

Mañjarī svarūpa nirūpaṇa  
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## Translator's Preface

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

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

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

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

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<sup>1</sup>UN 4.41, 8.66.

<sup>2</sup>Verses 182-3.



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

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

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

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

Several Sanskrit and Bengali verses have been translated into English verse. At no time did I intend to translate all verse in this way, but I did not feel that these efforts diminished the meaning of the originals and could not bring myself to reduce them to prose. For this I apologize.

## Acknowledgements

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jan Brzezinski

May 21, 1997

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PaqYaUzSaariXaiXaraNa( AiPa cNd]PaadaNa(  
DaqraNa( MarNdMaDaura&ê MaDaae” SaMaqraNa( )  
vaH^iNTa ke- >auiv TaQaaMa\*TaiSaNDauPaUraNa(  
é[qæPaPaadk-ivTaaSaurSa& iNaPaqYa ))1 ))

*pīyūṣa-sāra-śīśirān api candra-pādān*

*dhīrān maranda-madhurāmś ca madhoḥ samīrān |*

*vāñchanti ke bhuvi tathāmṛta-sindhu-pūrān*

*śrī-rūpa-pāda-kavitā-surasam nipīya || 1 ||*

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

PaXYaiNTa ke- Saurbil/ rMa<aqYaTaa& Taa&  
MaNdaik-Naq ivk-ck-aÄNaPaÚl/+MaqMa( )  
SaMPaU<aRXaardSauDaak-rMa<@l&/ va  
é[qæPaPaadk-ivTaaSaurSa& iNaPaqYa ))2 ))

*paśyanti ke sura-bali-ramaṇīyatām tām*

*mandākinī-vikaca-kāñcana-padma-lakṣmīm |*

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sampūrṇa-śārada-sudhākara-maṇḍalam vā

śrī-rūpa-pāda-kavitā-surasam nipīya || 2 ||

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

ke- va rSaal/Mauku-le/Zvil/†\*TaaNa  
Xa\*<viNTa ik-àrvDaUk-l/k-i<#=NaadaNa( )  
ku-Åezu MaÅuk-l/k-aeik-l/kU-ijaTa& va  
é[qæPaPaadk-ivTaaSaurSa& iNaPaqYa ))3 ))

ke vā rasāla-mukuleṣv ali-jhaṅkṛtāni  
śṛṇvanti kinnara-vadhū-kala-kaṇṭhi-nādān |  
kuñjeṣu mañju-kala-kokila-kūjitaṁ vā  
śrī-rūpa-pāda-kavitā-surasam nipīya || 3 ||

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

## Chapter One

Mañjarī svarūpa nirūpaṇa  
**An introduction to Mañjarī-bhāva**

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

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

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

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

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

There are unlimited varieties of *prema*, but there is a vast difference in their magnitude. According to Viśvanātha Cakravartī's commentary on the varieties of heroine in "The Blazing Sapphire" (*Ujjvala-nīlamanī*), the four degrees of magnitude are: atomic, comparatively substantial, great and exceedingly great.<sup>3</sup> In those persons whose devotional

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

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

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

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

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

Even if such obstacles should be as vast  
as the immeasurable Mount Meru,  
sacred love will conquer them and,  
having conquered,  
become stronger and more vital. (*Prema-samputikā*, 54.)

Sacred love is the essence of Kṛṣṇa's internal potency, known as the *hlādinī* or bliss-giving energy.<sup>4</sup> This energy manifests in different types of devotees in four basic varieties known as servitorship, comradeship, guardianship and the sweetest affection known as “mistress-ship.” This mistress-ship is called “sweet love” (*madhurā rati*) because it is the most

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<sup>4</sup>Śrī Jīva, *Durga-saṅgaminī* on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, 1.3.1.

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relishable of the devotional sentiments. It is of three types: common (*sādhārāṇī rati*), compromising (*samañjasā rati*), and competent (*samarthā rati*). Of the three, the last is considered the most perfect. In the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, Rūpa Gosvāmin has described this competent love as *kāma-rūpā bhakti* or the devotion that has the form or appearance of sexual attraction:

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

In “The Story of Gopāla” (*Gopāla-campū*)<sup>6</sup> and “The Treatise of Sacred Love” (*Prīti-sandarbhā*), Jīva Gosvāmin writes that the Lord gave Uddhava a position in his life in the spiritual world of Goloka, but even so, Uddhava was unable to obtain the form of a cowherd girl or the true identity of one. This does not mean that Uddhava's status is not extremely elevated. According to the *Bṛhad-Bhāgavatāmṛta* (the larger “Nectar of the Lord's Devotee”), there are five kinds of devotees: (1) the devotee in knowledge (*jñāna-bhakta*), such as Bharata Mahārāja, (2) the pure devotee (*śuddha-bhakta*) like Ambarīṣa Mahārāja, (3) the devotee in sacred love (*prema-bhakta*) like Hanumān, (4) the devotee entirely fixed in sacred love (*prema-para-bhakta*) like the five Pāṇḍava brothers, and (5) the devotee completely absorbed in and moved by sacred love (*premātura-bhakta*) like the Yādavas, of whom the chief is Uddhava. Each of these divisions is superior to the one preceding it.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, even though Uddhava stands as superior to all the above-mentioned devotees,

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

<sup>6</sup>ii.37.11.

<sup>7</sup>jñāna-bhaktās tu teṣv eke śuddha-bhaktāḥ pare'pare |  
prema-bhaktāḥ pare prema-parāḥ premāturaḥ pare ||  
tāratamyavatām eṣāṁ phale sāmyaṁ na yujyate |  
tāratamyam tu vaikuṇṭhe kathaṁcid ghaṭate na hi || (2.1.16-17). See commentary also.

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he cannot attain to the ultimate standard of devotional sentiment known as the mood of the cowherd girl (*gopī-bhāva*).

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

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

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

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

I am completely unable, even if given a lifetime of the gods, to repay you  
your good deeds, for you have dedicated yourselves to me completely,  
breaking off the powerful chains that kept you bound to home and family to  
worship me. You will therefore have to be satisfied with your good deeds  
alone.<sup>8</sup>

Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the chief of Vrindavan’s milkmaids; she is the presiding deity of this competent devotion. Nevertheless, she herself is incapable of creating any change or transformation in the determination of the *mañjarīs* to exclusively serve her, their mistress.<sup>9</sup> Even though she is the source and abode of the innumerable goddesses of fortune, she still feels herself to be indebted to the *mañjarīs*. She is the reservoir of unlimited compassion and

<sup>8</sup>BhP 10.32.22. *na pārāye’haṁ niravadya-saṁyujāṁ sva-sādhukṛtyaṁ vibudhāyusaṁpi vaḥ |*  
*yāṁ ābhajan durjara-geha-śṛṅkhalāḥ saṁvṛṣcya tad vaḥ pratiyātu sādhunā ||*

<sup>9</sup>See UN, 8.88-9, *Vṛndāvana-mahimāmṛta*, 16.94.



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is always anxious to fulfill the desires of all the devotees, but the mañjarīs' only desire is service to her, and they will have nothing else of her. These are confidential and difficult facts that are not known to all, secrets only the select few can comprehend.

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

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

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

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

When Lord Gaurāṅga, the combined form of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, appeared on this earth, Rādhā's dearest maidservant, Rūpa Mañjarī, also appeared as Rūpa Gosvāmin. The following incident from Śrī Rūpa's life will help clarify the above statement. At one time, Rūpa Gosvāmin was living and performing his bhajan at a place called Tero Kadamba, which lies halfway between Nanda Gram and Javat (Yāvata) in the district of Braj. One day he thought to himself that if he only had some milk and sugar he could prepare some condensed milk (*khīr*) to offer his deity and then serve it as sacred remnants (*prasāda*) to his spiritual master, Sanātana. Only a few moments after having this thought, a young girl came by carrying milk and sugar, which she gave to him, telling him to make *khīr* for his deity. Having done this, she went away. Rūpa then did as he had been told; he boiled the sugar and milk down into a sweet and delicious preparation for offering to the Lord. Afterwards he gave the sacred remnants to Sanātana to enjoy. While Sanātana was eating, he was seized by uncontrollable spasms of ecstasy. When he had calmed down somewhat, he inquired from his brother where he had gotten his ingredients. Rūpa told him the story of the Vrajavāsī girl. When he had heard the entire account, Sanātana immediately realized that it had in fact been Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī herself who had come personally bearing gifts for them. But Sanātana was concerned because, despite the great blessing Rādhā had given them, she was their goddess and they were her servants. As the proper relation of served and servant had thus been reversed, he therefore strictly forbade Rūpa from accepting any such gifts in the future.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup>PrītiS. 63: *bhagavad-ānandaḥ khalu dvidvidhaḥ: svarūpānandaḥ svarūpa-śakty-ānandaś ca | antimaś ca dvidvidhaḥ: mānasānanda aiśvaryaś ca | tatānena tadīyeṣu mānasānandeṣu bhakty-ānandasya sāmṛāyaṇ darśitam |*

<sup>11</sup>BhP 10.86.59: *bhagavān bhakta-bhaktimān.*

<sup>12</sup>*Bhakti-ratnākara*, 5.1311-30.

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

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

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

*anarpita-carīm cirāt karuṇayāvatirṇaḥ kalau  
samarpayitum unnatojjvala-rasām sva-bhakti-śriyām |  
hariḥ purāṇa-sundara-dyuti-kadamba-sandipitaḥ  
sadā hṛdaya-kandare sphuratu vaḥ śacī-nandanaḥ ||*

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

<sup>13</sup>sarvāsādharaṇa-parama-mahā-sādhya-vastu, BṛBhāg 2.1.21 comm.

<sup>14</sup>dhanyo loke mumukṣur hari-bhajana-paro dhanya-dhanyas tato’sau  
dhanyo yaḥ kṛṣṇa-pādāmbuja-rati-paramo rukmiṇīśa-priyo’taḥ |  
yāśodeya-priyo’taḥ subala-suhṛd ato gopakāntā-priyo’taḥ  
śrīmad-vṛndāvanēśvary-atirasa-vivaśa-vivaśārādhakaḥ sarva-mūrdhni || 2.35.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ādadāno radais tṛṇam idaṁ yāce punaḥ punaḥ |  
śrī-rūpa-padāmbhoja-dhuliḥ syāṁ janma-janmani ||

<sup>16</sup>CC 2.19.105-7.

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

<sup>18</sup>*dekhiyā nā dekhe tāre abhaktera gaṇ* |  
*ulūke nā dekhe jaiche sūryera kiraṇ* || CC 1.3.86.

<sup>19</sup>*sayūtha-śrī-rūpānuga iha bhavan gokula-vane*  
*jano rādhā-kṛṣṇātula-bhajana-ratnam sa labhate* || *Manaḥ-śikṣā* 12.

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

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

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

*nivṛttānupayogitvād durūhatvād ayam rasah |  
rahasyatvāc ca saṁkṣīpya vitatāngo vilikhyate ||*

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

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

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<sup>20</sup> *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, 3.5.2. This translation is expanded with the help of the comments of Śrī Jīva and Viśvanātha Cakravartin.

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

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

Mother Jāhnavā answered, “Dear one, listen carefully. This *bhāvollāsā-rati* can only be found in the holy land of Vrindavan. The Lord’s abode of Vrindavan is even beyond the reach of the gods. There, the ever youthful Divine Couple reigns supreme. Serving them rhapsodically day and night are handmaidens like Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī and Śrī Anaṅga Mañjarī who possess this *bhāvollāsā-rati*. The happiness of the Divine Couple is their happiness; they know nothing else. Always immersed in an ocean of bliss in the service of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, they are oblivious to time. Their love, which delights in feeling, like a companion mood, aims at giving pleasure to Kṛṣṇa; it feeds and nourishes the love between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. They are all identical with Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī; they merely possess different bodies—one life, one soul, they all are expansions of Rādhā. When she and her lover are at the height of rapturous intimacy and the hair stands erect on her body, the very same phenomenon occurs on the bodies of her girlfriends. They experience seven times the pleasure that Rādhā does! Sometimes, on some pretext, she arranges for them to have trysts with Kṛṣṇa, seeing which her happiness increases thousands of times. This is a description of the *bhāvollāsā* love, which caused the Lord to say in the circle dance, ‘I am unable to repay you gopīs for the love you have shown me.’”<sup>21</sup>

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

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

<sup>21</sup>*Muralī-vilāsa*, ch. 6, p. 46.

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

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Raghunātha Dāsa writes:

*anārādhya rādhā-padāmbhoja-reṇum  
anāśritya vṛndātavīm tat-padāṅkām |  
asambhāṣya tad-bhāva-gambhīra-cittān  
kutaḥ śyāma-sindho rasāvagāhaḥ ||*

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

And from the *Padyāvalī*,

*kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa-bhāvita-matiḥ  
kriyatām yadi kuto'pi labhyate |  
tatra laulyam api mūlyam ekalam  
janma-koṭi-sukṛtair na labhyate ||*

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

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

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

<sup>23</sup> *Svasamkalpa-prakāśa-stotra*, 1.

<sup>24</sup> *Padyāvalī* 14. Also quoted at CC, 2.8.11.

<sup>25</sup> *tat-tad-bhāvādi-mādhurye śrute dhīr yad apekṣate |  
nātra śāstraṁ na yuktiṁ ca tal lobhotpatti-lakṣaṇam || BRS 1.2.292.*

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

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

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

A devotee whose heart is clear like a crystal will find that when the rays of the moon-like devotion of the residents of Vraja fall upon it, it lights up and takes on that glow itself, i.e., eagerness manifests itself in his heart. Then a curiosity about the dealings or feelings or passions of the eternally perfect residents of Vraja such as Nanda, Yaśodā, etc., arises in the practitioner. In other words a desire to know more about the patterns of their feelings occurs and he develops a taste or hunger for those patterns.<sup>27</sup>

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

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

Jīva’s commentary on this verse is as follows:

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

<sup>26</sup>ihā suni lubdha hay kono bhāgyavān. CC 2.22.87.

<sup>27</sup>tādṛśa-rāga-sudhākara-karābhāsa-samullasita-hṛdaya-sphaṭika-mañeḥ sādhakasya tat-paripāṭiṣv api rucir jāyate. BhaktiS 310.

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

<sup>29</sup>tasyās tad-bhāvādi-mādhuryam niśamyeti śrutvā, kevalam śravaṇam yat pūrvam uktam tatra tu tasyaḥ prekṣaṇe’pi tasya śravaṇasya sāhāyiam avaśyam mṛgyata ity abhipretam, yad vinā mūla-tat-tad-rūpa-līlādy-asphūrtiḥ.

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

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

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



Mañjarī svarūpa nirūpaṇa

## Chapter Two

### Sthāyi-bhāva:

#### The Dominant Mood (I): Erotic Divine Love

##### 2.1 An overview of the concepts of sacred rapture

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

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

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

The media through which emotion arises are called *vibhāvas*. There are two categories of *vibhāva*: (1) the personalities or lovers experiencing the original emotion, who are called the *ālambanas* or props, and (2) the circumstantial inspirations for the emotion, such as the setting, the season and its symptoms, or reminders of past emotions, etc., which are known as the *uddīpanas*. The personalities are also divided into two according to the role they play: the one experiencing the dominant emotion has been given the name of *āśraya-vibhāva*, or repository of love; the other is the object (*viśaya*) of the emotion, the one who inspires love in the *āśraya*.<sup>31</sup> The *uddīpanas* or kindlers of rapture awaken the dominant mood, which then manifests itself externally in certain physical responses; these are called *anubhāvas* if they are done somewhat consciously or willingly (like the coquettish movements of a woman who is attracted to her man), and *sāttvikas* if they are spontaneous or uncontrollable (like tears or hair standing on end). *Sañcārīs*<sup>32</sup> ("concomitant feelings") are

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

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

<sup>32</sup>Also known as *vyabhicāri-bhāvas*.

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the passing emotions, like excitement or frustration, which appear in lovers in particular situations. They arise from the dominant mood and give it beauty and variety, like waves in the ocean. All the different ingredients combine together to produce the full æsthetic experience known as *rasa*.

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

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

## 2.2 The person qualified to experience sacred rapture

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

*bhakti-nirdhūta-doṣāṇām prasannojjvala-cetasām  
śrī-bhāgavata-raktānām rasika-saṅga-raṅginām  
jīvanī-bhūta-govinda-pāda-sevā-sukha-śriyām  
premāntaraṅga-bhūtāni kṛtyāny evānutiṣṭhatām  
hṛdayeṣu virājanī saṁskāra-yugalojjvalā  
ratir ānanda-rūpaiva nīyamānā tu rasyatām*

Those whose faults have been entirely removed by the performance of devotional practices and whose minds are peaceful (making them suitable for the appearance of pure goodness' special features) and effulgent (and thus

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

<sup>34</sup>*ei sab kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa sthāyi-bhāva |  
sthāyi-bhāve mile yadi vibhāva anubhāv ||  
sāttvika vyabhicārī bhāver milane |  
kṛṣṇa-bhakti rasa hay amṛta āsvādane ||  
yaiche dadhi sitā ghr̥ta marica karpūr |  
milane rasālā hay amṛta madhur || CC 2.19.180-2.*

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equipped with full knowledge), who are attached to hearing the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, who find happiness in the association of devotees, for whom the joy of service to Govinda has become the *raison-d'être* of their existence, and who are always engaged in the most confidential process of developing love for Kṛṣṇa, namely hearing and chanting about his qualities and pastimes, have a love (*rati*)<sup>35</sup> for Kṛṣṇa which is effulgently manifest due to the conditioning of both the past and previous lives. This love, which is an embodiment of the divine joy, becomes experienced as *rasa* without any dependence upon the fine quality of the poetry or dramatic performance being witnessed as is the case in material æsthetic experiences, but simply due to the different inspirators, etc., connected with the person of Kṛṣṇa.<sup>36</sup>

## 2.3 Kṛṣṇa is the object of divine love

God, Kṛṣṇa, is the object of love in all devotional relationships. There are, nevertheless, differences in the way that God manifests himself to his devotees in accordance with their desires. A fundamental distinction is made between the Lord's majesty and his sweetness. This book is more concerned with Kṛṣṇa as the original god of love or Kāmadeva than it is with his manifestation as the Lord of the universes. It is in the latter form (sweetness) that he is the object of the gopīs' love.

### 2.31 God's majesty and his sweetness

The word *bhagavān* has been given many definitions. Jīva has defined it to mean "that Truth which contains an extraordinary combination of both godly opulences and human sweetness."<sup>37</sup> In the Visnu Purana (6.5.73-75) the word *bhagavān* is defined as the possessor of the six opulences of wealth, strength, fame, beauty, knowledge and renunciation. These opulences can be considered in two divisions, namely supreme majesty and supreme sweetness. Majesty, or *aiśvarya*, refers to those powers by which the Supreme Lord controls the entire universe. The contemplation by the devotee of the Lord's majestic potencies results in responses such as fear and excessive respectfulness of the Lord. On the other hand, sweetness (*mādhurya*) refers to those qualities of the Lord which cause his form and pastimes themselves to become the object of the devotee's delight. Realization of those qualities results in love (*prema* or *prīti*) for the Lord.

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

<sup>35</sup>The term *rati* is synonymous here with *sthāyi-bhāva*. *Rati* is the raw material for *rasa* or sacred rapture.

<sup>36</sup>BRS 2.1.6-10.

<sup>37</sup>Laghutoṣaṇī on BhP 10.11.12.

<sup>38</sup>*Durgama-saṅgamanī* to BRS 4.4.15.

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

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>39</sup>*Bhakti-sandarbhā*, section 187.

<sup>40</sup>*Durgama-saṅgaminī* to BRS 2.4.268.

<sup>41</sup>*Bhagavad-gītā*, 11.41-47.

