

THE DISTINCTIVE CONTRIBUTION  
OF  
ŚRĪ RŪPA GOSVĀMĪ

A monograph by

ŚRĪ ŚRĪMAD

BHAKTIVEDĀNTA NĀRĀYAṆA GOSVĀMĪ MAHĀRĀJA

on the occasion of *viraha-tithi-mahotsava*,  
the divine disappearance day,  
of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī



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*Dedicated to my Holy Master*



*śrī gauḍīya-vedānta-ācārya-kesarī nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa  
om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata śrī*

**ŚRĪMAD BHAKTI PRAJÑĀNA KEŚAVA  
GOSVĀMĪ MAHĀRĀJA**

*the best amongst the tenth generation  
of descendants in the bhāgavata-paramparā  
from Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu,  
and the founder of the Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti  
and its branches throughout the world.*

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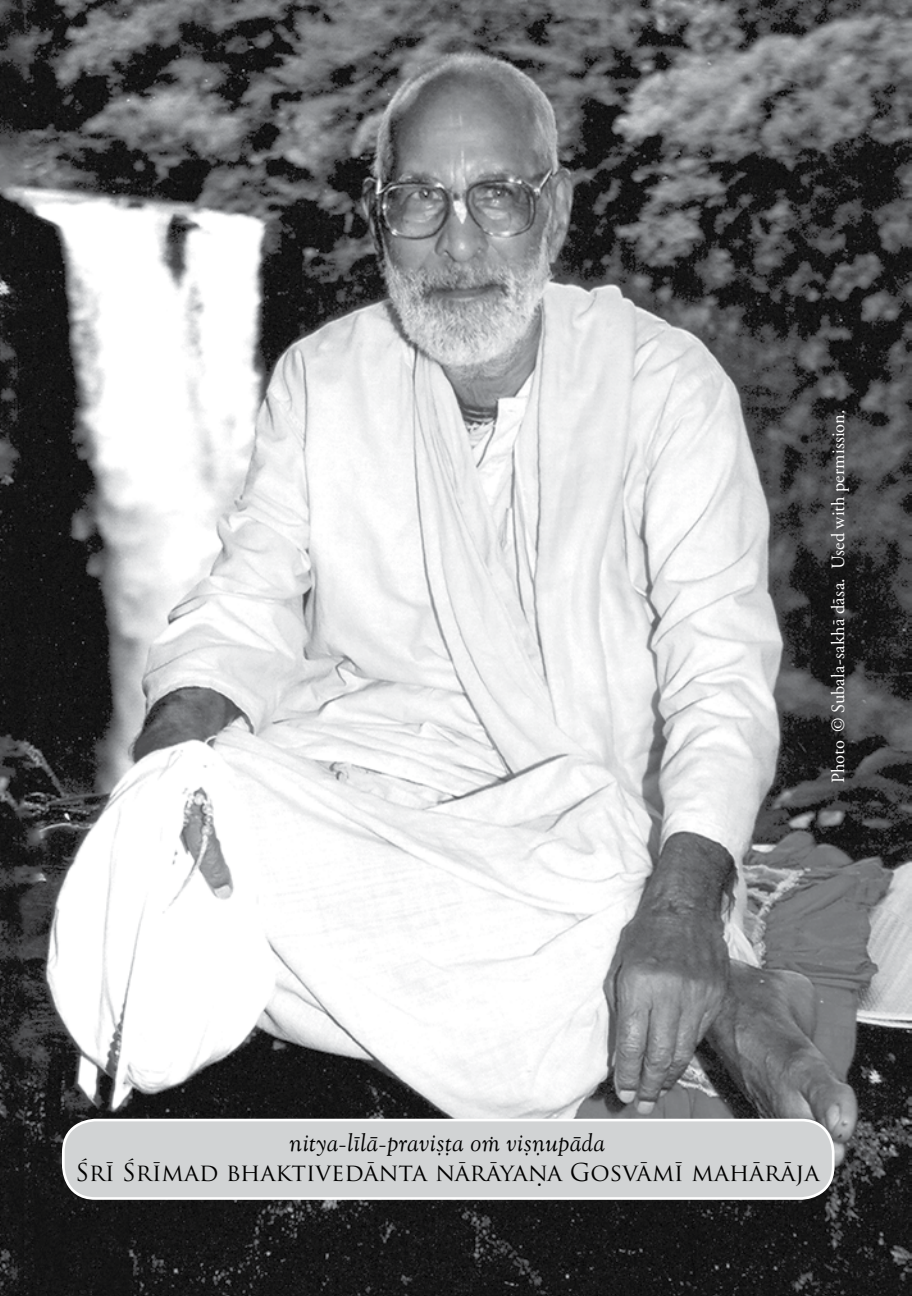


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*nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda*

ŚRĪ ŚRĪMAD BHAKTIVEDĀNTA NĀRĀYAṆA GOSVĀMĪ MAHĀRĀJA



*nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda*  
ŚRĪ ŚRĪMAD BHAKTIVEDĀNTA VĀMANA GOSVĀMĪ MAHĀRĀJA

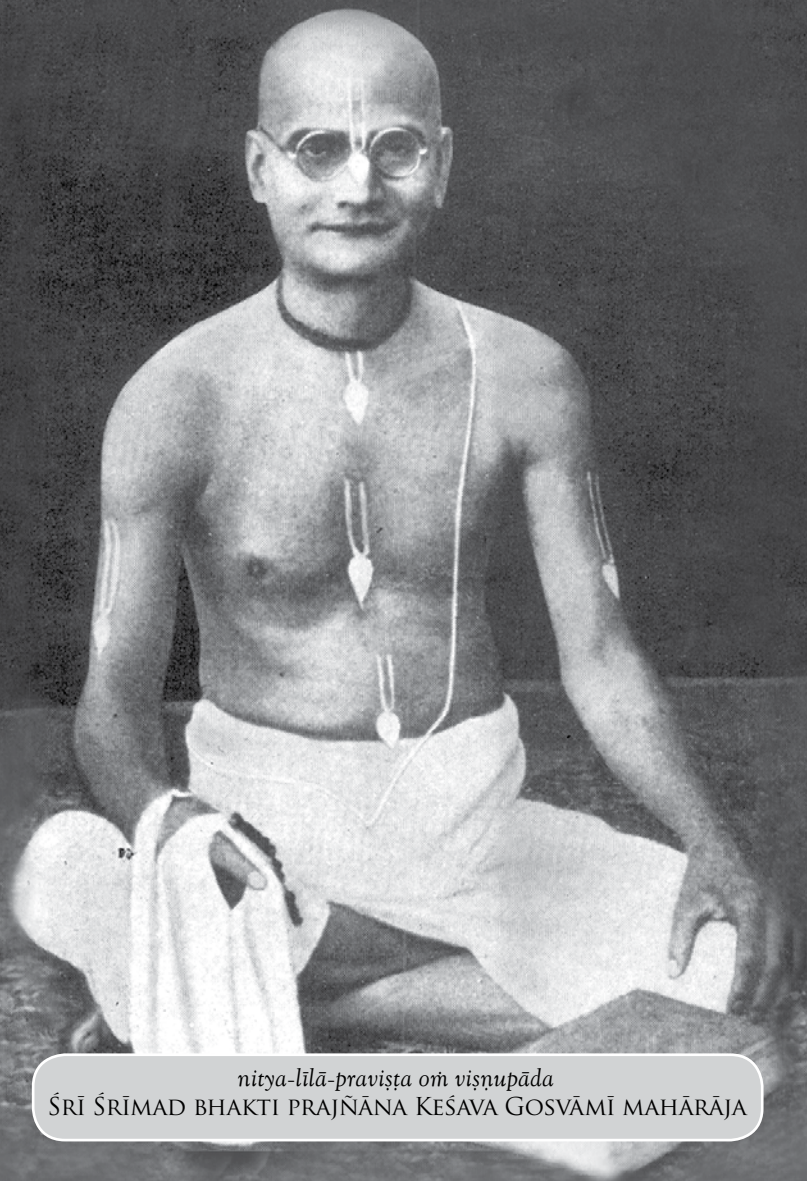




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*nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda*  
ŚRĪ ŚRĪMAD BHAKTIVEDĀNTA SVĀMĪ MAHĀRĀJA





*nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇu-pāda*  
ŚRĪ ŚRĪMAD BHAKTI PRAJÑĀNA KEŚAVA GOSVĀMĪ MAHĀRĀJA



*nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda*  
ŚRĪ ŚRĪMAD BHAKTISIDDHĀNTA SARASVATĪ PRABHUPĀDA



*nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa parama-bhāgavat-pravara*  
ŚRĪ ŚRĪLA GAURAKIŚORA DĀSA BĀBĀJI MAHĀRĀJA



*nitya-lilā-praviṣṭa Saccidānanda*  
ŚRĪ ŚRĪLA BHAKTIVINODA ṬHĀKURA





Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī





# The Distinctive Contribution of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī

*śrī-caitanya-mano 'bhīṣṭam  
sthāpitaṁ yena bhū-tale  
svayaṁ rūpaḥ kadā mahyaṁ  
dadāti sva-padāntikam*

*(Prema-bhakti-candrikā<sup>1</sup>, maṅgalācaraṇa)*

When will that Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, who has fulfilled the innermost desire of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu on this earth, give me shelter at his lotus feet?

## Mano 'bhīṣṭam, the heart's desire

What is the innermost desire of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu?

*anarpita-carīm cirāt karuṇayāvatīrṇaḥ kalau  
samarpayitum unnatojjvala-rasāṁ sva-bhakti-śriyam  
hariḥ puraṭa-sundara-dyuti-kadamba-sandīpitaḥ  
sadā hṛdaya-kandare sphuratu vaḥ śacī-nandanah*

*Śrī Vidagdha-mādhava<sup>2</sup> (1.2)*

<sup>1</sup> A collection of songs by Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura.

<sup>2</sup> Śrī Vidagdha-mādhava is a drama of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in Vṛndāvana. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī finished this book in the year 1454 Śakābda (A.D. 1532).

May Śrī Śacīnandana Gaurahari, resplendent with the radiance of molten gold, manifest Himself within your heart. It had been a long time that He had not bestowed that most excellent, exalted, radiant conjugal mellow (*ujjvala-rasa*) on the world, and so He has mercifully descended in the age of Kali<sup>3</sup> to bestow the wealth of devotional service unto Himself (*sva-bhakti*).

Even though Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the original source of all incarnations, is endowed with six opulences<sup>4</sup>, He is also *rasika-śekhara*, the supreme enjoyer of *rasa*, the mellow of transcendental relationships. During His manifest pastimes in this world, He personally tasted the twelve *rasas*<sup>5</sup>, such as the mellow of conjugal love (*madhura-rasa*), but He did not give that *prema* (divine love) to the living beings of the world. Therefore, in the first portion, or the *sandhyā*, of Kali-yuga, Śrī Śacī-nandana

.....  
<sup>3</sup> The present age of quarrel and hypocrisy, known as the Iron Age.

<sup>4</sup> *aiśvaryasya samagrasya vīryasya yaśasaḥ śrīyaḥ  
jñāna vairāgyayoś caiva śaṇṇām bhaga itiṅganā*

*Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (6.5.74)

One who is complete in the six opulences of wealth, power, fame, beauty, knowledge and renunciation is known as Bhagavān.

<sup>5</sup> Beyond Vaikuṇṭha lies Goloka Vṛndāvana. It is here alone that the embodiment of all the *rasas* resides. The twelve *rasas* include five principal *rasas*: *śānta* (neutrality), *dāsyā* (servitorship), *sakhya* (friendship), *vātsalya* (parenthood) and *mādhurya* (conjugal); and seven subsidiary *rasas*: *hāsyā* (humor), *adbhuta* (wonderment), *karuṇa* (pity), *raudra* (anger), *vīra* (chivalry), *bhayānaka* (fear), *vībhatsa* (disgust).

Gaurahari, who is the manifestation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa when He is adorned with the mood (*bhāva*) and splendor (*kānti*) of Śrī Rādhā, mercifully appeared in order to bestow the beauty, known as *śrī* or *śobhā*, of the most radiant mellow of conjugal love, *unnatojjvala-rasa*, upon the living beings of the world.

