Holy Name shows qualities like mercy even more than Kṛṣṇa Himself!

*vācyaṁ vācakam ityudeti bhavato nāma-svarāpa-dvayam
pūrvasmāt param eva hanta karuṇaṁ tatrāpi jānīmahe
yas tasmīn vihītāparādha nivahah prāṇī samantād bhaved
āsyenedam upāsya so'pi hi sadānandāmbudhau majjati*

"O Holy Name! We know that you have appeared as the transcendental form of Kṛṣṇa (*vācya*) and as His Holy Name (*vācaka*), but of the two I consider the Holy Name to be more merciful, for if one offends the Lord one can be delivered from the reaction by loudly calling out His name and thus be immersed in an ocean of transcendental loving bliss!"

In this way it is known that all the **means** and all the **goals** of human perfection lie in the **Holy Name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa**.

The chanting of the Holy Name is the primary item (*aṅgī*) of devotional practice, and all the other items are secondary (*aṅga*).

Remembering this, the practicing devotees should chant the Holy Name with even more devotional attachment. In this way they will become swiftly blessed.

Finally Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī says:

"O mind! Take shelter of the incomparable youthful loving couple of Vraja, Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and thus increase your wonderful love for Them!"

Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī is an eternal associate of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, known as Tulasī Mañjarī or Rati Mañjarī, and he has descended along with the Lord to teach the aspiring devotees the intricacies of the worship of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, thus taking them along to the Vraja-*nikuñja*.

The worship of the youthful Couple of Vraja as a *mañjarī* (spiritual maidservant) is the unprecedented and most merciful gift of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

One of the reasons for Mahāprabhu's descension is to mercifully bless the sinful and fallen souls of the age of Kali by giving them this intimate worship of the Divine Couple of Vraja, which is rarely attained even by Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, Uddhava and other great souls.

Some may think:

"Mahāprabhu Himself has said (in Caitanya Caritāmṛta):

cāri bhāva bhakti diyā nācāimu bhuvana

'I will make the world dance by giving it devotion to Kṛṣṇa in four different moods (servanthood, fraternal love, parental love, and amorous love).' Then how can you say that He only came to give the intimate worship of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa?"

The answer to this may be that:

"He may have said that, but factually He established during His discussions with Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya and others, that the worship of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa is the crown jewel of all human pursuits. He Himself

as well as His direct disciples, the Six Gosvāmīs, who are the *ācāryas* of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya, mainly practiced and preached the amorous love for Kṛṣṇa as the highest attainment, and their books are filled mainly with this topic.

How Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī was immersed in worshipping the Divine Couple in *mañjarī-bhāva* can be clearly experienced as we go on discussing his Stavāvalī-prayers.

It has been ascertained in various ways by the Gosvāmīs, who carry Śrīman Mahāprabhu's teachings in their throats, that simply by worshipping Śrī Kṛṣṇa without Śrī Rādhā, one attains only a drop of the relish of the Kṛṣṇa-ocean.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is like a bottomless ocean of sweetness, which is hard to enter into.

Nevertheless, the greatest way of experiencing God is relishing His sweetness. How can an insignificant living entity ever enter into this ocean of sweetness? Only if the living entities would receive a lot of mercy from a great energy through complete love would they be able to savour this complete sweetness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and become blessed. That great energy is Śrī Rādhā.

Just as the ocean of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweetness increases unlimitedly when He is with Śrī Rādhā, Śrī Rādhā makes the living entities who surrender to Her lotus feet relish Kṛṣṇa's full sweetness in *sakhī-* or *mañjarī-bhāva*.

Not only that, She also makes them relish it even more than She relishes it Herself!

*rādhāra svarūpa - kṛṣṇa prema kalpalatā;
sakhīgaṇa hoy - tāra pallava puṣpa pātā
kṛṣṇa līlāmṛta yadi latāke siñcaya;
nija seka hoite pallavādyera koṭi sukha hoy*

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta Madhya 8)

"Rādhā is a desire-vine of love for Kṛṣṇa, and the *sakhīs* are the buds, leaves, flowers of that vine. When that vine is sprinkled with the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, the buds and flowers experience millions of times more happiness than the vine herself."

They experience happiness a million times more because Śrī Rādhā can relish the great sweetness of Kṛṣṇa with them, but the *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs* who are surrendered to Her lotus feet can relish the sweetness of both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa when They are together. They can also relish the wonderful savour of the service to this sweet Couple, and thus be blessed.

The worship of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in the mood of the *mañjarīs* is the highest stage the living entity can attain in the kingdom of divine flavours through the practice of loving devotional service. For this reason Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, though he is a *nitya-siddha-mañjarī*, has instructed the aspiring devotees of the world to become more attached to the lotus feet of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, on the pretext of instructing his own mind.

It's no wonder that a devotee who follows the instructions only of even this one verse, what to speak of all the other verses, will invoke a benediction for his *sādhana*.

*ohe bhrātaḥ mora mana, ei mama nivedana,
sadā dambha parityāga koro
hari bhakti niketana, śrī gurura śrī caraṇa,
anurāge tā' āśraya koro*

"O mind, my brother! I pray to you:

Always give up your pride and lovingly take shelter of your *guru*deva's lotus feet which are the abode of devotion to Hari!"

*aprākṛta cinmaya dhāma, vṛndāvana yāra nāma,
tāhe yoto sthāvara jaṅgama*

*gala lagnī kṛta vāse, sadā āsru nīre bhese,
nityā tādera koroho praṇāma*

"Always offer your obeisances to all the moving and non-moving living entities of the transcendental abode named Vṛndāvana, thereby shedding tears of love and holding a piece of cloth around the neck (in humble submission)."

*vaiṣṇava mahānta-gaṇa, prema bhaktira mahājana,
jane jane patita pāvana
bhṛtya prāya saṅge phira, nitya paricaryā koro,
tabe hobe vāñchita pūraṇa*

"Always associate with the saintly Vaiṣṇavas who are the great teachers of loving devotion and who are redeeming one fallen soul after the other. If you always engage in their service like a menial servant all your (devotional) desires will be fulfilled."

*śrī kṛṣṇera priyavara, dvija-gaṇe bhakti koro,
āśīrvāda maṅgala kāraṇa
akhīla brahmāṇḍa-pati, suprasanna hobe ati
tāhādera korile sevana*

"Serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa's most beloved *brāhmaṇas*, for they can give you auspicious blessings. If you serve them, the Lord of all the worlds will be very pleased with you."

*kṛpā śakti sañcārita, dikṣā mantra guru-datta,
japa mana loiyā śaraṇa
mantra-rāja ākarṣaṇe, prakāśiyā vṛndāvane
dekhā dibe madana mohana*

"The initiation-*mantra* is invested with the grace of the *guru*. Practice this *mantra* and take shelter of it. Madana-Mohana will be so attracted to this king of *mantras* that He will reveal Himself to you in Vṛndāvana."

*sarva śakti paripūrṇa, mahāprabhu mukhodgīrna,
bhuvana maṅgala hari-nāma
koro śravaṇa kīrtana, japa mana rātri dina,
premānanda yāra pariṇāma*

"The Holy Name of Hari, which emanated from the mouth of Mahāprabhu, is filled with all transcendental potencies and is the source of auspiciousness to the whole world. Hear and chant this Holy Name and repeat it day and night. This will result in ecstatic love of Kṛṣṇa."

*nava vidhā bhakti ratne, anuśilana kori yatne,
bhaja mana yugala caraṇa
daśanete tṛṇa dhare, ei cātu vākya dvāre,
tuyā pade kori nivedana*

"O mind! Follow the nine jewel like types of devotion with care and worship the lotus feet of the Divine Couple. Holding a straw between my teeth I speak this flattering words to you and I pray to your feet."

TEACHING NR. 2:

*na dharmam nādharmam śruti-gaṇa-niruktaṁ kila kuru
vraje rādhā-kṛṣṇa-pracura-paricaryām iha tanu
śacī-sūnum nandiśvara-pati-sutatve guru-varam
mukunda-preṣṭhatve smara param ajasram nanu manaḥ*

na - not; *dharmam* - religion; *na* - not; *adharmam* - irreligion; *śrutigaṇa* - Vedas; *niruktaṁ* - described; *kila* - certainly; *kuru* - do; *vraje* - in Vraja; *rādhā kṛṣṇa* - Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa; *pracura* - abundant; *paricaryām* - worship; *iha* - here; *tanu* - body; *śacī sūnum* - the son of Śacī; *nandiśvara pati* - the Lord of Nandiśvara; *sutatve* - being the son; *guru* - teacher; *varam* - the best; *mukunda* - Mukunda; *preṣṭhatve* - being dear to; *smara* - remember; *param* - great; *ajasram* - always; *nanu* - indeed; *manaḥ* - O mind!

O mind! Don't follow any of the religious or irreligious paths which are prescribed or forbidden by the Vedas. Intently worship Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in Vraja! Know that the son of mother Śacī (Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu) is the son of the king of Nandiśvara (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) and that the best of spiritual teachers is dear to Lord Mukunda (Śrī Kṛṣṇa).

Commentary:

Śrīmat Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī instructs the aspiring devotees of the world in some of the compulsory duties of pure *rāgānugā-bhakti* and in the science of devotion on the pretext of instructing his own mind.

The Vedic scriptures are vast, and according to the eligibility of the many different human beings there are different instructions in them on fruitive activities, wisdom, and devotional service. Sometimes someone can give up a lower occupation and become eligible to enter into a higher occupation. These things are also ascertained by the scriptures. If by some inconceivable fortune one attains the mercy and the association of a great saint, one may gain faith in the process of hearing and chanting about the Lord and develop a liking for it.

In this way one will transcend the *varṇāśrama*-system of the four social and spiritual orders and the path of intellectual spiritual realisation (*jñāna*) and gain access to pure faithful devotional worship.

In Śrīmad Bhāgavata (11.20.9) Lord Kṛṣṇa tells Uddhava:

*tāvat karmāṇi kurvīta na nirvidyeta yāvatā
mat kathā śravaṇādau vā śraddhā yāvan na jāyate*

"One must continue performing one's occupational duties as they are prescribed by the Vedas, as long as one has not developed a liking for hearing topics about Me."

The purport of this is that as soon as one's heart is purified by performing Vedic fruitive activities one becomes callous towards worldly affairs and gains access to the path of *jñāna*, intellectual spiritual realisation. As long as one has not by chance become attracted to the topics of the Lord by the grace of a great saint, one must continue to perform all the different social duties. A faithful person becomes eligible to render pure devotional service to the Supreme Lord, and should not to engage in fruitive activities or contemplative wisdom.

The Lord Himself has instructed the world to give up the caste- and *āśrama*-system and to worship Him instead.

*ājñāyaiva guṇān doṣān mayādiṣṭān api svakān
dharmān santyajya yaḥ sarvān mām bhajet sa ca sattamaḥ*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavata 11.11.32)

"He is the best of all men, who, having completely neglected all his duties though prescribed by Me, while knowing well the virtues (of following them) and the sins (of not following them), worships Me alone."

Śrīdhara Svāmī writes in his commentary on this verse:

*mayā veda-rūpeṇa ādiṣṭān api sva-dharmān santyajya yo mām bhajet so'pyevaṁ pūrvoktavat
sattamaḥ. kim ajñānāt nāstikyād vā? na, dharmācarāṇe sattva-śuddhyādin guṇān vipakṣe doṣānīs
cājñāyāya jñātvāpi mad dhyāna vikṣepatayā mad bhaktyaiva sarvaṁ bhaviṣyatīti dṛḍha niścayenaiva
dharmān santyajya*

"Such a person knows that such fruitive activities are simply disturbing his meditations on Me, so he becomes firmly determined to give them up and engage in My devotional service. He does not give up the Vedic rules and regulations out of atheism or ignorance".

At the end of the Bhagavad Gītā the Lord gave a similar instruction as being the most confidential of all teachings.

*sarva dharmān parityajya mām ekam śaraṇam vraja
ahaṁ tvam sarva pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*

"O Arjuna! Give up all forms of religion and simply surrender unto Me. I will free you from all sins. Do not fear."

This verse confirms that those who tread the path of pure devotion give up all connection with the religious and irreligious activities which are discussed in the Vedas.

Śrī Raghunātha dāsa then says: *vraje rādhā-kṛṣṇa pracura paricaryām iha tanu*

"O mind! Give up the moral and immoral activities which have been described by the Vedas and elaborately serve Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in Vraja!"

The word *paricaryā* is a synonym for *pūjā*, *sevā*, *upāsanā* and so on. *pracura paricaryā* here means that on the path of *rāgānugā bhakti* the devotee thinks of himself as a devotee of Vraja both in his external body and in his mentally conceived spiritual body.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has written:

*sevā sādḥaka rūpeṇa siddha rūpeṇa cātra hi
tad bhāva lipsunā kāryā vraja-lokānusārataḥ*

(Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu 1.2.295)

"A person who desires love for the lotus feet of Rādhā and Mādhava should follow in the footsteps of the people of Vraja, serving Them both in his external devotee-body (in allegiance to Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmī) and in his spiritual body (in allegiance to Śrī Rūpa and Rati Mañjarī)."

*bāhya antara ihāra dui to sādḥana;
bāhya - sādḥaka dehe kore śravaṇa kirtana
mane - nija siddha dehe koriyā bhāvana;
rātri dine kore vraje kṛṣṇera sevana*

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta Madhya 22)

"There are two kinds of devotional practice: internal and external. In the external body one engages in hearing and chanting and in the mind one conceives of one's own spiritual body, in which to serve Kṛṣṇa in Vraja day and night."

A devotee who desires love for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa should persistently live in Vraja (if not physically, then mentally) and serve (the deity of) Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa with flowers and dairy-products from Vraja, always chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and hearing about the loving pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa from the mouths of the *rasika* devotees.

*rādhā-kṛṣṇa sevana, ekānta koriyā mana,
caraṇa kamala boli yāu
dohāra nāma guṇa śuni, bhakta mukhe puni puni,
parama ānanda sukha pāu*

"Fix your mind on the service of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and praise Their lotus feet. You will become most happy by hearing Their names and qualities from the mouths of the devotees."

In this way one should always meditate on one's mentally conceived spiritual body, following in the footsteps of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī and Śrī Rati Mañjarī and mentally serve Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa throughout Their eternally revolving, eightfold daily pastimes.

Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura Mahāśaya sings:

*śrī rūpa mañjarī sāra, śrī rati mañjarī āra,
anaṅga mañjarī mañjulālī
śrī rasa mañjarī saṅge, kasturikā ādi raṅge
prema sevā kori kutūhale*

"I will eagerly render loving service with Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī, Śrī Rati Mañjarī, Anaṅga Mañjarī, Mañjulālī, Śrī Rasa Mañjarī, Kastūrikā and others."

*e sabā anugā hoiyā, prema sevā nibo cātyā,
iṅgite bujhibo sab kāja
rūpe guṇe ḍagamagi, sadā hobo anurāgī,
vasati koribo sakhī māṅha*

"Following in their footsteps I will render loving service, and I will understand my duties simply on their hints. I will always be attached to Their forms and qualities and stay amongst the *sakhīs*."

*vṛndāvane dui jana, caturdike sakhī-gaṇa,
samaya bujhiyā rasa sukhe
sakhira iṅgita hobe, cāmara dhūlābo kobe,
tāmbūla yogābo cānda mukhe*

"The Divine Couple resides in Vṛndāvana and is always surrounded by Their girlfriends. Let me serve Them in *rasika* joy, understanding the appropriate time. When can I, on the indications of the *sakhīs*, fan Them and offer betel leaves to Their moon-like faces?"

*yugala caraṇa sevi, nirantara ei bhāvi,
anurāgī rahibo sadāya
sādhane bhāvibo yāhā, siddha dehe pābo tāhā,
rāga-pathera ei se upāya*

(Prema Bhakti Candrikā)

"I will always meditate on my service to the lotus feet of this Divine Couple and I will always remain attached to this. Whatever the *rāgānugā*-devotee thinks of during his practice, he will get when he receives his *siddha*-(spiritual) body. That is the way of *rāgānugā-bhakti*."