<sup>42</sup>*kim ca, bhaktāś ca dvividhāḥ, aiśvaryaṇubhavino mādhuryaṇubhavinaś ca | aiśvaryaṁ tāvad deva-līlā-deva-ceṣṭā-deva-vapur ity ādikam, mādhuryaṁ ca nara-līlā-nara-ceṣṭā-nara-vapur ity ādikam | kim ca, aiśvaryaṁ vinā mādhuryasya nityatā na sambhavati | kevala-nara-ceṣṭā-sādharmyeṇa māyikatvāpātān mādhuryasyāpy asiddheḥ | mādhuryaṁ vinā bhakta-prema-hāniḥ syāt | Sādhana-dīpikā, 9.22.*

<sup>43</sup>*tad evaṁ pāramaiśvaryaś bhaktau yat kvacid uddīpanatvaṁ, tat tu sambhrama-gauravādi tad-avayavasyaiva | tatrāpy avayavini prītyaṁse tu mādhuryasyaivoddīpanatvaṁ | Prīti-sandarbhā, 98.*

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

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

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

### 2.32 Kṛṣṇa in his form as "the charmer" is the object of the gopīs' love

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

<sup>44</sup>Siddhānta-ratna, 2.3.

<sup>45</sup>*mādhurya bhagavattā sār, braje kaila paracār, tāhā śuka vyāsera nandan |  
sthāne sthāne bhāgavate, jānāyāche dekhāite, jāhā śune mātē bhakta-gaṇ || CC 2.21.110.*

<sup>46</sup>*dhīra-lālitya-vṛddhy-arthaṁ kriyamāṇā vratādikā |*

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Rūpa Gosvāmin characterizes this charming gallant in the following manner:

*vidagdho nava-tārūṇyaḥ parihāsa-viśāradaḥ  
niścinto dhīra-lalitaḥ syāt prāyaḥ preyasī-vaśaḥ*

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

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

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

In the erotic relation, some of the Lord's attributes enliven the devotee's (the gopī's) heart, thus elevating her to the point of *bhāva*, feeling.<sup>50</sup> The appreciation of the Lord's further qualities create in her the spirit of possessiveness, which is the dominant characteristic of *prema*, love. Other qualities melt the heart completely, bringing her to the point of *sneha*, affection. Further qualities strengthen the gopī's self-assurance in her loving relationship with the Lord and she thus rises to the next stage called *māna*, jealous pride. Those qualities that awaken a sense of intimate trust elevate her to *pranaya*, confident love. Others create the intense desire or attachment that is the symptom of *rāga*, passionate love. Finally, some of the Lord's attributes madden the devotee with their unequalled marvels—this is the platform of *mahā-bhāva*, great feeling. These different levels are the higher stages of the *sthāyi-bhāva*.<sup>51</sup>

Of course, the appreciation of the different attributes of the Lord depends a great deal on the nature of the devotee and the intensity of her emotion: not all devotees appreciate all of

<sup>47</sup> BRS 2.1.230.

<sup>48</sup> *mādhurya-rase śrī-kṛṣṇer pañcis guṇ pradhān |  
ek ek guṇ śuni juṛāy gopīr prāṇ || CC 2.19.*

<sup>49</sup> *Prīti-sandarbha*, 92.

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

<sup>51</sup> *tatra pūrveṣāṁ guṇānāṁ svarūpāṇi tais tasyās tārātamyāṁ bhedās ca yathā prītiḥ khalu bhakta-cittam ullāsayati, māmatayā yojayati, viśrāmbhayati, priyatvātiśāyenābhīmānayati, drāvayati, sva-viṣayam pratya abhilāṣātiśāyena yojayati, pratikṣaṇam eva sva-viṣayam nava-navatvenānubhāvayati, asamordhva-camatkāreṇonmādayati ca | Prīti-sandarbha*, 84.

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God's qualities. The cowherd beauties of Vraja alone can appreciate the Lord's attributes, which madden them due to their unequalled marvels (*asamordhva-camatkāreṇonmādayati*). As a result of this, the highest devotional mood known as *mahā-bhāva*, not found in any other devotee, appears in them. The qualities of Kṛṣṇa that awaken this mood are only perceived and relished by them and thus they are the only ones who have a proprietary claim to this mood.

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

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

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

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

<sup>52</sup>*yadyapi śrī-kṛṣṇasya tādrśa-bhāva-janakatvaṁ sva-bhāva eva, tathāpy ādhāra-guṇam apekṣate svāty-ambuno muktādi-janakatvaṁ iva. PrītiS 92.*

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid. nimeṣāsahatvaṁ tāsāṁ eva.*

<sup>54</sup>*tatra yathā yatra prakāśas tathā tatrābhimāna-viśeṣa-mayī prītir udayate | prakāśa-vaiśiṣṭya-hetuś ca bhakta-viśeṣa-saṅga eva | PrītiS 94.*



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

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

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

The following important verse is found in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*:

*jayati jananivāso devakī-janma-vādo  
yadu-vara-pariṣat svair dorbhir asyann adharmam  
sthira-cara-vrijina-ghnam susmita-śrī-mukhena  
vraja-pura-vanitānām vardhayan kāma-devam*

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

<sup>55</sup>*kṛṣṇa-bhakti janma-mūla hay sādhu-saṅga* | CC 2.22.83.

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

<sup>57</sup> BhP 10.90.48.

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

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

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

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

This last portion of the verse (*vardhayan kāma-devam*) can also be taken in this way: “He has become victorious by manifesting in the hearts of the gopīs all those manifold desires that will bring about his own personal pleasure” or “He becomes victorious over material desire (*kāma*) by increasing the gopīs' celestial love (*kāma*) for him.”

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

Furthermore, because *kāma* or lust when related to Kṛṣṇa becomes elevated to the highest and most perfect type of love, the word *deva* used in the verse in composition with *kāma* indicates its divine nature. On the other hand, the word *deva* is derived from the root *√div* which has the meaning “to play,” implying that this *kāma* is not nocuous like the

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destructive desire of this material world, but is full of sportive amusements. Thus the meaning reached here is that the Lord is ever glorious because, by manifesting unlimited masses of beauty and sweetness, he produces the different erotic sports and dalliances in the gopīs. That devotion, which has such amorous amusements as its external form, causes the experience of a specific joy that arises from the direct vision of Kṛṣṇa's glowing lotus-like face. That joy is the bliss-giving potency (*hlādinī śakti*) emanating from his personal form, which causes all the other achievements of human life to dwindle into insignificance. For this reason, this lust-love of the gopīs is the ultimate perfection of all kinds of devotion and should be recognized as the highest wealth of divine love. The vision of Kṛṣṇa's glowing lotus face, etc., here implies all the glories of his beauty, sweetness, charm, etc., in short, all of his opulences in their most intense aspect.

*Kāmarūpā bhakti* and the worship or devotional practice in its wake (*kāmānuga bhakti*) have a particular form of Kṛṣṇa with particular attributes that are especially conducive to their development. In his commentary on the third verse of *Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta* ("Nectar for Kṛṣṇa's ears"), Kṛṣṇa Dās Kavirāja states:

This Kṛṣṇa is the beguiler of infinite numbers of goddesses of fortune; he is the lover of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and the enchanter of even Cupid (Kāmadeva), the god of love himself. He is the seed of the unlimited gods of love throughout the unlimited universes. From him alone do they have their birth. Pradyumna of the first *catur-vyūha* is the original Cupid and his expansions fill the universes. These are the trunk and branches developing out of the first seedling. The leaves are the mundane gods of attraction who manifest only a fragment of the original potency present in the seed, Kṛṣṇa. Thus the ever new Cupid of Vrindavan is the root cause of all the gods of love, both divine and mundane.<sup>58</sup>

One should not mistakenly think that Govinda himself has any touch of the mundane Eros in him. It is stated in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* that Kṛṣṇa is like the sun, whereas the material nature can be likened to darkness. Wherever Kṛṣṇa is present, there the powers of illusion have no authority to approach. The *Bhāgavata* (1.1.1) similarly states "The Supreme Truth, upon whom I meditate, is always free from material contamination by virtue of his own divine effulgence" (*dhāmnā svena sadā nirasta-kuhakam*). The gopīs' pure love is simply known by the name of *kāma* as is clearly stated in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.285).<sup>59</sup>

Kṛṣṇa is the source of all existences, material or spiritual; without his nod of approval even one leaf dangling on the branch of a tree cannot move. "Material nature is herself incapable of creation as she is dull and lacking consciousness; only when Kṛṣṇa mercifully instills the potency within her does she become so able."<sup>60</sup> Thus, just as it is through his potency that

<sup>58</sup>The two following paragraphs appears as a footnote in the Bengali edition.

<sup>59</sup>*premaiva gopa-rāmāṇām kāma ity agamāt prathām |*

<sup>60</sup>*jagat-kāraṇaḥ nahe prakṛti jaṇa-rūpā |*

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

In the *Āgama-śāstras* there are injunctions for worshiping Lord Kṛṣṇa with the mantra known as *kāma-gāyatrī* and with the seed mantra named *kāma* (*klīm*). Accompanying these mantras is the meditation on Kṛṣṇa as the “bewilderer of Cupid”: he is the enchanter of millions of Cupids; he attracts an infinite number of minds; he is the ocean of the sweet nectar of charm. Those great sensitive souls who have been able to achieve the highest standards of devotional worthiness perceive him in this way. He is the beguiling cowherd of the sacred land of Vrindavan; he is the source of all the incarnations of the deity, but he is especially the cause of all the manifestations of sweetness. Therefore, the writers of the many scriptures have repeatedly glorified him in his lovely blackish form in the circle dance:

All glories to the circle dance which forever unites the bugle of the Lord’s urbanity and the drum of Rādhā’s good fortune.<sup>61</sup>

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

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

Pray tell, can sweetness be still more than sweet?  
And then more sweet, a sweetness even more complete?  
With just one drop, the entire cosmos fills  
And drowns within those lovely honey swills;  
In sweetness all directions merge and meet.  
The smiling rays of camphor touch his lips,

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*śakati sañcare tāre kṛṣṇa kari kṛpā* || CC 1.5.59.

<sup>61</sup>*rāsa-līlā jayaty eṣā yayā saṃyujyate’niṣam* |  
*harer vidagdhatā-bheryā rādhā-saubhāgya-dundubhiḥ* ||

Śrīdhara’s commentary on *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*.

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The smile melts from his misty mouth and drips  
Ent'ring by force the ears of all the skies  
Beguiles, and ravishing it ties  
The hearts of all, and most of all the girls.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*:

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

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<sup>63</sup>śṅgāra-rasa-rāja-maya-mūrti dhar |  
ataeva ātmā paryyanta sarva-citta har ||  
puruṣa-yoṣit kimvā sthāvara-jaṅgam |  
sarva-cittākaraṣak sākṣāt manmatha-mathan ||  
rāy kahen kṛṣṇa hayen dhīra-lalit |

nirantara kāma-kṛīḍā yāhāra carit || CC 2.8.143, 139, 187.

<sup>64</sup>hita-sādhū-samihita-kalpa-taruṁ taruṇi-gaṇa-nūtana-puṣpa-śaram |  
śaraṇāgata-rakṣaṇa-dakṣatamaṁ tam asādhū-kulopala-caṇḍa-karam || 6

<sup>65</sup>vāma-bāhu-kṛta-vāma-kapola-valgita-bhrūr adharārpita-venum |  
komalāṅgulibhir āśrita-mārgam gopya irayati yatra mukundaḥ || BhP 10.35.2

The subsequent verse from the *Bhāgavata* is as follows:

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

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

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

Seeing Cupid's flower arrows which carry desire for Kṛṣṇa in them, the demigoddesses say, "O arrows of desire for Kṛṣṇa! we all surrender our minds to you; quickly pierce them. We have thrown our fidelity to the winds; Kṛṣṇa may freely be intimate with us, by his kindness." At the same time, their husbands are also thinking, "We disavow our masculinity and our position as gods; may Kṛṣṇa immediately give us the bodies of cowherd girls here in Vrindavan so that we may consummate our feelings for him."<sup>67</sup>

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

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

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

In this madhura-rasa, the props are Kṛṣṇa and his beautifully-browed mistresses. There Kṛṣṇa is characterized as the object of romantic affection, possessed of unequalled assets of beauty, clever and attractive movements,

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<sup>66</sup>vyoma-yāna-vanitāḥ saha siddhair viśmitāḥ tad upadhāya salajjāḥ |  
kāma-mārgana-samarpita-cittāḥ kaśmalam yayur apasmṛta-nivyaḥ || BhP 10.35.3

<sup>67</sup>Aho! veṇu-nādasya itāvan mohanatvam ananubhūta-caram yato'smān sādhvīr api mohayati | asmān puruṣān  
api strī-bhāva-yuktīkṛtya mohayatīti | ... śrī-kṛṣṇa-viṣayaka-kāma-śarān ālakṣya, bhoḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-kāma-śarāḥ |  
yuṣmabhyam etāni asmac-cittāni dattāni, etāni śighram viddhikuruto'smābhiḥ pātivratyāya jalāñjalir dattaḥ |  
kṛṣṇo'smābhiḥ saha kṛpayā ramatām iti | tathā asmābhir api sva-puṁstvam devatvam ca tyaktam | kṛṣṇo'smān  
sadya eva svayogena gopa-strī-kṛtyāsmābhiḥ saha ramatām |

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urbane wit, etc. The most excellent repositories of that love are the dear milk-maids of Vrindavan.<sup>68</sup>

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

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

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

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

<sup>68</sup>asmin ālambanaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ priyās tasya tu subhruvaḥ |  
tatra kṛṣṇaḥ asamānordhva-saundarya-līlā-vaidagdhi-sampadām |  
āśrayatvena madhure harir ālambano mataḥ || BRS 3.5.3-4.

<sup>69</sup>premera svarūp deha prema-vibhāvita |  
kṛṣṇera preyaśi śreṣṭha jagate vidita ||

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

<sup>70</sup>vibhur api kalayan sadābhivṛddhim | DKK, 2. Quoted at CC, 1.4.131.

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



## 2.5 The dominant mood of erotic divine love

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

### 2.51 Madhurā rati

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

The original cause of Kṛṣṇa and the doe-eyed damsels’ engagement in the eight types of union (*sambhoga*), beginning with meditation and viewing, is the amorous feeling which dwells in those damsels’ breasts. That feeling guarded within them, which has Kṛṣṇa as its object, reaches rapturous fulfillment (*rasatva*) and is then relished by both parties. This amorous affection [here called *priyatā*] is also known by the name of *madhurā rati*. Its symptoms or manifestations are unlimited; they include sidelong glances, eyebrow movements, sweet words, smiles, etc.<sup>72</sup>

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

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

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<sup>72</sup>*mitho harer mṛgākṣyās ca sambhogasyādi-kāraṇam |  
madhurāpara-paryāyā priyatākhyoditā ratiḥ |  
asyām kaṭākṣa-bhrūkṣepa-priyavāṇī-smitādayaḥ || BRS 2.5.36.*

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

<sup>74</sup>*laukika-līlā loka-ceṣṭā-may.*

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

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

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

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

In this connection, Viśvanātha Cakravartin has commented that Rūpa Gosvāmin has given the name *sāmānya-rati*, “an unspecific, general feeling of love” to the eternally self-manifested love of the gopīs for Kṛṣṇa as it exists from the time of their birth until puberty.<sup>77</sup> When, during the time of the manifestation of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in the material universe, the gopīs reached adolescence, then erotic feelings for Kṛṣṇa appeared and they developed the desire to please him by giving their own bodies to him to enjoy. It is only at the attainment of such a metamorphosis that their sentiment is graced by the name of *madhurā rati*.

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

How youth has bloomed! Rādhā's eyes  
are casting wistful glances:  
her shyness has developed and her smile has become sweet.  
Now she takes the mirror to dress and decorate herself  
as she inquires from her girlfriends  
about the ways of amorous sport.<sup>78</sup>

### 2.52 Samarthā rati

The dominant mood of erotic sacred rapture is also given the name of *samarthā rati* (“competent affection”). Kṛṣṇa is the greatest lover in the supernatural affaires-de-coeur of the sacred land of Vrindavan and there, the supreme among his lady-loves are the cowherd

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

<sup>77</sup>kañcid viśeṣam aprāptā sādharma-janasya yā |  
bālikadaiś ca kṛṣṇe syāt sāmānyā sā ratir matā || BRS 2.5.9.

<sup>78</sup>aba yauvana bhelo bankima dīṭh | upajolo lāja hāsa bhelo mīṭh ||  
mukura lei abo koroto śingār | sakhire puchoye koiche suroto vihār ||

girls. Here Viśvanātha Cakravartin makes some relevant comments about *samarthā rati* in his commentary on *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*:

This *samarthā rati* is extremely potent and exists eternally in the gopīs; it does not depend therefore on any other causes such as hearing Kṛṣṇa's qualities, etc. It is present in them even prior to their attainment of adolescence, first in a general or indistinct (*sāmānya*) way. Even so, they loved Kṛṣṇa with all their hearts, and all the activities of their senses were for his satisfaction only. Afterwards, in the manifest *līlā*, when they came of age and sexual desire emerged, they developed a specific affection for him. In their minds arose the desire for physical association with Kṛṣṇa, which was similarly for his satisfaction exclusively. Therefore, no difference whatsoever exists between their personally craving erotic contact with him and their love for him; the two had merged into a single identity. Such a fusion of these two spirits is possible in the Vrindavan gopīs and cannot exist elsewhere. This is the sign of their competence and makes their love for Kṛṣṇa worthy of the name *samarthā rati*. From the time of their reaching maidenhood, they desired to serve the Lord through this gift of their own bodies—that was their vow; this love of theirs is thus known as *madhurā rati*.<sup>79</sup>

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

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

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

<sup>80</sup>*tathā hi, sva-ramaṇasya śrī-kṛṣṇasya sarvato-bhāvena vaśikāre tad-rūpa-guṇa-mādhuryāṇām sāmastyenāsvādanāyām tathā sva-mādhuryānubhāvyamānasya tasyāpi mohane para-camatkāra-prāpaṇe ca svato'pi mahaiśvaryaśya viśmāraṇe tathā sādharmaṇasya rūpa-guṇa-kalā-mādhuryāṇām sāmastyenāsvādanāyām nitya-navīni-karaṇe sarvotkarṣe ca sāmartyavyatīti samarthā | Ānanda-candrikā, 14.36.*

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

Adopting this path of extreme attraction, the cowherd women found an unexcelled process for attaining Mukunda, the giver of liberation. This unexcelled process has been searched for by profound scholars of the śrutis, the more ancient portions of the scriptures, but they have not yet been able to discover it. In other words, such an intensity of passion is outside the regular standards of behavior found in the Vedas. Nevertheless, the object searched for by those versed in the Vedas and the scriptures that rest on them is the supremely ecstatic, eternally spiritual truth.

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

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

## 2.53 Kāma-rūpā bhakti

This love of the gopīs, as has been previously mentioned, is known by the name of kāma “desire,” or according to Rūpa Gosvāmin, by the longer term, *kāma-rūpā rāgātmikā bhakti*, “passionate devotion which takes the form of [sexual] desire.” This variety of devotion exists in the gopīs alone.<sup>83</sup> Jīva Gosvāmin adds in his commentary that the word *kāma* usually refers to the desire for one’s personal sense gratification. Although it usually implies gross bodily activity, sensual desire has a subtle or psychological aspect also. The mentality of the gopīs is, “May Kṛṣṇa get pleasure from me,” and due to the intensity of that inner

<sup>81</sup>āsām aho caraṇa-reṇu-juṣām ahaṁ syām  
vṛndāvane kim api gulma-latauṣadhīnām |  
yā dustyajam ārya-patham sva-janam ca hitvā  
bhejur mukunda-padaviṁ śrutibhir vimṛgyām || BhP 10.47.61.