### **Parakīya-bhāva, the mood of paramour love**

*Unnatojjvala-rasa* indicates *parakīya-bhāva*, the mood of paramour love, and it is only present in the hearts of Śrī Rādhikājī and the *gopīs* who are Her direct expansions (*kāya-vyūha-svarūpā*). Their ecstatic emotions, known as *bhāvas*, which include *mādanākhyā-bhāva*<sup>6</sup> and *rūḍha-bhāvas*<sup>7</sup>, cannot be given to any living being. However, it is possible that the beauty – the *śrī*, or *śobhā* – of their *bhāva* may be given. Śrī Rādhikā, the embodiment of *hlādinī-śakti*, the pleasure potency of the Lord, is the desire creeper of love, the *prema-kalpa-latā*. The *gopīs* are Her leaves and flowers, and Her *mañjarīs*, or buds, are the beauty of all of them. Just as in the breeze, these *mañjarīs* further enhance the beauty of the creeper, so the confidential female servitors of Śrī Rādhikājī, such as Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī and others, enhance the beauty of Śrī Rādhikā. Śrī Kṛṣṇa has appeared in the form of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu only to bestow the mood of those *mañjarīs*, which is known as *mañjarī-bhāva*, to the living beings of the world through the medium of *śrī nāma-saṅkīrtana*.

6 The pinnacle of selfless, ecstatic *prema*.

7 Advanced ecstasies.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's innermost desire was to preach the paramour mood, *parakīya-bhāva*. Indeed, by the Lord's inspiration and mercy, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī fulfilled this innermost desire of the Lord. Before the advent of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, people would look contemptuously upon this most effulgent paramour mood (*unnatojjvala-parakīya-bhāva*) of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*. However, with strong scriptural arguments, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī established that *parakīya-bhāva* between the heroic lover, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and His beloved heroines, the *gopīs*, is the most auspicious, pure, and elevated mellow. In *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*<sup>8</sup> (1.21), Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī states:

*laghutvam atra yat proktaṁ tat tu prākṛta-nāyake  
na kṛṣṇe rasa-niryāsa-svādārthaṁ-avatāriṇi*

The defect of the paramour mood that is described in *rasa-sāstras* (which delineate the science of drama<sup>9</sup>) is applicable to a mundane hero, not to Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself. He is *sarva-avatārī*, the source of all incarnations. He is also the crest jewel of these incarnations, all of which control religion (*dharma*) and irreligion (*adharma*). Since the incarnations are not controlled by *dharma* and *adharma*, how is it possible that Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is Their source, would be influenced? Śrī Kṛṣṇa accepted the paramour mood known as *upapati-bhāva* with the desire of tasting *rasa*, the sweetness of transcendental

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8 A transcendental description of transcendental loving affairs that includes metaphor, analogy, and higher *bhakti* sentiments. Pure devotion in conjugal love is briefly described in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, but it is elaborately covered in *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*.

9 Or books that describe the *rasas*.

loving relationships. He is the cause of all causes (*sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇa*); He, who is the origin of everyone, is Himself without an external cause of origin; He is all powerful; and He is the reservoir of pleasure (*akhila-rasāmṛta-sindhu*). The *gopīs* are *ānanda-cinmaya-rasa-pratibhāvitābhis tābhir ya eva nija-rūpatayā kalābhiḥ* (Śrī *Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.37). They represent *ānanda-cinmaya-rasa*, meaning the *gopīs*' forms are submerged in the nectar of the effulgent mellow of the pinnacle of divine love. Moreover, being the personal expansions and counterparts of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, they embody the functions of His pleasure potency, *hlādinī-śakti*. Therefore, where this Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the hero and these *gopīs* are the heroines, how can there be any defect in this mood of paramour love that exists between them?

It is stated in Śrī *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Ādi-līlā 4.15–16):

*prema-rasa-niryāsa karite āsvādana  
rāga-mārga bhakti loke karite pracāraṇa  
rasika-śekhara kṛṣṇa parama-karuṇa  
ei dui hetu haite icchāra udgama*

The supremely *rasika* and merciful Śrī Kṛṣṇa desired to appear in this world to taste the essence of the mellow of divine love and to propagate *rāga-mārga bhakti*, devotional service based on the platform of spontaneous attraction.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī cites the following evidence from scriptures such as *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that details the *parakīya-bhāva* of the *gopīs*:

(1) *tā vāryamāṇāḥ patibhiḥ pitṛbhir bhrāṭṛ-bandhubhiḥ*  
*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.29.8)*

The *gopīs* did not stop, despite being restrained by their husbands, fathers, brothers and other relatives.

(2) *bhrāṭaraḥ patayaś ca vaḥ vicinvanti ...*  
*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.29.20)*

Being unable to see you, your mothers, fathers, husbands, sons, brothers and relatives must be searching for you.

(3) *pati-sutānvaya-bhrāṭṛ-bāndhavān ativilaṅghya te ...*  
*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.31.16)*

O Acyuta! We have come here to You, overstepping our husbands, children, ancestors, brothers, relatives, and the boundaries of morality, propriety, respectability and chastity.

(4) *evam mad-arthojjhita-loka-veda svānām hi ...*  
*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.32.21)*

O girls, for My sake, you have abandoned worldly obligations, Vedic principles, and even your near and dear relatives.

(5) *na pāraye 'haṁ niravadya samyujam*  
*sva-sādhu-kṛtyam vibudhāyuṣāpi vaḥ*  
*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.32.22)*



O *gopīs*! You have worshiped Me even after breaking the shackles of household life that are difficult to overcome.

- (6) *nāyaṁ śrīyo 'ṅga u nitānta-rateḥ prasādaḥ*  
*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.47.60)

During *rāsa-līlā*, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa showed mercy to the *gopīs* and fulfilled their desires by placing His arms around their necks. Such mercy was not obtained even by Lakṣmī-devī, who always resides on His chest.

- (7–8) *āsām aho caraṇa-reṇu-juṣām ahaṁ syām*  
*vr̥ndāvane kim api gulma-latauśadhīnām*  
*yā dustyajam̐ sva-janam ārya-patham̐ ca hitvā*  
*bhejur mukunda-padaṁ śrutibhir vimrgyām*  
*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.47.61)

[Śrī Uddhavajī says] Ah! Although the boundaries of Vedic etiquette and custom regarding husbands, sons and relatives are so difficult to give up, these *gopīs* have abandoned them and have obtained the love of Śrī Kṛṣṇa that is searched for by even the *śrutis* (the Vedic hymns). In order to continuously receive the foot-dust of these *gopīs*, I desire to take birth here in Vṛndāvana in the form of a bush, creeper, or herb.

The implication of this statement is that the damsels of Vraja possess love that is far superior even to that of Rukmīṇī-devī and the other queens of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

(9) *gopī-jana-vallabhāya-svāhā*

*Śrī Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad (Pūrva 3)*

The phrase *gopī-jana-vallabha*, meaning ‘the beloved of the *gopīs*,’ which is found in the *gopāla-mantra* and other *mantras*, is emblematic of the paramour mood, *parakīya-bhāva*.

Other than in *Śrī Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī has mentioned the *parakīya* mood of the *gopīs* in the dramas *Vidagdha-mādhava* and *Lalita-mādhava*, as well as in books such as *Harṣa-dūta* and *Dāna-keli-kaumudī*.

### **The Speciality of the Gauḍīya Sampradāya**

In some *sampradāyas*, only Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes of eternal meeting (*milana*) and sporting pleasure (*vihāra*) are accepted. Even within those pastimes, they do not accept pastimes of concealed desire and longing (*pracchanna-kāmukatā*), sulky mood (*māna*), tryst (*abhisāra*), achievement with great difficulty (*durlabhatā*) and opposition (*nivāraṇa*). In regard to the paramour mood of the *gopīs*, they espouse the common sentiment regarding ordinary heroes and heroines and look upon *parakīya-bhāva* as licentious behavior. “Such people,” according to the thought of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, “are evil-minded!” In the following verse, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī uses the interjection *āḥ* to express great lamentation for these people:

*āḥ kiṁ vānyad yatas tasyām idam eva mahāmuniḥ  
jagau pāramahaṁsyām ca saṁhitāyām svayam śukaḥ*

*Śrī Ujjvala-nīlamanī (3.22)*

He says that in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which is also known as *Pāramahaṁsī-saṁhitā*<sup>10</sup>, the great sage Śrī Śukadeva sang the glories of the *vraja-gopīs'* *parakīya* mood in a loud voice. Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa first revealed this *Pāramahaṁsī-saṁhitā* to Brahmā, the grandfather of the universe, in the form of four verses known as *catuḥ-ślokī*, and Paramahansa Śrī Vyāsadeva, who is the manifestation of Nārāyaṇa Himself, composed it. Śrī Śukadeva, the crest jewel of the family of *paramahaṁsas*<sup>11</sup>, loudly sang this *saṁhitā* in the assembly of Mahārāja Parīkṣit. Śrī Parīkṣit was awaiting death in the presence of Devarṣi Nārada, Śrī Vaśiṣṭha, Śrī Parāśara, Śrī Veda-vyāsa, and other great souls. Those great personalities were spiritual masters, knowers of the Supreme Absolute Truth, expert in relishing the mellows of devotion, and crest jewels of liberated personalities. It was at that particular time, in the presence of these personalities, that Śrī Śukadeva sang about this *parakīya-bhāva* in the *Pāramahaṁsī-saṁhitā Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* discourse. He – the speaker, Śrī Śukadeva – and the audience, who included Mahārāja Parīkṣit and sages such as Śrī Sūta, Śaunaka, Vidura, and Maitreya Muni, were all exalted or even liberated personalities. Therefore, this mood of paramour love between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* can never be reprehensible or sordid.

.....  
<sup>10</sup> A treatise that is fully agreeable and beneficial for swanlike devotees.

<sup>11</sup> Divine, swanlike persons.

## Bhakti-rasa, the form of devotion

In the Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas* before Śrīman Mahāprabhu, the practice of *bhakti* – that is *vaidhī-bhakti*, or devotional service according to regulative principles – was present. However at that time, it was not widely accepted by scholars that *bhakti* is also a *rasa*, meaning that its essential nature is that of relishment in transcendental relationship. It was solely Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī who, in his analytical expositions<sup>12</sup>, established that *bhakti* has the inherent nature of transcendental *rasa* extending to the pinnacle state of *śṛṅgāra-rasa* (paramour conjugal love) in the spontaneous loving devotional service (*rāgātmika-bhakti*) of Vraja.

He used examples to show how *bhakti-rasa* manifests when *rati* (attachment) or *sthāyī-bhāva* (permanent ecstasy) combines with ecstasies such as (1) *vibhāva* (excitants that stimulate affection for Kṛṣṇa) in the form of *ālabhana* (supportive excitants) and *uddīpana* (impelling excitants), (2) *sāttvika-bhāva* (existential ecstasy), (3) *anubhāva* (subordinate ecstasy), (4) *sañcārī-bhāva* (transitory ecstasy), etc.

*Bhakti-rasa* contains five main *rasas*, or serving moods: (1) *śānta* (passive adoration), (2) *dāsyā* (servitude), (3) *sakhya* (friendship), (4) *vātsalya* (parenthood) and (5) *mādhurya* or *śṛṅgāra* (conjugal love); and seven secondary *bhakti-rasas*: (1) *hāsyā* (comedy), (2) *adbhuta* (wonder), (3) *raudra* (anger), (4) *vīra* (chivalry), (5) *karuṇa* (pathos), (6) *bhayānaka* (dread), and (7) *vībhatsa* (disgust). Such an illustration of the form of devotion has never been seen before, anywhere.

<sup>12</sup> Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu and Ujjvala-nīlamanī.

## Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī is Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī is Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī in the pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In the form of an eternal maidservant, she serves the Divine Couple in their pastimes in the secluded bowers of Vraja. However, Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī does not explain the process by which the mood of being a maidservant is obtained. In the form of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, though, he has explained this. He states:

*kṛṣṇaṁ smaran janam cāśya  
preṣṭhaṁ nija-samīhitam  
tat-tat-kathā-rataś cāsau  
kuryād vāsaṁ vraje sadā*

*Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.294)*

“The male or female practitioner engaged in remembering and serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa should call to mind the *rāgātmika*<sup>13</sup> devotees – those who are endowed with moods such as *sakhya* (friendship), *vātsalya* (parental affection), and *śṛṅgāra* (conjugal affection) – whose service he or she longs for. While continuously staying in Vraja, the practitioner should serve the Divine Couple under the guidance of such *rāgātmika* devotees in his or her spiritually perfected body (*siddha-deha*), always remaining submerged in the nectarean pastimes of the

<sup>13</sup> *Rāga* is the quality of natural, ultimate absorption in and attachment to the object of one's devotion. That *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* which is endowed with such *rāga* is called *rāgātmika-bhakti* and that *bhakti* which follows in the wake of such *rāgātmika-bhakti* is called *rāgānugā-bhakti*. Examples of *rāgātmika* devotees are: Śrī Rādhā (in the conjugal mellow *śṛṅgāra-rasa*) and Śrī Nanda-Yaśodā (in the parental mellow *vātsalya-rasa*). In fact, all the inhabitants of Vraja – including the *gopas*, *gopīs*, cows, calves, animals and birds – are *rāgātmika*.