There is an endless variety of ways in which one can think of these services within one's *siddha deha*, therefore Śrī Raghunātha dāsa speaks of *pracura paricaryā*, an abundance of devotional service, here.

While worshipping the Divine Couple in this way Śrī Raghunātha dāsa instructs his mind to see Śrī Śacīnandana (Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu) as Śrī Nandanandana (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) Himself, in the mood of Śrī Narottama dāsa:

vrajendra-nandana yei, śacī-suta hoilo sei

"He who is the prince of Vraja has now become the son of mother Śacī."

The purport here is that in previous ages even the great sages were hardly able to enter into the confidential worship of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Vrajendra-Nandana then became greedy after His own sweetness in the mood of Śrīmatī Bhānu-nandinī, accepted Her mood and complexion and thus became Gaura, relishing the sweetness of Vraja-*līlā* Himself and teaching His devotees how to relish this also.

*kṛṣṇa līlāmṛta sāra, tāra śata śata dhāra,
daśa dige bohe yāhā hoite
se caitanya līlā hoy, sarovara akṣaya,
mana haṁsa carāho tāhāte*

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta Madhya 25)

"The pastimes of Kṛṣṇa are the quintessence of nectar and hundreds of streams emanate from it, forming an endless lake of Caitanya-pastimes. Make your swan-like mind swim in this shoreless nectar-lake."

This is why the devotees think of Śrī Gaura relishing the pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, before meditating on that particular Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa-*līlā*. In this way the worship of the *rāgānugīya* Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas becomes very beautiful and expert as they meditate on the eternal daily pastimes of Śrī Gaurāṅga alongside with the eternal pastimes of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

Then Śrī Raghunātha dāsa thinks of his *guru* as being Śrī Mukunda's dear most devotee. The scriptures always order the devotees to think of the *guru* as being non-different from the beloved deity. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself tells Uddhava in Śrīmad Bhāgavata: *ācāryam mām vijānīyāt* (11.17.27)

"Know the *ācārya* to be Me". *guru kṛṣṇa rūpa hon sāstrera pramāna* (C.C. Ādi 1)

"The scriptures have proven that the *guru* is a form of Kṛṣṇa". In this connection Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has written:

śuddha bhaktās tv eke śrī guroḥ śrī śivaś ca bhagavatā mahābheda dṛṣṭim tat priyatamatvenaiva manyante

(Bhakti Sandarbha 213)

"But the pure devotees see the *guru*, as well as Śrī Śiva, as non-different from the Supreme Lord on the strength of their being His dear most beloveds."

Such devotees are very rare, though, hence Śrī Jīva used the word *eke* (one).

In this consciousness Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī always remembers his *guru* as being Mukunda's dear most beloved.

*śruti śāstre pratipādyā, āra niśiddhādi pada,
dharmādharmā sab parihari
nitya satya premāspada, vraje rādhā-kṛṣṇa pada,
bhajo mana divasa śarvarī*

"O mind! Give up all the rules which are set by the Vedic scriptures, as well as all things which are forbidden there, like all religiosity and irreligiosity. Instead, day and night worship the feet of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in Vraja which are eternal and real and which are the abode of love."

*vrajendra-nandana yei, śaci-suta hoilo sei,
ei bhāve gaurāṅga caraṇa
ohe mana! bhajo tumi, e minati kori āmi,
dibe prema anargha ratana*

"O mind! I humbly pray to you: 'Worship the lotus feet of Gaurāṅga in the mood of He Who is the son of Vrajendra and has now become the son of mother Śaci!', and He will give you priceless jewels of love of God!"

*gaura-govinda preṣṭha, śrī guru tāhāra preṣṭha,
kṛṣṇa-kṛpā guru-rūpa dhare
jivera māyā andhakāra, nāśibāre vrata yāra,
ghuriyā beḍāya ghare ghare*

"The *guru* is Gaura-Govinda's most beloved, for he is the form of Kṛṣṇa who wanders from house to house, dedicated to destroy the darkness of illusion in the hearts of the conditioned souls."

*govinda vilāsa ghara, yāra śuddha kalevara,
bhaja mana śrī guru-caraṇa
locana ānanda dātā, nāma prema-bhakti dhātā,
avatīrṇa patita pāvana*

"O mind! Worship the lotus feet of the *guru*, whose pure body is the abode of Govinda's pastimes and who has descended to save the fallen souls, to delight the eyes and to bestow upon us the chanting of the Holy Name and loving devotion."

TEACHING NR. 3:

***yadiccher āvāsaṁ vraja-bhuvi sa-rāgaṁ pratijanur
yuva-dvandvaṁ tac cet paricaritum ārād abhilaṣeḥ
svarūpaṁ śrī-rūpaṁ sa-gaṇam iha tasyāgrajam api
sphuṭam premnā nityaṁ smara nama tadā tvaṁ śṛṇu manaḥ***

yadi - if; *iccheḥ* - of the desire; *āvāsaṁ* - residence; *vraja-bhuvi* - in Vraja; *sa* - with; *rāgaṁ* - sacred passion; *prati* - every; *januḥ* - birth; *yuva* - youthful; *dvandvaṁ* - Couple; *tac* - that; *cet* - if; *paricaritum* - worship; *ārād* - near; *abhilaṣeḥ* - of the desire; *svarūpaṁ* - Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī; *śrī rūpaṁ* - Rūpa Gosvāmī; *sa-gaṇam* - with his group; *iha* - here; *tasya* - his; *agrajam* - elder brother, Sanātana Gosvāmī; *api* - even; *sphuṭam* - clearly; *premnā* - with love; *nityaṁ* - eternally; *smara* - remember; *nama* - bow down; *tadā* - then; *tvam* - you; *śṛṇu* - listen; *manaḥ* - mind.

O mind, listen! If you want to live in Vraja with great love birth after birth and if you want to attain the service of the youthful Couple of Vraja (Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa), then always lovingly remember and honour Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and his devotees as well as his elder brother, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī!

Commentary:

In this verse Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī too instructs his mind about the secrets of *rāga bhajana*. "O Mind! If you want to live in Vraja with love birth after birth..." — Now the question arises: Does a devotee have to take birth again and again?

The answer is: Devotional practice is not the same as *jñāna* or *yoga*-practice. The practice of *bhakti* is sweet and its resultant perfection is also sweet.

The experiences of *sādhana bhakti*, *bhāva bhakti* and *prema bhakti* are to some extent included in each other. The savour of *sādhanā bhakti* is not less.

Especially the taste of living in Vraja is so great and astonishing that the devotee desires to take birth there again and again to relish it and the Lord, Who fulfills all of His devotee's desires, also thinks: "Let My devotee savour the nectar of living in Vraja!"

The devotee humbly thinks that he doesn't have any devotion and prays:

*nātha yoni sahasreṣu yeṣu yeṣu vrajāmyaham
teṣu teṣvacyuta bhaktir acyute'stu sadā tvayi*

(Prahāda praying in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa)

"O Lord Acyuta! May I have unflinching devotion for You in all the thousands of births I may still have to take!"

The devotee humbly thinks that he is so sinful that he will have to take many births more in the material world in different species, but it doesn't matter to him as long as he has devotion to God in his heart!

Śrī Raghunātha dāsa speaks here about living in Vraja with love, birth after birth. How beautiful is the picture of living in Vraja with love!

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī and Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, who showered themselves with tears of love while feeling anxious separation from their beloved deity, are the best examples of how to live in Vraja with love. They only wore loin cloths and *chādars* (shawls) and floated on the waves of the nectar-ocean of the love of the *gopīs*. Everything in Vraja reminded them so much of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa that they wandered all over Vrajamaṇḍala, lamenting and searching for their beloved deities:

*he rādhe vraja devike ca lalite he nanda sūno kutaḥ
śrī govardhana kalpa pādapa-tale kālindi-vanye kutaḥ
ghoṣantāv iti sarvato vraja-pure khedair mahā vihvalau
vande rūpa-sanātanau raghu-yugau śrī jīva gopālakau*

(Śrīnivāsācārya, Śrī-Śrī Ṣaḍ-Gosvāmyaṣṭakam - 8)

"O Rādhē! O goddess of Vraja! O Lalite! O Son of Nanda! Where are You? Now I am in Vraja-*dhāma*, the abode of Your eternal pastimes, where You are immersed in the *rasa* of Your pastimes, diffusing unlimited sweetness! Are Your pastimes going on at the foot of a wish-yielding tree near Govardhana Hill, or are You enjoying on the bank of the Yamunā?"

In this way these six Gosvāmīs very anxiously cried out for Rādhā and Mādhava, and wandered throughout Vraja-maṇḍala looking for Them. I offer my obeisances unto these six Gosvāmīs!"

Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura has sung in his 'Prārthanā Gītikā (song 25)':

*karāṅga kaupina loiyā, cheṇḍā kāntha gāye diyā,
teyāgiyā sakala viṣaya*

*kṛṣṇa anurāga hobe, vrajera nikuñje kobe,
jāiyā koribo nijāloya*

"When will I become so attracted to Kṛṣṇa that I will give up all sense enjoyment, wear only a loincloth and a torn up *chādar*, and carry only a clay pot (*kāruā*) with me? When can I go to the *nikuñja* of Vraja and make them my home?"

*hari hari! kobe mora hoibe sudina?
phala mūla vṛndāvane, khābo divā avasāne,
bhamibo hoiyā udāsina*

"Hari Hari! When will that great day be mine when I can wander around in Vṛndāvana, not caring about anything, eating only fruits and roots at the end of the day?"

*śītala yamunā jale, snāna kori kutūhole,
premāveśe ānandita hoiyā
bāhu por bāhu tuli, vṛndāvane kuli kuli,
kṛṣṇa boli beḍābo kāndiyā*

"I will eagerly take a bath in the cool Yamunā-water and in great loving ecstasy I will raise my arms and wander all over Vṛndāvana, crying out 'Kṛṣṇa!'"

*dekhibo saṅketa sthāna, juḍābe tāpita prāṇa,
premāveśe gaḍāgaḍi dibo
kāhā rādhā prāṇeśvari, kāhā giri-varadhāri,
kāhā nātha boliyā ḍākibo*

"I will soothe my burning heart by seeing Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's meeting place and I will roll around there in great loving ecstasy, crying out: "Where are You, O Rādhē, Queen of my heart? O Lord Girivaradhāri! Where are You?"

This is a sweet picture depicting how the devotee lives in Vraja with *anurāga*, deep love. According to the experience of the *ācāryas*, this condition is even more relishable than directly meeting the Lord Himself.

The word *sarāgam* can also mean 'to live in Vraja together with other *rāgānugā* devotees'.

The devotion of Kṛṣṇa's eternal associates in Vraja is called *rāgātmika-bhakti*, and devotion in allegiance to them is called *rāgānugā-bhakti*.

*rāgamayi bhaktira hoy rāgātmika nāma;
tāhā śuni lubdha hoy kon bhāgyavān
lobhe vrajavāsī bhāve kore anugati;
śāstra yukti nahi māne rāgānugāra prakṛti*

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta Madhya 22)

"Devotion full of *rāga* (deep love) is called *rāgātmika* devotion. Any fortunate soul who becomes greedy for such devotion after hearing about it, will follow the mood of the inhabitants of Vraja without caring about scriptural injunctions or logical arguments. Such is the nature of *rāgānugā bhakti*." Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī writes in *Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu* (1.2.270):

*virājantam abhivyaktān vrajavāsī janādisu
rāgātmikam anusṛtā yā sa rāgānugocyate*

*śrīla sanātana rūpa, prema-bhakti rasa-kūpa,
vṛndāvane yāra mahā-jana
daśanete tṛṇa dhare, praṇati koroḥo tāre,
kuñja sevā koroḥa prārthanā*

"Śrīla Sanātana and Rūpa are wells full of the *rasa* of devotion and they are the *mahājanas* (leading saints) of Vṛndāvana.
O mind! Carry a straw between your teeth, offer obeisances unto them and pray to them for service in the *kuñjas*!"

*donhe ati kṛpāvān, dibe śrī caraṇe sthāna,
unnata ujvala rasa-nāma
añjali añjali bhari, dibe tomā kṛpā kori,
dhanya hobe yāhā kori pān!*

"They are both very merciful and they will give you a place at their feet, blessing you by making you drink handful after handful of the elevated erotic *rasa*."

TEACHING NR. 4:

***asad-vārtā-veśyā visṛja mati-sarvasva-haranīḥ
kathā mukti-vyāghryā na śṛṇu kila sarvātma-gilanīḥ
api tyaktvā lakṣmī-pati-ratim ito vyoma-nayanīm
vraje rādhā-kṛṣṇau sva-rati-maṇidau tvaṁ bhaja manaḥ***

asad - nonsense; *vārtā* - subjects; *veśyā* - prostitute; *visṛja* - give up; *mati* - discriminating intelligence; *sarvasva* - the treasure; *haranīḥ* - stealing; *kathā* - talks; *mukti* - liberation; *vyāghrā* - the tigress; *na* - not; *śṛṇu* - listen; *kila* - surely; *sarva* - complete; *ātma* - self; *gilanīḥ* - devours; *api* - even; *tyaktvā* - give up; *lakṣmī* - the goddess of fortune; *pati* - the Lord; *ratim* - love; *itaḥ* - here; *vyoma* - Vaikuṅṭha; *nayanīm* - takes; *vraje* - in Vraja; *rādhā-kṛṣṇau* - Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa; *sva* - own; *rati* - love; *maṇi* - jewel; *dau* - givers; *tvaṁ* - you; *bhaja* - worship; *manaḥ* - mind.

O mind! Give up the prostitute of speaking and hearing nonsense, which will rob you of the treasure of your heart! Don't listen to the words of the tigress of liberation which swallows your whole individuality and also give up your love for the Lord of Lakṣmī (Nārāyaṇa), for that will take you to the majestic realm of Vaikuṅṭha! Worship instead Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in Vraja, the givers of the jewels of Love for Themselves!

Commentary:

Now Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī begins to describe the powerful obstacles to *bhajana* and to give very valuable instructions about the life of *sādhana* in this *Manaḥ Śikṣā* on the pretext of instructing his own mind.

In Vedic culture, instructions come in the form of 'do's' and 'don'ts', and the 'don'ts' are mentioned first. "O Mind! Give up your association with the prostitute called *asad-vārtā*, unreal topics, for she will take everything away from your consciousness!"

Except for topics of Kṛṣṇa, every topic is unreal. Our hearts are contaminated by desires for enjoyment of dead matter and fruitive results, and it is very difficult to wash that contamination off

on one's own strength, since the individual soul has only very limited power. The senses are very powerful, independent and fixed on their material objects and without the mercy of the Lord, Who makes the devotee relish His own sweetness, no one can become free from their control on his own strength.

The devotee should nevertheless do his best to fix his mind on Kṛṣṇa and withdraw it from everything else.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu personally told Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī: *grāmya kathā na śunibe, grāmya vārtā na kohibe* "Don't speak about village-topics and don't hear any village-topics".

grāmya-vārtā means topics on other subject matters than God. Both hearing and speaking nonsense will disturb the mind and will obstruct spiritual progress. Some people think that *grāmya-kathā* means only 'speaking about women', but Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī writes in his commentary on Śrīmad Bhāgavata 3.28.3: *grāmya-dharma nivṛttiś ca*: village religion (*grāmya-dharma*) consists of religiosity, economic development, and sense enjoyment¹.

Hence *grāmya-vārtā* should be understood as any topic not related to Kṛṣṇa. 'sat' means that, which is real in all three phases of time: past, present and future. *Asat* is exactly the opposite of that.

All temporary creations of *māyā* are *asat* and hearing or speaking about *asat*-topics must be given up, for they take away everything from the discriminating intelligence.

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī writes at the end of his Laghu-Tosaṇī-commentary on Śrīmad Bhāgavata's verse 10.51.36, that the God-consciousness of a devotee who attains the association of great devotees is called **the seed of rati**:

sat saṅgamena raty-aṅkura rūpaiva matir jāyata iti

"Discussion of nonsense topics destroys this seed of *rati*, which is the all-in-all of the consciousness, and in this way the vine of devotion which was planted by the grace of *guru* and Vaiṣṇava can't grow in the devotee's heart."