<sup>82</sup>kaṁcid viśeṣam āyantiā sambhogecchā yayābhitaḥ |  
ratyā tādātmyam āpannā sā samartheti bhāṇyate ||  
sva-svarūpāt tadīyād vā jātā yat-kaṁcid-anvayāt |  
samarthā sarva-vismāri-gandhā sāndratamā matā || UN 14.52-3.

<sup>83</sup>iyam tu vraja-devīṣu suprasiddhā virājate | BRS 1.2.284.

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feeling, their external activities of kissing and embracing, etc., are also translated into genuine selfless acts of affection or love. This is the competence which earns it the title of *samarthā rati* by which it has also become known.

The following is an example from Viśvanātha's "The Nectar of thinking about Kṛṣṇa" (*Kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāmṛta*, 9.65). It is there said that when the Divine Couple first meet for their noontime dalliances, they embrace and begin to exchange kisses and caresses. These embraces and caresses begin to increase the beauty of their love just as the rays of the moon increase its loveliness without being something distinct from it. In other words, just as the moon and its cooling light are not different from one another, neither are Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's love for one another and their expressions of it in erotic activity. The moon and its rays may be distinguished for the sake of analysis, but actually one is simply the expression or by-product of the other; so too, is it with the Divine Couple's love and its expressions in embracing, kissing, etc. The same applies equally to all the other girls of Vrindavan. By way of contrast, in mundane sexual affairs no such distinction between external expression and internal feeling can be made, for true selflessness in the carnal act is nowhere to be found.

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

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

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

<sup>84</sup>hiyār paraś lāgi, hiyā mor kānde. A Bengali song of unknown origin.

<sup>85</sup>svarūpābhinnā-sambhogecchā kānta-bhāvaḥ ... śrī-vraja-devīnām eṣa svābhāvika eva.

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*samarthā rati* and *sambhogecchā-mayī kāma-rūpā bhakti* is the intense desire for union of their every limb with his for his satisfaction.<sup>86</sup>

## 2.6. Kāmānugā bhakti and its two divisions

That type of *bhakti* which embraces the desire for erotic union within itself is called *kāmarūpā*: “devotion in the form of [erotic] desire.” The main characteristic of this love is that the only motivation for any action is the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa.<sup>87</sup>

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

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

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

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

<sup>86</sup>*Locana-rocanī*, 14.38.

<sup>87</sup>*sā kāma-rūpā sambhoga-tṛṣṇāṁ yā nayati svatām |  
yad asyām kṛṣṇa-saukhyārtham eva kevalam udyamaḥ || BRS 1.2.283.*

<sup>88</sup>*sambhogah khalu dvividhaḥ | priya-jana-dvārā svendriya-tarpaṇa-sukha-mayaḥ sva-dvārā tad-indriya-tarpaṇa-bhāvanā-mayaś ceti | tatra pūrvecchā kāmah sva-hitonmukhatvāt, uttarecchā tu ratiḥ priya-jana-hitonmukhatvād iti |*

<sup>89</sup>*kāmānugā bhavet tṛṣṇā kāma-rūpānugāminī |  
sambhogecchāmayī tat-tad-bhāvecchātmicā sā dvividhā || BRS 1.2.297-8.*

<sup>90</sup>*kāmānugāyās tu dvaividhya-darśanāt kāma-rūpāyā api dvaividhyam iti |  
Ānanda-candrikā on UN 5.26.*

<sup>91</sup>*keli-tātparya-vaty eva sambhogecchāmayī bhavet |  
tad-bhāvecchātmikā tāsām bhāva-mādhurya-kāmitā || BRS 1.2.299.*

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In the *Prīti-sandarbhā* (365), this same division is made.<sup>92</sup> In section 375, Jīva subdivides *sambhoga* into four types: union through sight, conversation, touch and actual sexual union.<sup>93</sup>

## 2.7 The dominant mood of the lady-loves

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

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

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

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

<sup>92</sup>*atha kānta-bhāvaḥ sthāyī... eṣa ca sthāyī sāksād upabhogātmakas tad anumodanātmakaś ceti dvividhaḥ | pūrvah sāksān nāyikānām uttarah sakhinām |*

<sup>93</sup>*sandarśana-saṁjalpa-saṁsparśa-samprayoga-lakṣaṇa-bheda-catustaya-bhinnatvaṁ dṛśyate |*

<sup>94</sup>*hareḥ sādharmaṇa-guṇair upetās tasya vallabhāḥ | prthu-premṇām sumādhurya-sampadām cāgrimāśrayāḥ || UN 3.1.*

<sup>95</sup>*praṇamāmi tāḥ parama-mādhurī-bhṛtaḥ | kṛta-puṇya-puñja-ramaṇī-śiromaṇiḥ | upasanna-yauvana-guror adhītya yāḥ | smara-keli-kauśalam udāharan harau || UN 3.2.*

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

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

One day, one gopī was remembering the previous night's rendez-vous with Kṛṣṇa and was becoming quietly excited and enthusiastic to meet with him again. Still, due to shyness, she suppressed her display of emotion and spoke to her closest friend as follows: "O friend! My mind is constantly replaying the memory of those amorous experiences, that drama directed by Cupid. What a wonderful night we had! Both of us were fearless and bold; both of our bodies were decorated with the scratch marks of our passionate fingernails. His peacock feather, both our garlands, dress, decorations and makeup were scattered and spoiled, not to mention his necklace of guñja berries and mine of pearls! That love tore the bracelets from my hands and was made even more beautiful by the erotic murmuring sounds we both made."<sup>97</sup>

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

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

Viśvanātha's commentary on this verse elaborates Rādhā's instructions to Viśākhā in the art of acting as a go-between and her fantasy of the conversation which will take place between her friend and Kṛṣṇa as she tries to interest him in Rādhā.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>96</sup>ataeva madhura rasa kahi tāra nām |  
svakīyā parakīyā bhede dvidha saṁsthān ||  
parakīyā bhāve ati rasera ullās |

braja binā ihāra anyatra nāhi vās || CC 1.4.46-7.

<sup>97</sup>udañcad-vaiyātyām pṛthu-nakha-padākīrṇa-mithunām  
skhalad-barhākalpām dalad-amala-guñjā-maṇisarām |  
mamānaṅga-kṛīḍām sakhi valaya-rikṭi-kṛta-karām

manas tām evocair maṇita-ramaṇīyām mṛgayate || UN 5.46, as embellished by Viṣṇu Dāsa's *Svātma-prabodhinī* commentary. Kuṅjavihārī Dāsa also uses Haridāsa Dāsa Bābājī's translation. (p. 81).

<sup>98</sup>tvam asi mad-āsavo bahis carantas  
tvayi mahatī paṭutā ca vāgmitā ca |  
laghur api laghimā na me yathā syān

mayi sakhi rañjaya mādhaveṇ tathāya || UN 7.87.

<sup>99</sup>tvayā puṣpāvacaya-miṣeṇa vanam bhramantyā tasya nikaṭa eva tam adṛṣṭavatyeva tam śrāvayitvā sva-sakhībhiḥ saha kathopakathāsu vadhū-jana-prasaṅge sarvābhyah sakāśād api mad-rūpa-premādaya ādhikyena varṇanīyāḥ | tatas ca tenāgatya tvan-nikaṭa evam vaktavyam sakhi, kām evam adbhuta-mādhuryam varṇayasīti |



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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*tataś ca tvayā sa-sambhramaṁ vaktavyaṁ na kām apīti | sakhi, mā bhaiṣīḥ ko'py atra doṣo na bhaviṣyati | yāṁ avocaś tām paricāyayāmīti | mādharma, tayā jñātayā tava kiṁ kāryam iti | sakhi, asti mahad eva rahasyaṁ kāryam iti | mādharma, ito'pasara | tasyās tava ca mahad eva vaisādrīṣyaṁ svabhāva-vaijātyāt | atas tava tayā na kimapi kāryam iti | sakhi, kiṁ tat svabhāva-vaijātyam | mādharma, tvaṁ strī-lampataḥ, sā pativrata | tvaṁ cañcalaḥ, sā parama-dhīrā | tvaṁ dharma-karma-hīnaḥ, sā deva-pūjā-parā | tvaṁ aśuciḥ, sā tri-savana-snāna-parā dhautā-vastrālaṁkāravatīti | sakhi, ahaṁ api brahmacārīti durvāsa-munir eva pramāṇam | ahaṁ acañcala ity atra sapta-dina-paryantam eka-hastena govardhana-dhāraṇam eva pramāṇam | ahaṁ sāmpratam pitrājñayā śrī-bhāgurer guru-devāl labdha-viṣṇu-mantra-dīkṣāka ity atra gārgī-nāndī mukhī-paurṇamāsyā eva praṣṭavyāḥ | ahaṁ śuciḥ sāksān mūrta evātra tvad-anubhava eva pramāṇam iti | mādharma, tadapi tvaṁ puruṣa-jātiḥ sā kulajā na tvāṁ draṣṭyātīti | sakhi, sā mām mā paśyatu, ahaṁ tu tām parama-dharmavatīm dūrād api drṣṭvā kṛtārthi-bubhūṣāmīti | mādharma, kaś tatropāya iti | sakhi, atraiva govardhana-kandara-mandirē'dyaiva mayā ekā sūrya-deva-mūrthiḥ sthāpanīyā sva-hastena mandira-lepanādikam api kṛtvā dūre sthāsyāmi | tvayādrṣṭa-carasya devasya darśana-pūjanādy-arthaṁ sātrānetavyā | tataś ca tasyāḥ pūjārtham atropaviṣṭāyāḥ prṣṭha-deśa-darśanenāpi kṛtārthi-bhaviṣyāmi | yadi ca tava kṛpayā sammatir bhāvinī tadālakṣitam āgatya śanaiḥ pāda-pīṭhaś ca spraṣṭavya iti | mādharma, atra kamapy utkocaṁ dāsyasīti | sakhi, ātmānam eva tava haste vikreṣyāmy utkocasya kā varteti | mādharma, samāśvāsihi manoratham imaṁ te sampādayiṣyāmi ity uktvā āgatya mām tatra nayeti śrī-rādhāyā manogata evopadeśaḥ sva-sakhyai viśākhāyai jñeya iti | Ānanda-candrikā to UN 7.83, Kāvya-mālā edition, p. 184.*

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

After hearing this, Kṛṣṇa will surely say, “Viśākhā! I am also a celibate. Haven’t you ever heard what Durvāsas Muni said about me? He described me as a brahmacārī in the *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad*. And you say I’m irresponsible. That’s a wild accusation if I ever heard one! Why, I held up Govardhana for an entire week without even moving an inch; that’s hardly the symptom of someone with a flickering mind! And why do you say that I am irreligious? I took initiation in the Viṣṇu mantra from Bhāguri Muni on my father’s order. You can ask Gārgī, Nāndī mukhī or Paurṇamāsī, any one of them can confirm it for you. As far as my being unclean is concerned, I’ll have you know that I am purity personified.<sup>100</sup> Of that I am sure you have personal experience!”

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

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

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

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

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

Then he will surely respond by saying, “What, are you asking me for a reward? I’m ready to sell you my very soul, what to speak of anything else!”

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

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You should then answer him, “Alright, take it easy, Mādhava, I’ll make all the necessary arrangements to fulfill your desires.”

Then you should immediately run here and take me to the trysting place at Govardhana!

In this way, Rādhā reveals her desires to Viśākhā.

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

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

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

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

In this verse, Rādhārāṇī clearly states, “I loosened the bonds of modesty, or rather, gave them up entirely, just to enjoy the pleasure of sitting on his lap” This seems like a direct expression of an egocentric sensual desire, but it should be known that all of the gopīs are possessed of *samarthā rati*, which means that they have a subtle, and yet overpowering mental undercurrent to all their acts which can be expressed as follows: “I must see that Kṛṣṇa’s pleasure is increased in a new and special way.” When this is true of all the gopīs, then how much more so it must be true of Rādhā herself! Nevertheless, this subtle mental undercurrent is not always revealed in their speeches, but is kept hidden in the treasury of their hearts and they speak as if they are desiring egocentrically. Kṛṣṇa is the supreme sovereign amongst the perceptive surely he is able to detect their true motives. If it were not the case that they sought his pleasure, he would not be influenced or conquered by their love. The evidence that he is so influenced is provided by the *Bhāgavata* verse (10.32.22) where Kṛṣṇa states that he is eternally indebted

<sup>101</sup>*samarthā-rati-matīnām gopīnām āsām ratautsukyādikam api sarvaṁ kṛṣṇa-sukhārtham eva phalati... ato’syā nāyikātvāt tādṛśa-sambhogābhilāṣaḥ sva-kānta-trīpti-prayojanako nānupapanna iti | Ānandacandrikā to UN 5.46 (5.44 in Kāvya-mālā edition, p. 123.)*

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to the gopīs on account of their selfless love for him. Therefore, we have no  
other alternative but to draw such a conclusion.<sup>102</sup>

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

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

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

Because the gopīs are possessed of competent affection, it can be concluded that they are filled with exclusive and selfless love for Kṛṣṇa; they have no consciousness of the destruction of their own distress or the attainment of their own happiness. Their every action, whether mental, verbal or physical, is for the exclusive purpose of pleasing him. When such gopīs make a direct appeal to Kṛṣṇa for cohabitation as they do in this verse, it should be interpreted that they are doing so to arouse his desires and consequently, his pleasure. They are very expert in romantic dealings and therefore do not lighten their love by expressing it vocally. They keep their love hidden while externally verbalizing their feelings of sensual desire, thus indirectly minimizing it. As an example, we can cite the person who sees that his friend is hungry and so carefully prepares a variety of sweetmeats with which to feed him. Seeing the elaborate preparations, the friend asks him what he is up to, in response to which his host disguises his actual intentions and says, “I am preparing all of these things for myself, not you! I was preparing them for a special event which was to take place today, but you just happened to turn up.” By dissimulating it in this way, the value of his love is actually

<sup>102</sup>yasyotsaṅga eva sukhaṁ tasya sukha-mūrtitvāt tad-āśayā utsaṅga-prāpty-arthaṁ ity arthaḥ | yadyapy atra spaṣṭoktyā sva-sukha-sprhā pratiyate tadapi sva-saundarya-vaidagdhy-ādibhiḥ śrī-kṛṣṇam ahaṁ viśeṣataḥ sukhaṁ prathayānīti sūkṣmo mānaso vyāpāraḥ samārtha-rati-matīnām sarvāsām eva vraja-sundarīnām sadaivāsty eva kimuta tasyāḥ sarva-vraja-vāmā-mukuta-maṇi-bhūtāyāḥ | kimtu sa tābhiḥ sva-vāg-viṣayī-bhūtaḥ prāyeṇa na kriyate śrī-kṛṣṇas tv abhijña-cūdāmaṇis taṁ jānāty eveti na pārāye’haṁ niravadya-saṁyujām ity ādibhis tad-vaśīkāraṇyathānupapattyā evaṁ vyākhyāyate | ataevoktaṁ yad asyām kṛṣṇa-saukhyārthaṁ eva kevalam udyama iti | Ānanda-candrikā to UN 13.3 (Kāvya-mālā edition, p. 343.)

<sup>103</sup>samañjasa-rati-matīnām pura-sundarīnām sva-sukha-sprhāyā abhāve’pi svāṅga-sparśādibhiḥ śrī-kṛṣṇo mām sukhayatv iti sūkṣmo mānaso vyāpāraḥ kenāpy aṁśenāsty eva, taṁ ca śrī-kṛṣṇo jānāty eva yasyendriyam vimathitum kuhaḥ na śekur iti śrī-śuka-vākyānyathānupapattyāiva vyākhyāyata iti | ibid.

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increased. If he were to tell the truth, “I am doing all this for you and not for  
myself, I have no need to do this, etc.” then his love would be devalued.<sup>104</sup>

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

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

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

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

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

The movements of his body, the movements of his eyes  
were all crooked and sly;  
his lips were smiling and he held a flute in his hands.  
A peacock feather rested horizontally on his crown.  
How many young girls have become lusty by looking at him?

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

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

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

<sup>106</sup>tan no nidhehi kara-pankajam ārtabandho  
tapta-staneṣu ca śiraḥsu ca kiṅkarīṇām | BhP 10.29.41.

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What can I do to resolve this dilemma?

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

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

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

### 2.81 The Vedas

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

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

The Lord answered, “You have desired something very wonderful, but at the same time, something rare and difficult to achieve. Nevertheless, I approve of your desire and it shall be fulfilled completely. In the future creation, when Brahmā is born and sets about the work of universal reconstruction, then, in the Sārasvata-kalpa, you shall be born in the bodies of cowherd girls. You

<sup>107</sup>nabahu ruci deha sakhi, nipahu mūle pekhanu, nayana mama bhai geo bibhor | nūtana tamāla kiye, kiye dāminī ambara, lakhite nāri kiye kālā ki gaura || aṅga gati bhāti ati, baṅkima se cāhani, adhara hāsi karete bāmsi sobham | ucca cūrā ṭerā śikhi, puccha tachu kopari, heriye kata yuvatī mana lobham || adhara cāhe adharāmṛta, hṛdaye hṛdi māgañ, prāṇe puna rākhite cāhe prāṇ | śyāma vapu lāgiye, nijahu vapu sādhiye, kaiche hām karaba samīdhān || eke ta hām ramanī bhela, nanadī bhela kālare, vihita more karala kula nārī | Govinda Dāsa kahe, e duḥkhe kata jīyaba, e duḥkhe tanu yamunā nīre ḍārī ||

<sup>108</sup>UN 3.40-51.

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shall take birth in my sacred abode of Vrindavan in the area of Mathurā in  
Bhāratavarṣa. There you will attain me as your lover in the circle dance. With  
great affection, intense attachment greater than that of any person, you shall  
know me as your paramour and thus become completely fulfilled.”<sup>109</sup>

## 2.82 Gāyatrī Devī

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

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

## 2.83 The sages in Daṇḍaka forest

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

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

<sup>109</sup>śrutaya ūcuḥ—kandarpa-koṭi-lāvaṇye tvayi dṛṣṭe manāmsi naḥ | kāmīnī-bhāvam āsādyā smara-kṣubdhāny asaṁsayam || yathā tval-loka-vāsīnyaḥ kāma-tattvena gopikāḥ | bhajanti ramaṇam matvā cikīrṣājani nas tathā || śrī-bhagavān uvāca —durlabho durghaṭaś caiva yuṣmākaṁ sumanorathaḥ | mayānumoditaḥ samyak satyo bhavitum arhati || āgāmini viriṇcau tu jāte sṛṣṭy-artham udyate | kalpaṁ sārāsvataṁ prāpya vraje gopyo bhaviṣyatha || pṛthivyāṁ bhārata kṣetre mātṛhure mama maṇḍale | vṛndāvane bhaviṣyāmi preyān vo rāsa-maṇḍale || jāra-dharmaṇa susnehaṁ sudṛḍhaṁ sarvato’dhikam | mayi samprāpya sarve’pi kṛta-kṛtyā bhaviṣyatha || Sārārtha-darśinī to BhP 10.87.19. Portions of this citation are also found in both Jīva and Viśvanātha’s commentaries to UN 3.46.

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

<sup>111</sup>purā maharṣayaḥ sarve daṇḍakāranya-vāsinaḥ |

dṛṣṭvā rāmaṁ hariṁ tatra bhoktum ācchan suvigrahaṁ || BRS 1.2.301. Cited from *Padma-purāṇa*.

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

## Chapter Three

### The Dominant Mood (II):

### Rādhārāṇī’s girlfriends

#### 3.1 The Spirit of Rādhārāṇī’s girlfriends

In the previous chapter, the *sthāyi-bhāva* of Kṛṣṇa’s mistresses was described. This chapter will discuss *sakhī-bhāva*, the dominant mood of affection of Rādhā’s girlfriends, and its various subdivisions.