Divine Couple.” By this alone, that desired mood can be obtained. Without the specific guidance of the *gopīs*, that *pāra-kīya-bhāva* cannot be obtained.

Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī is endowed with properties or attributes that are more distinguished than even those of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī. By the life and pen of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, the world has reaped greater benefit.

*yaṅ kali rūpa śarīra na dharata  
taṅ vraja-prema-mahānidhi kuṭharika,  
kon kapāṭa ughāḍata (1)*

*ko jānata, madhura vṛndāvana,  
ko jānata vraja-nīta  
ko jānata, rādhā-mādhava-rati,  
ko jānata soi prīta (4)*

*Yaṅ Kali Rūpa  
Śrī Mādhava dāsa*

The purport of this song is that if Rūpa Gosvāmī had not appeared, who would have revealed *para-kīya-bhāva* (paramour mood), which is the means to obtain the great treasure of the love of Vraja? Without his mercy, who could have understood the sweetness of Mathurā and Vṛndāvana and the glories of the damsels of Vraja? Moreover, who could have understood the mood and love of Rādhā and Mādhava?



## Understanding the Heart of Śrī Caitanya

### Mahāprabhu

At the time of Ratha-yātrā<sup>14</sup>, Śrī Gaurahari was speaking a verse from *Sāhitya-darpaṇa*<sup>15</sup>, whose purport only Svarūpa Dāmodara, and no one else, could comprehend. However, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, understanding the innermost desire of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, explained the confidential meaning of that verse in another verse he himself composed. For this, Śrīman Mahāprabhu lovingly slapped him on the back. The *Sāhitya-darpaṇa* verse reads:

*yaḥ kaumāra-haraḥ sa eva hi varas tā eva caitra-kṣapās  
te conmīlita-mālātī-surabhayaḥ prauḍhāḥ kadambānilāḥ  
sā caivāsmi tathāpi tatra surata-vyāpāra-līlā-vidhau  
revā-rodhasi vetasī-taru-tale cetaḥ samutkañṭhate*

Śrī Padyāvalī<sup>16</sup> (386)

That very personality who stole my heart during my youth on the banks of the Revā has now become my husband. The same nights of *madhu-māsa*<sup>17</sup> have arrived. The scent of blooming *mālātī* flowers is again there, and the same sweet breezes are gently

<sup>14</sup> Festival of the Chariots of Śrī Jagannātha at Purī.

<sup>15</sup> Literally, A Mirror of Composition. Name of a treatise on literary or rhetorical composition by Viśvanātha Kavirāja (15th century CE). Both Rūpa Gosvāmī and Rāmānanda Rāya were scholars, and as such, they were expert in composing poetry strictly in accordance with *Sāhitya-darpaṇa* and other Vedic literature.

<sup>16</sup> An anthology of verses compiled by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

<sup>17</sup> *Madhu-māsa* means “a month in Spring.” Also known as Caitra, corresponding to March-April, it is the first month of the year.

blowing with the fragrance of the *kadamba* forest.  
I am also the same heroine in the performance of  
intimate pastimes, yet even in this, my mind is not  
happy. It is hankering to go back to the banks of the  
Revā under the shade of the *kadamba* tree in the  
*vetasī* grove.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's verse reads:

*priyaḥ so 'yaṁ kṛṣṇaḥ saha-cari kuru-kṣetra-militas  
tathāhaṁ sā rādhā tad idam ubhayoḥ saṅgama-sukham  
tathāpy antaḥ-khelan-madhura-muralī-pañcama-juṣe  
mano me kālindī-pulina-vipināya sprhayati*

Śrī Padyāvalī (387)

O *sakhī*! Today, in Kurukṣetra, I have met My  
dear Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is My life and soul. I am the  
same Rādhā, and We are both experiencing the same  
happiness of meeting. But still, My mind yearns for  
the forest of Vṛndāvana on the banks of the Kālindī<sup>18</sup>,  
which is flooded by the bliss of the fifth note of Śrī  
Kṛṣṇa's flute.

The meanings of the verses of *Govinda-virudāvalī*<sup>19</sup>  
composed by Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī are extremely  
confidential, and even *dik-gaja paṇḍitas*<sup>20</sup>, or powerful,  
stalwart scholars, cannot fathom their meaning. These

.....  
<sup>18</sup> Yamunā River.

<sup>19</sup> A detailed panegyric of Śrī Govinda.

<sup>20</sup> Scholars as strong as the eight elephants that guard the eight  
cardinal points and support the universe.

verses reveal wonderful variety of ornamentation (*alaṅkāra*) and alliteration (*anuprāsa*).

### **Uttamā-bhakti, pure devotional service**

Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī describes that *śraddhā* (faith), the first step of pure devotional service (*uttamā bhakti*), leads to *niṣṭhā* (firm faith), *ruci* (taste, or relish), *āśakti* (attachment), *rati* (condensed attachment, also known as *bhāva*, a ray of the sun of *prema*) and *prema* (pure love). It progresses further as *sneha* (affection), *māna* (sulky mood), *praṇaya* (intimate love), *rāga* (spontaneous love), *anurāga* (sub-ecstatic love), *bhāva* (ecstatic love), *mahābhāva* (topmost spiritual ecstasy), and *mādana* (topmost ecstasy in meeting).

The definition of pure devotional service, or *uttamā-bhakti*, and its abovementioned successive developmental stages – as described by Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* and *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* – are not to be found anywhere else. Even scholars of other *sampradāyas* quote these definitions in their speeches and commentaries. One example is Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī's definition of *uttamā-bhakti*:

*anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam  
jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam  
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-  
śīlanam bhaktir uttamā*

*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.1.11)

When perpetual, ardent endeavor (*anuśīlana*) is performed with a mood that is favorable to Śrī Kṛṣṇa

and to the objects and personalities related to Him, if it is unmixed with (1) attachment to knowledge of the oneness of the *jīva* with the featureless, impersonal Brahman (*nirbheda-brahma-jñāna*<sup>21</sup>), (2) attachment to fruitive activities (*sakāma-karma*) and to performing activities without personal motivation (*niṣkāma-karma*), and (3) attachment to occupational duties in the *varṇāśrama*<sup>22</sup> system and to the practice of mysticism (*yoga*), and if it is devoid of desires for anything other than Śrī Kṛṣṇa and *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, or loving service to Him, then such constant endeavor (*anuśilana*) is known as *uttamā-bhakti*.

### The Characteristics of Prema-bhakti

Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī's definition of *sādhana*, or devotional practice:

*kṛti-sādhya bhavet sādhyā-  
bhāvā sā sādhanābhidhā  
nitya-siddhasya bhāvasya  
prākṛtyaṁ hṛdi sādhyatā*

Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.2)

*Sādhana-bhakti* is devotional service that is to all appearances accomplished by activities – such as

<sup>21</sup> *Nirbheda-brahma-jñāna* posits that there is no difference between the *jīva* and Brahman, and when ignorance is dissipated, the living being becomes identical with the nature of Brahman. At that time, the *jīva* has no separate existence. Such misguided knowledge is also known as *jīva-brahma-aikya-jñāna*.

<sup>22</sup> Social and spiritual duties based on the four divisions of social status (*varṇas*) and orders of spiritual culture (*āśramas*).

hearing and chanting – of the dull material senses. *Bhāva-bhakti* (ecstatic devotion) and *prema-bhakti* (loving devotion) are obtained through this *sādhana* (practice). From this statement, one should not think that *bhakti* is attained by the activities of the senses; *bhakti* is the eternally established nature (*nitya-siddha svabhāva*) of the pure soul. *Sādhana* is the name of the process by which that *siddha-bhāva*, or perfected mood of the pure soul, is manifest in the heart through the activities of hearing (*śravaṇa*), chanting (*kīrtana*), etc.

Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī's definition of *rati* (condensed attachment), here known as *bhāva-bhakti* (ecstatic devotion):

*śuddha-sattva-viśeṣātmā*  
*prema-sūryāmśu-sāmyabhāk*  
*rucibhiś citta-māsṛṇya-*  
*kṛd asau bhāva ucyate*

Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.3.1):

When the heart becomes melted by *ruci*, an intense longing to attain the Lord, then what was previously *sādhana-bhakti* (regulated devotional service) is called *bhāva-bhakti*. This *bhāva-bhakti* is a special manifestation of *śuddha-sattva*. It is like a ray – the first beam – of the rising sun of *prema-bhakti*.

*ananya-mamatā viṣṇau*  
*mamatā prema-saṅgatā*

*bhaktir ity ucyate bhīṣma-  
prahlādoddhava-nāradaih*

*Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.4.2)*

When one develops an unflinching sense of ownership or possessiveness (*mamāta*) in relation to Lord Viṣṇu, or, in other words, when one considers Viṣṇu and no one else to be the object of love, such an awakening is called *bhakti* by exalted persons like Bhīṣma, Prahlāda, Uddhava and Nārada.

*sarvathā dhvaṁsa-rahitaṁ  
yadyapi dhvaṁsa-kāraṇe  
yad bhāva-bandhanam yūnoḥ  
sa premā parikīrtitaḥ*

*Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi (14.63)<sup>23</sup>*

The bond of mutual affection between a couple that is not destroyed even when the cause for such destruction is present is known as *prema*.

*samyam masṛṇita-svānto  
mamatvātiśayāṅkitaḥ  
bhāvaḥ sa eva sāndrātmā  
budhaiḥ premā nigadyate*

*Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.4.1)*

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<sup>23</sup> This definition of *prema* from *Śrī Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* is quoted by Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī in his commentary of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.60.51), describing the pure love between Rukmīṇī and Kṛṣṇa.

When *bhāva* (attachment towards Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the preliminary stage of transcendental love of God) becomes intensely condensed, the wise call it *prema*. *Prema* completely melts the heart and produces an extreme sense of possessiveness, or ownership (*mamatā*), towards its object, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Similarly, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has also defined *sneha* (affection), *māna* (sulky mood), *praṇaya* (intimate love), *rāga* (spontaneous love), *anurāga* (sub-ecstatic love), *bhāva* (ecstatic love), *mahābhāva* (topmost spiritual ecstasy), *mādana* (topmost ecstasy in meeting), and so on. These are states that had never been described by others. Learned scholars of other *sampradāyas* – even *māyāvādīs*<sup>24</sup>, monists of the school of *advaita-vāda* – also illustrate their work with his definitions.

*ādadānas tṛṇaṁ dantair  
idaṁ yāce punaḥ punaḥ  
śrīmad-rūpa-padāmbhoja-  
dhūliḥ syāṁ janma-janmani*

*Śrī Mukta-carita*

Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī

Taking a straw between my teeth, I humbly pray again and again that I may become a speck of dust at Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī's lotus feet, birth after birth.

<sup>24</sup> Followers of *advaita-vāda* are known as *māyāvādīs* because they contend that Absolute Truth, or Brahman, falls under the influence of *māyā* (illusion) and is overcome by ignorance.





# The Life of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī Prabhu

by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī Prabhu is one of the Six Gosvāmīs in *śrī gaurāṅga-līlā*, and he is Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī in *śrī vraja-līlā*. His forefathers came from Karṇāṭaka, South India. For a reason that is unknown, one of his ancestors left his native place and settled in Bengal. In approximately 1411 Śakābda (1489 CE), in Moragrām (Mādhāipura), Bengal, Śrī Rūpa appeared in this lineage, which is that of Yajurvedi *brāhmaṇas* descending from Bhāradvāja Ṛṣi (son of Bṛhaspati). His father's name was Śrī Kumāra-deva, his older brother was Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, and his younger brother was Śrī Anupama, or Vallabha, who was the father of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī. From childhood, the three brothers were very much attached to the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Bhagavān.