Just as a seemingly sweet and beautiful-looking prostitute takes away a man's wealth, beauty and reputation, so too the prostitute of *asad-vārtā* takes away the *mati*, or discriminating intelligence, from the living being.

Those who always speak and hear nonsense will think more and more about those subjects and less and less about Kṛṣṇa, until the whole consciousness has been taken over by nonsense thoughts, not allowing any thoughts of Kṛṣṇa to enter anymore. Especially a renunciant should be cautious that he does not fall from his vow by being callous and allowing his mind to become absorbed in bodily consciousness.

Devotion is pure when it has only the pure motivation to satisfy the Lord. Devotion becomes superficial when it has other purposes. The worst kind of *asad-vārtā* is hearing and speaking about other people's faults.

Lord Caitanya said in Caitanya Bhāgavata:

madyapera niṣkṛti āchaye kon kāle; para-carakera gati kabhu nāhi bhāle

"A drunkard can be redeemed at any time, but the destination of someone who slanders others is never good."

The slanderer always sees other people's faults before him and gets more and more taste for speaking about them, so his mouth gradually becomes very coarse. As a result the saintly attitude will disappear from his heart and make place for an unsaintly attitude to sit down there. This is why hearing and speaking nonsense has been compared to a prostitute.

One may ask:

"Well, if the three goals of human life, namely religiosity, economic development and sense enjoyment are rejectable, then we can hear about (the fourth goal) liberation!"

But Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī says here:

kathā mukti-vyāghrā na śṛṇu kila sarvātma gilaniḥ

¹ *grāmyas traivargiko dharmah tasmān nivṛtīh*

"Do also not listen to the tigress called liberation, who swallows your whole *ātma*!"

Just as a tigress devours the whole body, talks about liberation devour the body, mind, intelligence and the individual soul². The individual soul is an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa, and thus the four goals of human life, religiosity, economic development, sense gratification, and liberation are all forms of deceit. Amongst them, liberation is the greatest form of deceit, for it makes the fortune of Kṛṣṇa-*bhajana* vanish forever.

*ajñāna tamera nāma kohiye kaitava;
dharma-artha-kāma mokṣa vāñchā ādi saba
tāra madhye mokṣa vāñchā kaitava pradhāna;
yāhā hoite kṛṣṇa-bhakti hoy antardhāna*

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta, Ādi 1st chapter)

The soul is an eternal servant of God and when it desires its own sensual happiness the soul is cheating.

This cheating goes on under the names of *dharma* (religiosity), *artha* (economic development), *kāma* (sense gratification), and *mokṣa* (liberation).

A person who desires liberation has become so blinded by desires for personal happiness that in his desire to become free from the suffering of birth, death and the three kinds of material misery (caused by his own body and mind, by the elements and by other living beings) he also destroys his servant-master relationship with God forever.

"Śrī Kṛṣṇa is my master, and I am His servant, being an individual living entity!"

This feeling of relationship is called *bhakti*, or devotion and can be awakened by the grace of a saint as long as the living entity is still engrossed in *dharma*, *artha* or *kāma*, but when the desire for liberation awakens and one merges with God, the servant-master relationship disappears forever and there is no more possibility of any exchange of love. This is opposed to the servant-consciousness and is therefore the major kind of deceit.

Just as one becomes afraid of hearing the word 'tigress', so a pure devotee also becomes afraid of hearing the word 'liberation'.

Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya told Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu: *mukti śabda kohite mone hoy ghrṇā trāsa; bhakti śabda kohite mone hoy to ullāsa*

"When I hear the word 'liberation' my mind feels hatred and fear, but when I hear the word 'devotion' my mind becomes very happy."

Therefore it has been forbidden to listen to the words of the tigress named *mukti* which swallows one's entire self.

And if any reverentially worshipping devotee then says:

'O Gosvāmī! I understand! You have given up everything, desiring devotion to the Lord of Vaikuṅṭha, Śrī Nārāyaṇa!', then Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī says:

api tyaktvā lakṣmī-pati ratim: "Also give up your reverential devotion for Śrī Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa which leads you to Vaikuṅṭha!"

Reverential devotion decreases the possibility to love Kṛṣṇa spontaneously, therefore those who want a pure loving relationship with the Lord do not desire such a respectful worship.

aiśvarya jñāna prādhānye saṅkocita prīti; dekhile nā māne aiśvarya - kevalāra rīti:

"The nature of *kevalā*, or pure and sweet devotion, is that the devotee may see Kṛṣṇa's prowess, but he does not heed it, for knowledge of Kṛṣṇa's prowess will cause his spontaneous love to shrink."

The devotees whose love is mixed with awe and reverence can't love the Lord like this.

² *ātma* means body, mind, intelligence, life, nature and ego.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in Caitanya Caritāmṛta (Ādi 4):

*aiśvarya jñānete sab jagata miśrita;
aiśvarya śīthila preme nāhi mora pṛita
āmāre īśvara māne - āpanāke hīna;
tāra preme vaśa āmi na hoi adhīna
mora putra mora sakhā mora prāṇa-pati;
ei bhāve kore yei more śuddha bhakti
āpanāke boḍo māne - āmāre sama hīna;
sarva bhāve āmi hoi - tāhāra adhīna*

"The whole world is pervaded by awareness of My prowess and majesty, but such weakened love does not please Me.

I am not subdued by the devotion of someone who considers Me to be the Supreme Lord and thinks of himself as low and inferior. I am subdued in all respects by the love of anyone who is purely devoted to Me, thinking: 'He is my son, He is my friend or He is my lover', and who thinks that he's greater than or equal to Me."

Śrīmat Sanātana Gosvāmī wrote in his 'Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta' that when Śrī Gopa Kumāra, who had a relationship of pure friendship with Kṛṣṇa in Vraja, came to Vaikuṅṭhaloka, he could not become happy even by seeing Lord Nārāyaṇa due to His vastly majestic appearance.

One day Lord Nārāyaṇa, Who fulfills all the desires of His devotees, appeared before Gopa Kumāra in the form of Kṛṣṇa, the son of Nanda. The goddess of fortune then became Śrī Rādhā, Dharādevī became Candrāvalī and all the devotees of Vaikuṅṭha became cowherd boys, but because the whole display took place in the majestic surroundings of Vaikuṅṭha, it could not please Gopa Kumāra, not even when Lord Nārāyaṇa imitated Kṛṣṇa's pastimes of tending the cows in one of Vaikuṅṭhaloka's gardens!

Śrī Gopa Kumāra himself said:

*tathāpi tasmin parameśa buddhe vaikuṅṭha lokāgamana smṛteś ca
sañjāyamānādara gauravena tat prema hānya sva mano na tṛpyet*

(Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta 2.4.113)

"Still I considered Him to be the Supreme Lord and I remembered that I had come to Vaikuṅṭhaloka. The reverential feelings which arose in my heart at that time hampered my sweet love and thus my mind could not feel satisfied." Vaikuṅṭhaloka or the Paravyoma is a place filled with such *aiśvarya*. So much so that if Śrī Nārāyaṇa assumes the form of Śrī Vrajendra-Nandana there to fulfill the special desires of His devotees and even performs His pastimes there, still the *aiśvarya-buddhi* can't disappear there on the strength of the location.

With this in mind Śrī Raghunātha has used the words *vyoma-nayanīm*.

Of all the *bhāvas* of Vraja the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas again practice the greatest one, known as *gopī-bhāva*.

*gopikāra mon hārite nāre nārāyaṇa
nārāyaṇera kā kathā, śrī kṛṣṇa āpane;
gopikāra hāsya korāite hoy nārāyaṇe
catur-bhuja mūrti dekhāya gopī-gaṇera āge;
sei kṛṣṇe gopikāra nahe anurāge*

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta Madhya 9)

"(Kṛṣṇa, the Original Personality of Godhead, steals Lakṣmī's mind, but) Nārāyaṇa can't steal the *gopikās'* minds! What to speak of Nārāyaṇa, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself even became Nārāyaṇa to make the *gopikās* laugh! Although Kṛṣṇa assumed Lord Viṣṇu's four-armed form, the *gopikās* did not feel attracted to 'that Kṛṣṇa'".

*gopikā bhāvera ei sudṛḍha niscoy;
vrajendra-nandana vinā anyatra nā hoy
śyāmasundara śikhi-piñcha guñjā vibhūṣaṇa;
gopa-veśa tri-bhaṅgima murali-vadana
iha chāḍi kṛṣṇa yadi hoy anyākāra;
gopikāra bhāva nā yāy nikaṭa tāhāra*

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta Ādi 17)

"The mood of the *gopīs* is based on the firm determination that they will not have anyone else but Kṛṣṇa, the prince of Vraja. If Kṛṣṇa assumes any other form then that of flute-playing Śyāmasundara with His threefold bending form, His peacock-feather crest, His *guñjā*-bead-ornamentation and His cowherders' dress, the *gopīs* will not go to Him"

Finally Śrī Raghunātha dāsa says: *vraje rādhā-kṛṣṇau sva rati maṇidau tvaṁ bhaja manaḥ*

"O mind! Just worship Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in Vraja which are the bestowers of the jewel of love for Themselves!"

Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa will give the sweetest possible love for Their lotus feet, the love of the maidservants of Śrī Rādhā, to those who worship Their lotus feet and thus bless the devotees.

This is the crown jewel of all kinds of love of God, and it is most pure, just like golden molten a hundred thousand times.

Śrī Narottama Ṭhākura Mahāśaya sings in Prema Bhakti Candrikā:

*rādhā-kṛṣṇa koro dhyāna, svapne-o nā bolo āna,
prema vinā āna nāhi cāo
yugala kiśora prema, yeno lakṣa-bāna hema,
ārati pirīti rase dhyāu*

"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!"

The duty of *prema* is to bless the loving devotee with the sweet savour of the beloved deity. This *prema* will immerse the worshipper of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in an ocean of bliss by making him relish Their endless sweetness.

*kanaka ketakī rāi, śyāma marakata kī
darapa darapa koru cura
naṭavara śekharinī, naṭinīra śiromaṇi
duñhu guṇe duñhu mana jhura*

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

*śrī mukha sundara vara, hema nīla kānti dhara,
bhāva bhūṣaṇa koru śobhā
nīla pīta vāsa dhara, gaurī śyāma manohara,
antarera bhāve duñhu lobhā*

"Their beautiful faces shine with golden and bluish lustre and are furthermore beautified with ornaments of ecstatic love. Gaurī (Rādhikā) wears an enchanting blue *sārī* and Śyāma wears a yellow *dhotī*. In this way They reveal Their innermost desires (for Each other)."

There are innumerable sweet forms of God eternally manifested in the spiritual kingdom and different devotees describe Them in different ways, according to their own mood, but the intelligent devotees may ask:

'Which form of God is more sweetly described than the one of Śrī Kṛṣṇa!'

There is no comparison to the sweetness of the divine Pair, there is no comparison to the love of the Yugala Kīśora!

Śrī Raghunātha therefore says:

*he mon! minati dhara, sadā parityāga koro,
asad vārtā veśyā kulaṭāke
matī saravasa dhane, gopane kori haraṇe,
sei kāṅgāla koriyāche tomāke*

"O mind! Humbly pray! Always leave the prostitute of hearing and speaking nonsense, who secretly steals everything from your consciousness and turns you into a beggar!"

*mukti vyāghrīra kathā, se prasāṅga hoy yathā,
karṇe kabhu na hoy śravaṇa
vyāghrīra kavale pore, sa-śarīre gile tāre,
tāra doyā nāhiko kokhono*

"Never lend an ear to the talks of the tigress named liberation! When you fall into her mouth you will be swallowed with your whole body. She never has any mercy!"

*sei rūpa mukti kothā, se prasāṅga hoy yathā,
śravaṇa mātṛe mukti grasta hoy
āmi nitya kṛṣṇa dāsa, e sambandha kore grāsa,
sāyujya loite vāñchā hoy*

"Simply by hearing about liberation incidentally or by desiring *sāyujya-mukti* you will be devoured by her, along with the identification of 'I am Kṛṣṇa's eternal servant'."

*lakṣmī nārāyaṇe bhakti, koro na tāy āsakti,
āśīrbāda koriyā grahaṇa
vraje rādhā-kṛṣṇa pada, amūlyā se sampada,
anurāge bhaja mora mon!*

"Don't be attached to devotion for Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa and don't accept Their blessings, but lovingly worship the priceless treasure of Rādhā's and Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet in Vraja!"

*duhuṅ ati kṛpāvān, tribhuvane kore gāna,
yadi bhaje kon bhāgyavān
vrajera viśuddha prema, yeno jāmbu-nada hema,
se ratana tāre kore dāna*

"They are glorified by all the three worlds as being very merciful, and if any fortunate soul worships Them, then They will give that person the great jewel consisting of pure love of Vraja which is compared to gold taken from the Jāmbu-river!"

TEACHING NR. 5:

*asac-ceṣṭā-kaṣṭa-prada-vikaṭa-pāsālibhir iha
prakāmaṁ kāmādi-prakaṭa-patha-pāti-vyatikaraṁ
gale baddhvā hanye'ham iti bakabhid-vartmapa-gaṇe
kuru tvam phutkārān avati sa yathā tvam mana itaḥ*

asat - wicked; *ceṣṭā* - endeavours; *kaṣṭa* - problems; *prada* - giving; *vikaṭa* - great; *pāsālibhiḥ* - with ropes; *iha* - here; *prakāmaṁ* - intense; *kāma* - lust; *ādi* - etc.; *prakaṭa* - manifest; *patha-pāti* highwaymen; *vyatikaraṁ* - by the group; *gale* - around the neck; *baddhvā* - having bound; *hanye* -will die; *aham* - I; *iti* - thus; *bakabhid* - Kṛṣṇa; *vartmapa* — highway police; *gaṇe* - in the group; *kuru* - do; *tvam* - you; *phutkārān* - scream; *avati* - protects; *sa* - he; *yathā* - as; *tvam* - you; *manaḥ* - O mind!; *itaḥ* - here.

O mind! Anxiously cry out to the highway police of Bakabhid (Kṛṣṇa's devotees): "I 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.

Commentary:

When we are surrendering to the Lord's lotus feet it is necessary to remove all obstacles on the path of *sādhana*.

We can't advance on the path unless we remove the thorns lying on it. Some of them are external thorns and some are internal thorns. In the previous verse the poisonous results of associating with materialists and hearing material topics from them was discussed. These are the external thorns and now in this verse we will discuss the internal thorns:

lust, anger, greed, delusion, pride, and envy.

These six enemies of the spiritual soul are powerful obstacles on the way which pull the devotee's heart and mind into the realm of the sense objects.

Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī compares these six enemies with highwaymen who attack helpless travellers and rob them of all their possessions.

These enemies are publicly stealing the wealth of a practicing devotee's *bhajana* and then strangle him. When Śrī Raghunātha says: "These highwaymen bind me around the neck with these terrifying ropes of wicked deeds which are striking me as much as they want", he speaks in his own name out of mercy for the devotees who are struggling with these obstacles and who are in a deplorable condition.

asac ceṣṭā means 'endeavour for temporary accomplishments'.

When one thinks of sense objects, the enemy named lust gradually appears and forcibly keeps the heart and mind of the devotee bound to endeavours for sense gratification. These material thoughts are compared here to the terrifying ropes of highwaymen. What poisonous fruits grow from the tree of sensual contemplation!

*dhyāyato viṣayān pumsaḥ
saṅgas teṣūpajāyate
saṅgāt sañjāyate kāmāḥ
kāmāt krodho'bhijāyate
krodhād bhavati sammohaḥ
sammohāt smṛti vibhramāḥ
smṛti bhraṁśāt buddhi-nāso
buddhi nāśāt praṇaśyati*

(Bhagavad Gītā 2. 62-63)

"When one contemplates the objects of the senses, such as sounds and touches, thinking them to be the causes of happiness, attachment arises, from this attachment comes lust and when these lusty desires become frustrated, anger swoons up and from anger delusion overtakes, which steals away one's healthy discrimination of what is to be done and what is not to be done. When one is in illusion, memory is lost, thus one forgets that one is supposed to make efforts in doing *bhajana*. When memory is lost one's spiritual intelligence which causes one to persevere in spiritual advancement, is destroyed, and when the intelligence is destroyed everything is lost.