*Sakhī-bhāva* means unqualified love for the leading lady or *nāyikā*, also called *yūtheśvarī*. That love is without limit and is free from even the slightest touch of selfishness, to the extent that the *sakhī*, or girlfriend, thinks that the leading lady is dearer to her than her own life or her own self. This type of devotion, known as *tad-bhāvecchātmikā bhakti*, is saturated with the desire for the sweetness of the mood that attracts the affection of the lover and his beloved by finding greater joy in helping Rādhā and other leading ladies (i.e., Candravali, Pālī, and others) enjoy erotic encounters with Kṛṣṇa and by taking greater pleasure in seeing their fulfillment. This mood (*bhāva*) is also called the mood of the girlfriends (*sakhī-bhāva*).

The essence of *sakhī-bhāva* is trust, or *viśrambhā*, which Jīva Gosvāmin has defined as a feeling of mutual identity.<sup>114</sup> As a result of maintaining this intimate trust, the *sakhīs* are

<sup>112</sup>*maharṣayo’tra śrī-gokulastha-śrī-kṛṣṇa-preyasy-anugata-vāsanāḥ |*

*Durgama-saṅgamanī* on the above verse.

<sup>113</sup>*tābhīr evāyaṁ mantro dṛṣṭo’stīti kecit āhuḥ padma-purāṇānusāreṇa pūrva-janmani śrī-rāghunāthāvatāre tāsām eva ṛṣitvāt | Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī* on BhP 10.22.2.

<sup>114</sup>*viśrambho gāḍha-viśvāsa-viśeṣaḥ | BRS 3.3.106.* Jīva’s gloss: *gāḍha-viśvāsa-viśeṣo’tra parasparam sarvathā svābheda-pratītiḥ |*



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able to understand the *nāyikā* spontaneously, without her having to say anything, or make the slightest hint or gesture.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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<sup>115</sup>nirupādhi-prīti-parā sadṛśī sukha-duḥkhaḥ |  
vayasya-bhāvad anyo'nyam hṛdaya-jñā sakhī bhavet || Alaṅkāra-kaustubha, 5.279.

<sup>116</sup>svātmano'py adhikaṁ prema kurvāṇānyo'nyam acchalam |  
viśrambhini vayo-veśādibhis tulyā sakhī matā ||  
UN 7.70. (Kāvya-mālā edn., 7.66, p. 178).

<sup>117</sup>prema-līlā-vihārāṇām samyag viśtārikā sakhī |  
viśrambha-ratna-peṭi ca tataḥ suṣṭhu vivicyate || UN 8.1.

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

In his *Stavāvalī*, Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmin expresses this feeling of dedication to Rādhā's service in the following famous prayer:

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

### 3.2 The five divisions of sakhī-bhāva

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

<sup>118</sup>*pādābjayos tava vinā vara-dāsyam eva  
nānyat kadāpi samaye kila devi yāce |  
sakhyāya te mama namo'stu namo'stu nityam  
dāsyāya te mama raso'stu raso'stu satyam || Vilāpa-kusumāñjali, 16.*

<sup>119</sup>*asyā vṛndāvanēśvaryāḥ sakhyāḥ pañca-vidhā matāḥ |  
sakhyāś ca nitya-sakhyāś ca prāṇa-sakhyāś ca kāścana |  
priya-sakhyāś ca parama-preṣṭha-sakhyāś ca viśrutāḥ || UN 4.50*

### 3.21 Kṛṣṇa-snehādhikā

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

In the opinion of those devoted to the *rāgānugā* path, one must follow a specific gopī with a feeling of affection at least equal to the one with which one worships Kṛṣṇa. If one follows with less affection for the devotee than for Kṛṣṇa, then there is no distinction between the *vaidha* and *rāgānugā* paths, for one cannot attain the desired result of *rāgānuga-bhakti* without following in the footsteps of one of the Vrindavan devotees. If one adores a girlfriend of Rādhā's whose affections lean proportionately more towards Kṛṣṇa, then Rādhā's prominence is diminished; she takes a position inferior to that of her own girlfriend. This is a great breach of protocol, for Rādhārāṇī is the greatest of all the *yūtheśvarīs* or *nāyikās*.<sup>120</sup>

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

### 3.22 Sama-snehā

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

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

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

<sup>121</sup>*vinā kṛṣṇam rādhā vyathayati samantān mama mano  
vinā rādhām kṛṣṇo'py ahaḥ sakhi mām viklavayati |  
janiḥ sā me mā bhūt kṣaṇam api na yatra kṣaṇaduhau  
yugenākṣṇor lihyām yugapad anayor vaktra-śaśināu || UN 8.136*

### Mañjarī svarūpa nirūpaṇa

The *parama-preṣṭha-sakhīs* like Lalitā and Viśākhā are also *sama-snehā* like the *priya-sakhīs*, with the distinction that, although they love both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa equally, they definitely feel themselves to be Rādhā's. These eight sakhīs (Lalitā, Viśākhā, Sudevī, Raṅgadevī, Campakalatā, Citrā, Tuṅgavidyā and Indulekhā) have reached such heights of love for both members of the Divine Couple that they sometimes appear to feel more affection for either the one or the other, but this distinction is slight and manifests only briefly. For example, when Rādhārāṇī is in one of her sulking moods, then their sympathies might sway toward Kṛṣṇa, the spurned and forlorn lover. On the other hand, when Kṛṣṇa breaks his promise or fails to appear for an assignation, they will take Rādhā's side.

### 3.23 Rādhā-snehādhikā

The *prāṇa-sakhīs* and *nitya-sakhīs* are more affectionate toward Rādhā. Of these two groups of sakhīs, the first category is more prominent. In his *Ujjvala-nīlamanī-kiraṇa*, Viśvanātha states that the *prāṇa-sakhīs* are chief amongst the *nitya-sakhīs*, who include all those who are *Rādhā-snehādhikā*.<sup>122</sup> In the commentary on *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* 8.137 already partially quoted above, Viśvanātha makes the following further distinction between these two types of mañjarī:

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

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

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

<sup>122</sup>yā rādhikāyām snehādhikā sā nitya-sakhī, tatra mukhyā yā sā prāṇa-sakhy uktā.

<sup>123</sup>gopī-padavī-prāpti rāgānugām bhaktim vinā na bhavatīti pūrva-pratipāditvāt siddhāntād ānugyaṁ ca vinā rāgānugāyā asiddhe rāgānugamanenaiva rāgavatīnām tāsām apy anugatir vyākhyāteṭi anugamyā nitya-siddhā gopya ivānugantryo'pi labdha-siddhāyo'nādita evānugamyābhyah kiñcin nyūnatayā vartanta eva |

<sup>124</sup>viramatu tava vṛnde dūtya-cāturya-caryā

sahacari vinivṛtya brūhi goṣṭhendra-sūnum |

viśama-viśadhareyaṁ śarvarī prāvṛṣeṇyā

katham iha giri-kuñje bhīrur eṣā praheyā || UN 8.132.

### 3.3 The superiority of the *Rādhā-snehādhikā* sakhīs

In the *Ānanda-candrikā* commentary on *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* 2.15, Viśvanātha writes that although all sakhīs find their own happiness by arranging for the pleasure of the *nāyikā* in union with her Lord, still a general division into two categories can be made among them. They are (1) those whose bodies are extremely attractive to Kṛṣṇa due to their having salient qualities such as love, beauty and coquettishness, and (2) others who are somewhat inferior in these respects and thus not so attractive to the Lord's romantic aspirations. Girls of the former category may occasionally, at the behest of their friend and mistress (*yūtheśvarī*), desire for erotic dalliance with Kṛṣṇa, for his pleasure. These sakhīs include Lalitā and the other *parama-preṣṭha-sakhīs*. Sakhīs of the second category, however, never entertain such aspirations. These are Kasturī and the other *nitya-sakhīs*.<sup>125</sup>

For an example of this, we can look to the *Vṛndāvana-mahimāmṛta* by Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī:

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

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

I take shelter of the handmaidens of the Queen of Vrindavan,  
led by Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī, who lovingly satisfy her  
by offering her betelnuts and other condiments,  
massaging her feet, bringing fragrant water  
and arranging trysts with her lover.

Having thus become most dear to her,  
they are allowed to enter the scene

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

<sup>126</sup>*ananya-śrī-rādhā-pada-kamala-dāsyaika-rasa-dhīr  
hareḥ saṅge raṅgaṁ svapana-samaye nāpi dadhatī |  
balāt kṛṣṇe kūrpāsaka-bhidi kimapy ācarati kāpy  
udaśrur meveti pralapati mamātmā ca hasati || VMA 16.94*

Mañjarī svarūpa nirūpaṇa  
of the Divine Couple's most intimate affairs  
without the slightest discomfiture,  
a reward not given even to her dearest friends.<sup>127</sup>

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

Raghunātha Dāsa tells us that though Raṅgaṇamālā and her friends are Rādhā's intimate friends, they sometimes behave towards the Ever-youthful Couple of Vraja just as if they were maidservants. This they do either on their own initiative or at the behest of Viśākhā and her friends. Behaving shyly, they are thus able to obtain the joy of listening to the Divine Couple's droll banter, while they perform their most cherished service.<sup>128</sup>

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

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

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

<sup>127</sup> *tāmbūlarpaṇa-pāda-mardana-payo-dānābhisārādibhir  
vṛndāranya-maheśvarīm priyatayā yās toṣayanti priyāḥ |  
prāṇa-preṣṭha-sakhī-kulād api kilāsaṅkocitā bhūmikāḥ  
kelī-bhūmiṣu rūpa-mañjarī-mukhās tā dāsikāḥ saṁśraye* || Verse 38

<sup>128</sup> *vraja-navina-yuva-dvandva-ratnam prati viśākhādi-dvārā kvacit svayaṁ vā lajjām abhinīya mṛdu bhāṣita-  
vivicyamāna-narma-kalā-kalāpa-janita-paramānanda-viśeṣa-lābhāya abhilaṣita-paricarāṇa-viśeṣa-lobhāya ca  
raṅgaṇamālā-prabhṛtaya etāḥ parama-praṇayi-sakhyo'pi paricārikā iva vyavaharanti* | *Muktā-carita*, p.111

<sup>129</sup> *tā vidyud-dyuti-jayī-prapadaika-rekhā  
vaidagdhya eva kila mūrti-bhṛtas tathāpi |  
yūtheśvarītvam api samyag arocayitvā  
dāsyāmṛtābhim anusasnur ajasram asyāḥ* || KBhA 3.2

<sup>130</sup> *etad hr̥ṣīka-çaṣakair asakṛt pibāmaḥ  
śarvādayo'ṅghry-udaja-madhv-amṛtāsavam* || BhP 10.14.33

<sup>131</sup> *aṅghri-padma-sudhā kahe kṛṣṇa-saṅgānanda* | CC 2.8.226.

### Mañjarī svarūpa nirūpaṇa

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

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

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

Just as the moon enlivens the lilies, so Kṛṣṇa is the bright moon that enlivens the lily-like hearts of the residents of Vrindavan. His pleasure-giving potency is personified in Rādhā, who is like a vine with fruits of *prema*. Her girlfriends are the unlimited branches, leaves and flowers that expand out from her self and are thus equal to her. For this reason, when that winding vine of love is watered with the heavenly potion of Kṛṣṇa's sporting activities, then its leaves and flowers, the *sakhīs*, find hundreds of times more pleasure than if they were themselves to be sprinkled. There is nothing unusual about this.<sup>132</sup>

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

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

<sup>133</sup>vibhur api sukha-rūpaḥ sva-prakāśo'pi bhāvaḥ  
kṣaṇam api nahi rādhā-kṛṣṇayor yā ṛte svāḥ |

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

The pleasure felt by the eyes of the sakhī on seeing Rādhā merged in an ocean of love for Kṛṣṇa alone makes all the Supreme Lord's festive arrangements for his own happiness seem trivial.<sup>134</sup>

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

If Kṛṣṇa should touch Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī,  
then lo and behold! her sakhīs start to tremble;  
they sweat, their body hairs stand on end,  
and tears well up in their eyes.

And if Kṛṣṇa should carefully sip  
the spirituous liquor of Rādhā's lips,  
it is they who become intoxicated!  
This is truly something wonderful.<sup>135</sup>

In his commentary on this verse, Vṛndāvana Cakravartin observes that it contains the figure of speech (*alaṅkāra*) known as *asaṅgati* or “non sequitur.” *Asaṅgati* is a rhetorical flourish that comes when one describes unusual or unexpected results from a particular cause. Here, the Lord is said to be touching and kissing Rādhā, but the effects of his act, trembling and intoxication, are said to take place in the bodies of the sakhīs.<sup>136</sup>

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

O doe-eyed beauties !  
When your girlfriends are absent,  
you have to look at a mirror  
before you can say whether you are happy or sad.

When tears fall from your eyes they also cry;

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*pravahati rasa-puṣṭim cid-vibhūtir iveśaḥ*  
*śrayati na padam āsām kaḥ sakhinām rasajñāḥ* || GLA 10.17  
<sup>134</sup>*rādhā-nāgara-keli-sāgara-nimagnāli-dṛśām yat sukhām*  
*no tal-leśa-lavāyate bhagavataḥ sarvo'pi saukhyotsavaḥ* || VMA 1.54

<sup>135</sup>*spṛśati yadi mukundo rādhikām tat-sakhinām*  
*bhavati vapuṣi kampa-sveda-romāñca-bāṣpam |*  
*adhara-madhu mudāsyās cet pibaty eṣa yatnād*  
*bhavati bata tad āsām mattatā citram etat* || GLA 11.137

<sup>136</sup>*atyanta-bhinnādhāratve yugapad-bhāṣaṇam yadi | dharmayor hetu-phalayor tadā sā syād asaṅgatiḥ ||*  
*rādhāṅga-sparśa-tad-adhara-madhu-pāna-rūpa-hetuḥ tat-sakhinām āṅga-rūpa-bhinnādhāre hetu-janyam*  
*phalam yayos taylor dharmayo rādhā-sparśādhara-pāna-kampādi-mattatā-rūpayor yugapad-bhāṣaṇam*  
*atrāsaṅgatiḥ*



Mañjarī svarūpa nirūpaṇa  
when you are excited, their hairs stand on end;  
when you laugh they also do so;  
and when you become depressed,  
they also look down-hearted.  
By reflecting your every mood,  
they perform all the services of a looking glass!<sup>137</sup>

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

Rādhā's handmaids are unable to live if they cannot watch their beloved Divine Couple's pastimes. [Now, after the rāsa dance] they had eagerly gathered about the window of the forest cottage where Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa were locked in embrace and one of them said, "Friends, what an amazing and wonderful situation they have gotten themselves into!"<sup>138</sup>

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

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

Just as Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are transcendental, so also are the sakhīs and mañjarīs. In the *Kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāmṛta* they are described in the following way:

These handmaidens of Rādhārāṇī are unexcelled in this universe, for their beauty is without bounds. The rays coming from the nails of their toes are more brilliant than the lightning bolt. Each one of them is an incarnation of Rādhārāṇī's expertise in loving dalliances and is thus perfectly capable of becoming a competitor for Kṛṣṇa's affections. Yet such desires do not enter their minds for even a moment because they are completely desireless. This is

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<sup>137</sup>pataty asre sāsrā bhavati pulake jāta-pulakāḥ  
smite bhāti smerā malimani jāte sumalināḥ |  
anāsādyā svālir mukuram abhivikṣya sva-vadanam  
sukham vā duḥkham vā kim api kathanīyam mṛga-dṛśaḥ || AK 3.32  
<sup>138</sup>yās tv etayoḥ keli-vilokanam vinā  
naiva śvasanty āsu gavākṣa-saṅcayam |  
śrītāsu kācin nijagāda paśyatā-  
nayoḥ daśa keyam abhūd ihādbhutā || KBhA 20.26

Mañjarī svarūpa nirūpaṇa  
how they have become eligible to eternally dive into the ambrosial sea of  
service to her.<sup>139</sup>

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

Sometimes the mañjarīs even faint from the ecstasies they feel when they watch the intimate pastimes of the Divine Duo through the spaces between the forest vines. Rūpa Gosvāmin<sup>141</sup> has described such an instance in the *Nikuñja-rahasya-stava* ("Hymn to the secrets of the forest-bower"):

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

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

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<sup>139</sup>*tā vidyud-dyūti-jayī-prapadaika-rekhā  
vaidagdhya eva kila mūrti-bhūtās tathāpi |  
yūtheśvarītvam api samyag arocayitvā*

*dāsyāmṛtābhim anusasnur ajasram asyāḥ || KBhA 3.2*

<sup>140</sup>*acintyāḥ khalu ye bhāvā na tāms tarkṣya yojayet | MBh cited at BRS 2.5.93*

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

<sup>142</sup>*praṇayamaya-vayasyāḥ kuñja-randhrārpitākṣiḥ  
kṣīti-talam anu labdhvānanda-mūrcchām patantiḥ |  
prati rati-vidadhānau ceṣṭitaiḥ citra-citraiḥ  
smara nibhṛta-nikuñje rādhikā-kṛṣṇa-candrau || Verse 24.*

### Mañjarī svarūpa nirūpaṇa

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

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

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

Govinda, I have only one desire:  
to have ever-increasing intelligence  
to be able to serve you and Rādhā  
on the field of your ever-expanding, ecstatic romance,  
so that you experience newer and newer bliss.

By such service, countless gopīs have attained  
the very limits of fulfilled desires.  
Therefore, O Lord of Gokula, my mind  
never becomes eager for your direct embrace;  
it does not crave for such enjoyments,

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<sup>143</sup>tvayā yad upabhujyate murajid-aṅga-saṅge sukham  
tad eva bahu jānati svayam avāptitaḥ śuddha-dhīḥ |  
mayā kṛta-vilobhanāpy adhika-cāturi-caryayā  
kadāpi mañi-mañjarī na kurute'bhisāra-sprhām || UN 8.88.

Mañjarī svarūpa nirūpaṇa  
please just engage me in that service.<sup>144</sup>

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

Everyone seeks happiness and naturally they most intensely crave those things that give them the most happiness. The mystery of *mañjarī-bhāva*, therefore, is that acting as an accessory to and a witness of the varieties of Rādhārāṇī's loving sports with Kṛṣṇa produces a greater pleasure than any other. The craving to serve and observe is called *mañjarī-bhāva*.<sup>146</sup>

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

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

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

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<sup>144</sup>*rādhā-raṅga-lasat-tvad-ujjvala-kalā-saṅcāraṇa-prakriyā-  
cāturyottaram eva sevanam ahaṁ govinda samprārthaye |  
yenāśeṣa-vadhū-janodbhaṭa-mano-rājya-prapañcāvadhaṁ  
notsukyam bhavad-aṅga-saṅgama-rase'py ālambate man-manah || UN 8.89*

<sup>145</sup>*tvayā saha svāṅga-saṅga-sukhād api jāla-randhrāḍau śrī-rādhāṅga-saṅga-darśanottham sukham adhikam  
anubhūtam man-manasā.*

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

<sup>147</sup>*baka-ripu-parirambhāsvāda-vāñchā-viraktim  
vratam iva sakhi kartrī svāli-saukhyāika-tṛṣṇā |  
phalam alabhata kastūryādir āliḥ sakhinām  
hari-vana-vara-rājye sīncate tām yad adya || MādhM 7.131*

### Mañjarī svarūpa nirūpaṇa

When the Lover and Beloved  
have been worn out by their erotic war,  
the mañjarīs bring them condiments of betelnut;  
they mix sandalwood and saffron, musk and camphor,  
and smear the fragrant paste upon their bodies;

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

They place enchanting garlands around their necks;  
they fan them to give a cooling breeze;  
they offer them water, cold and fragrant,  
drinking which the lovers' thirst is slaked.

