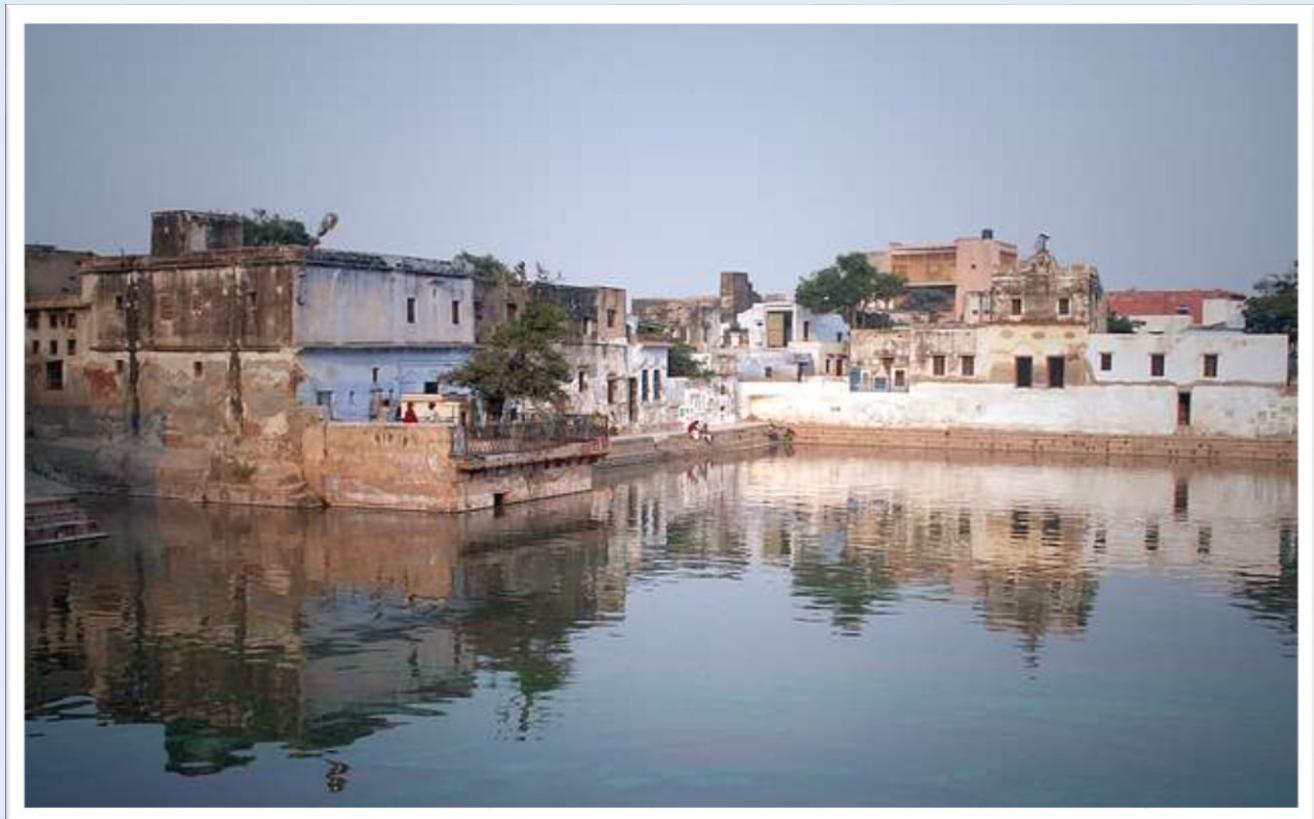


MELLOWS OF DIVINE LOVE

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RAGANUGA BHAKTI



Essays on raganuga-bhakti
compiled by
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A general examination of bhakti

The word “raganuga” literally means “to follow loving attachment”, love directed towards God. To gain a deeper understanding of the concept, let us first examine the concept of bhakti, loving devotion for God, in general.

Bhakti is divided into three main categories in accordance with its development.

sa bhaktih sadhanam bhavah prema ceti tridhodita ||
(brs 1.2.1)

“This devotion is said to be of three kinds, namely practice (sadhana), feeling (bhava) and love (prema).” The initial stage of practice (sadhana) is the time when the aspiring servant of God begins to cultivate his relationship with God. Practice is understood as follows:

kriti-sadhyā bhavet sadhya-bhava sa sadhanabhidha |
nitya-siddhasya bhavasya prakatyam hṛidi sadhyata ||
(brs 1.2.2)

“That, which is accomplished through the functions of the senses, and through which a loving devotional feeling (bhava) is attained, is called devotion in practice (sadhana-bhakti). The appearance of an eternally perfected feeling within the heart is called the stage of the attainment of perfection.” As the practice ripens, it culminates into specific loving feelings (bhava) towards God.

suddha-sattva-viseshatma prema-suryamsu-samya-bhak |
rucibhis citta-masrinya-krid asau bhava ucyate || (brs 1.3.1)

“A distinct manifestation of divine existence, akin to a ray from the sun of prema, tenderness of consciousness experienced as different tastes – this is called bhava.”

Foundational feelings of love of God are known to be of five kinds, namely (1) a peaceful, neutral relationship, (2) the affection of a servant, (3) the affection of a friend, (4) the affection of a parent, and (5) the affection of a consort, either as a wife or as a paramour lover. As the foundational feeling is further cultivated, it ripens into a wholesome rapturous experience of love for God (prema).

samyan-masrinita-svanto mamatvatisayankitah |
bhavah sa eva sandratma budhaih prema nigadyate || (brs 1.4.1)

“When bhava softens the heart altogether, endowed with an abundance of possessive feelings towards Him, being very intense by nature, the wise call it prema.”

God, being the infinite reservoir of love, is naturally the object of varieties of individual loving feelings. He appears to each individual devotee in that very form in which the devotee sincerely longs to see Him. This being the fact, there is a need to examine the two prominent varieties of practice of bhakti which lead to two distinct perfections.