The devotee will then have to wander around in the material world in different species, birth after birth." (This is the gist of Śrīpāda Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's commentary on these verses).

A helpless traveller can never escape from the grip of these powerful highwaymen on his own strength, but if there's a powerful policeman or a soldier nearby, he can loudly call out for help, so that the policeman can save him.

In the same way the highway police of Bakabhid, or the devotees of Kṛṣṇa, will come to save the struggling soul from the attack of the six highwaymen called *lust, anger, greed, delusion, pride, and envy*.

In such times of danger one has to call out for the devotees with great pity.
Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura sings:

*e saṁsāra bāṭuyāre, kāma pāṣe bāndhi māre,
phukāra koroḥo hari dāsa
koroḥo bhakata saṅga, prema kathā rasa-raṅga,
tabe hoy vipad vināśa*

(Prema Bhakti Candrikā)

"The highwaymen of material desires are binding and killing 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."

A person who wants to be freed from the grip of highwaymen like lust and who wants to fill his life with devotion is completely dependent on the association of the Vaiṣṇavas.

In the association of devotees one's *bhajana* becomes deep and one conquers over all obstacles to attain the supreme goal: **love of God**. As a concomitant factor one also acquires all divine qualities such as freedom from lust, non-violence, non-envy, good behaviour, equanimity, control of the mind and senses, humility and friendliness.

māṛjana hoy bhajana, sādhu saṅga anukṣaṇa, ajñāna avidyā parājaya

"Bhajana purifies. Always associate with saints, so that your ignorance will be defeated".

The purity that emanates from the body of a *sādhu* will bless even a human being who practices no *bhajana* with the gift of the great wealth of *bhajana*.

The darkness in their hearts which are contaminated by vile things like lust, is suddenly removed by the light of devotion which is diffused by the grace and the association of these devotees.

Is there therefore any doubt that when the example of the sinless lives of the great, pure-hearted saints always remains before the eyes, ordinary human beings can also become enthusiastic to attain the highest goal of life and that by the grace of these saints their insignificant material desires will disappear from their hearts?

In his Prema Bhakti Candrikā Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura has written that by associating with great souls people who are attached to sense-gratification will be able to give up their attachments and turn towards God.

Such devotees are the greatest friends. The practicing devotees can turn the poison of the six enemies into nectar and become immortal by engaging these enemies in Kṛṣṇa's service.

Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura sings:

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

"I offer my lust to the service of Kṛṣṇa, my anger towards those who envy 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!"

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

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

Śrī Raghunātha dāsa therefore says: "O mind! Call out to the devotees of Kṛṣṇa, which are like powerful policemen who will protect you from the hands of these powerful robbers. The wealth of your *bhajana* will then be in safe hands!"

*he mon yukati śuno, kāma krodhādi ripu-gaṇa,
mahā śakti-śālī bāṭoyāle
asat ceṣṭā kaṣṭa-prada, bhayaṅkara granthi yoto,
sei ḍore bāndhi mora gole*

"O mind, listen with reason! Lust, anger, and greed are like powerful highwaymen who are keeping me bound around the neck with their terrible and painful ropes of wicked deeds."

*vināśa korite cāya, asahya yātanā tāya,
pade pade hoi acetana
emon bāndhava ke, āmā uddhāribe ye,
se bandhana koriyā mocana*

"They want to destroy me and they give me intolerable pain, so much so that I fall unconscious at every step. Who is that friend who will save me and loosen this bondage?"

*he mon kātara svare, koro tumi phutkāre,
kothā ācho bakārīra jana?!
sumālya tilaka dhārī, nāmāṅkita aṅga bhari,
kothā ṭhākura vaiṣṇavera gaṇa*

"O mind, cry out with an anxious voice: 'Where are you, O devotees of Bakārī, wearing Tulasī-beads around the neck, *tilaka* on the forehead and Kṛṣṇa's Holy Names written all over your bodies? Where are you, O Vaiṣṇavas?'"

*chay ripu nāśa kori, rakṣā koro keśe dhari,
kṛṣṇa boli koriyā huṅkāra
natuvā parāṇa gelo, śrī kṛṣṇa viṣṇu bhelo,
kothā ācho bhakta parivāra?*

"Destroy these six enemies and save me by roaring out loud the name of Kṛṣṇa, otherwise my life will leave me and I will forget Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Where are you, O host of devotees?"

TEACHING NR. 6:

***are cetah prodyat-kapaṭa-kuṭināṭi-bhara-khara-
kṣaran-mūtre snātvā dahasi katham ātmānam api mām
sadā tvam gāndharvā-giridhara-pada-prema-vilasat-
sudhāmbhodhau snātvā tvam api nitarām mām ca sukhaya***

are -O!; *cetaḥ* - mind; *prodyat* - rising; *kaṭa* - deceitfulness; *kuṭināṭi* - diplomacy; *bhara* - full; *khara* - ass; *kṣarat* - trickling; *mūtre* - in the urine; *snātvā* - having bathed; *dahasi* - you burn; *katham* - why; *ātmānam* - yourself; *api* - even; *mām* - me; *sadā* - always; *tvam* - you; *gāndharvā* - Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī; *giridhara* - Kṛṣṇa; *pada* - feet; *prema* - love; *vilasat* - shines; *sudhā* - nectar; *ambodhau* - in the ocean; *snātvā* - having bathed; *svām* - yourself; *api* - even; *nitaram* - always; *mām* - me; *ca* - also; *sukhaya* - gladden.

**O mind! Why are you burning me and yourself by bathing in the trickling ass-urine consisting of obvious deceitfulness and diplomacy?
Always bathe in the glistening nectar-ocean of love for Gāndharvā and Giridhārī (Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa) and make me and yourself happy forever!**

Commentary:

Through some indescribable good fortune a soul whose heart is pierced by lusty desires comes to the path of devotion, but then the vices he is accustomed to through innumerable births are still pulling at him.

The living being is Kṛṣṇa's eternal servant, therefore every desire other than the desire to serve Kṛṣṇa is falsification (deceit) of his *svarūpa*, his eternal constitutional position. Vices such as diplomacy, deceitfulness, forbidden behaviour and violence towards others which come forth from his being accustomed to freedom in physical enjoyment, are creating so many obstacles on the devotee's way which stop him from advancing.

According to the dictionary the word '*kaṭa*' can mean 'deceit', 'slyness', 'chicanery', 'fraud', 'swindling', 'untruthful behaviour', 'irreligious behaviour' and 'sin'.

satyam jñānam ānandam: truth is knowledge and bliss.

How can the Supreme Truth (*satyam param dhīmahī*) Śrī Kṛṣṇa ever be pleased with our hearing, chanting, *pūjā*, *smaraṇa* and *japa* when we are still lying and cheating (ourselves and others)?

When that lying, fraudulent and cheating propensity which is even considered a sin in ordinary worldly scriptures on morality, comes in contact with *bhagavad-bhajana*, it is no longer an ordinary sin but turns into a **great offense**.

In an unreal heart this cheating and stealing propensity will gradually extend towards the *sādhu*, *guru* and the Lord also.

It is said 'Don't become a ghost by dying in Gayā', or: all the ghosts can be delivered in Gayā, except for Gayā's own ghosts! All cheating can be forgiven and can be removed by the *sādhus* and the *guru*, but if we cheat the *sādhus* and the *guru* we will be doomed.

Still we do not repent for this in any way, rather we try to cover up our sinful activities with a veil of hypocrisy and excuses, like: "There was no sin committed, actually it was allright!"

But the fortunate saints do not misbehave like that. They repent after feeling the burning sensation of regret within themselves for any injustice they may have committed and they become eager to atone in a proper way.

Śrīpāda Raghunātha has therefore compared this burning sensation with a bath in the trickling urine of an ass.

The word *kuṭināṭi* means ‘unreal activities’, ‘absorption in other things’, ‘mercilessness’, ‘violence’ and other things.

asat kriyā kuṭināṭi, chāḍo anya paripāṭi
(Prema Bhakti Candrikā)

"Give up all these clever tricks and unreal activities known as *kuṭināṭi*!"

Bodily consciousness is the main obstacle in our lives of *bhājana*, and it is the main cause of the devotee performing unreal, merciless, and violent activities. Therefore Śrī Narottama Ṭhākura has said:

dehe nā koriho āsthā, morile se yama śāstā, duḥkhera samudra karma-gati

"Don't put your faith in your material body, for when you die you will be punished by Yamarāja. The course of *karma* is an ocean of suffering."

We don't pay attention to insignificant errors, but in the end they become very harmful obstacles to the execution of *bhakti*.

"I have heard from the scriptures and the *sādhus* that all my *sādhana* is useless like an elephant's bath if I consider Śrī Gurudeva to be an ordinary human being, and I try to bring that message to others also, but actually I am dealing with my Śrī Gurudeva in a worldly manner, quarrelling and arguing with him and at times treating him even worse than an ordinary human being. I profess that blasphemy of a Vaiṣṇava is an offense to the Holy Name, but meanwhile I like to make my mouth coarse by meeting with five or ten people and speaking bad about other devotees."

Lying and misbehaving towards others is an ordinary sin, but when this is done with a Vaiṣṇava it becomes an offense and destroys our devotion.

"I have only read this, but when I come to the market I'm lying during business transactions, and if someone by accident gives me too much change back I'm very happy with the profit that I stick in my pocket!"

Compassion, forgiveness, and humility are some of the ornaments (virtues) of the great devotees. *dayā* means that the heart melts when one sees the suffering of others; this is a stream of nectar. The hearts of Kṛṣṇa's devotees are naturally (soft and delicious) like nectar and are therefore naturally filled with compassion. "But as a result of my bodily consciousness a person like me is always giving different kinds of misery to the saintly Vaiṣṇavas with his words and behaviour, what to speak of ordinary people? I even consider it a kind of amusement to give all kinds of pain to others, it has become a kind of habit!" This habit will ultimately take the form of a terrible monster of violence and hatred.

Śrī Raghunātha says: "O mind! You are burning yourself to death by constantly bathing in the burning ass-urine of deceitfulness and diplomacy, and you're constantly burning me (the soul) with it as well! There's no other way to end this calamity and soothe yourself than to enter into the nectar-lake of love of God, that's why I say: *sadā tvam gāndharvā giridhara prema vilasat sudhāmbhodhau snātvā svam api nitarām mām ca sukhaya*. "Always bathe in the nectar ocean of the love of Gāndharvā and Giridhara and make yourself and me happy!"

kṛṣṇa prema sunirmala, yeno śuddha gaṅgā jala,
sei prema amṛtera sindhu
nirmala se anurāge, nā lukāye anya dāge,
śukla vastre yaiche masī bindu

"Love for Kṛṣṇa is spotless like pure Gaṅgā-water. It is like an ocean of nectar. It is so spotless that it does not leave any other stain, which would appear just like a drop of ink on a white cloth."

*suddha prema sukha sindhu, pāi tāra eka bindu,
sei bindu jagata ḍubāya
kohibāra yogya nahe, tathāpi bāule kohe,
kohile vā kevā pātiyāya*

Caitanya Caritāmṛta (Madhya 2)

"The whole world can be inundated by even a single drop from that blissful ocean of pure love. Actually this should not be revealed, but still a madman like me speaks. Who would believe this, even if it was proclaimed?"

That Kṛṣṇa, a single drop of love for Whom can or does inundate the whole world, is Himself drowning in a single drop of love of Śrī Rādhā! The Mahājanas say in Kṛṣṇa's name:

tuyā anurāge prema, samudre ḍubiyāchi āmi, āmāre tuliyā loho pāre "(O Rādhē!)

"I'm drowning in the ocean of Your love (for Me), and only You can help Me cross it!"
It's easily understood then that a worshiper of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa floats in an ocean of ecstatic love for Them, which can't be explained with words.

*yugala caraṇe prīti, parama ānanda tathi,
rati prema-maya parabandhe
kṛṣṇa nāma rādhā-nāma, upāya koro rasa dhāma,
caraṇe poriyā parānande*

"Love for the lotus feet of the Divine Couple is a most blissful thing, filled with ecstatic *rati* and *prema*. Take to the Holy Names of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā which are the abode of *rasa*, falling at Their feet in topmost ecstasy!"

*prema bhakti sudhānidhi, tāhe ḍubo niravadhi,
āra yoto kṣāra-nidhi prāya
nirantara sukha pābe, sakala santāpa yābe,
para tattva kohinu upāya*

(Prema Bhakti Candrikā)

"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!"

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has written that Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī was always rolling and turning in the billowing waves on top of the vast ocean of love for Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa:

rādhā-kṛṣṇa prema mahārṇavormi nivahe ghūrṇan sadā divyati.

To teach the conditioned souls he has descended to the platform of a *sādhaka* struggling with *anarthas* and he taught them by example that there's no other way to extinguish the fire of conditioned life than to swim in the love-nectar which trickles from Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet.

In this way he directs the conditioned souls to the path of *prema* on the pretext of preaching to his own mind.

*he mon! durbodha cita, nāhi jāno nija hita,
kapāṭa kuṭināṭi yoto hoy
viṣayābhisandhi yoto, anyatra āveśa cita,
gardabhera mūtra tulya hoy*

"O mind! O Foolish heart! You don't know what's for your own good! Don't you know that deceitfulness, diplomacy, endeavours for sense gratification and bodily consciousness are all just like the urine of an ass?"

*se khara-mūtre snāna kori, nije-o āmāre dhari,
dagdha keno koro nirantara
prema bhakti sudhānidhi, tāhe ḍubo niravadhi,
ei dīna jane sukhi koro*

"Why are you constantly bathing yourself and me in this urine of an ass? Instead always dive into the nectar-ocean of loving devotion and make this wretch happy!"

*śrī gāndharvā giridhārī, pāda-padme thāko poḍi,
tabe se catura boli tore.
tumi āmi dui jane, līlāmṛta āsvādane,
divā-nīśi hao nā vibhore*

"Always stay at the lotus feet of Śrī Gāndharvā and Giridhārī, then I will call you clever! Why shouldn't you and I be absorbed in relishing the nectar of Their pastimes day and night?"

TEACHING NR. 7:

*pratiṣṭhāśa dhr̥ṣṭā śvapaca-ramaṇī me hṛdi naṭet
katham sādhu premā spr̥ṣati śucir etan nanu manaḥ
sadā tvam sevasva prabhu-dayita-sāmantam atulam
yathā tvam niṣkāśya tvaritam iha tam veśayati saḥ*

pratiṣṭhā - distinction, position; *āśā* - desire; *dhr̥ṣṭā* - shameless; *śvapaca* - dogeating; *ramaṇī* - woman; *me* - my; *hṛdi* - heart; *naṭet* - dances; *katham* - how; *sādhu* - beautiful ; *prema* - love; *spr̥ṣati* - touches; *śucih* - pure; *etad* - this; *nanu* - indeed; *manaḥ* - mind; *sadā* - always; *tvam* - you; *sevasva* - serve; *prabhu* - to the Lord; *dayita* - dear; *sāmantam* - generals; *atulam* - incomparable; *yathā* - so that; *tam* - her; *niṣkāśya* - expelling; *tvaritam* - quickly; *iha* - here; *tam* - that love; *veśayati* - make to enter; *saḥ* - it.

O mind! The shameless dog-eating woman of the desire for prestige, distinction, and position is dancing in my heart. How can beautiful and pure love of God ever touch it then? Therefore always serve the matchless leading devotees who are dear to the Lord, so that this pariah-woman can quickly be chased out of the heart and love of God may enter it!

Commentary:

In this verse Śrī Raghunātha describes a terrible vice in the life of a devotee, named *pratiṣṭhāśā*. Even if we manage to give up lust, anger, speaking or hearing nonsense, bad company, greed and diplomacy, the desire for prestige and distinction does not want to leave our hearts, therefore it is compared to the shameless wife of a dog-eater.