After Śrī Rūpa and Śrī Sanātana finished their education in their youth, they impressed Hussain Shah, the king of Bengal (Gauḍadeśa), with their penetrating intelligence, generosity, and other outstanding qualities. The king appointed Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī to be Prime Minister and Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī to be Deputy Prime Minister. In 1514 CE, in the course of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's first journey to Vraja, the Lord met the brothers in the village of Rāmakeli.

At that time, Śrīman Mahāprabhu turned back and returned to Jagannātha Purī. After this meeting, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's eagerness to attain Kṛṣṇa increased so much that he quit his government position and left everything. During Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's second journey to Vraja, when He was returning to Purī from Śrī Vṛndāvana, He met Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī in Prayāga and infused His potencies in the heart of His beloved Rūpa by presenting an unprecedented explanation of *bhakti-rasa-tattva*. This episode is described in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā* 19.136–137):

*prabhu kahe, -śuna, rūpa, 'bhakti-rasera lakṣaṇa'*  
*sūtra-rūpe kahi, vistāra nā yāya varṇana*

*pārāpāra-śūnya gabhīra bhakti-rasa-sindhu*  
*tomāya cakḥāite tāra kahi eka 'bindu'*

Śrīman Mahāprabhu said, “O my beloved Rūpa, I will give you a synopsis of the symptoms of *bhakti-rasa*. The nectarean ocean of *bhakti-rasa* has no limit; it is boundless and fathomless, and so it is impossible to describe in full. From that ocean, I am giving you one drop.”

For ten days in Prayāga, Mahāprabhu presented to Śrī Rūpa an unprecedented exposition of *bhakti-rasa-tattva*. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has explained all this in his writings, including *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, *Lalita-mādhava*, and *Vidagdha-mādhava*.

Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī is celebrated for his qualities, such as renunciation of household life, humility, and

disinclination toward objects of the senses, all of which arose from his profound love for Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. His life is elaborately described in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Bhakta-māla*, and other books. Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura Mahāśaya awarded him the befitting title “*śrī caitanya mano ’bhīṣṭa sthāpaka* – He who has established the mission to fulfill the dearest desire of Śrī Caitanya.” Śrīman Caitanya Mahāprabhu gave him two specific instructions: to reestablish Vraja-maṇḍala’s hidden holy places and to manifest devotional literature.

From Prayāga, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī went to Vṛndāvana, and from there he returned to his home in Bengal to take care of family affairs and see to the education of his nephew, who later became known as Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī. After this, he went to Nīlācala where he joined Mahāprabhu.

While in Bengal, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī started to write outlines of the two dramas *Vidagdha-mādhava* and *Lalita-mādhava*. To pacify his separation from Vraja, he had desired to write about the pastimes of Vraja and the pastimes of Dvārakā as one drama, but while traveling through Orissa, in town of Satyabhāmāpura, Śrī Satyabhāmā-devī appeared in a dream and ordered him to present the stories as two separate dramas. In Nīlācala, Mahāprabhu directly gave him the same instruction. There, in the assembly of His devotees, Śrīman Mahāprabhu was delighted to hear the compositions that Śrī Rūpa recited. Only *rasika* devotees will understand the joy they experienced.

Mahāprabhu infused Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī with all potency and, appointing him *ācārya*, sent him to Vṛndāvana to fulfill His innermost desire. Therefore, Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has written:

*śrī caitanya mano 'bhīṣṭaṁ sthāpitaṁ yena bhūtale  
svayaṁ rūpaḥ kadā mahyaṁ dadāti sva-padāntikam*

When will Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, who established within this world the mission to fulfill the dearest desire of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, personally give me the shelter of his feet?

The literature written by Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī includes *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, *Laghu-bhagavatāmṛta*, *Lalita-mādhava*, *Vidagdha-mādhava*, *Nikuṅja-rahasya-stava*, *Stava-mālā*, *Śrī Rādhā-kṛṣṇa-gaṇodeśa-dīpikā*, *Mathurā-māhātmya*, *Padyāvalī*, *Uddhava-sandeśa*, *Harṇsadūta*, *Dān-keli-kaumudī*, *Kṛṣṇa-janma-tithi-vidhi*, *Prayuktākhyāt-maṇjarī* and *Nāṭaka-candrikā*.

# Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's Instructions on the Attainment of Kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa

(From the Introduction to *Śrī Utkalikā-vallarī*  
by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja)

Those who are suffering, desirous of wealth, inquisitive, and searching for knowledge can worship the Supreme Lord Bhagavān if they have sufficient spiritual merit (*sukṛti*). But unless they achieve a state of consciousness that is thoroughly saturated with the pure mellows of loving devotion to Kṛṣṇa, or *kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa-bhāvitā matiḥ*, they cannot obtain the greed for the happiness that comes with serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa, not even with the accrued *sukṛti*, or pious credits, of hundreds of millions of lifetimes. Therefore Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī Prabhu has shown the method to attain that greed:

*tan-nāma-rūpa-caritādi-sukīrtanānu-  
smṛtyoḥ krameṇa rasanā-manasī niyojya  
tiṣṭhan vraje tad-anurāgi janānugāmī  
kālaṁ nayed akhilam ity upadeśa-sāram*

*Śrī Upadeśāmṛta* (8)

A devotee should remove his tongue and mind from all matters unrelated to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and, living in Vraja-maṇḍala under the guidance of those persons who have

deep, spontaneous love for Him, engage his senses full-time in remembering and glorifying Kṛṣṇa's names, forms, qualities and pastimes. This is the essence of all advice.

This verse makes it clear that for devotees who are greedy for *vraja-rasa*, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has recommended living in Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma. Residence in Vraja, in any manner at all, is extolled by the scriptures. However, as instructed both by Śrīman Mahāprabhu Himself and that personality who established Śrī Mahāprabhu's innermost desires, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, merely physically staying in Vraja is not enough to attain *viśuddha bhakti-rasa*, the transcendently sweet relationships relished in spontaneous loving service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, in the abovementioned verse, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī Prabhu has also described the method for living in Vraja.

One will not be able to attain *unnatojjvala-rasa-maya prema-bhakti* (pure love in the most excellent, exalted, radiant conjugal mellow) that is practiced and preached by Rūpa Gosvāmī – in other words, one will not be able to become a *rūpānuga*, a follower of Rūpa Gosvāmī – even by following those who are dedicated to *vaidhī-bhakti*, what to speak of following those who use deceitful *bhajana* to camouflage sense enjoyments such as eating, sleeping, amusement or acquisition, becoming an object of veneration, and celebrity. The only way of attaining this most exalted *prema-bhakti* is to accept the guidance of *rasika* spiritual masters who follow those of Śrī Vrajendra-nandana's associates who are a part of His intimate Vraja pastimes, and to constantly practice under these *gurus*.

Therefore, mere physical presence in Vraja does not qualify one to be a true Vrajavāsī. Rather, residence in Vraja is successful when one fully dedicates his mind and the sentiments of his heart to continuously remain under the guidance of the devotees who are absorbed in *vraja-rasa*. To establish this very principle, Śrīman Mahāprabhu referred to Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī as a “pure Vrajavāsī” even though he never, even for a single moment, physically resided in Vraja.

There is another topic to be remembered. In the beginning stage, the practitioner is engrossed in many unwanted habits and vices. Thus it is not fit that such a neophyte engage in the practice of exclusively contemplating (*smaraṇam*) pastimes of the Lord. By doing so on the pretext of doing solitary *bhajana*, he could simply foster lethargy. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī is the preceptor, or *ācārya*, of transcendental (*aprākṛta*) *rasa* who has taught by his personal example how to relish these divine mellows. He has established the method for performing spontaneous devotion, or *rāga-bhajana*. Transgressing this method and endeavoring to display so-called topmost devotion to Lord Hari is nothing but a wicked contrivance. Such an attempt is impertinent, unrestrained, offensive, and inauspicious and will bring about the destruction of society. We must always remember the instruction of our worshipable *parama-gurudeva* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda: “*kīrtana-prabhāve, smaraṇa hoibe, se-kāle bhajana-nirjana sambhava* – One must engage in *kīrtana*, loud glorification of the name, form, qualities and pastimes of the Lord. This *kīrtana* will automatically cause

one to remember Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His attributes. Such *kīrtana*-induced remembrance makes solitary *bhajana* possible.”

Therefore, what is required is that *sādhakas* who want to attain a particle of the bliss of service that is intrinsic to *unnatojjvala-bhakti-rasa*, the most excellent, radiant *rasa* of conjugal love that Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī longs for, should become free from ulterior desire (*anyābhilāṣitā-śunya*) and, endeavoring constantly with genuine kindness towards Kṛṣṇa (*anukūla kṛṣṇa-anuśīlana-mayī*), should cultivate the most exalted devotion (*uttamā-bhakti*) in the company of affectionate, like-minded devotees.



# Uttamā-bhakti

Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja

The original form of Bhagavān descended during this age of quarrel and hypocrisy as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to deliver all of the living entities. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, who is *priya-svarūpa*, the very embodiment of everything dear to Him, and who is foremost among those who established the deepest wishes of His heart, has revealed the symptoms of *uttamā-bhakti*, the utmost culmination of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa:

*anyābhilāṣitā-śunyaṁ  
jñāna-karmādyanāvṛtam  
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānuśīlanam  
bhaktir-uttamā*

*Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.1.11)*

*anya-abhilāṣitā* – prone to selfish, ulterior desires; *śunyaṁ* – devoid; *jñāna* – knowledge; *karma* – fruitive work; *ādi* – and so on; *anāvṛtam* – not eclipsed; *ānukūlyena* – through genuine kindness to Him; *kṛṣṇa* – Kṛṣṇa; *anu* – perpetual; *śīlanam* – ardent endeavour; *bhaktir-uttamā* – the utmost culmination of *bhakti* (devotional service to Kṛṣṇa).

Perpetual, ardent endeavour meant exclusively for Śrī Kṛṣṇa and performed out of genuine

kindness<sup>1</sup> to Him, when neither prone to any selfish, ulterior desires nor eclipsed by impersonal knowledge, fruitive work, or any other occupation, is known as *uttamā-bhakti*.

The *sādhaka* who carefully reflects upon and studies this verse under the guidance and care of the followers of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī will know the meaning of *bhakti* with lucid clarity and indeed, he will attain realization of *bhakti*.

### The Perfect Definition

The statement of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, “*kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam* – while all other forms of Godhead are expansions, Kṛṣṇa is personally the original form of Godhead” is accepted as the defining statement in any deliberation on *sambandha-tattva*, or existential relationships. Similarly, the verse at hand, the definition of *uttamā-bhakti* that we are now considering, must be accepted as the defining statement in relation to *abhidheya-tattva*, the means to the ultimate end, namely *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

It is said, “*sā cāniyame-niyama-kāriṇī* – the factual definition of something is the one that exceeds all others in authority and is thus regarded as the most prominent.”

Fruitive workers, speculative philosophers, mystics, those who offer the results of their work to God, sense

.....  
<sup>1</sup> A gentle, sympathetic, or benevolent disposition; showing consideration for others. Synonyms include “affection, lovingness, fondness, intimacy, agreeableness, pleasantness, gratefulness, thankfulness, softness and tenderness” (Based on the definition of “kind” found in the Oxford dictionary).

enjoyers, whimsical religionists, and the members of various cults, all propagate their own conceptions of *bhakti*. This verse, from which the symptoms of *bhakti* to Kṛṣṇa can be derived, has utterly subverted their opinions, understandings and inferences by proving these to be inconsistent, flawed and greatly misled.

## **Intrinsic Symptoms and Boundary Symptoms**

“Perpetual, ardent endeavour meant exclusively for Śrī Kṛṣṇa and performed out of genuine kindness to Him, when neither prone to any selfish, ulterior desires nor eclipsed by impersonal knowledge, fruitive work, or any other occupation, is known as *uttamā-bhakti*.”