Two varieties of practice **vaidhi** and **raganuga**

The practice of devotion is divided into two distinct paths.

vaidhi raganuga ceti sa dvidha sadhanabhidha || (brs 1.2.5)

“Practice is of two kinds, namely vaidhi and raganuga.” The word “vaidhi” is derived from the Sanskrit word “vidhi”, referring to the commandments of the scriptures. The word “raganuga” is a compound of two words, namely raga, “loving attachment”, and anuga, “following in the wake of”. The general characteristics of these two paths are explained as follows:

vaidhi-bhaktir bhavet sastram bhaktau cet syat pravartakam |
raganuga syac ced bhaktau lobha eva pravartakah || (rvc 1.3)

“When devotion is caused by scriptural injunctions, it is called vaidhi-bhakti, but when its cause is spiritual greed alone, it is called raganuga-bhakti.”

yatra raganavaptatvat pravrittir upajayate |
sasanenaiva sastrasya sa vaidhi-bhaktir ucyate || (brs 1.2.6)

“That devotion which knows no attachment or greed, but which is prompted by the commandments of the scriptures, is called vaidhi-bhakti.”

virajantim abhivyaktam vrajavasi-janadishu |
ragatmikam anusrita ya sa raganugocyate || (brs 1.2.270)

“The devotion which is clearly present in the associates of the Lord in Vraja is called devotion filled with loving attachment (ragatmika-bhakti), and devotion following in the wake of this ragatmika-bhakti is called raganuga-bhakti.” As one desires to approach the Lord, so the Lord will approach the aspirant. (bg. 4.11) Whatever one remembers at the time of death, that he will attain without fail. (bg. 8.6) Reflecting on these famous words of the Bhagavad Gita, one can easily understand that varieties of goals are attained in accordance with one’s desires. It is not that all paths lead to the same goal.

vaidhi-raganuga-marga-bhedenā parikirtitah |
dvividhah khalu bhavo’tra sadhanabhinivesajah || (brs 1.3.7)

“The paths of vaidhi and raganuga are known to be separate from each other.

Engagement in these two forms of practice certainly awakens two distinct varieties of bhava.” The goals of these two paths of devotion in practice are understood as follows:

vidhi-bhakte parshada-dehe vaikunthete yaya || (cc 2.24.87)

“Through vidhi-bhakti, one will attain the form of an associate in Vaikuntha.”

aisvarya-jnane vidhi-bhajana kariya |
vaikunthake yaya catur-vidha mukti pana || (cc 1.3.17)

“Those who worship according to scriptural commandments, being aware of the Lord’s superhuman prowess, attain the four kinds of liberation in Vaikuntha.”

raga-bhakte vṛaje svayam-bhagavane paya || (cc 2.24.85)

“Through raga-bhakti, one will attain the Lord Himself in Vraja.”

raganuga-marge tanre bhaje yei jana |
sei-jana paya vṛaje vrajendra-nandana || (cc 2.8.221)

“He who worships on the path of raganuga will attain Vrajendranandana (Sri Krishna) in Vraja.”

In the realm of Vraja, the sweet and intimate human-like pastimes of

God prevail. Only in such an atmosphere love can attain its pinnacle. Love which is filled with awareness of the Lord's almighty is of an inferior quality. As stated by the Lord Himself:

sakala jagate more kare vidhi-bhakti | vidhi-bhaktye vraja-bhava paite
nahi sakti || aisvarya-jnanete saba jagat misrita |
aisvarya-sithila-preme nahi mora prita || (cc 1.3.15-16)

“Everyone in this world worships Me through vidhi-bhakti. Vidhi-bhakti has no power for attaining the feelings of Vraja. The devotion of the world is mixed with knowledge of My divine prowess. I do not delight in love diluted with prowess.”

It is thus evident that there is a need to deeply reflect on the nature and practice of raganuga-bhakti for anyone who desires to perfect his loving faculty in relationship with God. There is no other means for tasting the ambrosial sweetness of the Vraja-pastimes of the Lord!

karma, tapa, yoga, jnana, vidhi-bhakti, japa, dhyana |
iha haite madhurya durlabha ||
kevala ye raga-marge, bhaje krishne anurage |
tare krishna-madhurya sulabha || (cc 2.21.119)

“Sweetness is very difficult to attain through fruitive activities, austerity, yoga, intellectual speculation, vidhi-bhakti, recitation of mantras or meditation. The sweetness of Sri Krishna is easily attainable only for the one who affectionately worships Him on the path of raga.”

The nature of raganuga-bhakti

Raganuga-bhakti specifically means devotion which is inspired by and follows in the wake of Sri Krishna's eternal associates in the divine realm of Vraja. Their love is known as ragatmika, being filled with natural loving thirst for the Lord.

ishte svarasiki ragah paramavishtata bhavet |
tan-mayi ya bhaved bhaktih satra ragatmikodita || (brs 1.2.272)

“That devotion in which one is filled with abundant natural love for the Chosen One is known ragatmika.”

This love is splendidly manifest in the eternal residents of Vraja. Ragatmika-bhakti is known to be of two kinds.

sa kamarupa sambandharupa ceti bhaved dvidha || (brs 1.2.273)

“Its two divisions are that which has the form of an amorous desire (kamarupa) and that which has the form of a relationship (sambandharupa).”

The servants, friends and parents of the Lord are established in a relationship consisting of a recognized relationship in the society. However, the pinnacle of love present in the paramour lovers of the Lord consists of sole amorous desire, which unhesitatingly breaks through the boundaries of acceptable social interaction

Just as there are two kinds of ragatmika-bhakti, so there are two kinds of raganuga-bhakti.

ragatmikaya dvaividhyad dvidha raganuga ca sa |
kamanuga ca sambandhanuga ceti nigadyate || (brs 1.2.290)

“As ragatmika is of two kinds, so is raganuga. It is known as that which follows the amorous desire (kamanuga) and that which follows the relationship (sambandhanuga).”

One who, upon hearing of the sweetness of the feelings of the Lord’s eternal associates towards Him, becomes eager to attain feelings akin to theirs, begins the path of raganuga. Let us now proceed to examine the gradations between the various relationships to be attained.

The specific flavours of raganuga-bhakti

Sri Krishna, the Original Personality of Godhead, descended to this world along with His associates some five thousand years ago in the land of Vraja, displaying His ever-sweet pastimes to attract the souls of this world to His divine abode.

anugrahaya bhaktanam manusham deham asritah |
bhajate tadrisih krida yah srutva tat-paro bhavet || (sb 10.33.36)

“To show favor to His devotees He appears in a human form, enjoying such pastimes upon hearing of which one must become completely devoted to Him.”

After Sri Krishna and His associates disappeared from the visible realm of Vraja, various schools of thought and practice, intent on attaining His service, arose. In due course of time, Sri Krishna Himself, eager to taste

the sweetness of His own service, descended to this world in the form of a great teacher and devotee named Sri

Krishna Caitanya Mahaprabhu, known as Visvambhara during His earlier life.

prema-rasa-niryasa karite asvadana |
raga-marga bhakti loke karite pracarana ||
rasika-sekhara krishna parama-karuna |
ei dui hetu haite icchara udgama || (cc 1.4.15-16)

“Sri Krishna is the crest-jewel of relishers and the most merciful one. His desire (to descend to this world) arose out of two reasons, as he wished to taste the essence of loving rapture and to broadcast devotion on the path of raga to the world.”