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

Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa close their eyes in slumber on the flower bed,  
the mañjarīs, seeing them do so, feel the happiness  
resulting from service executed well.  
Rādhā Mohan Dās, seeing all this  
is freed of all mental anguish.<sup>148</sup>

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

The definition of the word *sakhī* has been given separately in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* and *Alaṅkāra-kaustubha*. Five kinds of *sakhīs* were listed, among whom the *prāṇa-sakhīs* and *nitya-sakhīs* have the greatest freedom from self-consciousness when present at the Loving Couple's most intimate moments, being always firmly devoted to their own treasure of love. Their love is so unique in nature that even though Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmin had already indicated its existence in his references to *tad-bhāvecchātmikā* devotion, he felt it necessary to find another name for it that was suitable to the actual *sthāyi-bhāva*. The

<sup>148</sup>*rati-rāṇe śrama-yuta, nāgarī-nāgara, mukha-bhari tāmbūla jogāy |*  
*malayaja kuṅkuma, mṛgamada karpūra, militahi gāta lāgāy ||*  
*aparūpa priya-sakhī prem |*  
*nija-prāṇ koṭi, dei niramāṇchaṇ, naha tula lākh-bān hem ||*  
*manorama mālya, duhuṇ gale arpaṇ, bijaṇ śita mṛdu bāt |*  
*sugandhī śītala, karu jala arpaṇa, jaiche hota duhuṇ śāt ||*  
*duhuṅka caraṇa puna, mṛdu sambāhana, kari śrama karalahī dūr |*  
*īngite śayana, karala duhuṇ sakhīgaṇa, sabahu manoratha-pūr ||*  
*kusuma śeje duhuṇ, nidrita herañ, sevana parāyaṇa sukh |*  
*rādhā-mohana dās, kiye heraba, meṭaba sab manodukh ||*

### Mañjarī svarūpa nirūpaṇa

term he chose was *bhāvollāsā rati* (“love that is enlivened by their feelings,” or “that love which enlivens their loving sentiment for one another”). This *bhāvollāsā rati*, then, is the *sthāyi bhāva* or dominant mood of the mañjarīs.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the usual object (*viṣaya*) of *madhurā rati* and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is its subject (*āśraya*). Those devotees who are endowed with a similar dominant mood of love towards the Lord are naturally friends (*suhṛt*) of Rādhā; the name of the friendly affection that Lalitā and her other friends feel towards Śrīmatī is therefore called *suhṛd-rati*. If such *suhṛd-rati* is as strong as the feeling of affection that they have for Kṛṣṇa, or if it is somewhat less, then it serves the function of a *sañcārī-bhāva*, a helper or inspirator to the dominant mood. Thus the friendly affection that the *sama-snehā* and *kṛṣṇa-snehādhikā* sakhīs feel for Rādhā is experienced as a source of inspiration for their love for Kṛṣṇa. On the other hand, if the feeling of love for the friend, namely Rādhā, exceeds one’s devotion for even Kṛṣṇa, and if it is constantly increasing and dominates one’s spiritual life, then even though it remains in the *sañcārī* category, it is so unique that it requires the special name of *bhāvollāsā rati*.<sup>149</sup>

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

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

Other than Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in the *madhura-rasa*, such a thing is unheard of in relation to any devotee of any other *rasa*. This is only possible because of Rādhā’s exalted stature. It has never been said anywhere of any other devotee that she is hundreds of times greater than even Kṛṣṇa, except in the case of Rādhā. Kṛṣṇa himself says in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*:

The three worlds have me alone as the source of their pleasure—who is there who will give pleasure to me? That person who is hundreds of times more qualified than myself is the one who will be able to gladden my mind; yet how is it possible that anyone in the universe can be more qualified than I?

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<sup>149</sup> *sañcārī syāt samāno vā kṛṣṇa-ratyāḥ suhṛd-ratiḥ |  
adhikā puṣyamāṇā ced bhāvollāsā ratiḥ || BRS 2.5.128*

Mañjarī svarūpa nirūpaṇa

I can only see such virtues in Rādhā. The whole world becomes happy at seeing the beauty of my form, yet my eyes become fulfilled only by seeing her. The sound of my flute fills the whole world with bliss, yet my ears are stolen away by the sound of her voice. The entire universe is fragrant due to my bodily odour, yet her fragrance steals my life and soul. The world is filled with flavor due to my *rasa*, yet the taste of her lips completely overthrows me. Even though the touch of my body is cooling to all, I myself can become cooled only by touching her. In these ways am I the source of the world's joy, yet the form and qualities of Rādhārāṇī are my life and soul.<sup>150</sup>

This is the reason that it is only possible for someone to feel more strongly about Rādhārāṇī than about Kṛṣṇa. In no other circumstance is it possible for someone to feel an affection of comparable strength for any other devotee; *bhāvollāsā rati* is only possible in the case of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

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

It was previously stated that *madhura-rasa* is only possible if the lover and beloved share a mutual desire for romantic love. From this, a question about the specific mood of the mañjarīs arises. One who is devoid of any erotic desire for Kṛṣṇa may feel servitude, friendship or even parental affection for Rādhārāṇī, but where is the possibility of *madhura-rasa*? The relationship between two women of the type under discussion cannot be called romantic love. The dominant affection of the mañjarīs is toward the Divine Couple in a romantic way; they are attached to and absorbed in Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa as a unit. Thus, this spirit of the mañjarīs is what Caitanya was looking for when he asked Rāmānanda Rāya to “to hear of the loving dalliance of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa” after having heard from him “the truths of the love that exists between them.”<sup>151</sup>

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

<sup>151</sup> *prabhu kahe—jāniluṇ kṛṣṇa-rādhā prema-tattva |*

Mañjarī svarūpa nirūpaṇa  
Narottama Dās Ṭhākura sings in *Prema-bhakti-candrikā*:

Remembrance is the life of the mind;  
What an exceedingly sweet abode it is!  
The essence of remembrance  
is the pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa;  
this is the practice, this the perfection—  
there is nothing more than this:  
It is the quintessence of all the rules  
and regulations of devotional life.<sup>152</sup>

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

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

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

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

Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa,  
In either birth or death my only goal,  
Lord and lady of my life and soul.<sup>154</sup>

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śunite cāhiye donhār vilāsa-mahattva || CC 2.8.186

<sup>152</sup>maner smaraṇa prāṇ, madhura madhura dhām, yugala-vilāsa smṛti-sār |  
sādhya-sādhana ei, ihā par āra nei, ei tattva sarva-vidhi-sār || *Prema-bhakti-candrikā*, song 6, p. 434 in  
Narottama Dāsa o Tānhāra Racanāvalī, Dr. Nīradprasād Nāth. (Kalikātā: Kalikātā Viśvavidyālaya, 1975)

<sup>153</sup>vināpy ākalpaiḥ śrī-vṛṣaravi-sutā kṛṣṇa-savidhe  
mudotphullā bhāvābharāṇa-valitālīḥ sukhayati |  
vinā kṛṣṇaṁ tṛṣṇākulita-hṛdayālaṅkṛti-cayair

yutāpy eṣā mlānā malinayati tāsāṁ tanu-manah || GLA 11.134

<sup>154</sup>jīvanē maraṇe gati, rādhā-kṛṣṇa prāṇa-pati | *Prema-bhakti-candrikā*, Song 4, ibid., p. 431.



### Mañjarī svarūpa nirūpaṇa

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>156</sup>*na saṅkocaṁ yayā yāti kāntena śayatotthitā |*

*ātmano mūrtir anyaiḥ priya-narma-sakhī tu sā || Alaṅkāra-kaustubha, kārīkā 159.*

<sup>157</sup>*tadīyatābhimānīnyo yāḥ snehaṁ sarvadāśritāḥ |*

*sakhyām alpādhikāṁ kṛṣṇāt sakhī-snehādhikāṁ tu tāḥ || UN 8.131*

### Mañjarī svarūpa nirūpaṇa

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

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

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

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

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

Whoever follows in the mood of the girlfriends of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī becomes eligible for service to the Divine Couple in Vṛndāvana's forest groves; other than this there is no other means to such an attainment.<sup>159</sup>

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

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

<sup>158</sup>*sama-snehā asama-snehā, nā kariha dui lehā, ebe kahi adhika snehā-gaṇ |*  
*nirantara thāke saṅge, kṛṣṇa-kathā līlā-raṅge, narma-sakhī ei sab jan ||*  
*śrī-rūpa-mañjarī sār, śrī-rasa-mañjarī ār, lavaṅga-mañjarī mañjulālī |*  
*śrī-rati-mañjarī saṅge, kastūrīkā ādi raṅge, prema-sevā kare kutūjalī ||*  
*e sabār anugā haiyā, prema-sevā niba cāiyā, iṅgite bujhibo sab kaje |*  
*rūpe guṇe ḍaga-magi, sadā habo anurāgi, basati karibo sakhī-mājhe ||* Song 5, *ibid.*, pp. 432-3. The first two lines of this quote are not found in all versions. They are given in a footnote in Nath's edition (p. 432).

<sup>159</sup>*ei sakhī bhāve jei kare anugati | rādhā-kṛṣṇa kuñja-sevā sādhyā sei pāy |*  
*sei sādhyā pāite nāhika upāya ||* CC 2.8.204-5.

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*sañcāris* comes this additional feeling: “Love for friends of a similar temperament of feeling for Kṛṣṇa is also known as a *sañcāri*.”<sup>160</sup>

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

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

One day on Govardhana hill, Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī observed Rādhārāṇī showing great affection for Lalitā during the course of her dalliances with Kṛṣṇa. She said to one of Lalitā’s friends in praise of her great fortune: “O friend, just see how Rādhārāṇī is wiping the perspiration and the hair from Lalitā’s face while she is simultaneously sporting with Kṛṣṇa.”<sup>161</sup>

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

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

Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa,  
In either birth or death my only goal,  
Lord and lady of my life and soul.<sup>164</sup>

Here the word *prāṇa-pati* (“lord of my life”) is generally used to refer to one’s lover, but in the above line by Narottam Dās, it is referring to both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa together. It is

<sup>160</sup>*sakhyādiṣu nija-premāpy atra sañcāritām vrajet* || UN 13.2

<sup>161</sup>*śaila-mūrdhni hariṇā viharantī roma-kuḍmala-karambita-mūrtiḥ |  
rādhikā salalitaṁ lalitāyāḥ paśya mārṣṭi lulitālakam āsyam* || UN 13.104.

<sup>162</sup>*lalitāyā āsyam mārṣṭi vihārajaṁ prasvedam apanayatīti lalitā-viṣayā śrī-rādhā-ratir apy atra sañcāri-bhāvo bhavan śrī-kṛṣṇa-ratiṁ puṣṇāti* | From Viśvanātha’s commentary on the above-quoted verse. *Kāvya-mālā* edition, on UN 13.101 (i.e. 13.104), p. 385.

<sup>163</sup>*yadi kvacit kṛṣṇa-rateḥ sakāśād apy adhikā syāt tayā puṣyamāṇā ca syāt tadā bhāvollāsa itīryate na tasyāḥ sañcāritvaṁ nāpi tasyāḥ sthāyitvaṁ iti bhāvaḥ* | Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Narottama Dāsa, PBC, Song 4, *ibid.*, p. 431.

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definitely something novel and has no precedent in Vaiṣṇava theology. Such an attitude is not possible towards anyone other than Rādhā. The greatest of the tasters of sacred rapture, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmin has thus made a lasting contribution to the science of sacred rapture by naming it *bhāvollāsā rati*.

### 3.6 The competence of mañjarī-bhāva in conquering Kṛṣṇa

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

Listen: if you're clever, I'll tell you a secret  
that all of us have discovered:  
Make friends with Rādhārāṇī.  
[If you think, "Why should I waste my time  
abandoning efforts to conquer Kṛṣṇa  
to win her over?" then listen]:  
If you just make friendship with Rādhā,  
then the joyous wealth of love for Kṛṣṇa  
will come automatically and offer itself to you.<sup>165</sup>

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmin comments that the wealth of happiness that exists in loving Kṛṣṇa is existentially an integral part of friendship with Rādhā.<sup>166</sup> Viśvanātha also paraphrases Mañjarī's instruction to the new arrival:

When you become Rādhārāṇī's confidential friend then he will know you as his beloved's sakhī and will show spontaneous affection for you, even more than if you became his mistress independently. So by becoming friends with Rādhā, intimacy with Kṛṣṇa will follow automatically. If you become Rādhā's friend, then in certain situations when she is angry with him or when it is hard for him to meet her because her mother-in-law or others keep her entangled in household affairs or locked in her room, then he will have to come to you for help. Without your having to do anything, he will come to you to make friends. There will be no need for you to make any independent effort to gain his affectionate attention."<sup>167</sup>

<sup>165</sup>vayam idam anubhūya śikṣayāma  
kuru cature saha rādhayaiva sakhyam |  
priya-sahacari yatra bāḍham antar-  
bhavati hari-praṇaya-pramoda-lakṣmīḥ || UN 8.133.

<sup>166</sup>yatra śrī-rādhā-sakhye śrī-hari-praṇayānanda-sampattir antar-bhāvaṁ prāpnoti | Locana-rocanī on UN 11.133 (Kāvya-mālā, 11.125, p. 236)

<sup>167</sup>tava śrī-rādhā-sakhīve tu siddhe mat-preyasyāḥ sakhiyam iti tvayi śrī-kṛṣṇasya snehādhikāyām avaśyam bhāvi | śrī-rādhāyāḥ kadācin māna-guruṇi rādhādāv atidurlabhye tat-prāptyartham tvām apy apekṣiṣyamāṇena tena prathamata eva tvayā saha sakhyam avaśyam kartavyam iti tena saha tava sakhyam ayatna-siddham iti || Ānanda-candrikā on ibid.

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

O Queen of Vṛndāvana! I pray  
for your mercy, again and again.  
By your mercy, even the killer of Keśī  
will come and appeal to me with flattering words  
to get help from me to meet you.<sup>168</sup>

### 3.7 The mañjarīs' way of devotion

The mañjarīs pray to Rādhā:

O goddess of the month of Kārttika,  
I beg you with sweet words to give me  
the best of benedictions:  
by which Kṛṣṇa, the killer of Baka,  
knowing me to be yours,  
will become even more merciful to me.<sup>169</sup>

And their prayer to Kṛṣṇa:

O son of Mahārāja Nanda!  
I fall at your feet and beg  
with thousands of tearful prayers  
that I may become the object of Rādhā's mercy,  
for she is the crown jewel of all the beauties of Vraja.  
Please fulfill this desire.<sup>170</sup>

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

O dear mind! Remember always  
that the moon of the forests of Vraja  
is my mistress Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's lover,  
and that she is the one who rules him.  
Think of Lalitā as her unequalled and chief sakhi,  
of Viśākhā as the teacher who delivers

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<sup>168</sup>karuṇām muhur arthaye param tava vṛndāvana-cakravartini |  
api keśi-ripor yayā bhavet sa cātu-prārthanā-bhājanam janah ||  
Rūpa Gosvāmin, *Stava-mālā: Cātu-puṣpāñjali*, 23.

<sup>169</sup>bhavaṭim abhivādyā cātubhir varam ūrjeśvarī varyam arthaye |  
bhavadīyatayā kṛpām yathā mayi kuryād adhikām bakāntakāḥ || UV, 20.

<sup>170</sup>praṇipatya bhavantaṁ arthaye paśu-pāleṇdra-kumāra kākubhiḥ |  
vraja-yauvati-mauli-mālikā karuṇā-pātram imam janam kuru || ibid, 19.

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the different intimate teachings of loving service;  
and remember that the King of Mountains and the Beloved Pond  
are the givers of attachment, eagerness and devotion,  
whereby Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's direct presence can be perceived.<sup>171</sup>

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

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

Kṛṣṇa, known as the foremost amongst the relishers of sacred rapture, accepted the mood and luster of his chief consort Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī with a view to fulfilling three desires (to know the nature of Rādhā's love, the extent of his own sweetness, and the nature of the happiness that she experiences in her love for him). After he, in his form as Gaurasundara, had experienced the fulfillment of all those desires through various pastimes, a new desire manifested within him: due to being filled with sweet and munificent love, he wished to experience the sentiment of the friends of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in their intimate service of the Divine Loving Couple, and after relishing it himself, to distribute it to the people of the world. This is the devotion that is glorified in the beginning of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* as *anarpita-carīm cirāt... unnatojjvala-rasām sva-bhakti-śriyam*, “the most elevated and effulgent, flavorful, intimate devotional beauty that had not been offered to the world for an inestimable length of time.”<sup>172</sup>

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

Ecstatic transformations that had never before been seen anywhere were all manifest in the Lord's body. Sometimes the joints of his arms and legs would separate to a distance of eight or ten inches with only the tightened skin holding the limbs together. Then again, sometimes his head and limbs would contract and withdraw into his body in the manner of a tortoise.<sup>173</sup>

<sup>171</sup>*mad-iśā-nāthatve vraja-vipina-candraṁ vraja-vane-  
śvarīm tan-nāthatve tad-atula-sakhīve tu lalitām |  
viśākhām śikṣāli-vitarāṇa-gurutve priya-saro-  
girindrau tat-prekṣā-lalita-rati-datve smara manah || Manah-sikṣā, 9.*

<sup>172</sup>*Caitanya-caritāmṛta 1.1.4 (Vidagdha-mādhava 1.2)*

<sup>173</sup>*kāhān nāhi śuni je je bhāver vikār |  
sei bhāva hay prabhura śarīre pracār |  
hasta-pader sandhi sab vitasti pramāṇe |  
sandhi chāri bhinna haye carma rahe sthāne ||  
hasta pada śira sab śarīre bhitare |  
praviṣṭa hay kūrma-rūpa dekhiye prabhure || CC 2.2.11-13*

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The gopīs constantly relish the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s qualities, his form, taste, fragrance, sound and touch; my mind is a mendicant who comes to them with his five ragged disciples, the five senses, to beg from them the remnants of their feast by which he will maintain his life.<sup>174</sup>

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

I saw the Yamunā and was immediately transported to Vṛndāvana where I saw the son of the king of Vraja playing in the water with Rādhikā and the other gopīs. They were frolicking with great amusement in the waters of the Yamunā. I stood on the shore with the other gopīs watching; one sakhi in particular showed me everything, pointing out the special features of the sports. “O sakhi! See the water games being enjoyed by Kṛṣṇa! He is like a maddened elephant agitating the waters of a pond in the association of all his gopī she-elephants.” Seeing all these amusements of Kṛṣṇa and the gopīs, my mind is overjoyed and my eyes and ears have attained supreme satisfaction.<sup>175</sup>

Tasting this rasa himself, he taught it to all the devotees; the Lord was rich with the jewels of *prema*. He discriminated not as to the place or recipient; he was the greatest of all philanthropists. Not even a drop of this ocean of secret spiritual emotions is attained by Brahmā and the other demigods, yet this wealth was distributed by the Lord throughout the world. No one can describe successfully the glories of such an incarnation, so merciful and so charitable, the equal of whom has never been seen. There is no question of describing it. If one describes it, no one will understand it. He is able to understand it to whom Caitanya has shown mercy and given the association of the servant of his servant.<sup>176</sup>

These pastimes of the Lord are transcendental as are their intricacies and details; the unfortunate develop no faith in them, even after hearing.<sup>177</sup>

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

<sup>174</sup>*kṛṣṇa guṇa-rūpa-rasa, gandha-śabda-paraśa, se sudhā āsvāde gopī-gaṇa* |

*tā-sabāra grāsa-śeṣe, āni pañcendriya śiṣye, se bhikṣāy rākhaye jīvan* || CC 3.14.49

<sup>175</sup>*sakhi he! dekha kṛṣṇera jala-keli-rāṅge | kṛṣṇa-matta kari-var, cañcala kara puṣkar, gopī-gaṇ kariṇīra sāṅge* || *jāhā kari āsvādan, ānandita mora man, netra karṇa jugma juṛāila* || CC 3.18.80-82; 84.