The symptoms described in the second half of this verse, *ānukūlyena kṛṣṇa-anu-śīlanam*, directly comprise *bhakti*’s own form. Hence, these symptoms are called the *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa* of *bhakti*. The symptoms described in the first half of this verse, *anya-abhilāṣitā-śunyaṁ jñāna-karma-ādi-anāvṛtam*, demarcate the boundary of *bhakti*. Hence, these symptoms are called the *taṭastha-lakṣaṇa* of *bhakti*.<sup>2</sup>

## **A Technical Analysis of Interpreting the Verb-root śīl**

There is no verb in this verse, but the verb-root *śīl* within the noun *anuśīlanam* is perfectly obvious. The word *anuśīlanam* is formed by qualifying the verb-root *śīl* with

<sup>2</sup> The literal meaning of the words *svarūpa*, *taṭastha* and *lakṣaṇa* are as follows: *sva* means “own” or “intrinsic”; *rūpa* means “form”; *taṭa* means “boundary”; *stha* means “situated on” and *lakṣaṇa* means “symptom” or “symptoms”.

the prefix *anu*. In Sanskrit grammar there are ten ways to interpret a verb, technically called *gaṇas*<sup>3</sup>. Within some of these *gaṇas* – headed by the *gaṇa* called *cara-gaṇa* – the verb-root *śīl* is interpreted as “repeated or permanent exercise or discipline” (*abhyāsa*). By this interpretation, *śīl* is conceived of as having progress or engagement (*pravṛtti*) as its essential characteristics. In contrast, within the other *gaṇas* – headed by the *gaṇa* called *bhvā-gaṇa* – the same verb-root, *śīl*, is interpreted as “profound stillness or concentration of thought, or intent contemplation of a particular object” (*samādhi*). By this interpretation, *śīl* is conceived of as having withdrawal or disengagement (*nivṛtti*) as its essential characteristics.

### Active Efforts and Emotional States of Being

The expression of *bhakti* is accomplished both through active efforts (*ceṣṭā*) and emotional states of being (*bhāva*). The verb root *śīl* accounts for both of these features of *bhakti*.<sup>4</sup>

### Active Engagements and Active Disengagements

Continuing on, the active feature itself of *anuśīlanam* for the sake of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is expressed through one’s body, one’s mind and one’s words. Each of these methods of expression is always seen in the two forms of engagements (*pravṛtti-rūpa*) and disengagements (*nivṛtti-rūpa*).

.....  
<sup>3</sup> “A series of roots or words following the same rule and called after the first word of the series” – Monier Williams Sanskrit Dictionary

<sup>4</sup> Note from the preceding section that *abhyāsa* can be considered an action, and *samādhi* can be considered an emotional state of being.

Engaging in the nine prominent limbs of *bhakti*, which constitute its very form, through one's body, mind and words is *kṛṣṇa-anuśīlanam* in the form of an active engagement (*pravṛtti-ātmaka-ceṣṭā*). On the other hand, resolutely abstaining from offending Kṛṣṇa's holy name or the process of serving Kṛṣṇa is *kṛṣṇa-anuśīlanam* in the form of an active disengagement (*nivṛtti-ātmaka-ceṣṭā*).

### Perpetual and Without Obstruction

The prefix *anu* can be used to mean “following”, “accompanying”, “repeatedly” or “perpetually”. In *Śrī Harināmāmṛta-vyākaraṇa* Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī comments on the use of the prefix *anu* in the context of *kṛṣṇa-pravacanīya* (cf. Pāṇini's *karma-pravacanīya*<sup>5</sup>).

*lakṣaṇa-vīpse-ittham-*  
*bhūteṣvabhir-bhāge paripratī*  
*‘anu’ reṣu sahārthe ca*  
*hīne tūpaś-ca kathyat*

*Śrī Harināmāmṛta-vyākaraṇa* (4.107)

The characteristics that are repeated in each of the prefixes *pari*, *prati* and parts of *abhi* [especially “toward” and “severally”, or “one after another”] are also included in *anu*. But it is to be mentioned that *anu* also exclaims “accompaniment” and “inferiority” like the prefix *upa*.

5 “A term for certain prepositions of particles not connected with a verb but generally governing a noun (either separated from it or forming a compound with it).” – Monier Williams Sanskrit Dictionary

The prefix *anu* is used in this verse with the verb-root *śil* to convey “perpetually and ardently endeavouring”. In other words, the ardent endeavours (*śīlanam*) discussed in this definition of *uttamā-bhakti* must be perpetual and without obstruction. Furthermore, such perpetual, ardent endeavours must be exclusively for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. When *anu-śīlanam* in both its features, namely active efforts and emotional states of being, is meant exclusively for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, then it is part of *bhakti*. Hence *kṛṣṇa-anu-śīlanam*.

## Flawed Definitions

Pleasing, active engagements exclusively meant for Śrī Kṛṣṇa is indeed *bhakti*. It stands to reason that perpetual, ardent endeavour (*anuśīlanam*) must be immediately pleasing to the person it is meant for. Thus, it would seem we have discovered the definition of *bhakti* in the term *kṛṣṇānuśīlanam* itself.<sup>6</sup>

However, this symptom of *bhakti* is tainted by two flaws (*doṣa*). In some respects it extends to include too much (*ativyāpti-doṣa*) and in other respects, it does not extend far enough (*avyāpti-doṣa*). Those symptoms that are not tainted by the faults of under-extension (*avyāpti*), over-extension (*ativyāpti*) or inconsistency are the correctly derived symptoms of *bhakti*.

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<sup>6</sup> The definition presently under discussion is “perpetual, ardent endeavour meant exclusively for Śrī Kṛṣṇa”, along with the implication that “such perpetual, ardent endeavour must immediately gratify the person it is meant for”.

## Over-extension

If *bhakti* were defined solely as *kṛṣṇānuśīlanam* (perpetual, ardent endeavour meant exclusively for Śrī Kṛṣṇa), or to please Śrī Kṛṣṇa, then, as we will see, it would serve to establish even spiteful demons like Kāṁsa's most fearsome wrestlers, Cāṇūra and Muṣṭika, as devotees. Herein, the symptoms of *bhakti* have extended to include too much. In other words, *ativyāpti-doṣa* has arisen.

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa heard the challenging words of Cāṇūra and Muṣṭika upon entering Kāṁsa's royal wrestling arena, the joy of heroism (*vīra-rasa*) surged within Him. Whenever a warrior receives blows from his opponent, he is thrilled. Thus, when Kṛṣṇa received repeated blows from Cāṇūra and Muṣṭika, who perpetually endeavoured to attack Him, He naturally experienced the happiness that arises from heroism. Should one then deem Cāṇūra and Muṣṭika to be *bhaktas*? Since their endeavours were meant for Śrī Kṛṣṇa's undoing, and not at all for His enjoyment, no one will ever conclude that they are *bhaktas*.

## Under-extension

Conversely, defining *bhakti* simply as pleasing Śrī Kṛṣṇa, would imply that someone who causes Kṛṣṇa any displeasure at all is not a *bhakta* and that his actions are not expressions of *bhakti*.

For example, once when Mother Yaśodā was breastfeeding baby Kṛṣṇa, the milk she had been heating began to boil over. At once, she removed Śrī Kṛṣṇa from her lap, much to His displeasure, and ran

to save the milk. Kṛṣṇa was so enraged that, biting His lips, He smashed a nearby clay pot that was full of yoghurt. He was so intensely unhappy at being denied His mother's breast milk to His full satisfaction that He burst into tears.

When Mother Yaśodā denied Śrī Kṛṣṇa full satisfaction, He was not even slightly pleased with her. Hence, in this case, defining *bhakti* as *kṛṣṇānuśīlanam* alone prevents the definition from extending to include these actions. In other words, *avyāpti-doṣa* has arisen.

Mother Yaśodā is the presiding goddess of immaculate *prema-bhakti* in *vātsalya-rasa* (parental love of God). Her every endeavour is for the sake of serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In this pastime, she had thought to herself, "My breast milk alone will not fully nurture Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but the milk on the stove, which is now boiling over, will protect His life!" Although Mother Yaśodā was the queen of Vraja and was always surrounded by unlimited servants and maids, she would personally milk the best cows and heat their excellent milk. Then, with her own hands she would prepare the finest butter for Kṛṣṇa.

"Even if I displease Kṛṣṇa for the time being," she had thought, "I must save this milk for Him." Thoughts like this would cause her *prema-bhakti* to swell to exceptional heights and thereafter permeate all of her actions. Her actions can never be anything but *bhakti*.

### **Genuine Kindness to Him**

The word *ānukūlyena* prevents the faults of under-extension (*avyāpti-doṣa*) and over-extension (*ativyāpti-doṣa*) from tainting the definition of *bhakti*.



In the instrumental case<sup>7</sup>, the adjective *anukūla* (kind) becomes *ānukūlyena* (by means of kindness). If someone aspires to perform *kṛṣṇānuśīlanam* – perpetual, ardent endeavours meant exclusively for Śrī Kṛṣṇa – then he must first become *ānukūla*, genuinely kind to Him. It must be his sole ambition to please and satisfy Śrī Kṛṣṇa and he must completely expel even the slightest trace of hostility (*pratikūlatā*) from his heart. Even if someone's *kṛṣṇānuśīlanam* temporarily seems to be entirely favourable for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, if it is not utterly devoid of any underlying adversity and any craving for personal gratification, then it is not *bhakti*. Although his endeavours may momentarily please his worshipful Lord, if he harbours any personal, selfish, ulterior motives or any motivation besides pleasing the Lord, he will fail to procure the actual fruit of *bhakti*, namely superlative love of Godhead (*prema*). Instead, the result he obtains will simply correspond to his underlying motivations.

### “Pleasing Śrīla Gurudeva Gives Me Life”

Many of the disciples of our Śrīla Gurudeva, *jagad-guru paramārādhya*tama Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda, gave their bodies, minds, words and wealth to assist in fulfilling his heart's deepest ambitions. Although he was immensely pleased by their service, or *anuśīlana*, it is seen that some of them, even after serving him in this way for

<sup>7</sup> The instrumental case is expressed by the inflection *ena* in Sanskrit and with the prepositions “by means of” or “with” in English. For example, in “perceived directly *by means of* one's own eye” or “perceived directly *with* one's own eye”, the noun eye is used in the instrumental case.

so many years, were willing to abandon him, their own *guru* (*guru-tyāga*), and that others have developed *guru-bhoga*, the propensity to exploit him. That is, instead of striving to imbibe the ideal and character of our Śrī Gurupāda-padma, who was perpetually rapt in *bhajana*, they have simply imitated his external activities and audaciously costumed themselves as *gurus*. Not even the first stage of *bhakti* has manifested in their hearts.

If we contemplate the cause for this, we find that as they served him, they failed to maintain the attitude, “Śrīla Gurudeva will be pleased by accepting my service and pleasing him gives me life.” Since they served him with many other motives and not exclusively with the hope of pleasing him, they were cheated out of obtaining the principal fruit of serving a *sādhū* and have instead attained whatever they secretly desired. If someone’s purpose is genuine then as *bhakti* appears in his heart all its symptoms, which are mentioned in the scriptures, will manifest in him and all hankerings and aspirations opposed to *bhakti* will gradually diminish.

## Symptoms Identical with Bhakti

In our investigation thus far, we have seen that the use of the noun *anuśīlanam* (perpetual, ardent endeavours) is far from meaningless. Surely therefore, we cannot assume that the adjective *ānukūlya* can sufficiently define *bhakti* on its own. As we have seen, on the one hand, perpetual, ardent endeavour meant exclusively for Śrī Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇānuśīlanam*) does not qualify as *bhakti* if it is not free from hostility; and, on the other hand, even if one’s *kṛṣṇānuśīlanam* displeases Śrī Kṛṣṇa, if it

is devoid of hostility, it may rightfully be called *bhakti*. Hence while simply pleasing Śrī Kṛṣṇa may not always be *bhakti*, *kṛṣṇānuśīlanam* that is devoid of hostility certainly is *bhakti*.

Furthermore, without a consideration of the active efforts and emotional states of being involved in *ānuśīlanam*, the mere absence of hostility will not be *bhakti*. For example, pots and other inert objects harbour no hostility toward Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but due to their insentience, they cannot make any active effort for Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sake nor express any emotion for Him. Therefore, the two terms *ānukūlyena* and *kṛṣṇānuśīlanam* together verily express the intrinsic symptoms of *bhakti*.

It has been stated in the scriptures:

*tad-abhinnatve sati tad-bhodakatvam  
svarūpa-lakṣaṇam*

That which remains identical with an object while causing comprehension of it to arise is called the object's *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa* (intrinsic symptom).