The unprecedented contribution of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu in the realm of raganuga-bhakti has been narrated as follows:

anarpita-carim cirat karunayavatirnah kalau |
samarpayitum unnatojjvala-rasam sva-bhakti-sriyam ||
harih purata-sundara-dyuti-kadamba-sandipitah |
sada hridaya-kandare sphuratu vah saci-nandanah || (Vidagdha-madhava 1.2)

“Out of His causeless mercy, He descended in this age of Kali to bestow the matchless treasure of the rapture of amorous love in His own service, which had not been given since a long time. May this son of Saci, Hari radiant with the enchanting complexion of multitude of gold, always be manifest in the core of your heart!”

The concept of amorous love was certainly present in the bhakti-traditions predating Sri Caitanya. What, then, is His unique contribution? It is a unique variety of amorous love in servitude. Amorous love (kamarupa-bhakti) is divided into two distinct categories.

kamanuga bhavet trishna kama-rupanugamini || (brs 1.2.297)

“The following of amorous feelings (kamanuga) appears as a thirst for following in the wake of that which consists of amorous feeling (kamarupa).”

sambhogeccha-mayi tat-tad-bhavecchatmeti sa dvidha || (brs 1.2.298)

“Its two divisions are (1) filled with desire for union (sambhogecchamayi) and (2) consisting of a desire for Her feelings (tad-bhaveccatma).”

keli-tatparyavaty eva sambhogeccha-mayi bhavet |
tad-bhaveccatmika tasam bhava-madhurya-kamita || (brs 1.2.299)

“That which aims for amorous sports is known as sambhogecchamayi, and that which longs for the sweetness of the feelings is known as tad-bhaveccatmika.”

The desire for union is understood to consist of four kinds of longing for union.

sandarsana-samjalpa-samsparsa-samprayoga-lakshana-bheda-catushtaya-bhinnatvam drisyate || (Pṛiti-sandarbha 375)

“The four different categories are understood as the various appearances of seeing, discussion, touching and sexual union.”

Particularly the last two forms of sambhoga characterize the sambhogecchamayi-devotion. The second division of amorous devotion, which consists solely of the longing to relish the sweetness of the feelings of Sri Radha, devoid of even a scent of desire for bodily enjoyment with Sri Krishna, is known as manjari-bhava; this is the mood of the maidservants of Sri Radha.

The eminent glories of the love of Sri Radha, the foremost among the consorts of Sri Krishna, are narrated throughout the scriptures and the poetry of the saints. Indeed, She is the very embodiment of love for the Lord.

hladinira sara amsa tara ‘prema’ nama |
ananda-cinmaya-rasa premra akhyana || (cc 2.8.159)

“The essential aspect of the pleasure-giving potency (hladini) of Sri Krishna is called ecstatic love (prema), which is understood as joy filled with rapturous mellows.”

premra parama-sara ‘mahabhava’ jani |
sei mahabhava-riupa radha-thakurani || (cc 2.8.160)

“The supreme pinnacle of prema is known to be maha-bhava, and Sri Radha Thakurani is the embodiment of this maha-bhava.”

premera 'svarupa-deha' prema-vibhavita |
krishnera preyasi-sreshtha jagate vidita || (cc 2.8.162)

“Her body is the very embodiment of prema and a transformation of prema. Throughout the world, She is known to be the dearmost among Sri Krishna’s beloveds.”

sei mahabhava haya ‘cintamani-sara’ |
krishna-vancha purna kare ei karya tantra || (cc 2.8.164)

“This maha-bhava is the the essence of a divine touch-stone; Her task is to fulfill all the desires of Sri Krishna.”

When one’s love for the beloved of Sri Krishna exceeds one’s love for Him, this condition is known as the jubilant arising of attachment (bhavollasa-rati), the foundational mood of a maidservant of Sri Radha.

sancari syat samano va krishna-ratyah suhrid-ratih |
adhika pushyamana ced bhavollasa ratih || (brs 2.5.128)

“When the affection for Sri Krishna and a dear one are equal, the feeling is known as a transitory feeling, but when devotion to a dear one is nourished and becomes dominant, the feeling is known as bhavollasa-rati.”

The pinnacle of divine joy which is present in the heart of Sri Radha becomes reflected into the hearts of Her dedicated maidservants, thus causing them to taste love which far exceeds any other form loving relish both in quantity and in quality.

pataty asre sasra bhavati pulake jata-pulakah |
smite bhati smera malimani jate sumalinah ||
anasadya svalir mukuram abhivikshya sva-vadanam |
sukham va duhkham va kimapi kathaniyam mrigadrisah ||
(Krishnahnika-kaumudi 5.128)

“Oh doe-eyed beauties! When your girlfriends are absent, you may have to look at a mirror before you can say whether you are happy or sad. They reflect every mood of yours, they perform all the services of a looking glass! When tears fall from your eyes they also cry; 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.”
This manjari-bhava is the unique contribution of Sri Caitanya

Mahaprabhu and the cherished treasure of the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition. One who desires to attain the ultimate goal of life should diligently study the writings of the saints on the subject matter of raganuga-bhakti.

Prior to engaging in any activity, a thoughtful person must carefully assess his eligibility for the same. We will now examine the causes and the characteristics of eligibility for bhakti in general and for raganuga-bhakti in particular.

Eligibility for devotion

No one is disqualified from engaging in acts of devotion on account of his lack of skill, of mental prowess or indeed of any other mundane faculty, nor does anyone become qualified for bhakti due to the virtue of such abilities. Rather, a mere desire for engaging in acts of devotion is the cause of eligibility for devotion.

bhaktau pravrittir atra syat taccikirsha suniscaya |
sastral lobhat tac cikirshu syatam tad adhikarinau || (rvc 1.4)

“According to devotional scriptures, an exclusive desire to engage in the practices of bhakti is the cause of engaging in bhakti. Bhakti of two different natures is born from fear of scriptural injunctions and from intense sacred greed respectively; accordingly, there are two kinds of candidates for bhakti-sadhana.”