<sup>176</sup>*āpane kari āsvādane, śikhāila bhakta-gaṇe, prema-cintāmaṇira prabhu dhanī | nāhi jāne sthānāsthān, jāre tāre kare dān, mahāprabhu dātā śiromaṇi | ei gupta-bhāva-sindhu, brahmā nā pāy eka bindu, hena dhan bilāila sāmsāre | aiche dayālu avatār, aiche dātā nāhi ār, guṇa keho nāre varṇibāre* || *kahibāra kathā nahe, kahile keha nā bujhaye, aiche citra caitanyera rāṅga | sei se bujhite pāre caitanyera kṛpā jāre, hay tāra dāsānudāsa sāṅga* || CC 2.2.81-83.

<sup>177</sup>*alaukika līlā prabhura alaukika rīti | śunileha bhāgya-hīnera nā hay pratīti* || CC 2.18.125.

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mundane mind, how amusing they are! How wonderful his emotional transformations, how wonderful his qualities, how wonderful his behaviour with his devotees.<sup>178</sup>

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

To the extent that an aspiring devotee develops devotion for Lord Gaurāṅga by the grace of those intimate with him, that is the extent to which the ocean of nectar of love for the service of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī will manifest suddenly in his heart.<sup>179</sup>

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

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

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

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

How is it that even after crying out the name of Gaurāṅga my heart does not melt? How is it that I am still alive? Vāsu Ghoṣa says that it seems that the creator has given him a heart of stone.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>178</sup>ata eva āpane prabhu gopī bhāva dhari | vrajendra-nandane kahe prāṇanātha kari || sei kṛṣṇa sei gopī parama virodh | acintya-caritra prabhur ati sudurbodh || ithe tarka kari keho nā kara saṁśay | kṛṣṇer acintya-śakti ei mata hay || acintya adbhut kṛṣṇa-caitanya vihar | citra-bhāva citra-guṇa citra-vyavahār || CC 1.17.303-6.

<sup>179</sup>yathā yathā gaura-padāravinde vindeta bhaktim kṛta-puṇya-rāsīḥ |  
tathotsarpati hṛdy akasmād rādhā-padāmbhoja-sudhāmbu-rāsīḥ || *Caitanya-candrāmṛta* 78.

<sup>180</sup>jadi gaurāṅga nā hata, ki mene haṁta, kemane dharitām de |  
rādhāra mahimā, rasa-sindhu-sīmā, jagate jānāto ke?  
madhura vṛndā-vipina mādhuri praveśa cāturi sār |  
varaja-juvatī bhāvera bhakati śakati haṁta kār ||  
gāo gān puna gaurāṅgera guṇa sarala haṁyā man |  
e tin bhuvane dayāra ṭhākura nā dekhiye eka-jan ||  
gaurāṅga baliyā nā gela galiyā kemane dharila de |  
vāsur hiyā pāṣāṇa diyā kemane gaṛila ke



## Chapter Four

### The Causes of Sacred Rapture

#### 4.1. Defining the term *vibhāva*

The *vibhāvas* or causes for experiencing a dominant mood of love for Kṛṣṇa as sacred rapture are twofold: the props and the inspirators.<sup>181</sup>

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

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

#### 4.2 The object of the mañjarīs’ love

The props of erotic sacred rapture are the leading man and his lady; the greatest of all such lovers and sweethearts are the son of the King of Vraja and Śrīmatī Rādhikā.<sup>182</sup>

Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa,  
In either birth or death my only goal,  
Lord and lady of my life and soul.<sup>183</sup>

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

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<sup>181</sup>*tatra jñeyā vibhāvās tu raty-āsvādana-hetavaḥ |*

*te dvidhā lambanā eke tathivoddīpanaḥ pare || BRS 2.1.14*

<sup>182</sup>*nāyaka nāyikā dui rasera ālamban | sei dui śreṣṭha rādhā vrajendra-nandan || CC 2.23.92.*

*vrajer nandan kṛṣṇa nāyaka cūṛāmaṇi | nāyikāra śiromaṇi rādhā ṭhākuraṇi || CC 2.23.66*

<sup>183</sup>*jīvane maraṇe gati rādhā-kṛṣṇa prāṇa-pati | Narottama Dās Ṭhākura, Prema-bhakti-candrikā, Song 4, ibid., p. 431.*

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Though the most wonderful and intense manifestation of spiritual existence is that of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana, even more delightful is he when joined with Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.<sup>184</sup>

He further states elsewhere, “The greatest form of worship is that performed to Kṛṣṇa while he engages in erotic sports with Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.”<sup>185</sup>

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

Beyond this ocean of Māyā lies the first effulgent light known as the impersonal *brahma-jyoti*. Beyond that lies the second effulgence, that of the Lord’s majesty called the *aiśa-jyoti*; better than that is the sweet effulgence known as the *madhura-jyoti*, of which Vṛndāvana is the supreme manifestation, or *mahā-madhura-jyoti*, for it made of intensified *madhura-rasa* or conjugal love.<sup>186</sup>

Within this most effulgent abode of Vṛndāvana, there is an enchanting forest cottage that enhances even its sacred glories. In that cottage, the beautiful Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are eternally engaged in their intoxicating, yet completely pure, erotic pastimes, surrounded by all the necessary ingredients and inspirators for the full experience of that primordial form of sacred rapture.<sup>187</sup>

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Lord of Vṛndāvana; he makes the land of Gokula honey-sweet by his presence. He is the son of Nanda Mahārāja and his body spreads rays of nectar throughout the universe; he is therefore called Kṛṣṇa-candra. His form is blackish like a new rain cloud, shining more brightly than the most radiant of sapphires. He is a fresh youth dressed in yellow silk; like a player on the stage, he enchants all the ladies. He plays the flute; his eyes are like lotuses tinged with the color of dawn. He wears a garland of many flowers that hangs down to his knees, is decorated profusely with ornaments and jewels, and his body is smeared with unguents, making him the ultimate inspiration for romantic attraction. He stands in an enchanting, three-fold bending form; he is the supreme lover of the flirtatious charmer (*dhīra-lalita*) variety. He has thirty-two auspicious physical characteristics, sixty-

<sup>184</sup>sarvato’pi sāndrānanda-camatkāra-kara-śrī-kṛṣṇa-prakāṣe śrī-vṛndāvane’pi paramādbhuta-prakāśaḥ śrī-rādhayā yugalitas tu śrī-kṛṣṇaḥ | KṛṣṇaS 189

<sup>185</sup>parama-śreṣṭha-śrī-rādhā-saṁvalita-līlā-maya-śrī-kṛṣṇa-bhajanam tu paramatamam eva | BhaktiS 338

<sup>186</sup>advaita-brahma-saj-jyotiṣi jayati mahānanda-saj-jyotir aiśam  
tasmin svādyāika-raty-ātmaka-madhura-mahā-jyotir ekam cakāṣti |  
śrīmad-vṛndāvanam tad-ghanam iha tad-adhi śyāmalenāsti rādhā  
nitya-kṛīḍā-kīṣorī smara madhurataram tat-pada-dvandva-ruciḥ || VMA 7.2

<sup>187</sup>atyantādbhuta-vaicitryā śrīmad-vṛndāvanojjvalā |  
yatratyam sarvam āścaryam rasa-sāraika-dīpakam ||  
kāma-bīja-vilāsātma-sarva-sāra-sukhākaram |  
yatra śrī-rādhikā-kṛṣṇau sarva-sundara-sundarau ||  
sahajāścarya-kaiśora-vayaḥ śrī-viśva-mohanau |  
mahā-vimāla-kandarpa-rasonmāda-nirantarau || VMA 7.79-81

Mañjarī svarūpa nirūpaṇa

four qualities unique to himself. His age is fifteen years, nine months and seven and a half days. He lives in Nandīśvara and enjoys his pastimes throughout Vṛndāvana.

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

Rādhā’s attachment to Kṛṣṇa is called *madīyatā* because she thinks of Kṛṣṇa as belonging to her rather than of herself as belonging to him. Her affection is called honey-like (*madhu-sneha*) because it needs no addition to be completely pleasing to the Lord. Her angry pride is called *lalita-māna* because it increases Kṛṣṇa’s erotic spirit; her intense attraction to Kṛṣṇa is called *mañjiṣṭha-rāga* because of its ever-newness and independence from and indifference to all obstacles.

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

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

Their enchanting bodily lustres are a heavenly golden and blackish. Each and every limb of their bodies emits brilliant rays of effulgence that flash in all directions. Their celestial forms are wonderfully proportioned and filled with loveliness in every detail; they are the shoreless ocean of unparalleled and astounding beauty. The ocean of their love for one another overflows its banks constantly as it increases. Their every limb spins constantly with the intoxication of erotic attraction. Due to their absorption in loving encounters their bodies are enveloped by waves of shivers that cause their body hair to stand erect. Their minds are untouched by any desire other than to touch and stroke each other. They are interested in no other amusements for their

### Mañjarī svarūpa nirūpaṇa

own sake. They are totally dedicated to one another in unbroken erotic attachment, yet they increase this attachment even more by singing beautiful love songs to each other. They are constantly floating on the surface of the ocean of their love for one another, and diving into its depths again and again. They are always served by Rādhā's girlfriends and handmaids. These sakhīs and mañjarīs are their very life because they are so expert in plunging them deeper and deeper into the ocean of loving ecstasies.<sup>188</sup>

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

I meditate on the forms of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa as their bewitching eyes drink in each other's beauty with mutual glances of intense affection; they have their trembling arms wrapped around one another; their black and gold bodies are dressed in gold and black garments and they are aglow with intense eagerness to make love.<sup>189</sup>

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

When will I have the great fortune to see the original of all infatuated amorous couples, Śrī Śrī Gāndharvā and Giridhārī in Vṛndāvana? Their appearance sends forth a deluge of ambrosia in which Cupid's inspirations take a dominant role in expanding their dalliances and giving them great joy.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> mahā-divyatama-snigdha-gaura-śyāma-tanu-cchavi |  
ekaikāṅgocchalat-svaccha-cchaṭaughā-cchanna-dik-cayau ||  
mahā-mohana-divyāṅga-kānti-līnākhila-dvayau |  
lāvanya-sāra-sarvasva-divyāṅga-valanādbhutau ||  
asamordhva-mahāścarya-saundaryāpāra-vāridhī |  
paras-parāstyā-maryāda-varḍhiṣṇu-prema-sāgarau ||  
madonmadānaṅga-rasa-ghūrṇa-mānākhilāṅgakau |  
raty-āveśa-vaśa-bhrāmyat-sarvāṅgotpula-kāvalī ||  
kheḷantāv atyavicchinnā-pronmadānaṅga-kelibhiḥ |  
anyonya-sahitānaṅga-kṛḍānyāsparsi-mānasau ||  
paramāścarya-saṅgīta-kalojjṛmbhita-manmathau |  
ati-suddhānūrāgaika-mahādbhāv ādya āplutau ||  
nityaṁ viharato divya-sakhī-maṇḍala-lālitau |  
mahā-vidagdha-svātmaika-rasa-magnālī-jīvanau || VMA 7.82-88

<sup>189</sup> koṇenākṣṇoḥ pṛthu-ruci mitho hāriṇā lihyamānāv  
ekaikena pracura-pulakenopagūdhau bhujena |  
gaurī-śyāmau vasana-yugalaṁ śyāma-gauram vasānau  
rādhā-kṛṣṇau smara-vilasitoddāma-tṛṣṇau smarāmi ||  
(ed.) Haridās Śāstrī, pp. 61-2. (Vrindavan, Purana Kalidaha: Gadādhara-Gaurahari Press, 1982)

<sup>190</sup> prādurbhāva-sudhā-draveṇa nitarām āṅgitvam āptvā yayor  
goṣṭhe'bhikṣṇam anaṅga eṣa paritaḥ kṛḍā-vinodaṁ rasaiḥ |  
pṛītyollāsayaṭiḥ mugdha-mithuna-śreṇī-vataṁsāv imau  
gāndharvā-giridhārīnau bata kadā drakṣyāmi rāgeṇa tau ||

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

The girlfriends of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī  
carefully nurture the wish-fulfilling tree  
of Rādhā and Mādhava's jubilant pastimes  
in Vṛndāvana's fertile soil, constantly hoping  
for the appearance of fruits and flowers;  
they watch it grow and develop  
and when the fruits and flowers appear, they relish them;  
may that tree, by its unparalleled beauty,  
give pleasure to me also.<sup>191</sup>

He writes another verse in glorification of the Divine Couple in his *Gopāla-campū*,

Wise persons have determined that  
though these two are of a black and golden hue,  
in their minds they are of the opposite colors,  
as are, externally, their clothes also.  
This is some pure, unblemished love become incarnate,  
taking on this form with a dual manifestation  
which is both divided and a unity.<sup>192</sup>

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

Even though they fan each other  
with the corners of their constantly moving eyes,  
their bodies are still wet with perspiration;  
although they reside comfortably  
in the nimbus of each other's effulgence,  
still they are agitated and restless;  
and even though they constantly drink the nectar  
of each other's gently smiling faces,  
they are still disturbed by an ever-increasing sense of thirst.  
May that eternally frolicksome Divine Pair

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*Vraja-vilāsa-stava*, 4.

<sup>191</sup>ālībhīḥ paripālitaḥ pravalitaḥ sānandam ālokitāḥ |  
pratyāsaṁ sumanaḥphalodaya-vidhau sāmōdam āmoditaḥ |  
vṛndāranya-bhuvi prakāsa-madhuraḥ sarvātīśāyī-srīyā  
rādhā-mādhavayorḥ pramodayatu mām ullāsa-kalpa-drumaḥ ||  
(ed.) Chinmayī Chatterjee, p. 157. (Calcutta: Jadavpur University, 1988)

<sup>192</sup>imau gaurī-śyāmau manasi viparītau bahir api  
sphurat-tat-tad-vastrāv iti budha-janair niścitaṁ idam |  
sa ko'py accha-premā vilasad-ubhaya-sphūrtikatayā  
dadhan-mūrtibhāvaṁ prthag-aprthag apy āvirudabhūt ||  
*Gopāla-pūrva-campū* 15, verse 2.

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bestow upon us love for them.<sup>193</sup>

Finally, this anonymous verse sums up the vision of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa that is idealized by the mañjarīs:

The water increases the beauty of the lotus  
and the lotus increases the beauty of the water;  
both the lotus and the water enhance the charms of the lake.  
The bracelet is beautified by the diamonds,  
and the diamonds by the bracelet,  
and both combine to increase the beauty of the hand.  
The night becomes more lovely when the moon shines,  
the moon appears more beautiful at night;  
when both are present together, the sky's charm is heightened.  
So it is with Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa;  
each of them increases each other's beauty  
and together they augment the glories of Vṛndāvana.<sup>194</sup>

#### 4.3 The vessels of *mañjarī-bhāva*, the mañjarīs

In the *Vṛndāvana-mahimāmr̥ta*, Prabodhānanda exhorts everyone to—

O friend, just follow the handmaids of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, whose bodies are made of the foam coming from the ocean of solidified spiritual light that emanates from her lotus feet. They are expert in all aspects of conjugal love and are in the charming fullness of maidenhood; their beauty has become wondrously enchanting due to the new appearance in them of adolescence and the jewels and beautiful garments with which they have been decorated.<sup>195</sup>

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

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<sup>193</sup>svidyan dṛganta-capalāñcala-vījito'pi  
kṣubhyan sva-kānti-nagarāntara-vāsito'pi |  
tṛṣṇan muhuḥ smita-sudhām paripāyito'pi  
śrī-rādhayā praṇayatu pramadam harir naḥ || Ānanda-candrikā, Kāvya-mālā edition, p. 1.

<sup>194</sup>payasā kamalam kamalena ca payaḥ payasā kamalena vibhāti saraḥ |  
mañinā valayaṁ valayena ca mañiḥ mañinā valayena vibhāti karaḥ ||  
śaśinā ca niśā niśayā ca śaśi śaśinā niśayā vibhāti nabhaḥ |  
hariṇā ca rādhā rādhayā ca hariḥ, hariṇā rādhayā vibhāti vanam ||  
Kuñjavihārī Dāsji cites this verse as a old verse (prācīna śloka).

<sup>195</sup>śrī-rādhā-pāda-padma-cchavi-madhuratara-prema-cij-jyotir ekā-  
mbodher udbhūta-phena-stavaka-maya-tanūḥ sarva-vaidagdhya-pūrṇāḥ |  
kaisora-vyañjitās tad-ghana-rug-apaghana-śrī-camatkāra-bhājo  
divyālankāra-vastrā anusarata sakhe rādhikā-kinkarīs tāḥ || VMA 2.8

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Rādhārāṇī's girlfriends are entirely devoted to her service; they are like the branches, leaves and flowers of the divine vine of love that is Rādhā herself, the pleasure-giving potency of Kṛṣṇa, who is like the moon giving delight to the lily-like damsels of Vṛndāvana. Thus they are also equal to her very self.<sup>196</sup>

All the good qualities of the Lord are manifest in his devotees. Of course, this rule has its limitations due to the differences between the *jīva* and the Supreme Lord—not all of his infinite qualities can be fully manifest in the *jīva*. Similarly, all Rādhārāṇī's girlfriends are her personal expansions, so they are also imbued with her qualities, but with some differences in the type and quantity. Rādhārāṇī's twenty-five principal qualities have been alluded to above. They have especially been described in the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* (4.11-15) beginning from *madhurā* ("sweet"), "blossoming maidenhood," "enchancing sidelong glances," "glowing smile," etc. (See below, p. xx.) In the eighth century of *Vṛndāvana-mahimāmṛta*, these and other qualities are attributed to Rādhārāṇī's handmaidens:

The mañjarī is of a glistening, pleasing, golden color, a charming picture of sweetness. Her bodily lustre, her loveliness as well as her stocks of honey-like sweetness are all unlimited.<sup>197</sup>

She is in the first blush of maidenhood and her breasts have budded beautifully. She wears star-like spangled necklaces and multicolored blouses.<sup>198</sup>

Her arms are as shapely as bananas and are further enhanced by bracelets and jewelled arm bands. The vine of her braids hangs down to her captivating buttocks and its swinging movements augment her beauty.<sup>199</sup>

She has an enchantingly thin waist. A divine silk garment, folded alluringly, hangs down over her ankles.<sup>200</sup>

A fine cloth decorated with flowers and leaves covers her hair and the sides of her face. The enchanter Kṛṣṇa glances at her again and again.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>196</sup>sakhyāḥ śrī-rādhikāyā vraja-kumuda-vidhor hlādinī-nāma-śakteḥ  
sārāṁśa-prema-vallyāḥ kiśalaya-dala-puṣpādi-tulyāḥ sva-tulyāḥ |  
GLA 10.16, quoted in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, 2.8.211.

<sup>197</sup>kāntyānantām śrīyā'nantām mādhyair apy anantakām |  
susnigdha-lalita-svarṇa-gaurīm madhura-cchaviḥ | VMA 8.24

<sup>198</sup>tārā-hārāvalī-cāru-citra-kañcuka-dhārīṇīm |  
vyañjad-adbhuta-kaiśorām sujāta-mukula-stanīm || ibid. 8.25.

<sup>199</sup>snigdha-cchaṭā-kanda-doh-kandalī-cudāṅgada-śriyam |  
cāru-śroṇi-taṭe kṛḍan-mahā-veṇī-latojjvalām | ibid. 8.26.