The joint term *ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānuśīlanam* – the extraordinary nature of perpetual, ardent endeavour meant exclusively for Śrī Kṛṣṇa and endowed with the characteristic of kindness to Him (*ānukūlya*) – allows one to comprehend the meaning of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*. At the same time, *ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānuśīlanam* is truly identical with *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* itself. Hence *ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānuśīlanam* is the *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa* (intrinsic symptom) of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*.

## Symptoms Distinct from Bhakti

Now we will consider the two boundary symptoms.

*tad-bhinnatve sati tad-bhodakatvaṁ  
taṭastha-lakṣaṇam*

That which remains distinct from an object while causing comprehension of it to arise is called the object's *taṭastha-lakṣaṇa* (boundary symptom).

In the first half of the verse – *anyābhilāṣitā-sūnyam jñāna-karmādyanāvṛtam* – the terms *anya-abhilāṣitā*, and *jñāna-karma-ādi* describe *uttamā-bhakti* through their distinction from it. Hence they are the *taṭastha-lakṣaṇa* (boundary symptoms) of *uttamā-bhakti*.

## Not Prone to Any Selfish, Ulterior Motives

The purpose of the phrase *anya-abhilāṣitā-sūnyam* is to reveal that, while constantly engaged in the search for Śrī Kṛṣṇa's happiness, one must exclusively wish to obtain *bhakti* without harbouring any selfish, ulterior motives, like the aspiration to attain celestial or bodily pleasures.

It is very significant that the term *anyābhilāṣitā* has been used instead of *anyābhilāṣa*. While the prayers of some devotees may at times appear to be in the form of *anyābhilāṣa*, in other words motivated by some desire other than Śrī Kṛṣṇa's happiness, they are still not prone to foster these other desires (*anyābhilāṣitā*).

To illustrate this point, consider one example: Śrī Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja yearned to become the emperor of the world in order to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa. For this end,

he supplicated Śrī Kṛṣṇa with his request to perform the Rājasūya-yajña<sup>8</sup>. Actually, his apparent desire to be emperor was only *anyābhilāṣa*, but in fact, it was devoid of *anyābhilāṣitā*. His actual motivation was simply to have the necessary opulence to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa in a way befitting the Lord's position. In other words, his aspiration to have sovereignty over the whole world was not motivated by a desire to achieve personal greatness.

The word *anyābhilāṣitā* is comprised of the noun *anyābhilāṣa* (selfish, ulterior motive) and the suffix *ṇin*, which means "to foster". Thus, the nature of fostering selfish, ulterior motives is called *anyābhilāṣitā*.

Moreover, if a *śuddha-bhakta* is faced with some imminent disaster, he may pray to Śrī Bhagavān to save him. Although his prayer may appear to be *anyābhilāṣa*, it will not hinder his *bhakti*.

## Not Eclipsed

Perpetual endeavour in the form of active efforts and emotional states of being, meant exclusively for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, performed out of genuine kindness to Him, and uneclipsed by knowledge (*jñāna*) or fruitive work (*karma*) is, in fact, *uttamā-bhakti*.

In this context, *jñāna* refers to the search for the impersonal *brahma*; *karma* refers to daily rituals (*nitya-karma*), and rituals meant for specific occasions

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<sup>8</sup> The Rājasūya-yajña may only be performed by a king, and prospective world emperor, who has already subjugated the entire world, either by force or by consent, and has formalized his conquest by the particular means outlined in *śāstra*.

(*naimittika-karma*), as outlined in the *smṛti-sāstras*; and *ādi* (literally “and so on”) refers to futile forms of renunciation (*phalgu-vairāgya*), mystic *yoga* (*aṣṭāṅga-yoga*), *abhyāsa-yoga* as delineated in *saṅkhyā-sāstra* (the scriptures dealing with empiric enumeration of universal elements); and so forth.

All of the above disciplines are to be rejected by the *sādhaka* because they eclipse his devotion and because their purpose is not even remotely meant to make the Lord happy. Through these disciplines, the *sādhaka* can attain some supernatural powers, all of which are diametrically opposed to the longing search for Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s happiness. Since these forms of *jñāna* and *karma* thoroughly eclipse devotion, they have been forsaken.

The word *anāvṛtam*, which means “not eclipsed”, has been used in connection with *jñāna* and *karma* instead of *śunya*, which means “devoid of”. The significance of this is that certain forms of both *jñāna* and *karma* are integral parts of *bhakti*. Supremely pure *jñāna* is present within *bhakti* as the search for one’s worshipful deity and as knowledge of the reality of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, *bhagavat-tattva-jñāna*. And what appears to be *karma* (literally action), is present within *bhakti* as serving the Supreme Lord by cleaning His temple, cooking for Him and so on. Factually these activities are included among the nine limbs of *bhakti*; they are not mundane *karma*. Had the phrase *jñāna-karma-ādi-śunya* been used, which means devoid of *jñāna*, *karma* and so on, the aforementioned *viśuddha-bhakti-tattva-jñāna* (knowledge of the reality of supremely pure

*bhakti*), as well as service to Bhagavān, would have also been forsaken even though these forms of *jñāna* and *karma* do not eclipse *bhakti*. In fact, they solely and indispensably nurture it.

## The Highest Perfection of Bhakti

In our evaluation of the term *kṛṣṇānuśīlanam*, we must surely include *anuśīlanam* for Śrī Kṛṣṇa in any of His forms, like Rāma and Nṛsiṃha. Still, in light of this understanding, it would be most excellent if Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, the original and most revered *guru-pāda-padma* of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, has left some intimation of the utmost culmination of *uttamā-bhakti* within this perfectly derived definition; that culmination which is observed in the most exalted stages of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas' *bhajana*.

Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī was a most distinguished associate of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. Due to their great intimacy, he understood what was in Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's heart and has therefore written "*anukūlye sarvendriye kṛṣṇānuśīlana*" within his translation of this verse. He has used the words *sarva-indriya*, "with all senses", in order to indicate the highest stage of *bhakti*. That is to say, it is impossible for anyone but the *vraja-gopīs* who are in *madhura-rasa*, the mode of amorous love of Godhead, to perform *kṛṣṇānuśīlanam* with all of their senses. It is even impossible for those within *vātsalya-rasa*, the mode of parental love of Godhead, to perform *kṛṣṇānuśīlanam*, in its highest perfection, with all of their senses.

## The Fruit of Bhakti

Hearing, chanting, remembering and so on comprise the very form of *uttamā-bhakti*. If a *sādhaka* performs his *sādhana-bhakti* with the sole intention of making Śrī Bhagavān happy, he will attain *kṛṣṇa-prema*, the fruit of his *sādhana*, very quickly and with ease. Thereafter, he will gradually advance through each successive stage of *prema*. Therefore, in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (6.3.22) it is said:

*bhakti-yogo bhagavati tan-nāma-grahaṇādibhiḥ*

Devotional service, beginning with the chanting of the holy name of the Lord, is the ultimate religious principle for the living entity in human society.<sup>9</sup>

Here, although it suffices to simply say *bhakti-yoga*, the word *bhagavati* is included in order to convey that the activities of *bhakti*, such as chanting and remembering, are only known as *bhakti-yoga* when they are performed exclusively for Śrī Bhagavān's pleasure. Only this *bhakti-yoga* can bestow *prema*. If the activities of *bhakti* such as chanting and remembering are performed with any purpose other than pleasing Śrī Bhagavān, they cannot be called *bhakti-yoga* and they will never bear the fruit of *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

Translated from *Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā*

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<sup>9</sup> Translation by Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda,  
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ŚRĪ ŚRĪ RĀDHĀ-GOVINDADEVA  
*The Deity of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī*

## Yaṅ Kali Rūpa Śarīra Na Dharata Śrī Mādhava dāsa

*yaṅ kali rūpa śarīra na dharata  
taṅ vraja-prema, mahānidhi kuṭharika,  
kon kapāṭa ughāḍata (1)*

\* **yaṅ**—if; **kali**—the age of quarrel; **rūpa**—Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī; **śarīra**—body; **na**—not; **dharata**—would have assumed; **taṅ**—then; **vraja-prema**—the love of Vraja; **mahānidhi**—great treasure; **kuṭharika**—storehouse; **kon**—who; **kapāṭa**—the doors; **ughāḍata**—would have opened.

Had Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī not appeared in this age of Kali, who would have opened the doors to the great treasure house of *vraja-prema*?

*nīra-kṣīra-haṁsana, pāna-vidhāyana,  
kon prṭhak kari pāyata  
ko saba tyajī', bhajī' vṛndāvana,  
ko saba grantha viracita (2)*

**nīra**—water; **kṣīra**—milk; **haṁsana**—swan; **pāna**—drinking; **vidhāyana**—for; **kon**—who; **prṭhak kari**—separates; **pāyata**—would have been able; **ko**—who; **saba**—everything; **tyajī'**—having abandoned; **bhajī'**—worshipped; **vṛndāvana**—Vṛndāvana; **ko**—who; **saba**—all; **grantha**—scriptures; **viracita**—would have written.

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\* In Bengali poetry, an extra vowel is occasionally added to a word to make it fit the meter. In the word-for-word in these songs, this extra vowel is in gray scale, to familiarize the reader with the actual Bengali word.

Who [but Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī] could have extracted the essence of the scriptures in the same way that a swan separates water from milk? Who could have abandoned everything to perform *bhajana* in Vṛndāvana? Who could have written such scriptures?

*jab pitu vana-phula, phalata nānāvidha,  
manorāji aravinda  
so madhukara binu, pāna kon jānata,  
vidyamāna kari bandha (3)*

**jab**—when; **pitu**—yellow; **vana-phula**—forest-flowers; **phalata**—blossoming; **nānāvidha**—various kinds; **manorāji**—mind-enchanted; **aravinda**—lotus; **so**—that; **madhukara**—honey bee; **binu**—without; **pāna**—drinking; **kon**—who; **jānata**—would have known; **vidyamāna**—present; **kari bandha**—confined.

He was a honey bee amid varieties of blossoming yellow forest flowers and mind-enchanted lotuses. Without that honey bee, who could have known the art of drinking the nectar present yet confined within [those flowers]?

*ko jānata, mathurā vṛndāvana,  
ko jānata vraja-nīta  
ko jānata, rādhā-mādhava-rati,  
ko jānata soi prīta (4)*

**ko**—who; **jānata**—would have known; **mathurā vṛndāvana**—Mathurā and Vṛndāvana; **ko**—who; **jānata**—would have known; **vraja-nīta**—intricacies of Vraja; **ko**—who; **jānata**—would have known; **rādhā-mādhava-rati**—the loving attachment between Śrī Rādhā and Mādhava; **ko**—who; **jānata**—would have known; **soi**—that; **prīta**—love.

Who could have understood the glories of Mathurā and Vṛndāvana? Who could have fathomed the intricacies of Vraja? Who could have understood the *rati* between Śrī Rādhā and Śrī Mādhava? Who could have known that love?

*ḥākara-caraṇa- prasāde sakala jana,  
gāi gāowāi sukha pāota  
caraṇa-kamale, śaraṇāgata mādho,  
tava mahimā ura lāgata (5)*

**ḥākara**—whose; **caraṇa**—feet; **prasāde**—by mercy; **sakala**—all; **jana**—souls; **gāi**—sing; **gāowāi**—make [others] sing; **sukha**—joy; **pāota**—attained; **caraṇa-kamale**—at the lotus feet; **śaraṇāgata**—surrendered; **mādho**—Mādhava dāsa; **tava**—your; **mahimā**—glories; **ura**—topmost, unlimited; **lāgata**—comprehended.

By the mercy of his lotus feet, all souls may sing and inspire others to sing [about the glories of the love of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava], thereby attaining true joy. [O Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī,] having surrendered at your lotus feet, may this Mādhava dāsa be able to comprehend your unlimited glories.

**Viṣaya-vāsanā-rūpa**  
Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

*viṣaya-vāsanā-rūpa cittera vikāra  
āmāra hṛdaye bhoga kare anibāra (1)*

**viṣaya**—sense objects; **vāsanā**—desire; **rūpa**—in the form of; **cittera**—of consciousness; **vikāra**—perversion; **āmāra**—my; **hṛdaye**—in heart; **bhoga kare**—enjoys; **anibāra**—constantly.

My desire for sense objects is a perversion of consciousness which constantly impels my heart to [want to] enjoy.