The desire to engage in the practices of bhakti is born out of two distinct motivations. The one in whom the desire for devotion awakens on account of scriptural commandments is eligible for the practice of vaidhi-bhakti.

yah kenapyati bhagyena jata sraddho’sya sevane |
natisakto na vairagya bhagasyam adhikaryasau || (brs 1.2.14)

“When, out of inconceivable luck, faith awakens in someone for the service of the Lord, and he has no firm attachment for the Lord and is only slightly averse to bodily attachments, such a person is eligible for sadhana-bhakti.”

This desire for devotion is characterized by obedience of and faith in the scriptural commandments, which invoke a sense of duty for the service of the Lord. This desire is born out of the fear of violating the scriptures and thus incurring sin and consequent calamity. On the other hand,

eligibility for the practice of raganuga-bhakti is born out of greed for attaining feelings akin to the Lord's dear ones.

ragatmikaika-nishtha ye vrajavasi-janadayah |
tesham bhavaptaye lubdho bhaved atradhikaravan || (brs 1.2.291)

“The very being of those who reside in Vraja is steeped in loving attachment. One who becomes greedy to attain feelings similar to theirs possesses eligibility.”

Eligibility for the practice of raganuga-bhakti

The symptoms of the awakening of greed for attaining feelings akin to the Lord's eternal associates is described as follows:

tat tad bhavadi madhurye srute dhir yad apekshate |
natra sastram na yuktim ca tal lobhotpatti lakshanam || (brs. 1.2.292)

“When one hears about the sweetness of their feelings and so forth, and a desire for attaining the same awakens in the consciousness without dependence on scripture and logic, this is a symptom of the awakening of greed (lobha).”

However, the impetus of the vaidhi-bhakta remains dependent on the commandments of the scripture.

vaidha-bhakty-adhikari tu bhavavirbhavanavadhi |
atra sastram tatha tarkam anukulam apekshate || (brs 1.2.293)

“However, until bhava arises within the one eligible for vaidhi-bhakti, he remains dependent on scriptures and logical considerations.”
The greed for attaining Vraja-bhava only awakens in rare and fortunate souls.

ragamayi-bhaktira haya 'ragatmika' nama |
taha suni lubdha haya kona bhagyavan || (cc 2.22.152)

“That devotion which consists of deep attachment is called ragatmika. One who becomes greedy upon hearing about this is fortunate.”

lobhe vrajavasi-bhave kore anugati |
sastra-yukti nahi mane – raganugara prakriti || (cc 2.22.153)

“Greedily following in the wake of the feelings of the residents of Vraja, without considering scriptures or logic – such is the nature of raganuga.” In such a person, the attraction for attaining particular loving feelings for the Lord overrules all other considerations.

vrajalila parikarastha sringaradi bhava madhurye srute dhir idam mama
bhuyat iti lobhotpattikale sastra yukty apeksha na syat satyam ca tasyam
lobhatvasyaivasiddheh | nahi kenacit sastra drishtya lobhah kriyate napi
lobhaniya vastu praptau svasya yogyayogyatva vicarah ko’py udbhavati.
kintu lobhaniya vastuni srute drishte va svata eva lobha utpadyate || (tvc
1.5)

“If, upon hearing of the sweetness of the feelings, headed by passion, of Sri Krsna’s associates in the Vraja-lila, one thinks, ‘Let me also attain such feelings,’ then at this time one need not depend either on the revealed scriptures or on favorable logical considerations. If such dependence remains, it cannot be said that greed has appeared. Greed never arises in anyone because of scriptural considerations, and in anyone who is desirous to attain the object of the greed, no considerations of qualification or lack of qualification arise. Rather, greed arises only by hearing about the object of greed or by seeing it.”

As love cannot arise due to commandments or as the outcome of a certain pattern of reasoning, it is not possible that eligibility for raganuga-bhakti would arise on account of scriptural commandments or the subsequent logical considerations. Indeed, one who becomes greedy for Vraja-bhava hastens to attain it wherever it is available.

krishna-bhakti-rasa-bhavita-matiḥ |
kriyatam yadi kuto’pi labhyate ||
tatra laulyam api mulyam ekalam |
janma-koti-sukritair na labhyate || (Padyavali 14)

“Wherever that consciousness laden with rapturous loving feelings for Sri Krishna is available, from there it must be acquired. For that there is indeed only one price, greed, which cannot be attained through pious deeds even in millions of births.”

Though the direct cause for the awakening of greed is the hearing of narrations about the Vraja-pastimes of Sri Krishna, one must also give due consideration to the foundational cause of the phenomena.

krishna tad bhakta karunya matra lobhaika hetuka |
pushti margataya kaiscid iyam raganugocyate || (brs 1.2.309)

“The only causes of the appearance of sacred greed are the mercy of Sri Krishna or the mercy of His devotee. Therefore some also call the path of raganuga-bhakti with the name pushti-marga (the path of grace).”

Commenting on this verse, Sri Jiva Gosvami states:

krishneti – matra padasya vidhi marge kutracit karmadi samarpanam api
dvaram bhavatiti tad vicchedarthah prayoga iti bhava ||

“The word matra is used in the above because sometimes the offering of fruitive activities can lead to entry into vaidhi-bhakti, whereas raganuga-bhakti is only (matra) attained through grace.”

Though the paths of vaidhi and raganuga are two distinct paths, the practice of vaidhi-bhakti can offer indirect support for the awakening of the eligibility for raganuga-bhakti, its various practices being agents which assist in the purification of the heart. In addition to grace, a certain lucidity of awareness is necessary to facilitate the appearance of the aforementioned greed.

yasya purvoktam raga-viseshe rucir eva jatasti na tu raga-visesha eva
svayam, tasya tadrisa-raga-sudhakara-karabhasa-samullasita-hridaya-
sphatika-maneh sastradi-srutasu tadrisya ragatmikaya bhakteh paripatishv
api rucir jayate | tatas tadiyam ragam rucy-anugacchanti sa raganuga
tasyaiva pravartate || (Bhakti-sandarbha 310)

“When the splendour of the moonrays of raga shines upon the crystal-like heart of a person in whom a taste for the aforementioned specific raga has awakened, but who himself does not possess distinct raga, his heart rejoices. He then hears from the scriptures about such ragatmika-bhakti and consequently develops a taste for the same. Following his taste for such raga, he engages in raganuga-bhakti.”