"I am a great scholar, renunciant, devotee, lecturer, and preacher! Who is there as great as I am? I will lord it over the society of devotees and everyone will bow down at my feet!" This desire is called *pratiṣṭhāśā* and if a devotee wants to introduce himself to neophytes according to his *bhajana* it serves as quicksand which will suck the boat of his *sādhanā* to hell.

This is the greatest and final obstacle to surrender for a practicing devotee, and this one does not allow itself to be caught so easily. Therefore it is mentioned in the appendix of the Hari Bhakti Vilāsa (Vaiṣṇava-smṛti):

*sarva tyāge'py aheyāyāḥ sarvānartha bhuvās ca te
kuryuḥ pratiṣṭhā viṣṭhāyā yatnam asparśane varam*

"Even those who were able to renounce everything were not able to renounce the desire for distinction. Therefore an intelligent person who desires *prema* should take care not to touch this stool-like desire."

In Caitanya Caritāmṛta this is called one of the weeds that cause the vine of devotion to suffocate. Weeds are terrible things that grow on the same water that has sprinkled the flowering vine of devotion. Such water is compared to the process of hearing and chanting Kṛṣṇa's glories.

*seka-jala pāiyā upasākhā bādhi yāy;
stabdha hoiyā mūla śākhā bādHITE nā pāy
prathamei upasākhā koriye chedana;
tabe mūla śākhā bādhi yāy vṛndāvana*

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta, Madhya 19)

"The original plant can't grow anymore when there are too many weeds around. All the sprinkled water (of hearing and chanting) will go to the weeds (of the desire for prestige). First one must uproot the weeds, and then the original vine can grow up to Vṛndāvana."

The desire for distinction can only appear in the heart of a devotee who has no taste for hearing and chanting the glories of the Lord (*bhajana*). The only target of the devotees who are free from desires, who are pure-hearted and who are fixed in worship of God is *prema*, love of God. These devotees are able to cast the vice of *pratiṣṭhāśā* far away by being ornamented by virtues like humility. As soon as one gives shelter to this shameless dog-eating woman in the heart even once the result will be terrible, for this woman is never alone. She will call her dog-eating husband named *mātsarya* (envy), the inability to tolerate another person's superiority. '*parotkarṣāsahanam mātsaryam*'. There is no more disgusting mentality than this, and it will turn a human heart into one of an animal.

The seed of the husband named *mātsarya* will conceive twin children in the womb of his wife *pratiṣṭhā*, named *himsā* (violence) and *asūyā* (malice, slander). Their terrible dancing will crush all virtues within the heart and fill it with great cruelty.

Then we will externally wear all the signs of a Vaiṣṇava and mechanically follow the process of hearing and chanting, but we will not hesitate to behave mercilessly toward other people for the sake of some insignificant temporary selfish desires.

We will feel great pleasure while hurting other people's feelings with our words or behaviour for no just reason. It is most deplorable that even then we think of ourselves as greatly qualified scholars, devotees, and *bhajanānandīs*!

Śrīmad Bhāgavata opens with the words *nirmatsarānām satām*: this *bhāgavata* (Vaiṣṇava)-religion is accessible to good and non-envious people.

"How many verses haven't I memorised, how nicely can't I lecture on Bhāgavata-philosophy, but I did not manage to become **free from envy**! When I hear that there is a greater scholar, writer, lecturer or devotee than me somewhere, my heart starts burning, and I can't find any peace unless and until I can diminish his superiority by finding some fault in him!"

Can pure devotion ever awaken in the heart of such an ambitious and envious person? Hence Śrīpāda Raghunātha has said: *katham sādhu-premā sprṣati śucir etan nanu manaḥ*

"O Mind! The shameless dogeating woman of the desire for distinction is dancing in your heart! How can the most pure love of God ever enter such a foul heart?"

There is only one way to cast this shameless witch of the desire for distinction out of the field of the heart and that is to humbly serve the powerful generals amongst Śrī Kṛṣṇa's devotees, the great

souls. They will chase this shameless dog-eating woman of the desire for distinction out of the heart and bestow love of God on such a fortunate servant, after infusing all saintly qualities like humility in him.

The victory over all these vices is actually just a concomitant factor. Love for the lotus feet of the Lord is the most important result.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa told Uddhava in Śrīmad Bhāgavata (11.26.31):

*yathopāśrayamāṇasya bhagavantaṁ vibhāvasum
śītaṁ bhayaṁ tamo'pyeti sādhuṁ saṁsevatas tathā*

"Just as cold, fear and darkness disappear for a man who takes shelter of the firegod, so the fear of ignorance and rebirth disappears from a man who serves the saints."

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī gives the follow commentary on this verse:

*svīyauḍana siddhyartham upāśrayamāṇasya apyeti naśyati. tathaiva bhajana siddhyartham
sādhuṁ saṁsevayamāṇasya karmādi jāḍyam saṁsāra bhayaṁ bhajana vighnaś ca*

"When one kindles the fire to cook food, then fear, cold and darkness disappear as an accompanying factor. In the same way, when one serves the saints one attains the perfection of *prema*, and as an accompanying factor one easily becomes free from fear of *karma* and material existence and one conquers over all obstacles to spiritual advancement."

Therefore, *ayaṁ hi paramo lābho nṛṇāṁ sādhu samāgamah* (Bhāg. 12.10.7)

"The highest gain of mankind is the company of saints."

All the spiritual scriptures repeatedly describe the glories of the service of and the association with the saints.

*pratiṣṭhāśā caṇḍalīnī, kulaṭā ye kalāṅkīnī,
hṛdayete koriche nartane
sunirmala kṛṣṇa prema, yeno lākho bāna hema,
mora hṛdi sparśibe kemone*

"The contaminated dog-eating woman of the desire for distinction dances in my heart. How can spotless love for Kṛṣṇa which is as pure as gold molten a hundred thousand times over, ever touch my heart?"

*kṛṣṇera bhakata gaṇa, mahā-vīra sāmanta-gana,
mon! tādera nitya sevā koro
tomara durdaśā dekhe, pratiṣṭhāśā kulaṭāke
hṛdoya hoite koribe bāhira*

"O mind! Always serve Kṛṣṇa's devotees who are like great heroic generals. When they see your miserable condition they will chase this dog-eating woman of desire for distinction out of your heart!"

*sādhu prema mahārāje, hṛdaya mandira mājhe,
divyāsane koribe sthāpana.
pābe prema phalāsvāde, pūrṇa hobe mano-sādha,
tabe dhanya hoibe jivana*

"They will bring the great king of divine love into the palace of your heart and seat him there on a divine throne.

Then you will taste the fruit of *prema* and have your desires fulfilled. Then your life will be blessed!"

TEACHING NR. 8:

*yathā duṣṭatvaṁ me davayati śaṭhasyāpi kṛpayā
yathā mahyaṁ premāmṛtam api dadāty ujjvalam asau
yathā śrī-gāndharvā-bhajana-vidhaye prerayati mām
tathā goṣṭhe kākvā giridharam iha tvaṁ bhaja manaḥ*

yathā - so that; *duṣṭatvaṁ* - wickedness; *me* - my; *davayati* - breaks; *śaṭhasya* - of the wicked; *api* - even; *kṛpayā* - by grace; *yathā* - so that; *mahyaṁ* - unto me; *prema* - love; *amṛtam* - nectar; *api* - even; *dadāti* - gives; *ujjvalam* - glistening; *asau* - this; *yathā* - so that; *śrī gāndharvā* - Śrī Rādhikā; *bhajana* - worship; *vidhaye* - for the course; *prerayati* - He will engage; *mām* - me; *tathā* - in this way; *goṣṭhe* - in Vraja; *kākvā* - anxiously; *giridharam* - Giridhārī; *iha* - here; *tvam* - you; *bhaja* - worship; *manaḥ* - mind!

O mind! Eagerly worship Śrī Giridhārī in Vraja, so that He will be so kind as to remove the wickedness of a cheater like me, give me the splendid nectar of amorous love of God and engage me in the loving service of Śrī Gāndharvā (Rādhā)!

Commentary:

Although Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī is Śrīman Mahāprabhu's eternal associate, he teaches the practicing devotees the intricacies of *bhajana* as if he himself is a neophyte struggling with so many vices.

It is also the nature of devotion that one is never satiated with it and so Śrīla Dāsa Gosvāmī considers himself to still be a neophyte.

premera svabhāva - yāhā premera sambandha; sei māne - kṛṣṇe mora nāhi prema gandha "It is the nature of *prema* that the devotee who has it thinks: 'I don't even have a whiff of love for Kṛṣṇa.'" (Caitanya Caritāmṛta)

This insatiable aspect of devotion awakens great eagerness in the heart of the genuinely humble devotee. Although he already relishes the Lord's sweetness in his *smaraṇa*, dreams and visions, the unsatisfied lover still anxiously laments and thinks himself to be an unqualified neophyte struggling with so many vices. The stream of love floats in his heart like the undercurrent of a subterranean river and on the outside there is want, humility, and lamentation. This is a desirable and elevated stage of *sādhana*.

While mentioning these different vices, Śrī Raghunātha thinks to himself: "So many vices are rooted in my heart! This is all because of my deceitfulness!"

A cheater is called a *śaṭha*. By nature the soul is Kṛṣṇa's eternal servant and it is his natural occupation to serve Kṛṣṇa. Giving up this service, he has come to this material world, desiring personal enjoyment and becoming engrossed in feelings of 'I am this' and 'this is mine'. Cheating his eternal Lord, the soul wanders around looking for his own enjoyment. This deceit is the only cause of hundreds of other vices.

If all this mishap is caused by abandoning our eternal Lord, then naturally the only way to come out of this trap and to reach the highest good, love of God, is to give up cheating the Lord and to humbly surrender to His devotional service.

Śrī Raghunātha dāsa now remembers Śrī-Śrī Giridhārī given to him by Mahāprabhu and he thinks:

"How merciful the Lord was to give me this Giridhārī and to reveal His real position to me, saying 'This stone is Kṛṣṇa's transcendental form (*ei śilā kṛṣṇera vighraha*).'"

Just as there is no limit to the Lord's mercy and love for His devotees, there is also no limit to Raghu's misfortune.

He could not worship and serve Giridhārī with the necessary enthusiasm! That's why he now prays:

tathā goṣṭhe kākvā giridharam iha tvaṁ bhaja manaḥ

"O Mind! Eagerly and anxiously serve Giridhārī in the meadows of Vraja!"

When the Lord gave him the service of Giridhārī and told him to serve Him in pure goodness, Raghu showed the perfect example of loyalty, renunciation, and loving devotion. Caitanya Caritāmṛta describes:

*pūjā kāle dekhe śilāya vrajendra-nandana;
prabhura sva hasta datta govardhana śilā
eto cinti raghunātha preme bhāsi gelā*

"When Raghunātha dāsa worshipped the *śilā*, he saw Kṛṣṇa, the prince of Vraja, in it. Remembering that the Lord had given him the Govardhana-*śilā* with His own hands, Raghunātha dāsa floated in *prema*."

That's Raghunātha's position. But what he wants to teach us through his humble words is, that we often think our Govardhana- or Salagrāma-*śilā* and our deities to be mere pieces of stone, clay or metal. Unless we always realize that '*pratimā hahe tumi sākṣāt vrajendra-nandana*' (C.C. Madhya 5,96) "You are not a statue, You are the prince of Vraja Himself!", we can't worship the deity with eagerness (*kākkvā*) and sincerity.

Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmī writes in Bhakti Sandarbha: *paramopāsakās ca sākṣāt parameśvaratvenaiva taṁ paśyanti; bheda-sphūrter bhakti vicchedakatvat tathaiva hyucitam*

"The highest worshippers see the deity as the Supreme Lord Himself. Their devotion would be broken if they saw a difference between the Lord and His image."

When the deity is seen as the Supreme Lord Himself, only then can one eagerly and anxiously serve Him. There is no shortage of examples of how the great devotees have seen God face-to-face in the deity and have gotten responses from Him.

Śrī Raghunātha says: "O mind! Serve Giridhārī so humbly and eagerly that by His grace you can give up deceitfulness!" No desire of the devotee can be fulfilled if his *sādhana* is not accompanied by the Lord's mercy. The Lord's mercy removes all the devotee's unworthiness. By the Lord's grace everything is possible. A person who says that something can't be accomplished even with the mercy of the Lord is to be counted among the atheists, and a person who does not believe in mercy is unqualified to receive it. A loyal and faithful devotee knows that *kṛṣṇa kṛpā koribena dṛḍha kori jāne* (C.C.)

"He is firmly convinced that Kṛṣṇa will bestow His mercy".

An accompanying result of mercy is that all the unwanted habits of a devotee disappear, and the main result is that he gets *prema*, or love of God.

Therefore Śrī Raghunātha dāsa says: *premāmṛtam api dadāty ujjvalam asau*: "So that Giridhārī will bestow brilliant nectarean *prema*, or amorous love of God, upon you!"

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī states in his Laghu Bhāgavatāmṛta (Pūrva 5.37):

*santvavatāra bahavaḥ puṣkara-nābhasya sarvato bhadraḥ
kṛṣṇād anya ko vā lateṣvapi premado bhavati*

"There may be many descensions of the lotus-naveled Lord Viṣṇu which are auspicious in all respects, but Who else but Kṛṣṇa can bestow Love of God even on the vines?"

*yuga dharma pravartana hoy aṁśa hoite;
āmā vinā anye nāre vraja-prema dite* (C.C.)

"I can promulgate the religious practice of the age through My expansions, but nobody but Me can give the love of Vraja!"

Of all kinds of Vraja-*prema* the sweet love of the *gopīs* is the greatest. Although Śrīpāda Raghunātha is Vraja's *nitya siddha mañjarī* he humbly begs for *prema*, hence the service of Śrī Rādhā is all he asks from Śrī Giridhārī. The service of Śrī Rādhā is cherished the most by the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, and it is

their *upāsana* (mode of worship). The Gosvāmīs are our example, therefore Dāsa Gosvāmī prays *yathā śrī gāndharvā bhajane vidhaye prerayati mām*

"O mind! Worship Giridhārī so that He will engage me in Śrī Rādhikā's devotional service."

Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa is a *rādhā-snehādhika* devotee, who loves Rādhā more than Kṛṣṇa. He worships Giridhārī so that He will offer him to Śrī Rādhikā, and not for independent purposes. *āmāra īśvarī hon vṛndāvaneśvarī; tāra prāṇa-nātha boli bhaji giridhārī* "My goddess is Rādhikā, the Queen of Vṛndāvana, and I worship Giridhārī because He is the Lord of Her life!" Śrī Giridhārī's service can't be supreme without the *bhajana* of Śrī Rādhā. The *rasikas* (transcendental connoisseurs) know this. Śrī Giridhārī therefore desires:

"Let them serve Me by serving Śrī Rādhā!"

How sweetly the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* pray to the lotus feet of the Divine Couple!

Śrīmat Rupa Gosvāmī prayed to Śrī Kṛṣṇa as follows in his 'Utkalikā Vallari' (19):

*praṇipatya bhavantam arthaye
paśupāendra kumāra kākubhiḥ
vraja-yauvata-mauli-mālikā
karuṇā-pātram imāṃ janāṃ kuru*

"O prince of the cowherders! I offer my obeisances unto You and I eagerly pray to You: Please make me the object of the mercy of Śrī Rādhikā, Who is the crowning garland of all the young girls of Vraja."

And to Śrī Rādhā he prays in the following verse:

*bhavatīm abhivādya cāṭubhir varam ūrjeśvari varyam arthaye
bhavadīyatayā kṛpāṃ yathā mayi kuryad adhikāṃ bakāntakaḥ*

"O Goddess of the month of Kārtika! I praise You with flattering words and I beg the following boon from You: "May Śrī Kṛṣṇa, knowing me to be Yours, give me more mercy!" Hence Śrīla Raghunātha anxiously prays to his own mind:

*ohe mana! śuno tumi, e kartavya boli āmi,
anugata jane kṛpā kori.
dhari giri govardhane, rakṣā koilo vraja jane,
kāku vākye bhajo giridhārī*

"O mind! Listen, I will tell you what your duty is. Worship Giridhārī, who protected the people of Vraja by lifting Govardhana Hill, and who is very merciful to His submissive devotees, with pitiful flattering words".