<sup>200</sup>atyanta-cāru-sukṛṣa-madhya-deśa-manoharām |  
divya-kuñcita-kauseyaṇāgulpha-parimaṇḍitām || ibid. 8.27.

<sup>201</sup>nicolenātisūkṣmeṇa sva-gucchāncala-sobhinā |  
alakānta-parivṛtām muhur mohana-vikṣitām || ibid. 8.28.

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She has sweet and shy smiles. She has playful glances. She knows how to make many attractive movements.<sup>202</sup>

She always feels thrilled by the loving affairs of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. She is expert in the many arts, having been taught by Rādhārāṇī herself.<sup>203</sup>

She is especially attractive due to being decorated by the Divine Couple's gifts of leftover garlands, ornaments and clothes. She is endowed with unlimited good qualities of which humility and mannerliness are foremost.<sup>204</sup>

She is capable of understanding Rādhā's wishes by her slightest glance or hint. She relishes Kṛṣṇa's leftover pān and betelnut and is very much the object of the Divine Couple's affections.<sup>205</sup>

She carries the necessary paraphernalia (like golden water jugs, etc.) for the nightly meetings of the Holy Pair. She constantly tastes the sacred rapture arising from Rādhā's form, qualities and pastimes. Thinking of Rādhā's affairs with Kṛṣṇa gives her a thrill.<sup>206</sup>

She is always immersed in an ocean of happiness due to her intense loving affection for Rādhārāṇī. In past, present or future, whether awake, dreaming or in deep sleep, she desires nothing other than service at Rādhā's lotus feet. Other than Rādhā's lotus feet, she knows nothing, not even in her dreams. She rushes toward anything that bears even the most insignificant relation to Rādhā in the way that the rivers rush to the ocean; she is washed away by the ocean of love. In separation from Rādhārāṇī for even a moment she almost dies. Day and night she remains as inseparable as a shadow from her mistress's lotus feet.<sup>207</sup>

Her maidenly beauty is so great that not only the whole universe but even Śiva and Ananta are astonished by it. At every moment, her skin is covered

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<sup>202</sup>sa-vrīḍā-madhura-smera-salilāpāṅga-vikṣaṇām |  
nānāścārya-kalodārām nānā-bhaṅgi-mayākṛtim || ibid. 8.29.

<sup>203</sup>rādhā-kṛṣṇa-mahā-premodaṅci-romaṇca-saṅcayām |  
śrīśvarī-śikṣitāśeṣa-kalā-kaṣṭhā-sālinīm || ibid. 8.30.

<sup>204</sup>preṣṭha-dvandva-prasāda-srag-vastra-bhūṣādi-mohinī |  
mahā-vinaya-sauśīlyādy-anekāścārya-sad-guṇām || ibid. 8.31.

<sup>205</sup>śrīśvarī-dṛṣṭi-vāg-ādi-sarveṅgita-vicakṣaṇām |  
śrī-kṛṣṇa-datta-tāmbūla-carvitām tat-tad-ādṛtām || ibid. 8.32.

<sup>206</sup>gūḍha-śyāmābhisārāṅga-bhṛṅgārādibhir anvitām |  
rādhā-prīty-anukampādi-pravṛddha-prema-vihvalām || ibid. 8.33.

<sup>207</sup>rādhā-prīti-sukhāmbodhāv apāre buḍitām sadā |  
rādhā-padābja-sevānya-sprhā-kāla-trayojjhitām || ibid. 8.34.

rādhā-pādāmbujād anyat svapne'pi na jānatīm |  
rādhā-sambandha-sandhāvat-prema-sindhogha-sālinīm | ibid. 8.35.  
kṣaṇam caraṇa-vicchedāc chrīśvareṇ prāṇa-hārinīm |  
padāravinda-samlagnatayaivāhar-nīṣam sthitām || ibid. 8.22.



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with goosebumps as she tastes the sacred rapture of service. She enchants everyone with her bodily lustre and loveliness as she moves from place to place in her anxiety to better serve Rādhā.<sup>208</sup>

Her bodily effulgence fills the ten directions which are beautified and enriched by it. She enchants the world with the sweet tinkling of her bracelets and her anklebells as she playfully moves her feet. She is satisfied and happy by overhearing the sweet, private conversations of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.<sup>209</sup>

She is overjoyed to listen to the nectarean words, cooling and sweet, which spill from the mouth of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.<sup>210</sup>

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

Taking refuge in devotion, the aspirant should constantly meditate on her own mañjarī form,  
her body drenched with the mercy of the spiritual master,  
a cowherd girl decorated with many and various ornaments,  
with elevated and fully-developed breasts,  
expert in the sixty-four arts and crafts,  
wearing a red skirt and white shawl,  
wearing a blouse covered in pearls  
and bordered with red and gold ribbon,  
anointed with unguents of musk and sandalwood,  
always sweetly smiling,  
always eager for service  
and expert in finding new ways of serving,  
who is endowed with all good qualities like humility,  
who is always praying for Rādhā's mercy,  
whose every action is only for the pleasure of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa,  
who is like a beautiful lotus flower,  
who has a deep and secret feeling of love for Kṛṣṇa,  
whose beauty bewilders even Cupid with joy,  
who is expert in conversation

<sup>208</sup> *seṣāśeṣa-mahā-vismāpaka-kaiśora-rūpiṇīm |*  
*kṣaṇe kṣaṇe rasāsvāda-prodaṅcat-pulakāvalīm ||*  
*sarvāṅga-kānti-saundaryair apāraiḥ sarva-mohinīm |*  
*rādhā-karmākulatayā tatra tatra vicālinīm ||* ibid. 8.36-37.

<sup>209</sup> *citrayantīm iva diśo vicitrāṅga-cchatā-cayaiḥ |*  
*sa-līlā-pada-vinyāsaiḥ sunūpura-ṛaṇat-kṛtaiḥ ||*  
*kāñjī-valaya-nādaḥ ca madhurair viśva-mohinīm |*  
*rādhā-kṛṣṇa-raho-goṣṭhī-sudhā-madhura-śītalām ||* ibid 8.39-40.

<sup>210</sup> *tat-tad-vacana-pīyūṣair mahā-madhura-śītalaiḥ |*  
*śrī-rādhā-mukha-candrānu-galitair abhinanditām ||* ibid. 8.41.

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that increases the pleasures of conjugal love,  
 who is transcendently, beautifully formed,  
 who is always jubilant due to absorption  
 in songs that are pleasing to the Holy Couple,  
 whose bodily lustre is of molten gold,  
 who is free from even the slightest hint of self-centred desire,  
 and who is overwhelmed day and night  
 by feelings of love for the Divine Couple.<sup>211</sup>

This meditation can be further augmented by verses from the same author's *Paddhati-traya*:

Her dear friends are always in the spirit of extra-marital love,  
 bringing secretly the two lovers together.  
 She is among Rādhārāṇī's galaxy of friends, a member of Lalitā's or someone  
 else's group.  
 She follows Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī and resides in Yāvaṭa village.  
 Dedicated exclusively to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, she is absorbed constantly in her  
 service,  
 loving her even more than Kṛṣṇa.<sup>212</sup>

#### 4.4. The *uddīpanas*, kindlers of loving emotion

There are two words used in connection with the Lord's form which are similar and yet subtly different—*svarūpa* and *rūpa*. The philosophical reality of the Supreme Lord, which includes his form, his qualities, his amusements, etc., all make up his *svarūpa*, generally translated as “identity” or “true nature.” Kṛṣṇa's all-pervasiveness, his non-material self-manifestness, and his supreme blissfulness are all attributes of his *svarūpa*. Thus references

<sup>211</sup> śrī-guru-caraṇāmbhoja-kṛpā-sikta-kalevarām |  
 kiśorīm gopa-vanitām nānālaṁkāra-bhūṣitām ||  
 pṛthu-tuṅga-kuca-dvandvām catuḥṣaṣṭhi-kalānvitām |  
 rakta-citrāntarīyām āvṛta-śuklōttarīyakām ||  
 svarṇa-citrāruṇa-prānta-muktādāma-sukañculīm |  
 candanāguru-kāśmīra-carcitāṅgīm madhu-smitām ||  
 sevopāyana-nirmāṇa-kuśalām sevanotsukām |  
 vinayādi-guṇopetām śrī-rādhā-karuṇārthinīm ||  
 rādhā-kṛṣṇa-sukhāmōda-mātra-ceṣṭām supadminīm |  
 nigūḍha-bhāvām govinde madanānanda-mohinīm ||  
 nānā-rasa-kalālāpa-sālinīm divya-rūpiṇīm |  
 saṅgīta-rasa-samjāta-bhāvollāsa-bharānvitām ||  
 tapta-kāncana-suddhābhām sva-saukhyā-gandha-varjitām |  
 divānīśam mano-madhye dvayoḥ prema-bharākulām |  
 evam ātmānam anīśam bhāvayed bhaktim āśritaḥ || Sādhanaṁṛta-candrikā 2.19.

<sup>212</sup> parakiyābhīmānīnyas tathāśya ca priya-janāḥ |  
 pracchannenaiva kāmēna ramayanti nija-priyām ||  
 gāndharvikā-sva-yūtha-sthā lalitādi-gaṇānvitā |  
 rūpa-mañjary-anugatā yāvaṭa-grāma-vāsinī |  
 rādhikānucarī nityam tat-sevana-parāyaṇā |  
 kṛṣṇād apy adhikam prema rādhikāyām prakurvati || Paddhati-traya.

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to Kṛṣṇa's svarūpa in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* say, "The Lord's natural condition (svarūpa) is to be full of eternity, knowledge and bliss."<sup>213</sup> "The Lord's true constitution (svarūpa) is one of non-differentiated full consciousness."<sup>214</sup> "In the spiritual relationship of peacefulness (śānta-rasa), there is only knowledge of Kṛṣṇa's svarūpa."<sup>215</sup> The devotees of the śānta-rasa are worshippers of this svarūpa, but they are not appreciative of the sweet nature of the Lord's form, qualities and pastimes. Kṛṣṇa's rūpa, on the other hand, refers to his spiritual body and its specific attributes of charm and beauty.

A similar distinction is made between the rūpa and svarūpa of the Supreme Lady, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and her expansions, the sakhīs and mañjarīs. Raghunātha Dāsa writes that Rādhā's body has been formed out of a wish-fulfilling jewel that is ablaze with the "great love" (*mahā-bhāva*).<sup>216</sup> Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja paraphrases this verse by saying that "Rādhā's true nature (svarūpa) is that of a wish-fulfilling jewel of the "great love," *mahā-bhāva-cintāmaṇi*."<sup>217</sup> Elsewhere he paraphrases his own verse from the *Govinda-līlāmṛta* saying, "Rādhā's svarūpa is that she is the wish-fulfilling vine of love for Kṛṣṇa. Her girlfriends and handmaids are its leaves, flowers and fruits on that vine."<sup>218</sup>

The following passage discussing svarūpa and rūpa is found in the *Muralī-vilāsa* of Rājavallabha Gosvāmin:

Lalitā and the other girlfriends are Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's svarūpa. Śrī Rūpa and the other mañjarīs follow Rādhā's nature. They want to increase Kṛṣṇa's happiness through following her mood, and in submission to her, they are absorbed in both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Taking shelter of her, they try to increase Kṛṣṇa's happiness. They are called *priya-narma-sakhīs*. Being born from Rādhārāṇī's passionate attachment (*rāga*) for Kṛṣṇa, one mañjarī is named Śrī Rāga Mañjarī. Another's existence springs from Rādhā's form (*rūpa*) and is therefore known as Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī. Anaṅga Mañjarī arises from her erotic desire, and so it is with all the mañjarīs.<sup>219</sup>

In the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, things that awaken an appreciation of the Lord's svarūpa have not been taken as *uddīpanas*. Rather, Rūpa has there concentrated on Kṛṣṇa's beautiful body, sweet characteristics and romantic affairs. Still, one should be careful to remember that Kṛṣṇa's svarūpa remains an essential part of everything connected with him. Divorced from a

<sup>213</sup>śac-cid-ānanda-pūrṇa kṛṣṇera svarūpa | CC 2.8.154

<sup>214</sup>advaya jñāna-tattva vastu kṛṣṇera svarūpa | CC 2.20.152

<sup>215</sup>kevala svarūpa-jñāna hay śānta-rase | CC 2.19.192

<sup>216</sup>mahā-bhāvojjvalac-cintā-ratnodbhāva-vigrahām | Rādhā-premāmbhoja-marandākhya-stava-rāja, 1.

<sup>217</sup>mahā-bhāva-cintāmaṇi rādhāra svarūp | CC 2.8.165.

<sup>218</sup>rādhāra svarūpa kṛṣṇa-prema-kalpa-latā |

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

<sup>219</sup>lalitādi sakhī-gaṇ rādhikā svarūp | śrī-rūpa mañjarī ādi rāi anurūp || tad-bhāvecchā-mayī bali kṛṣṇa-sukhollās | tat tat bhāve rasa-mayī ubhaya āveś || rādhikā āśray haiyā kṛṣṇa sukha cāy | priya-narma-sakhī bali sakaḷete gāy || rāgete udaya teṇi rāga-mañjarī kahi | rūpete udaya rūpa-mañjarī bolahi || anaṅga haṇte anaṅga mañjarī uday | rasa-vilāsādi kari ei mata kay || kahila saṁkṣepe ei mañjarī ākhyān || Muralī-vilāsa, edited by Nilakanta Goswami and Binod Bihari Goswami, ch. 2, p. 16.

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philosophical understanding of his constitutional position, simple meditation on the other attributes or pastimes of the Lord will eventually be reduced to something mundane. If the Lord's majestic aspect did not exist, his sweetness could not exist either. A simple resemblance to the activities of ordinary human beings is not sufficient to make something *madhura*, otherwise everything and everyone in the material world would be imbued with divine sweetness, but this is not the case. On the other hand, without *mādhurya*, there is no possibility of a devotee's developing love for the Lord.<sup>220</sup>

In his commentary to the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, Jīva Gosvāmin also writes that feeling for the Lord's sweetness includes the knowledge of his svarūpa or majestic aspect and this makes it possible for the devotee to relish the Lord's form, qualities, and pastimes.<sup>221</sup>

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

Those things that arouse feelings of love for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are called *uddīpanas*. They are of six kinds: either Hari or his dear ones' qualities, names, activities, dress, connected items and general impetuses for romantic feeling.<sup>222</sup>

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

#### 4.41 Qualities that enkindle the mañjarīs' ecstatic love

Kṛṣṇa has many varieties of qualities that arouse loving feelings in his devotee. They are primarily divided into three categories: mental, verbal and physical. His mental qualities are many, such as his gratefulness, forgiving spirit, and mercy.<sup>223</sup>

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

O sakhi! My mind has become anxious to meet with Kṛṣṇa after seeing him, for he is captivated by even the slightest amount of service (gratefulness); he simply smiles even after being grievously offended (forgiving spirit) and becomes overwhelmed with compassion upon seeing the most minor distresses of others (mercy).<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>220</sup>*Sādhana-dīpikā*, 9.22. Cf. supra, p. xx

<sup>221</sup>*Durgama-saṅgamīnī*, 4.4.15

<sup>222</sup>*uddīpana-vibhāvā hares tadīya-priyāṇām ca |  
kathitā guṇa-nāma-carita-maṇḍana-sambandhinas tatasthāś ca || 10.1*

<sup>223</sup>*guṇāḥ kṛtajñatā-kṣānti-karuṇādyās tu mānasāḥ | UN 10.3*

<sup>224</sup>*vaśam alpikayāpi sevayāmum  
vihite'py āgasi duḥsahe smitāsyam |*

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

(1) Her age (*vayas*): “Her divine form reveals a new, exciting youthfulness.”<sup>225</sup>

(2) Her gorgeous form (*rūpa*): “Her amazing beauty causes the entire universe, including the Supreme Lord, to lose consciousness and fall in a faint. It bewilders the mind, for it is the very picture of sweetness overflowing.”<sup>226</sup> *Rūpa* is defined as “that quality by which a young woman appears to be fully bedecked with all varieties of ornaments when in fact she is not.”<sup>227</sup>

(3) Her loveliness (*lāvaṇya*): “She is the embodiment of billions of oceans of loveliness.”<sup>228</sup> *Lāvaṇya* is defined by Rūpa Gosvāmin as “an indescribable aura that emanates from within every limb of a young woman in the way that a glow emanates from a pearl.”<sup>229</sup>

(4) Rādhā's beauty (*saundarya*), defined as “the perfect and charming arrangement of all the parts of the body,”<sup>230</sup> “At every step, Rādhā enchants the world with her amazing beauty.”<sup>231</sup> “She is the foremost of the milkmaidens of Vṛndāvana, she is decorated with all good qualities and her every limb is perfectly and beautifully formed.”<sup>232</sup> “The beauty of even the tip of her fingernails causes the best of the universe's beauties like Lakṣmī, Pārvatī, and Rati to bow their heads in shame. Her grace and golden lustre are unlimited.”<sup>233</sup>

(5) Her exquisiteness (*abhirūpatā*), defined in the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* as “the unique quality that causes the beautiful properties of one's own body to be transmitted to other objects situated in proximity to it.”<sup>234</sup> The following example is given of this particular quality:

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*para-duḥkha-lave'pi kātaram me*

*harim udvīkṣya manas tanoti tṛṣṇām* || UN 10.4

<sup>225</sup>*āścarya-nava-kaiśora-vyañji-divyatamākṛtiḥ* | VMA 7.96

<sup>226</sup>*śeṣāśeṣa-jagan-mūrcchā-kāriṇy āścarya-rūpiṇī* | VMA 7.92

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

<sup>227</sup>*āṅgāny abhūṣitāny eva kenacid bhūṣaṇādinā* |

*yena bhūṣitavad bhāti tad rūpam iti kathyate* || UN 10.25

<sup>228</sup>*nava-lāvaṇya-pīyūṣa-sindhu-koṭi-pravāhiṇī* | VMA 7.97

<sup>229</sup>*muktā-phaleṣu chāyāyās taralatvam ivāntarā* |

*pratibhāti yad aṅgeṣu lāvaṇyam tad ihocyate* || UN 10.28. *Rasa-sudhākara* 1.181

<sup>230</sup>*āṅga-pratyāṅgakānām yaḥ sanniveśo yathocitam* |

*susliṣṭa-sandhi-bandhaḥ syāt tat saundaryam itīryate* || UN 10.31

<sup>231</sup>*pade pade mahāścarya-saundaryāśeṣa-mohinī* | VMA 7.97

<sup>232</sup>*sarvāsām nūtanābhira-sundarīṇām śiromaṇiḥ* |

*sarva-lakṣaṇa-sampanna-sarvāvayava-sundarī* || VMA 7.91

<sup>233</sup>*mohinī-śrī-pārvatī-raty-ādi-rūpavatīr varāḥ* |

*kurvatī yan nakha-prānta-saundaryaughair avān-mukhiḥ* |

*tapta-kāncana-gaurāṅgī susnigdhananta-kānti-bhṛt* || VMA 7.92-3

<sup>234</sup>*yadātmiya-guṇotkarṣair vastv anyan nikṛta-sthitam* |

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One day, at the bank of Rādhākūṇḍa, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī was twirling a white lily that had been given to her by Vṛndā. At that time, Kṛṣṇa playfully took it and touching it first to her breasts and then to her hair said, “O Rādhā! How wonderful that this one lily blossom has taken three different forms: when in contact with your golden jug-like breasts, it appears to be a golden campaka flower; in your hand it takes the form of a pink lotus, and near your hair, which shines blacker than a bumblebee, it looks just like a beautiful blue lotus.”<sup>235</sup>

In Vṛndāvana-mahimāmṛta:

Rādhā’s golden bodily lustre fills the ten directions with its glow and all things within the universe, conscious or unconscious, become one in the ocean of her exquisite beauty ... She is the embodiment of all charm arising from the ocean of pure and great love for Kṛṣṇa, the very image of adoring of Kṛṣṇa with ten million lives and she bears the charm born of the foremost of all loving sentiments, the conjugal ... She is a self-illuminating picture of the spiritual non-duality of ecstatic love.<sup>236</sup>

(6) The quality of sweetness (*mādhurya*) is defined as an inexpressible quality of all-pervading charm or sweetness in the body of a beautiful girl.<sup>237</sup> “It is as if great heaps of sweetness have been gathered together in her body just to enchant the universe.”<sup>238</sup>

(7) The *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* defines *mārdava*, “delicacy” or “softness,” as “the inability to tolerate the touch of any hard object.”<sup>239</sup> Vidyāpati also writes, “This young girl’s body is as soft as a garland of flowers.”<sup>240</sup>

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

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sārūpyam nayati prājñair ābhirūpyam tad ucyate || UN 10.33

<sup>235</sup> vakṣoje tava campaka-cchaviṁ avaṣṭambhoru-kumbhopame  
rādhe kokanada-śriyaḥ karatale sindūrataḥ sundare |

drāg indindira-bandhureṣu cikureṣv indīvarābhām vahan  
nakāḥ kairava-korako vitanute puṣpa-trayī-vibhramam || UN 10.35

<sup>236</sup> daśa-dīn-maṇḍalācchādi-sugaurāṅgocchala-cchaviḥ |  
cid-acid-dvaitam āmajjaty ucchalan madhura-cchaviḥ ||  
mahā-prema-rasāmbhodhi-jṛmbhaṇaikādbhuta-cchaviḥ |

śrī-kṛṣṇātma-prāṇa-koṭi-nirmaṇchaika-rasa-cchaviḥ ||  
svayam prabhā cid-advaita-sat-premaika-rasa-cchaviḥ || ibid. 7.94-6

<sup>237</sup> rūpam kim apy anirvācyam tanor mādhuryam ucyate | UN 10.36

<sup>238</sup> mahā-mādhuryaughā-rūpa-mohanāṅgocchala-cchaviḥ | VMA 7.99

<sup>239</sup> mārdavam komalasyāpi saṁsparśāsahatocyate | UN 10.38

<sup>240</sup> se je alpa-vayasī bālā | tanu gāthanī puhupa-mālā |

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signs on her hands and feet, etc., (6) her bodily fragrance is able to drive Mādhava himself crazy.