Just as pure crystal reflects the colours of an object placed next to it, so the heart untainted by lust, anger and mundane greed easily develops a taste for the rapturous mélées of ragatmika-bhakti. In the initial stages of the practice of raganuga-sadhana, one’s practice must be mixed with vaidhi-bhakti.

ajata-tadrisa-rucina tu sad-viseshadara-matradrita raganugapi vaidhi-samvalitaivanushtheya |
tatha loka-samgrahartham pratishthitena jata-tadrisa-rucina ca |
atra misratve ca yatha-yogyam raganugayaiki krityaiva vaidhi kartavya ||
(Bhakti-sandartha 312)

“Those in whom such taste (rucī) has not awakened, but who have a special interest for it, should engage in a mixture of raganuga and vaidhi. For the sake of establishing an example for the people of the world, the one in whom such ruci has awakened will do the same. Therefore, as appropriate, raganuga should be performed together with vaidhi.” Since at this stage ruci as the driving force behind the practice of devotion has not yet been firmly established in the heart, one must engage in the practice of mixed raganuga-sadhana out of obligation at all times, just as one would do in regular vaidhi-sadhana. It is understood that the greed which makes one eligible for following the feelings of the residents of Vraja awakens gradually in accordance with the degree of the purification of the heart.

sa ca lobho raga vartma vartinam bhaktanam guru-padasraya lakshanam
arabhya svabhishta vastu sakshat prapti samayam abhivyapya “yatha
yathatma parimriyyate’sau mat punya gatha sravanabhidhanaih, tatha
tatha pasyati vastu sukshmam cakshur yathaivanjana samprayuktam | “
iti bhagavad ukter bhakti hetukantah karana suddhi taratamyat prati
dinam adhikadhiko bhavati | | (rvc 1.8)

“It is described that the devotees on the path of raga gradually progress from the initial surrender to the feet of Sri Guru up to the stage of directly attaining the object of their desires.

‘When the eye is smeared with medicinal ointment, its ability of perception becomes more and more refined, and accordingly it is able to perceive more and more subtle objects; similarly, according to the degree of the mind’s having become purified by hearing and chanting of My purifying pastimes, all the subtle truths of reality become manifest in the heart of the sadhaka.’

From these words of the Lord it is known that through sadhana-bhakti the consciousness of the sadhaka becomes more purified every day, and he gradually becomes more and more greedy.”

In accordance with the purification of the heart and the growth of

spiritual greed, one's eligibility for raganuga-bhakti increases day by day from an initial desire to an intense, captivating longing for the object of one's desires. Thus one gradually proceeds through the various stages of devotion.

atha raganuga-bhakti majjanasyanartha-nivritti-nishtha-rucy-asakty-
antaram prema-bhumikarudhasya sakshat svabhishta-prapti-prakarah
pradarsyate || (rvc 2.7)

“Then it will be described how the one, who has progressed on the path of raganuga-bhakti through the cessation of the evils (anartha-nivritti), firmness (nishtha), taste (rucī), and attachment (asakti) all the way to the attainment of ecstatic love (prema), will directly come to attain his desired object.”

Eligibility for hearing narrations of the lord's pastimes

We shall now take the question one step further, examining the nature of those deeds, namely hearing about and seeing the object of one's desires, which provoke the aforementioned spiritual greed.

satam prasangan mama virya-samvido |
bhavanti hrit-karna-rasayanah kathah ||
taj-joshanad asv apavarga-vartmani |
sraddha ratir bhaktir anukramishyati || (sb 3.25.25)

“In the association of saints, discussing the narrations of My wonderful deeds acts as the life-giving elixir for the heart and the ears. Being thus satisfied, one quickly proceeds on the path of liberation, as faith, attraction and devotion gradually appear.”

The glory of hearing about the loving sports of Sri Krishna is narrated everywhere in the scriptures.

vikriditam vraja-vadhubhir idam ca vishnoh |
sraddhanvito yah srinuyad atha varnayed va ||
bhaktim param bhagavati parilabhya kamam |
hrid-rogam asv apahinoty acirena dhirah || (sb 10.33.39)

“One who faithfully hears or describes the loving sports of Sri Krishna and the young maidens of Vraja will quickly drive away the heart-disease of lust, become sober, and attain supramundane devotion of the Lord.”

However, is everyone eligible for hearing such confidential topics, which may invoke thoughts of mundane sexuality in the eyes of an ignorant spectator?

kintu rahasya-lila tu paurusha-vikaravad indriyaih pitri-putra-dasa-bhavais
ca nopasya sviya-bhava-virodhat |
rahasyatvam ca tasyah kvacid alpamsena kvacit tu sarvamseneti jneyam
|| (Bhakti-sandarbha 338)

“However, these secret sports are not to be worshiped by those who experience male transformations in their senses, or by those who are in the moods of father, son and servant, for it would be contrary to their moods. Confidentiality is understood according to the partial or complete touching of limbs.”

Thus the individual who desires to absorb himself in narrations of the Lord must himself assess his own eligibility and aspire to hear narrations in accordance with his capacity. However, such confidential topics should never be narrated to antagonistic individuals who are likely to disrespect the supremely sacred human-like sports of the Lord.

asraddadhane vimukhe 'py asrinvati yas copadesah siva namaparadhhah
|| (Padma-purana, Brahma-khanda 25.15-18)

“One who describes the auspiciousness of the Name unto those who are faithless, opposed and unwilling to hear, is an offender against the Holy Name.”

Hence the aforementioned verse (sb 10.33.39) lays emphasis on hearing such narrations with faith. Faith in the divinity and the purifying nature of the deeds of the Lord awakens through associating with faithful saints, as one learns about the scriptural conclusions regarding the supramundane status of the Lord from them.

For the faithful people, whether pure or impure in heart, hearing narrations of the deeds of the Lord is recommended. The immense potency of the nectarine pastimes of Sri Krishna is praised in the Govinda Lilamritam, one among the original texts narrating the eight-fold daily pastimes of the Lord.

yat pitam srutivan manobhir anisam trishnapradam tvadbhutam |
samsaramaya haryapi pranayajonmadandhya mohadikrit || sasvac

carvitam eva bhuri rasadam dehadi hrit pushtidam |
taj jiyad amrita spriha haram idam govinda lilamritam || (gl 1.5)

“When drunk, it bestows astonishing, incessant thirst in the ears, speech and the mind; it destroys the bondage of samsara, giving rise to deep affection, madness, blindness, delusion and so forth! When constantly chewed, it produces a variety of tastes, nourishing the soul, the body and so forth; let those nectarine pastimes of Sri Govinda, which snatch away the desire for celestial ambrosia, be glorified!”