*monera dhṛṣṭatā yoto, dūra kori ari śata,
nija premāmṛta kori dāna
śrī rādhāra bhajanete, pāṭhāibe nikuñjete,
yugala kiśora hobe prāṇa*

"He will remove all the hundreds of shameless vices of the mind and will give you the nectar of love for Himself. He will send you into the *nikuñja* to serve Śrī Rādhā there, and thus the Yugala Kiśora will be your very life!"

TEACHING NR. 9:

*mad-īśā-nāthatve vraja-vipina-candram vraja-vane-
svarīm tan-nāthatve tad-atula-sakhīve tu lalitām
viśākhām śikṣālī-vitarāṇa-gurutve priyasaro-
girīndrau tat-prekṣā-lalita-ratidatve smara manaḥ*

mad - my; *īśā* - queen; *nāthatve* - as the Lord; *vraja* - of Vraja; *vipina* - the forest; *candram* - moon; *vraja-vaneśvarīm* - the queen of Vraja; *tan-nāthatve* - His mistress; *tad* - Her; *atula* - matchless; *sakhīve* - friendship; *tu* - but; *lalitām* - Lalitā; *viśākhām* - Viśākhā; *śikṣā* - instructing; *ālī* - girlfriend; *vitaraṇa* - distributes; *gurutve* - as the teacher; *priya* - dear; *saraḥ* - lake; *girīndrau* - the king of mountains; *tat prekṣā* - the sight; *lalita* - lovely; *rati* - love; *datve* - as the giver of; *smara* - remember; *manaḥ* - O mind!

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, Viśākhā as the teacher of all the other girlfriends and Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa and Girirāja Govardhana as the two places the mere sight of which bestows charming love of Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa!

Commentary:

In this verse Śrī Raghunātha paints a beautiful picture of a loving identification before the eyes of the *mādhuryopāsakas*, the practitioners of sweet amorous devotion on the pretext of instructing his own mind.

Causeless love for Kṛṣṇa is called *prema* and this *prema* is the goal of devotional service to the Lord. Great devotees like Bhīṣma, Prahlāda, Uddhava and Nārada gave up their feelings of mineness towards everything else and established their one pointed feelings of mineness towards the lotus feet of the Lord. That is called *prema* in the Nārada Pañcarātra:

*ananya mamatā viṣṇau mamatā prema saṅgatā
bhaktir ityucyate bhīṣma prahlādoddhava nāradaih*

The feeling of mineness is based on a loyal relationship.

If there is no feeling of relationship there can be no feeling of mineness. In *śānta rasa* (the tranquil, or neutral sentiments for God) there can be no feelings of mineness towards the Lord. *śāntera svabhāva - kṛṣṇe mamatā gandha hīna; paraṁ brahma-paramātma-jñāna pravīna* (C.C. Madhya 19)

"The nature of a *śānta*, or tranquil devotee is that he does not have any feeling of mine-ness towards Kṛṣṇa. His main knowledge of Kṛṣṇa lies in His Supreme (impersonal) *brahman*-aspect or His (localised) *Paramātma* (Supreme Self)-aspect."

These tranquil devotees are not only bereft of a feeling of 'mineness', they are also thought of as being unable to say '*tadīya* (I am His)'. They only worship the *svarūpa* (Kṛṣṇa's philosophical, constitutional aspect).

kevala svarūpa jñāna hoy śānta-rase (C.C.)

śānta rase svarūpa buddhye kṛṣṇaika niṣṭhatā etc. *brahmānanda* is light and liquid, whereas the bliss of devotion to God (*īśvaramaya sukha*) is heavy and intense. Whatever Īśvara-bliss the *śānta*-devotees experience is the bliss of the Lord's constitution. They can't experience the sweetness-mixed-with-majesty or the pure sweetness that other devotees experience. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī teaches:

*tatrāpīśa svarūpānubhavasyevoru hetutā
dāsādivan manojñatva līlāder na tathā matā*

(*Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu 3.1.6*)

"Although the *śānta*-devotees do experience the bliss of the Personality of Godhead in the form of His *svarūpa* (knowledge of God's constitutional position), they don't experience the attractiveness (beauty and tenderness) of His pastimes (such as lifting Govardhana Hill) as the other devotees, like His servants, do."

The *śānta*-devotees consider themselves blessed simply by seeing the Lord (without entering into His sweet pastimes). This is because they are bereft of any feelings of mineness towards the Lord.

For this reason Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī calls them 'marginal devotees' and their devotion 'marginal devotion'.

Anyone who attains one of the four relations of servanthood, friendship, parenthood or consortherhood with the Lord will attain a certain feeling of mineness towards Him. Among these four there is a certain distinction between higher and lower, culminating in the amorous relationship.

*pūrva pūrva rasera guṇa pare pare hoy;
dui-tina gaṇane pañca paryanta bādhaya
guṇādhikye svādādhikya bādhe prati rase;
śānta dāsya sakhya vātsalyera guṇa mādhubhurete boise
ākāśādira guṇa yeno para para bhūte;
dui-tina krame bādhe pañca pṛthivite
paripūrṇa kṛṣṇa prāpti ei premā hoite;
ei premera vaśa kṛṣṇa - kohe bhāgavate*

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta, Madhya 8)

"There is a gradual order of improvement from one *rasa* to the other. In each subsequent *rasa* there is one quality more than in the preceding one, counting from one up to five. As the qualities increase, so the taste also increases. Therefore the qualities of tranquility, servanthood, friendship, and parenthood are all present in amorous love. The qualities in the five gross material elements (sky, air, fire, water and earth) increase one after the other by a gradual process of one, two, three, four, until finally, in the element earth, all five qualities are manifest. Full attainment of Kṛṣṇa is achieved through *premā*, and **Śrīmad Bhāgavata says that Kṛṣṇa is captivated by this *prema*.**"

Although the amorous *rasa* is also present in Kṛṣṇa's Queens in Dvārakā, the full manifestation of amorous love can only be witnessed in the *Vraja-gopīs*. There is no hesitation and no reduction in the purely sweet love of *Vraja*.

By the mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* the highest kind of amorous love for Kṛṣṇa, called *mañjarī-bhāva*, became relishable especially for the people of the present age of quarrel.

Śrīpād Sanātana, Śrī Rūpa, Śrī Raghunātha dāsa and Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī are the great handicraftsmen of *Vraja-rasa*.

Just as goldsmiths make necklaces, bangles and earrings, etc., from one single material - gold -, similarly, by Śrīman Mahāprabhu's grace, the *ācāryas* have made wonderful ornaments of *rasika* poetry which was revealed within their hearts, and which was made of the 'ingredient' *śṛṅgāra rasa* (erotic flavours).

Here Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī is hinting at the great gift of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, which had not been given for a long time: *mañjarī bhāva*.

This is the self-identification the practicing devotees desire for themselves.

First of all he says: *mad īśā nāthatva vraja vipina candram:*
"O mind! Remember the moon of the Vraja-forest (Kṛṣṇa) as the Lord of my Īśvarī (mistress) Śrī Rādhā!"

How much nectar of love is there in that one word 'mad īśā' which Śrī Raghunātha uses here! How much intense love can be relished in that word!

āmāra īśvarī hon vṛndāvaneśvarī; tāra prāṇanātha boli bhaji giridhārī: "My Īśvarī is Rādhikā, the Queen of Vṛndāvana! I worship Giridhārī, knowing that He is the Lord of Her life!" The *ācāryas* experienced this and preached it. The more the practicing devotees manage to recognise themselves as Śrī Rādhikā's maidservants and manage to give up their bodily consciousness, becoming absorbed in identification as **Rādhā's dāsī at every moment**, the more transcendental jewels they will find.

There is nothing more sweet and relishable than being absorbed in *svarūpāveśa*, absorption in one's transcendental identity. *Māyā* will stay far away from him whose heart is absorbed in relishing these transcendental flavours.

The *sādhaka* will be blessed when he can relish the flavour of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's forms, qualities, pastimes, and devotional service. Then he will experience something of the taste of this single word *mad īśā*.

Śrī Raghunātha instructs his own mind to meditate on Śyāmasundara, the moon of Vṛndāvana, calling Him the Lord of his *īśvarī* Rādhā's life. First Rādhā, then Śyāma! After introducing herself to Śrī Rādhā and attaining Her service, the maidservant of Rādhā introduces herself to Śyāmasundara. Only then will she attain the service of the Lord of *īśvarī* Rādhā's life - not independently!

There is no comparison to Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa's *rādhā niṣṭhā* (loyalty to Rādhā)! He desires nothing else but the intimate service of Śrī Rādhā, the reader will experience that again and again in this 'Stavāvalī'-compilation.

The word *vraja-vipina-candra* means that the hearts of the people of Vraja are like Cakora-birds which are always absorbed in relishing the nectar oozing from the Kṛṣṇa-moon, such as His form, qualities, pastimes and love, but the hearts of Śrī Rādhā's maidservants are blessed like Cakorī- (female) birds which relish the nectar of the moon of Vraja's forest through the savour of Śrī Rādhā - not independently!

Again, he instructs his mind to remember Vṛndāvaneśvarī Rādhā as the beloved of Kṛṣṇa's heart: *vṛndāvaneśvarīm tan nāthatve*.

Although there are innumerable beautiful girls in Vraja who are qualified and full of love for Kṛṣṇa, still Kṛṣṇa's heart and mind are always controlled by Śrī Rādhā. Only She has the full Mādana Mahā Bhāva and only She can fully control Kṛṣṇa, Who is the very form of full transcendental bliss. They are absorbed in the sweetness of Each other's forms and qualities etc. and They both desire that Their mutual love will increase at every moment.

Śrīpāda Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī has written:

*tvayi śyāme nitya praṇayini vidagdhe rasa nidhau
priye bhūyo bhūyaḥ sudṛḍha mati rāgo bhavatu me
iti preṣṭhenokta ramaṇa mama citte tava vaco
cadantīti smerā mama manasi rādhā vilasatu*

(*Rādhā Rasa Sudhānidhi* 150)

"May Śrī Rādhā, Who smiles as She tells Her lover: 'These words of Yours are also on My mind!', after He told Her: 'O Śyāme! O Eternally beloved, clever girl! O dearest One!' May My mind always be firmly attached to the ocean of Your *rasa*!"

Then again, Dāsa Gosvāmī says: *tad atula sakhīve tu lalitām:* "O mind! Remember Lalitā as Śrī Rādhā's incomparable girlfriend." Śrī Lalitā is the chief of Śrī Rādhā's eight girlfriends, therefore

no one can compare to her in beauty, qualities and love. She's respected by all the *sakhīs*, and she leads all the *mañjarīs* in their service to the Yugala Kīśora.
Śrīla Narottama Dāsa has sung:

*lalitā kobe more, vijana deoyabo,
vijabo māruta mande
śrama-jala sakala, miṭabo duhuñ kalevara,
herabo parama ānande*

"When will Lalitā allow me to fan the Yugala, giving Them a cool breeze which will remove the sweatdrops of fatigue from Their bodies? I will be most blissful to see Them then!"

*lalitā ādeśa pāiyā, caraṇa sevibo yāiyā,
priya sakhī saṅge harṇa mone
duhuñ dātā śiromaṇi, ati dīna more jāni,
nikate caraṇe dibe dāne*

"Receiving Lalitā's order I will blissfully go to serve Their lotus feet with my dear girlfriends. Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are the crown jewels of donors. They know that I'm very fallen and They grant me a place at Their lotus feet."

Then *viśākhāṁ śikṣāli vitarāṇa gurutve*: "Remember Viśākhā as the instructing teacher in the service of the Divine Couple".

In his *siddha-svarūpa* Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī is in the *gaṇa* (party) of Śrī Viśākhā. When his heart was breaking out of separation from Śrī Rādhikā, Śrī Raghunātha was praying to Viśākhā's lotus feet to save his life:

*kṣaṇam api tava saṅgam na tyajed eva devī
tvam asi sama-vayas tan narma-bhūmir yad asyāḥ
iti sumukhi viśākhe darśayitvā mad īśāṁ
mama viraha hatāyāḥ prāṇa-rakṣāṁ kurusva*

(*Vilāpa Kusumāñjali* 99)

"O fair-faced Viśākhe! My Queen will not leave your company for even a moment! Because You are of the same age you are the realm of Her joking pastimes. Please save my life from the affliction of separation and show me my mistress!"

In his Sva Saṅkalpa Prakāśa stotram, Śrīpāda offers the following prayers to his/her *śikṣā guru* Viśākhā-*sakhī* for teaching her various kinds of expertise in the service of the Divine Pair, which is full of *madhura rasa*:

*mudā vaidagdryāntar lalita nava karpūra milana
sphuran nānā narmotkara madhura mādhvika racane
sa-garvaṁ gāndharvā giridhara kṛte prema vivaśā
viśākhāṁ me śikṣāṁ vitaratu gurus tad yuga sakhī (4)*

"May the teacher Viśākhā, the dear friend who is overwhelmed by love for Gāndharvā and Giridhārī, joyfully and proudly teach me the art of preparing for Their pleasure the sweet Mādhvika-nectar of different joking words mixed with the fresh camphor of elegant cleverness!"

*kuhū kaṅṭhī kaṅṭhād api kamana-kaṅṭhī mayi punar
viśākhā gānasyāpi ca rucira śikṣāṁ praṇayatatu*

*yathāhaṁ tenaitad yuva yugalam ullāsyā sa-gaṇāl
labhe rāse tasmān maṇi padaka hārān iha muhuḥ (5)*

"I pray that Viśākhā, whose voice is sweeter than the cuckoos', will teach me the art of beautiful singing, with which I can please the youthful Couple and Their girlfriends during the Rāsadance and I will continually get jewelled medals and gold from Them as rewards."

Finally Śrī Raghunātha says: *priya saro girīndrau tat prekṣā lalita rati-datve smara manaḥ*
"O mind! Remember my beloved Rādhākūṇḍa and Giri-Govardhana as the bestowers of the *darśana* of and the lovely attraction to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa!"

Śrī Rādhākūṇḍa is very dear to Śrī Rādhārāṇī, therefore it is also very dear to Śyāmasundara, namely as dear as Śrī Rādhā Herself is. Realizing this secret Śrī Raghunātha declares his one-pointed fixation in living near this crown jewel of Vraja-*bhūmi*, Śrī Rādhākūṇḍa:

*sva kuṇḍaṁ tava lolākṣi sa-priyāyāḥ sadāspadam
atraiva mama saṁvāsa ihaiva mama saṁsthiti*

(*Vilāpa Kusumāñjali* 97)

"O Lolākṣi (restless eyed girl)! Your lake is always the dwelling place of You and Your Beloved. Only here I will live and here alone I will stay!"
Because Śrī Rādhākūṇḍa is so dear to the Divine Pair it can bestow Their *darśana* and the tender love for Their lotus feet upon him.

Śrī Rāghunātha dāsa has described that in his 'Vilāpa Kusumāñjali' (15):

*yadā tava sarovaraṁ sarasa bhṛṅga saṅghollasat
saroruha kulojvalaṁ madhura vāri sampūritam
sphuṭat sarasijākṣi he nayana-yugma sākṣād vabhau
tadaiva mama lālasājani tavaiva dāsyē rase*

"O blooming lotus-eyed girl (Rādhē)! When my eyes directly saw Your pond (Rādhākūṇḍa), which is filled with sweet water and lotus flowers surrounded by blissfully humming bees, then I really got the desire to taste the nectar of Your service!" Therefore he also prayed to Rādhākūṇḍa for the *darśana* of Rādhārāṇī:

*he śrī sarovara sadā tvayī sā mad īśā
preṣṭhena sārḍham iha khelati kāma raṅgaiḥ
tvam cet priyāt priyam atīva tayor iti mām
hā darśayādya kṛpayā mama jivitaṁ tām*

(*Vilāpa Kusumāñjali* 98)

"O beautiful lake (Śrī Rādhākūṇḍa)! My mistress always plays erotic games in you with Her beloved Kṛṣṇa. If you are dearer to Them than the dearest, then please show me my mistress, Who is my very life!"