*katô je jatana āmi kôrilāma hāya  
nā gelô vikāra-buddhi śeṣe prāṇa jāya (2)*

**katô**—how much; **je**—so; **jatana**—effort; **āmi**—I; **kôrilāma**—made; **hāya**—alas!; **nā**—not; **gelô**—gone; **vikāra**—perverted; **buddhi**—intelligence; **śeṣe**—in the end; **prāṇa**—life; **jāya**—goes.

Oh, how much effort I have made, but my perversion has not gone. In the end, my life goes instead!

*e ghora vikāra more kôrilô asthira  
śānti nā pailô sthāna, antara adhīra (3)*

**e**—this; **ghora**—frightful; **vikāra**—perversion; **more**—to me; **kôrilô**—perturbed; **śānti**—peace; **nā**—not; **pailô**—found; **sthāna**—place; **antara**—heart; **adhīra**—restless.

This frightful perversion has perturbed me. Because my heart is restless, peace finds no place there.

*śrī rūpa gosvāmī more kṛpā bitariyā  
uddhāribe kabe jukta-vairāgya arpiyā (4)*

**śrī rūpa gosvāmī**—Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī; **more**—upon me; **kṛpā**—mercy; **bitariyā**—having distributed; **uddhāribe**—he will deliver; **kabe**—when?; **jukta-vairāgya**—renunciation that dovetails all favorable elements in devotional service; **arpiyā**—having invested.

When will Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī bestow his mercy upon me and deliver me by investing me with *jukta-vairāgya*?

*kabe sanātana more chāḍāye viṣaya  
nityānande samarpibe hōiyā sadaya (5)*

**kabe**—when?; **sanātana**—Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī; **more**—to me; **chāḍāye**—having made forsake; **viṣaya**—sense gratification; **nityānande**—to Nityānanda Prabhu; **samarpibe**—he will offer; **hōiyā**—having become; **sadaya**—compassionate.

When will Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, out of great compassion, make me forsake sense gratification and then offer me to Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu?

*śrī jīva gosvāmī kabe siddhānta-salile  
nibhāibe tarkānala, citta jāhe jvale (6)*

**śrī jīva gosvāmī**—Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī; **kabe**—when?; **siddhānta**—conclusive truth; **salile**—with water; **nibhāibe**—he will extinguish; **tarka**—arguments; **anala**—fire; **citta**—the heart; **jāhe**—by which; **jvale**—burns.

When will Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, with the waters of conclusive truth, extinguish the fire of false arguments, which are burning my heart?

*śrī caitanya-nāma śune udibe pulaka  
rādhā-kṛṣṇāmrta-pāne hōibô aśoka (7)*

**śrī caitanya-nāma**—the name of Śrī Caitanya; **śune**—having heard; **udibe**—will arise; **pulaka**—horripilation; **rādhā-kṛṣṇa**—Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa; **āmrta**—nectar; **pāne**—having drunk; **hōibô**—I shall become; **aśoka**—free from grief.

At that time, when I hear the name “Śrī Caitanya,” it will cause ecstatic horripilation in my body. By drinking the nectar of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, I shall become free from all grief.

*kāṅgālera sukāṅgāla durjana e-jana  
vaiṣṇava-caraṇāśraya jāce akiñcana (8)*

**kāṅgālera**—of the wretched; **sukāṅgāla**—most wretched; **durjana**—sinful; **e**—this; **jana**—person; **vaiṣṇava**—Vaiṣṇavas; **caraṇa**—feet; **āśraya**—shelter; **jāce**—begs; **akiñcana**—destitute person.

This sinful person is the most wretched among the wretched. This destitute soul begs for shelter at the lotus feet of the Vaiṣṇavas.

**Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī-pada**  
Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura

*śrī-rūpa-mañjarī-pada,      sei mora sampada,  
sei mora bhajana-pūjana  
sei mora prāṇa-dhana,      sei mora ābharāṇa,  
sei mora jīvanera jīvana (1)*

**śrī-rūpa-mañjarī**—Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī; **pada**—lotus feet; **sei**—they; **mora**—my; **sampada**—treasure; **sei**—they; **mora**—my; **bhajana**—devotional practices; **pūjana**—worship; **sei**—they; **mora**—my; **prāṇa**—life; **dhana**—treasure; **sei**—they; **mora**—my; **ābharāṇa**—ornaments; **sei**—they; **mora**—my; **jīvanera**—life's; **jīvana**—life.

The lotus feet of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī are my treasure. They are the veritable purpose of my *bhajana* and worship. Her lotus feet are the wealth of my life. They are the ornament of my life and indeed, the very life of my life.

*sei mora rasa-nidhi,      sei mora vāñchā-siddhi,  
sei mora vedera dharama  
sei vrata, sei tapaḥ,      sei mora mantra-japa,  
sei mora dharama-karama (2)*

**sei**—they; **mora**—my; **rasa**—rapture; **nidhi**—treasure-house; **sei**—they; **mora**—my; **vāñchā**—desires; **siddhi**—perfection; **sei**—they; **mora**—my; **vedera**—of the Vedas; **dharama**—religious principles; **sei**—they; **vrata**—vows; **sei**—they; **tapaḥ**—austerities; **sei**—they; **mora**—my; **mantra**—hymns; **japa**—recitation; **sei**—they; **mora**—my; **dharama**—religious; **karama**—activities.

Her lotus feet are the treasure-house of *rasa*, the attainment of my desires, and the conclusion of all the Vedas. Her lotus feet are the goal of my vows and



austerities, the object of my recitation of *mantra*, and the purpose of all my religious activities.

**anukūla**—favorable; **habe**—will become; **vidhi**—providence; **se**—those; **pade**—feet; **hōibe**—it will be; **siddhi**—attained; **nirakhibô**—I shall see; **e**—these; **dui**—two; **nayane**—with eyes; **se**—that; **rūpa**—beauty; **mādhurī**—sweet; **rāśi**—abundant; **prāṇa**—heart; **kuvalaya**—a night-blooming blue lotus; **śaśī**—the moon; **praphullita habe**—it will blossom; **niśi-dine**—in the night and day.

When providence becomes favorable, I shall attain Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī's lotus feet and behold them with these two eyes. The abundant, sweet beauty of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī's lotus feet will shine like the moon upon the blue lotus of my heart, causing it to blossom in jubilation both day and night.

*tuwā adarśana-ahi,      garale jārālô dehī,  
cira-dina tāpita jīvana  
hā hā prabhu karô dayā,      dehô more pada-chāyā,  
narottama lôilô śaraṇa (4)*

**tuwā**—your; **adarśana**—absence from vision; **ahi**—snake; **garale**—with poison; **jārālô**—corroded; **dehī**—body; **cira-dina**—remaining days; **tāpita**—burning; **jīvana**—life; **hā hā**—alas!; **prabhu**—O master; **karô dayā**—give mercy; **dehô**—give; **more**—to me; **pada**—feet; **chāyā**—shade; **narottama**—Narottama dāsa; **lôilô**—took; **śaraṇa**—shelter.

Your absence from my vision is like a snake that has corroded my body with poison. The remaining days of my life will pass in the burning fire of separation. Alas, O Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, be merciful and give me the shade of your lotus feet. There, Narottama is taking shelter.

## Śuniyāchi Sādhu-mukhe

Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura

*śuniyāchi sādhu-mukhe bōle sarva-jana  
śrī rūpa-kṛpāya mile jugala-carāṇa (1)*

**śuniyāchi**—I have heard; **sādh**u—saintly persons; **mukhe**—from the lips; **bōle**—they say; **sarva**—all; **jan**a—persons; **śrī rūpa**—Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī; **kṛpā**a—by the mercy; **mile**—one attains; **jugala**—the Divine Couple; **carāṇa**—feet.

I have heard from the lips of the *sādh*us—all of them contend—that by Śrī Rūpa’s mercy one can attain the lotus feet of the Divine Couple.

*hā! hā! prabhu sanātana gaura-parivāra  
sabe mili’ vāñchā-pūrṇa karahô āmāra (2)*

**hā! hā!**—alas; **prabhu sanātana**a—O Sanātana Prabhu; **gaura-parivāra**—O personal associates of Gaurāṅga; **sabe**—all of you; **mili’**—having united; **vāñchā**—desires; **pūrṇa karahô**—fulfil; **āmāra**—my.

O Sanātana Prabhu! O personal associates of Gaurāṅga! Together, all of you please fulfil my desires.

*śrī rūpera kṛpā jēnô āmā-prati haya  
se-pada āśraya jâ’ra, sei mahāśaya (3)*

**śrī rūpera**a—of Śrī Rūpa; **kṛpā**—mercy; **jēnô**—may; **āmā**—me; **prati**—to; **haya**a—be; **se**—those; **pada**—feet; **āśraya**a—shelter; **jâ’ra**—whose; **sei**—he; **mahāśaya**a—a great personality.

May the mercy of Śrī Rūpa fall upon me. Whoever takes shelter of Śrī Rūpa's lotus feet is a great personality.

*prabhu lokanātha kabe saṅge lōiyā jā'be  
śrī rūpera pāda-padme more samarpibe (4)*

**prabhu**—master; **lokanātha**—Śrī Lokanātha Gosvāmī; **kabe**—when?; **saṅge**—with; **lōiyā**—having taken; **jā'be**—he will go; **śrī rūpera**—Śrī Rūpa's; **pāda-padme**—at lotus feet; **more**—to me; **samarpibe**—he will offer.

When will my master, Śrī Lokanātha Gosvāmī, take me with him and offer me at Śrī Rūpa's lotus feet?

*henô ki hôibe mora—narma-sakhī-gaṇe  
anugata narottame kôribe śāsane (5)*

**henô**—such; **ki**—[denotes a question]; **hôibe**—will be; **mora**—mine; **narma-sakhī-gaṇe**—the *priyanarma-sakhīs*; **anugata**—follower; **narottame**—to Narottama; **kôribe śāsane**—they will instruct, discipline.

Will such a destiny ever be mine, that through their instructions, the *narma-sakhīs* make Narottama their faithful follower?

## Śrī Gāndharvā-Samprārthanāṣṭakam

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

*vṛndāvane viharator iha keli-kuñje  
matta-dvipa-pravara-kautuka-vibhrameṇa  
sandarśayasva yuvayor vadanāravinda-  
dvandvaṁ vidhehi mayi devi! kṛpām prasīda (1)*

**vṛndāvane**—in Vṛndāvana; **viharatoḥ**—of the two enjoyers of amorous pastimes; **iha**—here; **keli-kuñje**—in the pleasure-groves; **matta**—maddened, intoxicated; **dvipa**—elephants; **pravara**—great; **kautuka**—delightful; **vibhrameṇa**—with pastimes; **sandarśayasva**—please reveal, show; **yuvayoḥ**—of You two; **vadana-aravinda**—lotus-faces; **dvandvaṁ**—pair; **vidhehi**—please grant; **mayi**—to me; **devi**—O Queen; **kṛpām**—mercy; **prasīda**—be pleased, have mercy.

Within the pleasure groves of Śrī Vṛndāvana, You and Śrī Kṛṣṇa constantly delight in amorous pastimes, enthralled like two intoxicated elephants. O Devī, be pleased with me and mercifully grant me *darśana* of Your two lotus-like faces.

*hā devi! kāku-bhara-gadgadayādyā vācā  
yāce nipatya bhuvi daṇḍavad udbhaṭārtiḥ  
asya prasādam abudhasya janasya kṛtvā  
gāndharvike! nija-gaṇe gaṇanām vidhehi (2)*

**hā**—O; **devi**—Queen; **kāku**—a voice full of despair; **bhara**—heavy; **gadgadayā**—choked up, faltering; **adya**—and so on; **vācā**—words, speech; **yāce**—I beg; **nipatya**—having fallen down; **bhuvi**—on the ground; **daṇḍavat**—like a stick; **udbhaṭa-ārtiḥ**—in utter distress; **asya**—this; **prasādam**—mercy; **abudhasya**—foolish; **janasya**—of this person; **kṛtvā**—having done; **gāndharvike**—O

Goddess; **nija**—Your own; **gaṇe**—in group; **gaṇanām**—consider, count; **vidhehi**—please make.

O Devī Gāndharvikā, in utter distress, falling to the ground like a rod, I implore you in a choked voice full of despair and pray at Your lotus feet: please be merciful to this fool and count me as one of Your own.