Indeed, who could fail to be attracted by such beauty and sweetness?

ko nirvrito hari-kathasu ratim na kuryat || (Bhag. 2.3.12)

“Who is there who has no taste for absorption in narrations about Hari?”

nivritta-tarshair upagiyamanad |
bhavaushadhad chrotra-mano-'bhiramat ||
ka uttamasloka-gunanuvadat |
puman virajyeta vina pasughnat || (sb 10.1.3)

“Description of the qualities of the Lord who is praised with the best of verses is sung and relished in the minds of those whose thirst for the mundane is quenched, and it is the remedy for material existence as well. Who else than a butcher could keep himself away from hearing such descriptions?” Thus a faithful person desirous of attaining the ultimate goal of life, having heard of the scriptural conclusions regarding the truths about the Lord and His infinite potencies, should engage himself in hearing narrations depicting the sweet, love-laden pastimes of Sri Krishna and His Vraja-associates.

The practice of raganuga-bhakti, though aiming at spontaneous, inherent love for Sri Krishna, is not whimsical in nature. The various aspects of raganuga-sadhana have been carefully described in the writings of the saints. Anyone who desires to smoothly progress on the path of raga must study their words diligently.

Initial stages of practice

Just as one must learn from a teacher if he desires to master any given subject in this mundane world, so one must approach a realized teacher who can give adequate guidance on the path of raga.

sa ca lobho raga vartma vartinam bhaktanam guru-padasraya lakshanam
arabhya svabhishta vastu sakshat prapti samayam abhivyapya || (rvc 1.8)

“It is described that the devotees on the path of raga gradually progress from the initial surrender to the feet of Sri Guru up to the stage of directly attaining the object of their desires.”

It has been described earlier that the mercy of Sri Krishna or His devotees is the cause of that spiritual greed, which causes eligibility for the practice of raganuga-bhakti.

sa ca bhagavat kripa hetuko ‘nuragi bhakta kripa hetukas ceti dvividhah |
tatra bhakta kripa hetuko dvividhah praktana adhunikas ca |
praktanah— paurva bhavika tadrisa bhakta kripotthah, adhunikah etaj
janmavadhi tadrisa bhakta kripotthah |
adye sati lobhanantaram tadrisa guru caranasrayanam |
dvitiye guru caranasrayanantaram lobha pravrittir bhavati || (rvc 1.6)

“There are said to be two causes for the appearance of the aforementioned greed, namely the mercy of God and the mercy of an anuragi devotee. There are again two kinds of mercy bestowed by a devotee, namely old and recent. Greed which is born from the mercy of such devotees of Sri Krishna in a previous life is known as old (praktana). Greed which is born from the mercy of a devotee in the present life is known as recent (adhunika). In the one in whom greed has awakened in a previous birth, his greed manifests and he then takes shelter of the feet of a raganugya devotee guru. One whose greed is recent will first take shelter of the feet of a guru, after which his greed appears.”

It is thus evident that approaching a guru is necessary for anyone who desires to progress towards the ultimate goal of life with firm confidence.

In describing the 64 main aspects of practice in his Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu, Sri Rupa Gosvami delineates the first four as follows:

guru-padasrayas tasmat krishna-dikshadi-sikshanam |
visrambhena guroh seva sadhu-vartmanuvartanam || (brs 1.2.74)

“(1) Taking shelter of the feet of a guru, (2) Accepting initiation in Krishna-mantra and subsequent instructions, (3) Serving the guru with confidence, and (4) Following the path traversed by the saints.” The importance of accepting initiation into a Krishna-mantra has been described as follows:

divyam jnanam yato dadyat kuryat papasya sankshayam |
tasmad diksheti sa prokta desikais tattva kovidaih ||
ato gurum pranamyaivam sarvasvam vinivedya ca |
grihniyat vaishnavam mantram diksha purvam vidhanatah || (Bhakti-sandarbha 283)

“That, which bestows divine knowledge and destroys all sins, is called diksha by the knowers of the truth. Therefore, paying obeisance to the guru and offering unto him one’s all, one should receive Vaishnava mantra-diksha preceded with proper procedures.”

The great teachers have further glossed the importance of meditating on the diksha-mantra as a means of establishing a specific relationship with the Lord, which is, after all, the object of raganuga-bhakti sadhana.

divyam jnanam hy atra srimati mantre bhagavat-svarupa-jnanam, tena bhagavata sambandha-visesha-jnanam ca || (ibid.)

“Here divine knowledge means the knowledge about the Lord’s intrinsic identity which lies within the mantra, along with specific knowledge of one’s relationship with the Lord.” This is repeated over and over again:

sri-naradadi-vartmanusaradbhiih sri-bhagavata saha sambandha-visesham diksha-vidhanena sri-guru-carana-sampaditam cikirshadbhiih kritayam dikshayam arcanam avasyam kriyetaiva || (ibid.)

“Those who are following the path of Narada and others, and who desire the particular relationship with the Lord that is brought about at the feet of the guru through the rite of diksha, necessarily perform arcana (worship) when diksha is completed.”

Steadfast contemplation on the diksha-mantra gradually gives rise to and strengthens a certain loving relationship with the Lord. To refine the

conception of the practitioner, it is customary for the guru to further instruct the initiate on the nature of his specific eternal, spiritual identity.

sakshad vraja-jana-viseshayaiva mahyam sri-guru-caranair mad-abhishtavisesha-siddhy-artham upadishtam bhavayami || (Bhakti-sandarbha 312)

“I meditate on the specific form of one of Krsna’s associates in Vraja, which my revered guru has instructed me in, in order to attain my specifically desired perfection.”

Therefore, the eager disciple will at one point in time approach the guru, inquiring about the eleven-fold existence (ekadasa-bhava) of his own eternal form (siddha-deha) in the spiritual world, along with the identities of the predecessor gurus in his lineage. The eleven prominently contemplated aspects of the siddha-form are known as follows:

1. nama – name of a manjari;
2. rupa (varna) – form (complexion);
3. vayas – age;
4. vesa – color of dress;
5. sambandha – relationship;
6. yutha – group (of a certain sakhi);
7. ajna – order;
8. seva – service;
9. parakashtha – highest aspiration;
10. palyadasi-bhava – the mood of a maintained maidservant;
11. nivasa – residence.