There's no comparison to Śrī Raghunātha dāsa's devotion to Girirāja Govardhana. At the base of Śrī Girirāja lie Śrī Rādhākūṇḍa and Śyāmakunda. Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī lived at the base of Girirāja for the fulfillment of his desire to see and love the lotus feet of the Divine Couple and he offered the following prayer:

*pramada madana līlāḥ kandare kandare te
racayati nava yūnor dvandvam asmīn amandam*

*iti kila kalanārtham lagnakas tad dvayor me
nija nikaṭa nivāsa dehi govardhana tvam*

(Govardhana Vāsa Prārthana Dasakam 2)

"O Govardhana! The youthful couple Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa play passionate erotic pastimes in your every cave and I became very eager to witness them. Please allow me to live close to you and thus bless me!"

Śrī Raghunātha prays to his mind:

*he mana! tomāre boli, smaraṇa niyamāvali,
mad īśvarī vṛndāvaneśvarī
tāra prāṇeśvara jāni, rasikendra cūḍamaṇi,
bhajo tumi giri-varadhārī*

"O mind! I tell you what to remember:

"Know that the crown jewel of relishers, Girivaradhārī, is the Lord of the life of my mistress Vṛndāvaneśvarī's. Worship Him like that!"

*śrī kṛṣṇera priyatamā, śiro-ratna vraja-rāmā,
ei jñāne vṛndāvaneśvarī
anurāge nitya nava, rādhā pada koka-nada,
bhajo mana! e minati kori!*

"Know that Vṛndāvaneśvarī Rādhā, the crown jewel of all Vraja-gopīs, is Śrī Kṛṣṇa's dear most beloved. O mind, I humbly pray to you: Worship the ruddy lotus feet of this Rādhikā with ever-fresh passionate love!"

*prāṇa śakhī śrī rādhāra, atula mahimā yāra,
sakhī śreṣṭha lalitā smaraṇe
śikṣā guru rūpe jāni, viśākhāya smaro tumi,
anugata rasāla bhajane*

"Remember the best of *sakhīs*, Lalitā, as Śrī Rādhā's heart's friend, whose glories are matchless, and remember Viśākhā as the instructing *guru* of all the *gopīs*, while performing luscious *bhajana* in allegiance to her!"

*rādhākuṇḍa govardhane, smaro mana rātri dine,
daraśana rati dāna tare
smaraṇete kṛpā dhārā, prema mandākinī pārā,
uthalibe hṛdi pārāvāre*

"O mind! Remember Rādhākuṇḍa and Govardhana day and night for they bestow the *darśana* of and love for the Divine Couple upon you! The ocean of your heart then will swell as the nectarean Gaṅgā-stream of *prema* enters into it, brought down by Their mercy on the strength of your *smaraṇa*."

TEACHING NR. 10:

*ratim gaurī-līle api tapati saundarya-kiraṇaiḥ
śacī-lakṣmī-satyāḥ paribhavati saubhāgya-valanaiḥ
vaśikāraiś candrāvali-mukha-navīna-vraja-satīḥ
kṣipaty ārād yā tām hari-dayita-rādhām bhaja manaḥ*

ratim - Rati; *gaurīm* - Gaurī; *līle* - Līlā; *api* - even; *tapati* - burns; *saundarya* - of beauty; *kiraṇaiḥ* - with the rays; *śacī* - Śacī; *lakṣmī* - Lakṣmī; *satyāḥ* - Satyabhāmā; *paribhavati* - defeats; *saubhāgya* - fortune; *balanaiḥ* - with the strength; *vaśikāraiḥ* - controls; *candrāvali* - Candrāvalī; *mukha* - headed by; *navīna* - youthful; *vraja satīḥ* - chaste girls of Vraja; *kṣipati* - throws; *ārād* - far away; *yā* - who ; *tām* - Her; *hari dayita* - dear to Hari; *rādhām* - Rādhā; *bhaja* - worship; *manaḥ* - O mind!

O mind! Remember Haripriyā Rādhā, Who burns Rati, Gaurī and Līlā with the scorching rays of Her beauty, Who defeats Śacī, Lakṣmī and Satyabhāmā with the force of Her good fortune, and Who casts the young girls of Vraja, like Candrāvalī, far away with Her ability to control Śrī Kṛṣṇa!

Commentary:

In the previous verse Śrī Raghunātha revealed his preference for Śrī Rādhā (*rādhā-snehādhika prīti*) on the pretext of instructing his own mind. The devotees who practice *mañjarī-bhāva* mainly worship Śrī Rādhārāṇī, and their worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is a concomitant factor.

The *mañjarīs* have given their lives to Śrī Rādhā; without Rādhā their world is dark.
tavaivāsmi tavaivāsmi na jīvāmi tvayā vinā (Vilāpa Kusumāñjali)

"Hā Rādhe! I am Yours, I am Yours! I can't live without You!" This is the main anthem of those who practice *mañjarī bhāva*!

In this verse Śrī Raghunātha instructs his mind:

hari-dayita rādhām bhaja manaḥ

"O mind! Worship Hari's beloved, Rādhā!"

Without love no one can become dear to Kṛṣṇa. In Bhagavad Gītā Kṛṣṇa tells Śrī Arjuna: *yo mad bhaktaḥ sa me priya*

"He who is My devotee is dear to Me."

There are four different gradations of love of God:

aṇu (atomic), *āpekṣika nyūnādhika-maya* (more or less), *mahān* (great), and *parama mahān* (topmost).

Ordinary devotees have an *aṇu*, or atomic fraction of love for God, and they are just slightly dear to Kṛṣṇa. Devotees like Nārada have more or less love and they are more dear to Kṛṣṇa than the first group. The people of Vraja like Subala, Nanda-Yaśodā, Lalitā and the eight *sakhīs*, have great love for Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa also has great love for them.

Only Śrī Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī has the **greatest love** for Kṛṣṇa, and She is **also most dear to Him**.

Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī's written examples of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's mutual love are incomparable!

*govindānaṅga rājive bhānu śrīr vārṣabhānavī
kṛṣṇa hṛt kumudollāse sudhākara kara sthitiḥ*

"As the daughter of Vṛṣabhānu She is the beautiful sun that shines on the lotus flower of Govinda's erotic desire, and She is the ambrosial moon which casts its rays on the Kṛṣṇa-lily and thus delights it".

*kṛṣṇa mānasa haṁsasya mānasī sarasī varā
kṛṣṇa cātaka jīvātu navāmbhoda payaḥ śrutih*

"She is the great Mānasa Sarovara where the swan of Kṛṣṇa's mind flies and She is the shower from the fresh monsoon cloud which gives life to the Cātaka-bird named Kṛṣṇa".

*mukunda matta mātaṅga vihārāpāra dirghikā
kṛṣṇa prāṇa mahā mīna khelanānanda vāridhiḥ*

"She is the endless lake of enjoyment for the mad elephant Mukunda and She is the ocean of bliss where the great fish of Kṛṣṇa's life-airs plays".

*kṛṣṇa mañjula tāpiñche vilasat svarṇa yūthikā
govinda navya pāthode sthira vidyul latādbhutā*

"She shines like a golden Yūthikā-vine on the lovely Tamāla-tree named Kṛṣṇa and She is a wonderful steady lightning-vine on the fresh Govinda-raincloud".

*grīṣme govinda sarvāṅge candra candana candrikā
śīte śyāma śubhāṅgeṣu pīta paṭṭa lasat paṭi*

"In the summer She is soothing sandal paste, camphor and moonlight on all of Govinda's limbs and in the winter She is a beautiful yellow silken garment which covers Śyāma's auspicious limbs".

*madhau kṛṣṇa tarūllāse madhu śrīr madhurākṛtiḥ
mañju mallāra rāga śrīḥ prāvṛṣi śyāma harṣiṇī*

"In the spring She is the vernal goddess of fortune that delights the Kṛṣṇa-tree with Her sweet form, and during the monsoon She delights Śyāma with the beautiful Mallāra rāga".

*ṛtau śaradi rāsaika rasikendram iha sphuṭam
varitum hanta rāsa-śrīr viharanti sakhī-śritā*

"Āha! In the autumn She clearly accepts the only enjoyer of the Rāsa-dance (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) as Her husband and then enjoys the Rāsa-dance with Him and Her girlfriends as the Rāsa-Śrī, the goddess of fortune of the Rāsa-dance!"

*hemante smara yuddhārtham aṭantaṁ rāja-nandanam
pauruṣena parājetum jaya-śrīr mūrti dhāriṇī
(Viśākhānandada Stotram 51-62)*

"In the Hemanta-season She wanders around with the prince (of Vraja) for the sake of an erotic battle and then She defeats Him with masculine power, assuming the form of the goddess of victory".

Such examples that show the people of the world how Śrī Rādhā is Hari Priyā are very rare in this world.

Supernatural things are simply beyond the grasp of any earthly comparison. (An effort has been made, though, to explain this to the external world in this way)

Actually Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are One Self in two bodies, like one blue and one golden lotus on a single stem in a lake of love. Because of Their love They became non different in such a way that one can't even say anymore that "Rādhā is Kṛṣṇa's" and "Kṛṣṇa is Rādhā's".

The great poet Karnapura wrote:

*preyāṁś te'haṁ tvam api ca mama preyasīti pravādas
tvam me prāṇā aham api tavāsmīti hanta pralāpaḥ
tvam me te syām aham iti ca yat tac ca no sādhu rādhe
vyāhāre nau na hi samucito yusmad asmat prayogaḥ*

(*Alaṅkāra Kaustubha* 5.34)

"Ayi Rādhe! It is simply hearsay when one says that I am Your beloved and You are My lover. One simply raves by saying that I am Your life and You are Mine. It is also not good to say that You are Mine and I am Yours, because such words indicate a difference. It is not proper to speak about Us in terms of You and Me."

(Śrīla Rāmānanda Rāya sang: *nā so ramaṇa nā hām ramaṇī; duhuṁ mana manobhava peśala jāni*, Caitanya Caritāmṛta):

"He is not the lover and I am not the beloved. I know Their minds were squashed by Cupid." Because of Their great love it is as if Their minds and hearts have merged with each other.

Śrī Raghunātha dāsa says: "O mind! Worship Kṛṣṇa's beloved, Śrī Rādhā!". One may ask here: Why does Śrī Raghunātha, being a Yugala-upāsaka (worshiper of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa), worship only Śrī Rādhā?

Śrīmat Sanātana Gosvāmī provides the answer in his Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta (2.7.11):

śrī rādhājñā pratipālanenaiva śrī kṛṣṇasya vaśīkaraṇāt svayam evādhikādhika tat saṅga sukha saṁsiddher iti dik:

"By serving Rādhā or following Her order, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is more easily captured than when one serves Him directly, and the bliss of His company automatically becomes more and more available."

In Viśākhānandada Stotram (131) Śrī Raghunātha dāsa writes:

*bhajāmi rādhām aravinda-netraṁ
smarāmi rādhām madhura smitāsyām
vadāmi rādhām karuṇā bharārdraṁ
tato mamānyāstī gatir na kāpi*

"I worship Rādhā, Who has lotus like eyes, I remember Rādhā, who has a sweetly smiling face, and I speak of Rādhā, Who is melting of compassion. In this way there is no other goal for me".

While Śrī Raghunātha speaks about Śrī Rādhā's worship his mind becomes absorbed in Rādhā's sweetness and he expresses his experience by saying: *ratim gaurī līle api tapati saundarya-kiraṇaiḥ*

"With the rays of Her beauty She's scorching Cupid's spouse Rati, Lord Śiva's spouse Gaurī and the presiding goddess of the *līlā-śakti* (play-power) Līlā-devī."

The experience of Śrī Rādhā lies within *prema*. *premera svarūpa deha prema vibhāvita* (C.C.)

"Her body is made of *prema* and Her constitution consists entirely of *prema*."

Without practicing devotion with love one can't experience Śrī Rādhā's sweetness. If, by Her grace, one can experience one drop of the ocean of Rādhikā's self-manifest sweetness in one's heart, that is illuminated by *viśuddha sattva* (transcendence), then one can understand it. The ray of beauty that is described here is not a ray of material light, it is the light of the quintessence of *prema*, *mahā bhāva*. This ray pleases the eyes - it doesn't dazzle them!

Once these rays of beauty which defeat millions of lightning strikes touch the eyes, the eyes always want to remain immersed in them. The scorching affliction caused upon Rati, Gaurī and Līlā described within here, comes from their bodily luster being defeated by the splendour of Rādhikā's form.

In this connection we will give an example from the Purāṇas: In the 40th chapter of the Pātāla Khaṇḍa of Padma Purāṇa, Nārada Muni praises Śrī Rādhā as follows:

*bhrāntaṁ sarveṣu lokeṣu mayā svacchanda-cāriṇā
asyā rūpeṇa sadṛśī dṛṣṭā naiva ca kutrācit
mahā-māyā bhagavati dṛṣṭā śailendra-nandinī
yasyā rūpeṇa sakalaṁ muhyate sa-carācaram
lakṣmīḥ sarasvatī kāntir vidyādyās ca vara-striyaḥ
chāyām api sprśantyaś ca kadācin naiva dṛśyate
viṣṇor yan mohanaṁ rūpa haro yena vimohitaḥ
mayā dṛṣṭaṁ ca tad api kuto'syāḥ sadṛśaṁ bhavet
asyāḥ sandarśanād eva govinda caraṇāmbuje
ya premābdhir abhūt sā me bhūta-pūrva na karhicit
ayi devi mahā yoge māyeśvari mahāprabhe
mahā mohana divyāṅgi mahā mādhurya varṣiṇi
mahādbhuta rasānanda śithilikṛta mānase
mahā bhāgyena kenāpi gatāsi mama dṛk patham*

"I have freely wandered through all the worlds, but a form like Hers I have never seen anywhere! I have seen Mahāmāyā, the daughter of the mountain (Pārvatī), whose form enchants all moving and non-moving creatures, and I have seen Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī, Kānti, Vidyā and all the best of women, but they could not even touch the shadow of Her sweet form!

I have seen the form of Mohinī that Lord Viṣṇu assumed and that enchanted the demons and even Lord Śiva, but even She did not look like Her (Rādhikā). I have never seen that form, which has given me an ocean of love for Govinda's lotus feet on mere sight, before.

Ayi devi! O Mahā Yoge! O Goddess of *māyā*! O greatly effulgent goddess with the very enchanting divine form! O You Who showers great sweetness! O You Who softens the mind with very wonderful blissful *rasa*! By some great fortune You crossed the path of my eyes!"

Therefore it is said (in Caitanya Caritāmṛta):

yāra saundaryādi guṇa vāñche lakṣmī pārvatī

"The goddess of fortune, Pārvatī and all other goddesses covet Her qualities, like Her good fortune."

Then Śrī Raghunātha says *śacī lakṣmī satyāḥ paribhavati saubhāgya balanaiḥ*:

"By the force of Her good fortune or Her admirable love She defeats Śacī, Lakṣmī and Satyabhāmā".

The Hari Vaiṣṇava explains that Satyabhāmā is even more fortunate than Śacī and Lakṣmī:

satyabhāmottamā strīnām saubhāgye cādhikaṁ bhavet:

"Of all women, Satyabhāmā is the most fortunate".

Even this Satyabhāmā desired Śrī Rādhā's fortunate qualities, but did not get them.

yāhāra saubhāgya guṇa vāñche satyabhāmā (C.C.) "Satyabhāmā desires Her (Rādhā's) qualities of fortune." What then to speak of Śacī, the queen of heaven, and Lakṣmī, the goddess of fortune?

There is no comparison to Kṛṣṇa's admiration for Śrī Rādhā.

In Śrī Kṛṣṇa's words:

*śuno rādhe ei rasa- āmi ye tomāra vaśa,
toma vine nāhi loy mane
japite tomāra nāma, dhairaya na dhare prāṇa,
tuyā rūpa koriye dheyāne*

"Listen, O Rādhē! I am under Your control! I don't like to think of anyone but You! My heart can't remain patient when I repeat Your name and I meditate on Your form!"