*śyāme! ramā-ramaṇa-sundaratā-variṣṭha-  
saundarya-mohita-samasta-jagaj-janasya  
śyāmasya vāma-bhuja-baddha-tanurṁ kadāhaṁ  
tvām indirā-virala-rūpa-bharām bhajāmi? (3)*

**śyāme**—O Śyāmā; **ramā**—the Goddess of Fortune, Lakṣmī-devī; **ramaṇa**—husband; **sundaratā**—beauty; **variṣṭha**—super excellent; **saundarya**—beauty; **mohita**—enchanted; **samasta**—entire; **jagat**—world; **janasya**—of the people; **śyāmasya**—of Śyāma; **vāma**—left; **bhuja**—arm; **baddha**—bound; **tanurṁ**—body; **kadā**—when?; **ahaṁ**—I; **tvām**—to You; **indirā**—the Goddess of Fortune, Lakṣmī-devī; **virala**—rare, unique; **rūpa**—beauty; **bharām**—profuse; **bhajāmi**—I worship.

O Śyāmā, the entire world is enchanted by the beauty of Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa, but the beauty of You embraced by Śyāma with His left arm is super excellent. When will I worship You, whose unique beauty is rare even for Lakṣmī-devī?

*tvām pracchadena mudirac-chavinā pidhāya  
mañjira-mukta-caraṇām ca vidhāya devi!  
kuñje vrajendra-tanayena virājamāne  
naktam kadā pramuditām abhisārayiṣye? (4)*

**tvām**—You; **pracchadena**—with a covering; **mudirat**—cloud; **chavinā**—colored; **pidhāya**—having covered; **mañjira**—ankle bells;

**mukta**—opened; **caraṇām**—feet; **ca**—and; **vidhāya**—having done so; **devī**—O Queen; **kuñje**—in a grove; **vrajendra-tanayena**—with the son of the king of Vraja; **virājamāne**—resplendent; **naktaṁ**—at night; **kadā**—when?; **pramuditām**—delighted; **abhisārayiṣye**—I will lead to the meeting.

O Devī, when will I cover You in a rain-cloud-colored garment, remove the ankle bells from Your feet, and lead You, full of delight, to a gorgeous *kuñja* for a nocturnal rendezvous with Śrī Nanda-nandana?

*kuñje prasūna-kula-kalpita-keli-talpe  
saṁviṣṭayor madhura-narma-vilāsa-bhājoh  
loka-trayābharaṇayoś caraṇāmbujāni  
saṁvāhayiṣyati kadā yuvayor jano 'yam? (5)*

**kuñje**—in a grove; **prasūna**—flowers; **kula**—multitudes; **kalpita**—composed, made of; **keli-talpe**—on a pleasure bed; **saṁviṣṭayoh**—of you who are thoroughly absorbed; **madhura**—sweet; **narma**—joking; **vilāsa**—pastimes; **bhājoh**—of the two who enjoy; **loka-traya**—three worlds; **ābharaṇayoh**—of the ornaments; **caraṇa-ambujāni**—lotus feet; **saṁvāhayiṣyati**—I will massage; **kadā**—when? **yuvayoh**—of You two; **janaḥ**—person; **ayam**—this.

Within a *kuñja*, on a pleasure bed made of many kinds of flowers, You are both thoroughly absorbed in enjoying sweet, joking pastimes. Oh, when [at such a time] will this person massage Your lotus feet which are the ornaments of the three worlds?

*tvat-kuṇḍa-rodhasi vilāsa-pariśrameṇa  
svedāmbu-cumbi-vadanāmburuha-śriyau vām  
vṛndāvaneśvari! kadā taru-mūla-bhājau  
saṁvijayāmi camarī-caya-cāmareṇa? (6)*

tvat—Your; kuṇḍa—pond; rodhasi—on the bank; vilāsa—amorous sports; pariśrameṇa—by exertion; sveda—perspiration; ambu—drops of water; cumbi—kissing; vadana—faces; amburuha—lotus-like (lit. water-growing); śriyau—beauty; vām—of You two; vṛndāvaneśvari—O queen of Vṛndāvana; kadā—when?; taru—tree; mūla—base; bhājau—situated; sarṁvījayāmi—I will fan; camarī—yak-tail; caya—collection; cāmareṇa—with a fan.

O Vṛndāvaneśvarī, due to the exertion of Your love sports on the bank of Your pond, drops of perspiration caress the lotus faces of You and Your beloved. As You both sit [resting] in the shade of a tree, when will I fan Your bodies with a cāmara?

*līnām nikuṇḍa-kuhare bhavatīm mukunde  
citraiva sūcitavatī rucirākṣi! nāham  
bhugnām bhruvaṁ na racayeti mṛṣā-ruṣām tvām  
agre vrajendra-tanayasya kadā nu neṣye? (7)*

līnām—hidden; nikuṇḍa—secret grove; kuhare—in a cave; bhavatīm—You; mukunde—to Mukunda; citra—Citra Sakhī; eva—indeed; sūcitavatī—the one who indicated; rucira-akṣi—O beautiful-eyed one; na—not; aham—I; bhugnām—with bent; bhruvaṁ—eyebrows; na—not; racaya—do; iti—thus; mṛṣā—wrongly; ruṣām—angry; tvām—to You; agre—in front; vrajendra-tanayasya—of the son of the king of Vraja; kadā—when?; nu—[places stress on the previous word]; neṣye—I will appease.

“O beautiful-eyed Rādhikā, it was Citra Sakhī, not I, who informed Mukunda of Your hiding place in the kuṇḍa! Do not furrow Your eyebrows and become unfairly angry with me.” When will I thus appease You in the presence of Vrajendra-nandana?

*vāg-yuddha-keli-kutuke vraja-rāja-sūnuṁ  
jītvonmadām adhika-darpa-vikāsi-jalpām  
phullābhir ālibhir analpam udīryamāṇa-  
stotrām kadā nu bhavatīm avalokayiṣye? (8)*

**vāg**—words; **yuddha**—battle; **keli**—pastime; **kutuke**—in a prankish mood; **vraja-rāja-sūnuṁ**—the son of the king of Vraja; **jītvā**—having defeated; **unmadām**—intoxicated; **adhika**—exceedingly; **darpa**—pride; **vikāsi**—expanding; **jalpām**—speech; **phullābhiḥ**—blossoming; **ālibhiḥ**—by the girlfriends; **an-alpam**—not a little, greatly; **udīryamāṇa**—spoken; **stotrām**—praise; **kadā**—when?; **nu**—[places stress on the previous word]; **bhavatīm**—to You; **avalokayiṣye**—I will behold.

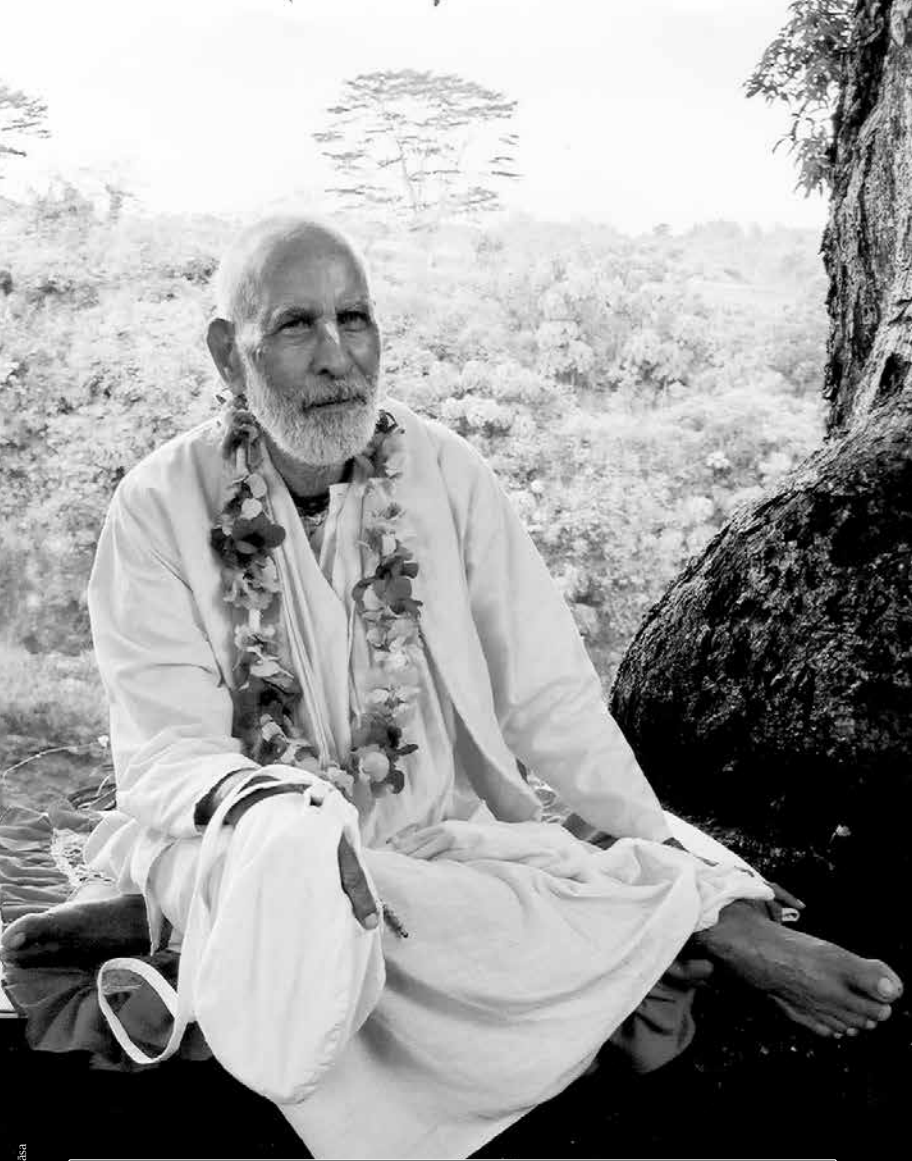
When, in a prankish mood, You defeat Vrajendra-nandana in a battle of words, You become exceedingly jubilant. You exult in the pride of Your oratory prowess as You are extolled by Your overjoyed *sakhīs*. When will I behold You in such a state?

*yaḥ ko 'pi suṣṭhu vṛṣabhānu-kumārikāyāḥ  
samprārthanāṣṭakam idam paṭhati prapannaḥ  
sā preyasā saha sametya dhr̥ta-pramodā  
tatra prasāda-laharīm urarī-karoti (9)*

**yaḥ**—who **ko** **api**—anyone; **suṣṭhu**—nicely; **vṛṣabhānu-kumārikāyāḥ**—about the daughter of Vṛṣabhānu Mahārāja; **samprārthana**—entreaty; **aṣṭakam**—consisting of eight verses; **idam**—this; **paṭhati**—reads, recites; **prapannaḥ**—surrendered; **sā**—She; **preyasā**—Her beloved; **saha**—with; **sametya**—having come together; **dhr̥ta**—sustained; **pramodā**—greatly pleased; **tatra**—thereupon; **prasāda**—mercy; **laharīm**—waves; **urarī-karoti**—accepts as Her own.




Anyone who takes shelter of Śrī Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī, Śrī Rādhikā, by regularly reciting this entreaty with great faith will surely please Her, along with Her beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa, thus becoming the recipient of the waves of Their profuse mercy.



Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja

## About the Author

 Out of his great compassion, Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja appeared in this world in 1921, in Bihar, India, near the sacred Ganges River. A self-realized spiritual master in the Brahma-Madhva lineage coming from Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself, Śrīla Mahārāja is a revered Vaiṣṇava authority and scholar of Vedic literature. He is the foremost disciple of his initiating *guru*, the renowned *rūpānuga* Vaiṣṇava Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, as well as his instructing *guru*, Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda, who was the first to propagate the mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu all over the world.

For over forty years, Śrīla Mahārāja taught the philosophy enunciated by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī throughout India. In 1996, he traveled to the West, and over the next thirteen years, he crisscrossed the globe thirty times, inspiring thousands with his lectures. He also translated into Hindi more than fifty Sanskrit and Bengali classical texts. These writings have been translated into numerous languages. These translations, published with his commentaries and exegesis by predecessor scholars, as well as his published lectures on these topics, have set a standard of excellence in the publication of Vaiṣṇava literature. Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja departed from this world in 2010 in Jagannātha Purī, India.

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