The unbroken chain of gurus, leading back to the eternal associates of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, is called guru-pranali (channel of gurus), and its celestial counterpart, the lineage of gurus in their Vraja-identities, is called siddha-pranali (channel of the perfected). Through this channel, the divine love of Vraja flows down into the heart of the aspirant.

esha tu bhaktis tan nitya parikaraganad arabhyedanintaneshvapi tad bhakteshu mandakiniva pracarati . . . sa tathabhuta nitya dhamni nitya parshadeshu nityam cakasti surasarid iva tad bhakta pranalya prapance ‘vatarati || (Siddhanta-ratna of Sri Baladeva Vidyabhusana)

“This bhakti is being promulgated from the eternal associates of Sri Hari down to the present day practicing devotees like the current of the Mandakini-river (the celestial Ganges). Bhakti is always present within

the Lord's eternal associates within the eternal abode, and flows down to the mundane world through the drain of Sri Hari's devotees like the stream of the Mandakini."

In their daily meditation, the practitioners of raganuga-bhakti always meditate on the divine forms and characteristics of their predecessors along with the eternal associates of Sri Radha and Krishna.

tatradau manjari-rupan gurvadin tu svyan svyan pranaly-anusarena
samsmaret sri-guru-parama-guru-krameneti tatah sri-radhikam dhyayet
| tatah sri-nandanandanam || (Paddhati of Dhyanacandra Gosvami,
344)

"In this meditation, before anything else, the practitioner should meditate on the manjari-forms of his guru-pranali, beginning with his guru, then parama-guru, etc. Then he shall meditate on Sri Radhika, and after that Sri Nandanandana (Krishna)."

Just as one hears narrations of the form and qualities of Sri Radha and Sri Krishna from authoritative sources, as they are inaccessible through the faculties of sensual perception and speculation, similarly one hears of the forms, qualities and so forth of all of Their associates, including the guru, from a realized person who is absorbed in the eternal service of Radha and Krishna in his eternal, spiritual identity.

manjaryo bahusah rupa-guna-sila-vayo 'nvitah ||
nama-rupadi tat sarvam guru-dattam ca bhavayet |
tatra tatra sthita nityam bhajet sri-radhika-hari ||
bhavayan sadhako nityam sthitva krishna-priya-grihe |
tad ajna-palako bhutva kaleshv ashtasu sevate || (ibid. 107-109)

"One should meditate on the various forms, qualities, natures, blooming youth and so forth of the manjaris, as described by the guru. One should always stay with them, worshiping Sri Radhika and Hari. The practitioner shall stay in the home of Sri Radha, the beloved of Krishna, following their orders and rendering service throughout the eight phases of the day."

Thus, having taken shelter of a genuine guru, one proceeds on the path of raganuga-bhakti sadhana.

Remembrance of Sri Krishna and His associates

In his Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu (1.2.294-296), Sri Rupa Gosvami has presented three essential verses describing the practice of raganuga-bhakti. We shall now proceed to examine them one by one.

krishnam smaran janam casya preshtham nije samihitam |
tat tat katha ratas casau kuryad vasam vraje sada || (brs 1.2.294)

One should remember the most dear form of Kṛṣṇa (presthām kṛṣṇam), the son of Nanda of kaiśora age, and the devotees of that particular form of Kṛṣṇa (asya janam), who have the same type of desires (for serving Kṛṣṇa) as oneself (nija-samīhitam). Remembering such devotees, one should live in Vraja. If possible, one should physically live in Vṛndāvana, the place where Kṛṣṇa resided as Nanda's son. If one cannot do that, one should live there mentally.

Examining the commentaries of the predecessors, a number of important considerations can be drawn from this verse. Sri Visvanatha Cakravarti has explained (rvc 1.11) this verse as follows:

First, through the words “remembering Krishna”, it is revealed that raga is a special feature of the mind, therefore one should remember; therefore the aspect of remembrance (smarana) is foremost on the path of raganuga. “Beloved” means the dearmost, Sri Krishna, the lord of Vrindavana, who enjoys pastimes suitable to His own mood. “His people” means Sri Krishna's people. Who are they? For this it is said, “of one's own preference”, which means the desirable ones, such as Sri Radha, the mistress of Vrindavana, Lalita, Visakha, Rupa Manjari and others.

Although Sri Krishna is the object of one's desires in a passionate mood, the associates of Sri Krishna, the ladies of Vraja headed by Sri Radha, are even more the object of the devotee's desires on account of their having an excessive amount of passionate feelings which the devotee desires. “Live in Vraja” – this statement means that if it is not physically possible, at least in one's mind one should live in Vraja.

Thus residing – whether physically or mentally – in the sacred land of Vraja, filled with stimulus for the remembrance of the sweet pastimes of

Vraja, while remembering the pastimes of Sri Krishna and His associates one is particularly inspired by, filled with attachment for narrations about them, is the quintessence of raganuga-bhakti. How, then, is service to be rendered? Sri Rupa Gosvami explains this in the next verse.

Internal and external service

seva sadhaka rupena siddha rupena catra hi |
tad bhava lipsuna karya vrajalokanusratah || (brs 1.2.295)

“One should serve both in his present sadhaka-body and in his siddha-form, following in the wake of the residents of Vraja, desiring to have feelings similar to theirs.”

This very verse, in particular the interpretation of what is meant with serving with the sadhaka-form while following the residents of Vraja, was the root of a great controversy in the Gaudiya tradition at the time of Sri Visvanatha Cakravarti. His interpretation of the verse, which came to be accepted as conclusive, reads as follows:

“With the sadhaka-form” means in the present body, “with the siddha-form” means with one’s own desired, internally conceived body suitable for the direct service of Sri Krsna, “desiring to attain their feelings” means to take shelter of one’s most cherished associate of Sri Krsna and one’s desired Sri Radha, the beloved of Sri Krsna, being anxiously desirous to attain the passionate feelings they have.

“Service”, how is it done? It is described as being performed with either items collected mentally or items collected with the physical body. The nature of this service is described as “following the people of Vraja”.

Following the residents of Vraja means to serve according to the model of Sri Rupa Gosvami and other residents of Vraja in the sadhaka-form and to serve according to the model of Sri Rupa Manjari and other residents of Vraja in the siddha-form.

The same is echoed, though more concisely, in an earlier work of Sri Krishna Das Kaviraja:

bahya, antara, ihara dui ta sadhana |
bahye sadhaka-dehe kare sravana-kirtana ||
mane nija-siddha-deha kariya bhavana |
ratri-dine kare vraje krishnera sevana ||
(cc 2.22.156-157)

“External and internal, these are indeed the two sadhanas. Externally, in the sadhaka-form, one engages in hearing and chanting, and in the mind, in one’s own siddha-form, day and night one thinks of and serves Sri Krishna in Vrindavana.”