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

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

Other than these 19 qualities, Rādhā has six virtues that are connected to her dealings with others: she is (1) the object of all Vraja's love; (2) her glories are spread throughout the entire creation; (3) she is treated with the greatest affection by all the older folk in Vṛndāvana. She is (4) controlled by the devotion of her girlfriends and is (5) the chief of all the lovers of Kṛṣṇa. Finally, (6) Kṛṣṇa himself is always ready to obey her slightest command.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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the shy Rādhā covers them again and again with the hem of her upper garment.

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

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

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

This Rādhā charms the entire creation by the glory of each of her limbs, all of which are equal to millions of oceans of splendour. Her form of fresh maidenly beauty moves with such delightful gestures, so erotically enticing that not only Kṛṣṇa, but even her girlfriends all fall into a swoon.<sup>241</sup>

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

#### 4.42 Inspirations for love arising out of the Divine Couple's holy names

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

“O Kṛṣṇa! At any time at all, in any connection whatsoever, if you hear the name of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, you immediately forget your own identity as well as all your clever innovations for captivating young women. O Rādhā! As soon as the two syllables *kṛ* and *ṣṇa* enter your ears, your entire body is overwhelmed by the symptoms of ecstatic love, especially that of being stunned.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>241</sup>VMA 7.99-8.15

<sup>242</sup>*kvāpy ānuśaṅgikatayodita-rādhikākhyā-  
vismāritākhila-vilāsa-kalā-kalāpam |  
kṛṣṇeti-varṇa-yugala-śravaṇānubandha-  
prādurbhavaj-jaḍima-ḍambara-saṁvṛtāṅgīm || UV 14.*



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Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmin writes in his “Indications of My Mind’s Desires” (*Abhīṣṭa-sūcana*):

O my greedy tongue! Don’t you know that the name of Rādhā is like fresh new ambrosia and the name of Kṛṣṇa is like wonderful sweet and thickened milk; add the camphor scent of your attachment and mix them together and then drink, drink eternally to your heart’s content.<sup>243</sup>

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

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

In loving affection, they address Rādhā with the following epithets: Ūrjeśvarī (“Goddess of the month of Kārttika”), Vṛndāvaneśvarī (“Empress of Vṛndāvana”), Śyāma-sohāginī<sup>244</sup> (“Kṛṣṇa’s most fortunate mistress”), Vṛndāvana-kalpa-vallī (“Wish-fulfilling vine of Vṛndāvana”), Apāra-karuṇā-nidhi (“Blessed with the treasure of unlimited compassion”), Prāṇeśvarī (“Lady of our lives”), Svāminī (“Mistress”), Devī (“Your highness”), Sumukhi (“Pretty-face”), Kalyāṇi (“Auspicious one!”), Vṛndāvana-rājñī (“Queen of Vṛndāvana”), Sarasijākṣī (“Lotus Eyes”), Navadalita-haridrā-garva-gaurī (“Golden Complexion Shaming Newly Ground Turmeric”), Indīvarākṣī (“Blue Lotus Eyes”), Sunetrā (“Beautiful Eyes”), Subhagā (“Fortunate Woman”), Kṛṣṇodari (“Thin Waist”), Cañcalākṣī (“Wandering Eyes”), Mṛga-śāvākṣī (“Young Deer Eyes”), Gāṅgeya-gātrī (“Body of molten gold!”), Manojña-hṛdayā (“Charming heart”), Kuśalā (“Expert”), Madhurā (“Sweet”), Hrīmatī (“Bashful”), Khañjanākṣī (“Humming-bird-eyed”), Kaṇaka-gaurī (“Golden-skinned”), Madhu-mukhī (“Honey-faced”), Kalāvātī (“Talented one”), Mugdhāṅgī (“Lovely body”), Varorū

<sup>243</sup>rādheti nāma nava-sundara-sīdhu-mugdham  
kṛṣṇeti nāma madhurādbhuta-gāḍha-dugdham |  
sarva-kṣaṇam surabhi-rāga-himena ramyaṁ  
kṛtvā tad eva piba me rasane kṣudhārte || 10

<sup>244</sup>This is a non-Sanskrit word, or rather a corruption of the Sanskrit *subhāginī* that has taken on the meaning in the vernaculars (both Hindi and Bengali, as well as other North-Indian dialects) of a fortunate woman who is her husband’s favorite wife.

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(“Beautiful-thighed”), Subhaga-mukhī (“Beautiful-faced”), Hrī-puñja-mūrti (“The image of modesty”), Suvratā (“Devoted one”), Sadayā (“Compassionate one”), Dhīrā (“Patient one”), Mañjuvadanā (“Sweet-faced”), Dhīramatī (“Collected in mind”), Kṛṣṇakāntā-śiromaṇi (“Best of Kṛṣṇa’s mistresses”), Parama-lajjāvatī (“Most shy”), Lolākṣī (“One with moving eyes”), Pakva-bimboṣṭhī (“...whose lips are red like the bimba fruit”), Praṇaya-śalīnī (“...whose essence is love”), and Sundarī (“Beautiful one”).

In anger they might use epithets like Anabhijñā (“Inexperienced”), Hrīdagdhā (“One whose modesty has been burned”), Mugdhā (“Foolish one”), Kautūhala-cañcalākṣī (“One whose eyes are active with curiosity”), Kaṭhinī (“Hard-hearted one”), Bajarābuki<sup>245</sup> (“Thunderbolt-heart”), Apariṇāma-darśitā (“One who refuses to change her ways”), Māna-bhujaṅga-darśitā (“You who have been bitten by the snake of petty spitefulness”), Durvinītā (“Ill-mannered one”), Caṇḍī (“The angry goddess”), or Kopinī (“Ill-tempered one”).

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

*Carita* or behavior is divided on the one hand into movements and gestures (*anubhāvas*) and acts and deeds (*līlā*), on the other.<sup>246</sup> *Līlā*, in particular, is described in the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* as including the Lord’s playful diversions such as dancing or playing the flute, his daily activities like milking the cows or going into the woods to herd them, or specific wondrous deeds like lifting Govardhana.<sup>247</sup> The inspirators for the mañjaris’ love come especially from Rādhā’s behavior like that of her charming movements, her playing on the vīṇā, her drawing pictures, making flower garlands, her cooking, her gait while walking, her singing, or any other of her activities.

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

According to *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* (11.54), Kṛṣṇa’s dress and decoration (*maṇḍana*) are of four types: clothing, ornaments, garlands and cosmetics. The terminology of the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* is somewhat different. There three types of *prasādhana* or toilet are mentioned. These are clothing, grooming and ornaments (*maṇḍana*).<sup>248</sup> In the subsequent verses, Rūpa Gosvāmin describes Kṛṣṇa’s clothing as being of three types: the first a simple outfit consisting of both an upper and lower garment; a second rather more formal ensemble [in the Northwest Indian style] including a shirt, turban and sash with his dhoti; the third is his ostentatious and theatrical costume, which has various pieces of differently colored cloth all over it. His grooming include hair styling, cosmetics, garlands, decorations of tilaka and other body paintings, the confections of betel nut (which color his teeth), and flowers. Ornaments include various jewels as well as the various minerals, feathers and flowers found in the forest. His jewelled ornaments include crown, earrings, necklaces,

<sup>245</sup> Another *tad-bhāva* Bengali word, derived from the Sanskrit Vajra-vakṣī

<sup>246</sup> *anubhāvās ca līlā cety ucyate caritaṁ dvidhā* | UN 10.43

<sup>247</sup> *līlā syāc cāru-vikrīḍā tāṇḍavam veṇu-vādanam* |

*godohaḥ parvatoddhāro gohūtir gamanādikā* || UN 10.44

<sup>248</sup> *kathitā vasanākālpa-maṇḍanādyam prasāadhanam* | BRS 2.1.178

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madallions, armbands, bracelets, rings and ankle bells. His forest decorations consist of a crown of flowers, flower earrings, and unguents such as red oxide.

The mañjarīs' mood of love is further inspired by Rādhā's sixteen types of toilette (*ṣoḍaśa-śṛṅgāra* or *ṣoḍaśākālpa*) and twelve ornaments (*dvādaśābhūṣaṇa*). The sixteen forms of toilette are listed in the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* (4.9): (1) bath, (2) effulgent pearl decorating the fore part of her nose, (3) a blue garment, (4) a sash around her waist, (5) her hair done into a braid, (6) a flower decoration on the ear, (7) unguents of camphor, sandalwood and musk spread on her body, (8) a flower decoration in her hair, (9) a garland around her neck, (10) a lotus as a plaything in her hand, (11) betel in her mouth, (12) a black beauty mark of musk on her chin, (13) back cosmetic (mascara) on her eyes, (14) a musk decoration of leaves and dots, etc., on her cheeks, (15) red lac juice beautifying the soles of her feet, and (16) tilaka on her forehead.<sup>249</sup>

The twelve ornaments are also found in the same place.<sup>250</sup> They are: (1) a jewelled crown, (2) golden earrings, (3) a golden chain of bells around her hips, (4) a golden medallion around her neck, (5) hoops and golden needles piercing her ears, (6) many bangles and bracelets on her arms and wrists, (7) a choker around her neck, (8) rings on her fingers, (9) a large necklace like a constellation of stars on her bosom, (10) armlets on her upper arm, (11) ankle bells with profuse jewelled decorations, and (12) toe-rings.

#### 4.45 Inspirators through relation (*sambandhi-uddīpana*)

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

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

<sup>249</sup>snātā nāsāgrā-jāgran-mañir asita-paṭā sūtriṇī baddha-veṇī  
sottāmsā carcitāṅgi kusumita-cikurā sragviṇī padma-hastā |  
tāmūlāsyoru-bindu-stavakita-cibukā kajjalākṣi sucitrā  
rādhālaktojjvalāṅghriḥ sphurati tilakini ṣoḍaśākālpinīyam || UN 4.9.

<sup>250</sup>divyaś cūḍa-mañindrah purāṭa-viracitāḥ kuṇḍala-dvandva-kāñci-  
niṣkāś cakrī-salākā-yuga-valaya-ghaṭāḥ kaṇṭha-bhūṣormikāś ca |  
hārās tārānukārā bhuja-kaṭaka-tulākoṭayo ratna-kliptās  
tuṅgā pādāṅguriya-cchavir iti ravibhir bhūṣaṇair bhāti rādhā || UN 4.10.

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

Other connected items are the remnants of her cloth, food and garlands, etc., her lute known as Vipāñcī, her intimate friends like Lalitā and Viśākhā, Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa, those who have taken shelter of her like the peahen Sundarī, the swans Śubhā and Tuṇḍakerī, the mynahs Sūkṣmadhī and Mañjubhāṣiṇī, etc., the bees, the doe Raṅgiṇī, the grove known as Kāma-mahātīrtha, “the great pilgrimage place of the god of love.”

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

O blooming lotus-eyed Rādhārāṇī! As soon as I caught sight of your beautiful water tank known as Rādhākuṇḍa, filled with sweet waters and lotus flowers, surrounded by hundreds of humming bees that is when I developed an ardent desire to become your personal maidservant.<sup>251</sup>

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

The shores of the Rādhākuṇḍa, with its groves and cottages, the banks of the Yamunā and the mountain Govardhana, the tank of flowers known as Kusuma-sarovara, Mānasa-gaṅgā, the Yamunā with her undulating waves, Vamśī-vaṭa, Gokula, Dhīra-samīra, the forest of Vṛndāvana with its innumerable trees and vines, the birds, the deer, the soft breezes, the peacocks and bees, the song of the flute, the flute itself, the buffalo horn, the markings of their feet on the ground, the black clouds in the sky, the moon, the spring, the sound of the conchshell, the sound of the hand cymbals, all these things are conducive to remembrance of the loving affairs of Śrī Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa and I am inspired by all of them.<sup>252</sup>

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

The neutral or *taṭastha-uddīpanas* inspire love due to providing an atmosphere conducive to love or through their metaphorical relationship to the love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. They are:

<sup>251</sup>yadā tava sarovaram sarasa-bhṛṅga-saṁghollasat-  
sarorūha-kulajjvalam madhura-vāri-sampūritam |  
sphuṭat-sarasijākṣi he nayana-yugma-sākṣād-babhau  
tadāiva mama lālasājani tavaiva dāsyē rase || *Vilāpa-kusumāñjalī*, 15.

<sup>252</sup>rādhā-kuṇḍa taṭa kuñja-kuṭīr | govardhana parvata yāmuna-tīr ||  
kusuma-sarovara mānasa-gaṅgā | kalinda-nandinī vipula-taraṅgā ||  
vamśī-vaṭa gokula dhīra-samīr | vṛndāvana taru-latikā-vānīr ||  
khaga-mṛga-kula malaya-bātās | mayūra bhramara muralī vilās ||  
venu, śṛṅga, pada-cihna, megha-mālā | vasanta-śaśāṅka śaṅkha-karatālā ||  
yugala-vilāsa anukūla māni | līlā-vilāsa uddīpana jāni || *Śaraṇāgati*, 32.

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the spring, the rainy season with its lightning and new rows of black clouds and golden vines winding around black tamāla trees, the autumn season, especially its full moon and moonlit nights, the cool and scented breezes, the cakora birds kissing the moonbeams, the buzzing bees thirsty for fresh nectar from new flowers, etc.

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

When will my eyes worship that form of Kṛṣṇa which is being embraced by Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in the way that the cakorī bird worships the moon with its moonlight, the way that the cātaka bird worships the black cloud embraced by the lightning flash and the way the bee worships the tamāla tree wrapped about by the golden vine.<sup>253</sup>

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

O friend Rūpa Mañjarī, just look at the golden yūthi vine as it entwines around the tamāla tree, surrounded by bees attracted to her lovely freshly blooming flowers. Seeing that blossoming yūthī vine, I am reminded of the smiling golden-lustred Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī as she clings to Kṛṣṇa, whose bodily hue puts to shame the color of the new clouds in the rainy season.<sup>254</sup>

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

Sakhi! May the breeze coming from the Malayan mountains in the south continue to play in its gentle way, and may the cuckoos continue to be absorbed in their amusements, singing sweetly on the fifth note of the scale; let the bees continue to pierce my very being with their buzzing sounds; all of them can help me forget my miseries, for if they continue like this, then I will shortly lose consciousness and I will be relieved of these torturous thoughts of Kṛṣṇa.<sup>255</sup>

<sup>253</sup>cakorīva jyotsnāyutam amṛtaraśmim sthira-taḍid-  
vṛtam divyāmbhodam navam iva raṭac-cātaka-vadhūḥ |  
tamālam bhṛṅgīvodyata-ruci kadā svarṇa-latikā-  
śritam rādhāśliṣṭam harim iha dṛḡ eṣā bhajati me || *Prārthanāmṛta* 17.

<sup>254</sup>tamālasya kroḍe sthita-kanaka-yūthim pravilasat-  
prasūnam lolālim sakhi kalaya vandyām ciram imām |  
tiraskartur megha-dyutim aghabhido'ṅke sthita-cala-  
dṛśam smerām rādhām taḍid-atirucim smārayati yā || *Prārthanāmṛta* 20.

<sup>255</sup>vikṛīḍantu paṭīra-parvata-taṭī-saṁsaṅgiṇo mārutāḥ  
kheḷantaḥ kalayantu komalatarām puṁskokilāḥ kākālim |  
saṁrambheṇa śilimukhā dhvani-bhṛto vidhyantu man-mānasam  
hāsyantyāḥ sakhi me vyathām param amī kurvanti sāhāyakam || VM 2.15

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

Aha! The breezes are filled with the scent of blossoming kadamba flowers; the yūthī flowers are also blooming, attracting bees that hum pleasantly; the peacocks are dancing and the earth has become dark with dense new grasses. Now that summer has ended, the twelve forests of Vṛndāvana are filled with such a new fascination that my mind is experiencing an extremely wonderful sensation.<sup>256</sup>

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

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

Seeing such a beautiful effulgent night,  
Śyāmasundara is overcome by feelings of romance  
and begins to play his flute,  
in the sweet key of the fifth note of the scale;  
the thief of the faithful wives' minds.

Hearing it, the gopīs immediately fall in love  
and mentally offer him their entire selves;  
they start on their way to meet him,  
absorbed in the beautiful music of his flute.<sup>257</sup>

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<sup>256</sup> kadambālī-jṛmbhā-parimala-bharodgāri-pavanā  
sphuṭad-yūthī-kṛta-madhupa-gāna-praṇayinī |  
naṭat-kekī-stomā mṛdula-yavasa-śyāmalim abhūs  
tapānte'dya svāntaṁ mama rasayati dvādaśavanī || VM 7.1

<sup>257</sup> This song is customarily sung in kīrtanas of the rāsa dance. Its translation unfortunately leaves only the bare bones of its literal meaning, losing its alliteration:

śarada canda pavana manda, vipine bharala kusuma gandha,  
phulla-mallikā mālatī yūthī, matta-madhukara bhoranī |  
heraṇ rāti aichana bhāti, śyāma mohana madane māti,  
muralī gān pañcama tān, kulavatī cita coraṇī |  
śunata gopī prema ropī, manahi manahi āpanā soṇpi |

tāhi calata jāhi bolata, muralīka kala lolanī | Govindadāser Padāvali o Tānhār Yuga, Bimanbihari Majumdar, Song 555, p. 273. (Kalikātā : Kalikātā Viśvavidyālaya, 1961)