

# ভক্তি-রস প্রসঙ্গ

*Bhakti-rasa Prasāṅga*

On Sacred Rapture

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# Preface (Bimanbihari Majumdar)

A few years ago, I went to Śrī Śrī Rādhākūṇḍa to collect some old manuscripts of Bengali songs. At that time seeing the extraordinary scriptural learning and spiritual illumination of Śrīla Kuñjabihārī Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, I was deeply impressed. I begged him to write a small book by the name of "On Sacred Rapture (*Bhakti-rasa Prasāṅga*)" so that general readers who enjoy Vaiṣṇava literature and students studying for their MA degrees can easily and in brief understand the essential cores of the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* and the *Ujvala-nīlamanī*. He, out of the sort of gracefulness that is so common among the great-souled, accepted my request. I hope that, for the general audience, this little book will be a key for entering into the inner chamber of Vaiṣṇava literature

Śrī Bimanbihārī Majumdar  
Gola-dariyapura  
Patna



# The Accomplishment of Sacred Rapture

In the *sūtras* of Sāṅḍilya, *bhakti* is said to be the highest love for the Lord.<sup>1</sup> The limitless, always unsatisfied, extremely intense ardor or longing for Bhagavān, that is called *bhakti*. One wants Bhagavān and nothing else. Those who implore Bhagavān for wealth, respect, sons, happiness, fortune, they do not love Bhagavān. They love all those earthly things. Bhagavān is for them only a machine or means for fulfilling their longings. Prahlāda in the *Bhāgavata* called such implorers business men. In exchange for offerings worth a few cents they want to try to gain from Bhagavān their desired objects.

In the *Nārada-sūtra* *bhakti* is described as “the form of the highest love to him.”<sup>2</sup> The indescribable feeling of unity having the form of the highest or single-minded love for the supreme lord is called *bhakti*. Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahaṃsa said: “Divine love means loving the Lord so much that the whole world is forgotten. Again one’s own body, which is so dear to one, even that is forgotten.” *Bhakti* is such a subtle experience that though it is relished, it cannot be revealed in any clear way. Only by image, by indication, by suggestion can the true nature of *bhakti* be somewhat revealed.

Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmin in his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.1.12), citing a technical definition of *bhakti* given in the *Nārada-pañcarātra*, has said that *bhakti* is serving the Master of all the senses (Hṛṣīkeśa) with senses that have been completely purified while repeatedly serving Śrī Bhagavān in

<sup>1</sup>Sāṅḍilya-sūtras, 1.1.2: सा परानुरक्तिरीश्वरे

<sup>2</sup>Ns, 2: सात्वस्मिन् परमप्रेमरूपा

a way that is free of all limitations, that is, free of all efforts or wishes for one's own pleasure or happiness.

In the opinion of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmin, the distinctiveness of *bhakti* is that it attracts Kṛṣṇa and brings him to the *bhakta* (1.1.41-3). Human beings live in the world of mankind and Bhagavān lives in the transcendent Goloka (World of Cows). Between the two there is some much distance, so much separation. If human beings cry in the universe of matter, will that crying reach the door of Bhagavān? Even if it arrives will he forgive mankind its hundreds and thousands of flaws, mistakes, and offenses? Will he be ready to dole out punishment with his rod up-raised like hard-hearted jurist or not? The Vaiṣṇava tradition of Bengal has resoundingly answered "No!" As a result of the genuine *bhakti* of the hearts of mankind, even Bhagavān's seat will be shaken. He melting in love and compassion will come running to his *bhakta*. He is himself anxious to receive the love of mankind. That mankind has forgotten him is for him a great sadness.



# Chapter 1

## Fundamentals

### 1.1 Distinguishing Those Qualified for *Bhakti-rasa*

In his commentary on Śrī Rūpa's *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (2.5.123), Śrī Jīva Gosvāmin says: First five types of people are recognised: bhaktas to be meditated on, bhaktas who meditate on them, the learned, the ignorant, and the rustic.<sup>1</sup> The *bhaktas* to be meditated on are the companions in divine sport, or the accomplished *bhaktas*. The meditating *bhaktas* are those are filled with the feelings of the bhaktas to be meditated on, those whose hearts are overwhelmed with rasa. They are also practitioner *bhaktas*. The learned are those who know the meanings of treatises on rasa but are unable to relish it. The ignorant are those who, though they may be educated in all the other scriptures, are unable to know the hearts of great ones whose minds are overwhelmed by rasa, that is, the meditated on and meditating bhaktas, because they are inexperienced in the scriptures on sacred rapture (bhakti-rasa). The rustics are indistinguishable from animals. They are attached to crude sense objects.

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<sup>1</sup>Brs, 2,5,123: तत्र तावत्पञ्चविधा जनाः परामृश्यन्ते, भाव्यभक्ताः, भावतभक्ताः, प्राज्ञा, अज्ञा, ग्रामाश्चेति

## 1.2 What is Called *Bhakti-rasa* or Sacred Rapture?

Those elements that are the causes, effects and variegating aids to the experience of extreme bliss, or, as it is called, the tasting of *rasa* on the part of Śrī Bhagavān and his sportive companions (servants, friends, lovers, etc.) when represented in poetry, drama, and so forth and when on hearing or reciting those works the subtle subconscious traces (*samskāra*) or feelings (*bhāva*) in the heart of the practicing bhakta connoisseur (*sahṛdaya-bhakta-sādhaka*) are excited (*vibhāvita*), made consequential (*anubhāvita*), and nourished and variegated (*sañcārīta*), then they are given the names “excitants” (*vibhāva*), “consequents” (*anubhāva*), and assisting variegaters (*sañcārin*).

The causes of divine love (*rati*) are Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa’s dear ones. Being stunned, and so forth are its effects and indifference and so forth are the assisting emotions.<sup>2</sup>

When this love for Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-rati*), which is called the stable or lasting emotion (*sthāyibhāva*) is brought, by means of the excitants, consequents, physical manifestations (*sāttvika*), and assistants, to a state of being tasted in the heart of the bhaktas through hearing and so forth, it is called sacred rapture or *bhakti-rasa*.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmin, *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, 2.5.85:

रतेः कारणभूता ये कृष्णकृष्णप्रियादयः ।  
स्तम्भाद्याः कार्यभूताश्च निर्वेदाद्याः सहायकाः ॥

<sup>3</sup>ibid., 2.1.5:

विभावैरनुभावैश्च सात्त्विकैर्व्यभिचारिभिः ।  
स्वादत्वं हृदि भक्तानामानीता श्रवणादिभिः ।  
एषा कृष्णरतिः स्थायी भावो भक्तिरसो भवेत् ॥