*śrī rādhe śrī rādhe vāṇī, ye diḡe yāra mukhe śuni,
sei dike dhāy mora mon
cātaka phukāre yeno, ḡhana cāhe variṣaṇa,
teno heri o cāṇḡa vadana*

"My mind runs in any direction where I hear from anyone's mouth the words: "Śrī Rādhē! Śrī Rādhē".

I stare at Your moon-like face like a Cātaka-bird hankering for a shower from the raincloud."

*khene khene mukha tuli' ḡhana ḡāki rādhā buli,
tabe prāṇa hoy nivārana
tomā anusare āsi, kuṇjera bhitorē bosī,
tomā lāḡi ei vṛṇḡāvana*

"Crying and crying, I lift My face and loudly call for Rādhā. Only then My life is saved. I follow You and wait for You, sitting in a *kuṇja*. I like Vṛṇḡāvana only because of You!"

No girl in Vraja can madden and gladden Kṛṣṇa in such a way, not even Candrāvalī. That's why Śrī Raghunātha states in the end: *vaśīkāraīś candrāvalī mukha navīna vraja-satīḡ*.

"She controls all the young chaste girls of Vraja, headed by Candrāvalī."

Śrī Rādhikā has the mood of *madīyatā* (He is mine) towards Kṛṣṇa, while Candrāvalī has the (inferior) mood of *tadīyatā*

(I am His).

In Govinda Līlāmṛta (11.131) it is described:

*candrāvalī praṇaya rūpa ḡṇaiḡ prayatnāḡ
vyaktīkṛtair vyaracayat svavaśam bakārim
śrī rādhikā tu sahaja prakāṭair nijais tair
vyasmārayat tam iha tām api hā kuto'nyāḡ*

"Candrāvalī must do some effort to somehow control Kṛṣṇa by showing her love, her form, and her qualities, but Śrī Rādhikā can naturally and easily control Kṛṣṇa with Her qualities, making Him forget even Candrāvalī, O! What to speak of other girls?"

Hence Śrī Raghunātha prays to his mind:

*yāra aṅga saundaryete, kāma-patnī rati tāpe,
śrī rādhāra caraṇe luṭāya
līlā śakti bhava gaurī, yāhāra saundarya heri,
manas tāpe māne parājaya*

*saubhāḡya bolete yini, kṛṣṇa kāntā śiromaṇi,
śacī, lakṣmī, satyabhāmā dūre
vaśīkarā śrī govinde, candrāvalī sakhī-vṛṇḡe
santāpa pradāna yiho kore*

*he mana! se gāndharvikā, hari priyā śrī rādhikā,
jīvana sarvasva kori loho*

*prema taraṅgiṇī nāma, prema kaṅthe koro gāna,
ārati piriti rasa cāho*

"O mind! Take this Hari Priyā Śrī Rādhikā, or Gāndharvikā, the crown jewel of Kṛṣṇa's consorts, Whose bodily beauty scorches Cupid's spouse Rati and makes her roll at Her feet, Who makes Līlā and Gaurī accept defeat in anguish after they beheld Her beauty, Who casts Śacī, Lakṣmī and Satyabhāmā far away with the force of Her good fortune, Who controls Śrī Govinda and Who gives affliction even to Candrāvalī and her girlfriends, as the all-in-all of your life. Sing the glories of this river of love with a loving voice, eagerly desiring the taste of love for Her!"

TEACHING NR. 11:

*samaṁ śrī-rūpeṇa smara-vivaśa-rādhā-giri-bhṛtor
vraje sāksāt-sevā-labhana-vidhaye tad-gaṇa-yujoh
tad-ijyākhyā-dhyāna-śravaṇa-nati-pañcāmṛtam idaṁ
dhayan nityā govardhanam anudinaṁ tvaṁ bhaja manaḥ*

samaṁ - with; *śrī rūpeṇa* - with Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī; *smara* - Cupid; *vivaśa* - overwhelmed; *rādhā giribhṛtoḥ* - Rādhā Kṛṣṇa; *vraje* - in Vraja; *sāksāt* - directly; *sevā* - service; *labhana* - attaining; *vidhaye* - in the course of; *tad* - Their; *gaṇa* - devotees; *yujoh* - with; *tad* - Their; *ijya* - formal worship; *ākhyā* - glorifying; *dhyāna* - meditating; *śravaṇa* - hearing; *nati* - bowing down; *pañca* - five; *amṛtam* - nectar; *idaṁ* - this; *dhayan* - drinking; *nityā* - with great devotional expertise; *govardhanam* - Govardhana Hill; *anudinaṁ* - every day; *tvaṁ* - you; *bhaja* - worship; *manaḥ* - mind.

O mind! For the sake of attaining the service of Rādhā and Giridhārī, Who are absorbed in erotic play along with Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī and her group, you should daily worship Govardhana Hill with five kinds of nectar, namely formal worship (ijya or pūjā), singing of his name (ākhyā or kīrtana), meditation, hearing about his glories and bowing down to him with great devotional expertise!

Commentary:

In this final verse of Manaḥ Śikṣā Śrī Raghunātha dāsa instructs his mind on how to worship Girirāja Govardhana to attain the service and the *darśana* of his most beloved deity Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Giridhārī with Their boyfriends like Subala and Their girlfriends like Lalitā.

In Śrīmad Bhāgavata it is seen that Śrī Rādhikā called Govardhana Hill **the best of Hari's servants** and only three devotees have been garlanded there with the title-of-honour 'best of Hari's servants':

King Yudhiṣṭhira, Uddhava and Govardhana Hill.

Amongst them, however, Govardhana Hill is again the greatest. The duty of a servant is to serve his master, and Govardhana's exclusive dedication to the Divine Couple is matchless. This will be well known through the following two *stavas* of Stavāvalī, which are entirely dedicated to Govardhana Hill.

It is even better to serve the Lord's devotees than to serve the Lord Himself, if one wants to attain the service of the Lord's lotus feet.

The Lord told His dear devotee Uddhava '*mad bhakta pūjābhyaḍhikā*': "It is better to worship My devotee."

It may still be doubted whether or not the Lord can be attained by serving the Lord directly, but it is sure that the method of serving the Lord's devotees is flawless! Therefore Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī has said that all the items of devotional service to the Lord can also be practiced by serving the Lord's devotees. We have described this in the first verse of Manaḥ Śikṣā.

With this in mind Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī says: *nītyā govardhanam anudinaṁ tvarī bhaja manaḥ*

"O mind! Worship Govardhana Hill with great devotional expertise, every day!" This devotional expertise is called *sāsaṅga-bhajana*, devotion with attachment and free from offenses and *bhajana* which is not mechanically and ritually performed in an absent-minded way. This kind of *bhajana* blesses the devotee with the full savour of each item of the practice. In this way Śrī Raghunātha dāsa has described five items of *bhajana* here:

tad iyyākhyā dhyāna śravaṇa nati pañcāmṛtam idaṁ dhayan: "There are five kinds of nectarean worship of Govardhana Hill which can be drunk: *pūjā* (ritual worship), *nāma* (chanting his Holy Name), *dhyāna* (meditating on him), *śravaṇa* (hearing about him) and *namaskāra* (offering obeisances unto him).

ijyā means *pūjā* or ritual worship. Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī has written: *śraddhā viśeṣataḥ prītiḥ śrī mūrter aṅghri sevane* (B.R.S. 1.2.90)

"The lotus feet of the deity should be served with special faith and love."

pratimā nahe tumi - sāksāt vrajendra-nandana
(C.C. Madhya 5)

"You are not a statue - You are the prince of Vraja Himself!" This faith must be there while serving the deity with love, then the sweet touch, or another kind of personal response will be obtained from the deity. In this way the first of Śrī Raghunātha's five kinds of nectarean, expert worship, named *ijyā*, is relished.

ākhyā means *nāma-saṅkīrtana*. The devotees who perform *nāma-saṅkīrtana* with great love and attachment, having firm faith in the statement of the scriptures that there's no difference between Kṛṣṇa and His name, and that ***nāma-saṅkīrtana* is both the means and the goal**, become blessed with the full relish of the nectar of the Holy Name. This means 'expertise in *nāma saṅkīrtana*'. The word *ākhyā* also refers to hearing topics about Śrī Hari in an assembly of devotees, or glorification in song of Hari's qualities and pastimes (*līlā-kīrtana* or *rasa-kīrtana*).

Thirdly there is *dhyāna* or *smaraṇa*. According to Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī *dhyāna* is the third stage of meditation.

tad idaṁ smaraṇaṁ pañca-vidham. yat kiñcid anusandhānaṁ smaraṇam. sarvataś cittam ākṛśya sāmānyākāreṇa manodhāraṇaṁ dhāraṇā. viśeṣato rūpādi cintanaṁ dhyānam. amṛta dhārāvad avichinnaṁ tat dhruvānusmṛtiḥ. dhyeya-mātra sphuraṇaṁ samādhir iti.

"There are five stages of *smaraṇa*. *smarana* itself is a random, accidental remembrance of Hari's names and forms, *dhāraṇā* means drawing one's mind away from all other topics and holding Śrī Hari's names and forms within the mind in an ordinary way, *dhyāna* means specifically meditating on some forms and names, *dhruvānusmṛti* means to meditate continuously like a stream of nectar, and *samādhī* means simply to transcendently envisage the object of meditation. On the path of *raga-bhakti* a practitioner who is fixed in *smaraṇa* firmly fixes his mind on his *siddha-svarūpa* and forgets about his material body and everything that is related to it, entering into the kingdom of *līlās* and becoming blessed by attaining a greatly astonishing kind of relish. This is called expertise in meditation, or the relish of nectar.

Fourthly there is *śravaṇa*, hearing topics of Kṛṣṇa from the mouths of saintly devotees. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has called this item of devotional practice the most important one, because without hearing first one can't develop a taste for all the other items of devotional practice. One can taste the full nectar by hearing about Śrī Kṛṣṇa's names, forms, qualities, and pastimes from the mouth of a greatly realized and like-minded devotee and thus become most blessed with the taste of nectar. This is true expertise in hearing.

tatrāpi savāsana mahānubhava mukhāt sarvasya śrī kṛṣṇa nāmādi śravaṇaṁ tu parama bhāgyād eva sampadyate
(Bhakti Sandarbhaḥ - 262 anuḥ).

Finally there is *nati*, or offering obeisances. This is also a nectarean engagement if one keeps the sweet mercy of the Lord and His love for His devotees in the heart.

Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī has attained these five kinds of nectar and always worships Govardhana Hill, faithfully residing at the base of the hill. He instructs his mind to serve and see the love-intoxicated Divine Couple along with Their friends like Subala and Their girlfriends like Lalitā, teaching his mind that this can't be accomplished without following in the footsteps of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī in the *sādhaka*-body and of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī in the *siddha*-body.

The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas similarly should take shelter of the base of Govardhana Hill and follow in the footsteps of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī in the present external body and of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī in the mentally conceived spiritual body. In this way they can also relish these five kinds of nectar. This is a flawless way of receiving the personal *darśana* and devotional service of the Śrī Yūgala, which has been taught here by Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī.

*vrata kori vraja vāse, yūgala ujvala rase,
nirantara yiho kore snāna
āmāra ārādhya guru, rūpa prema kalpa-taru
parama vairāgya balavān*

"I vow to live in Vraja and I will always bathe in the brilliant erotic *rasa* of the Divine Couple. My worshipable master Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, who is a wish yielding tree of love of God, is a most powerful renunciate."

*tāhāra saṅgete mana, lalitādi sakhigaṇa,
priya sakhā subalādi saṅge.
yūgala kiśora kuñje, yadi cāo sevā puñje,
matta yārā madana taraṅge*

*śravaṇa, kīrtana, smaraṇa, arcana, pāda sevana,
ei pañcāmṛta kori pāna.
girirāja govardhane, bhajo mana rātri dine,
kuñja sevā koribeka dāna*

"O mind! If you want to render plenty of service to the Adolescent Couple in the groves, as They are accompanied by Their dear boyfriends headed by Subala and Their girlfriends headed by Lalitā, intoxicated by waves of erotic joy, then drink the five kinds of nectar of hearing, chanting, remembering, ritually worshipping and serving the feet of Girirāja Govardhana day and night. He will certainly give you these devotional services in the *kuñja*!"

BENEDICTION:

***manaḥ-sikṣā-daikādaśaka-varam etan madhurayā
girā gāyaty uccaiḥ samadhigata-sarvārthayati yaḥ
sa-yūthaḥ śrī-rūpānuga iha bhavan gokula-vane
jano rādhā-kṣṇātula-bhajana-ratnaṁ sa labhate***

manaḥ - the mind; *sikṣā* - teachings; *da* - giving; *ekādaśaka* - eleven verses; *varam* - the best; *etad* - this; *madhurayā* - with sweetness; *girā* - voice; *gāyati* - who sings; *uccaiḥ* - loudly; *samadhigata* - readers; *sarva* - all; *artha-tati* - desires; *yaḥ* - who; *sa* - with; *yūthaḥ* - the group; *rūpa* - Rūpa Gosvāmī; *anuga* - followers; *iha* - here;

bhavan - being so; *gokula-vane* - in the forest of Gokula; *janaḥ* - person; *rādhā-kṛṣṇa* - Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa; *atula* - matchless; *bhajana* - worship; *ratnaṁ* - jewel; *sa* - he; *labhate* - attains.

Whoever loudly sings these eleven great instructing verses with a sweet voice and a fixed mind, being a follower of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and his devotees, will attain the incomparable jewel of the worship of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in the forest of Gokula.

Commentary:

In this verse Śrī Raghunātha dāsa bestows a benediction (*phala-śruti*) upon the readers of his *Manaḥ Śikṣā*.

In his *Manaḥ Śikṣā* Śrī Raghunātha dāsa described the rules to be followed by *rāgānugā*-devotees, the different obstacles they may face and the essential instructions for *rāgānugā-bhakti*.

It's no exaggeration to say that there are very few instructing poems in this world which are as beautiful as this one.

On the pretext of instructing his own mind in these eleven verses Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī has given a matchless gift to all the devotees of the world, therefore the assembled devotees will undoubtedly always remain indebted to him. The devotees should try to enter deeply into the purports of these verses.

Not only has Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī given us valuable instructions in this *Manaḥ Śikṣā*, in the end he even offers a great blessing to whoever chants this *stava*! His words are already filled with the *rasa* of *bhajana*, and are able to take the minds of the hearer and chanter along to the kingdom of love of God like a powerful *mantra*, and the benediction he offers here is as infallible as the words of the sages of yore, for the Lord never fails to fulfill the desires of His pure devotee. Undoubtedly the Lord will make this benediction come true for whoever loudly recites this *Manaḥ Śikṣā* with a sweet voice (and whoever hears it as well)! How very wonderful is this benediction:

sayūthaḥ śrī rūpānuga iha bhavan gokula-vane jano rādhā-kṛṣṇātula bhajana ratnaṁ sa labhate

"The chanter of this *Manaḥ Śikṣā* will be blessed by attaining the matchless jewel of worship of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in the forest of Gokula, following in the footsteps of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and his devotees."

The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava way of worship is one of allegiance to Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmī. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī himself has said: *vraja-lokānusārataḥ*. A person who desires love of the lotus feet of Rādhā and Mādhava should follow in the footsteps of the people of Vraja, serving Them both in his external devotee-body (in allegiance to Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmī) and in his spiritual body (in allegiance to Śrī Rūpa and Rati Mañjarī). "

*bāhya antara ihāra dui to sādhana;
bāhya - sādhaḥa dehe kore śravaṇa kirtana
mane - nija siddha deha koriyā bhāvana;
rātri dine kore vraje kṛṣṇera sevana
(Caitanya Caritāmṛta Madhya 22)*

"There are two kinds of devotional practice - internal and external. In the external body one engages in hearing and chanting and in the mind one conceives of one's own spiritual body, in which to serve Kṛṣṇa in Vraja day and night."

In the form of this blessed worship the devotee attains a priceless jewel, because *bhajana* is the means as well as the goal. *bhajana* is performed with the aim of doing more *bhajana*. When the external body of the devotee perishes he is blessed with attaining the long-cherished devotional service of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava.