The meaning of the sadhaka-form is evident: it means the present physical body. However, the concept of siddha-form deserves further examination. How is one to serve in a siddha-form, if one has not attained perfection (siddhi)? After all, the siddha-devotee is the one who has attained prema, and this verse appears in a section describing sadhana-bhakti. Is this not an oxymoron?

To this, the commentators (Jiva Gosvami, Mukunda Gosvami and Visvanatha Cakravarti) answer in chorus:

siddha-rupena antas-cintitabhishta-tat-sevopayogi-dehena | |

“In the siddha-form means in an internally thought, desired form suitable for His service.”

The chorus is slightly broken by Mukunda Gosvami, who states “manas-cintita”, “mentally thought” in the place of “antas-cintita”, “internally thought”.

Furthermore, the word “abhishta”, “desired”, reveals that we are speaking of something which is yet to be attained.

The concept is further illuminated by Sri Narottama Das Thakura:

sadhane bhavibe yaha, siddha dehe pabe taha |
raga marge ei sei upaya | | (Prema-bhakti-candrika 57)

“Whatever you think of during your sadhana, you will attain in your siddha-body. Such is the means on the path of raga.”

sadhane ye dhana cai, siddha dehe taha pai |
pakkapakka matra se vicara | | (ibid. 58)

“The treasure I covet during my sadhana, I will attain in my siddha-body. The only difference between the two is their being ripe and unripe.” Thus, both in the present body and in the internally contemplated siddha-form, one should follow the residents of Vraja, desiring feelings akin to theirs. The service in the present, physical body is further explained in the following verse.

External practices

sravanotkirtanadini vaidha bhaktyuditani tu |
yanyangani ca tanyatra vijneyani manishibhiih || (brs 1.2.296)

“Hearing, chanting and all the other limbs of vaidhi-bhakti are also to be engaged in. This is what the learned ones have ascertained.” Mere internal practice which neglects the external practices of bhakti, such as hearing, chanting and worshiping, is forbidden. For absorption in remembrance, a peaceful mind is required, and the mind can never be peaceful when the heart is filled with impurities.

suddhantah-karanas cet “etan-nirvidhyamananam icchatam akutobhayam” ity ady-uktatvan nama-kirtanaparityagena smaranam kuryat || (Bhakti-sandarbha 265)

“According to the statement ‘etan-nirvidhyamananam icchatam akutobhayam’ (sb 2.1.11), if the mind is purified, one should engage in remembrance without neglecting kirtana.”

Indeed, on the virtue of its power of captivating all the senses and connecting them with the Lord, kirtana has been declared as the emperor among the practices of devotion in the present age of disturbance. Indeed, one who neglects the practice of hearing and chanting the holy names is to be blamed on account of his disobedience of the scriptures.

sruti-smriti-puranadi-pancaratra-vidhim vina |
aikantiki harer bhaktir utpatayaiva kalpate || (brs 1.2.101)

“Exclusive devotion to Lord Hari which does not follow the rules and regulations prescribed by the Srutis, Smritis, Puranas, or the Narada Pancaratra, is only causing disturbance.”

Though the impetus for the practice of raganuga-bhakti is independent from the scriptural commandments, nevertheless one who desires to learn about the path of practice must turn to the scriptures for guidance. Sri Visvanatha Cakravarti illustrates the principle in his Raga-vartma-candrika:

tatas ca tadrisa lobhavato bhaktasya lobhaniya tad bhava praptyupaya
jijnasayam satyam sastra yuktyapeksha syat | sastra-vidhinaiva sastra-
pratipadita yuktyaiva ca tat pradarsanat nanyatha | yatha dugdhadishu

lobhe sati katham me dugdhadikam bhaved iti tad upaya jijnasayam tad
abhijnapta jana kritopadesa vakyapeksha syat | tatas ca gam krinatu
bhavan ityadi tad upadesa vakyad eva gavanayanatad ghasa pradana tad
dohana prakaranadikam tata eva sikshen na tu svatah || (rvc 1.7)

“Now, when the aforementioned greedy devotees become inquisitive about attaining their desired feelings, we see that they depend on scriptures and logic. The attainment of the desired feelings is taught through scriptural injunctions and scriptural logic, not in any other way. Just as when greed for milk awakens, what is the means for acquiring it? One desires to know the means, and at that time he relies on the instructions of a trusted person on the means for acquiring milk. He will say, ‘You should purchase a cow’, and so forth, instructing how to bring a cow, how to feed her with grass, and how to milk her. One cannot gain knowledge independently, without being instructed.”

Thus one must depend on the scriptures while pursuing the desired goal. There is no substantial difference between the external practice of vaidhi-bhakti and raganuga-bhakti; the difference lies in motivation. When one engages externally in the various aspects of vaidhi-bhakti with greed for attaining Vraja-bhava as his driving force, such practice is called raganuga-bhakti sadhana.

In his Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu, Sri Rupa Gosvami has delineated the 64 principle aspects of devotion in practice. In the end, he repeats five of them, declaring these five to be eminent among all the practices of devotion.

sraddha viseshatah prithi sri-murter anghri-sevane ||
srimad-bhagavatarthanam asvado rasikaih saha |
sajatiyasaye snigdhe sadhau sangah svato vare ||
nama-sankirtanam sriman-mathura-mandale sthitih ||
anganam pancakasyasya purva-vilikhitasya ca |
nikhila-sraishthya-bodhaya punar apy atra kirtanam ||
(brs 1.2.90-92)

1. Serving the lotus feet of the Deity with faith and particular loving disposition;
2. Relishing the taste of the meanings of the Bhagavata with those who are expert in tasting the moods of loving rapture;
3. Associating with saints who have similar inclinations, who are soft-

hearted and affectionately disposed towards oneself, and who are more advanced than is;

4. Engaging in congregational chanting of the holy names, and
5. Residing in the area of Mathura-mandala (the land of Vraja).

These aforementioned five limbs are understood as the essence of everything, and therefore they are glorified again.”

Internal practices

The inner, contemplative practices of raganuga-bhakti are divided into two categories, namely spontaneous (svarasiki) and static (mantramayi).

tatra nana-lila-pravaha-rupataya svarasiki gangeva |
ekaika-lilatmataya mantropasana-mayi tu labdha-tat-sambhava-hrada-
srenir iva jneya || (Krishna-sandarbha 153)

“Spontaneous pastimes are like the flow of the Ganges, as there are many different pastimes that flow into one another continuously.

The static pastimes are compared to a lake created by the Ganges in which one particular pastime is concentrated upon. This is generally meditated upon at the time of mantra worship, hence the name mantramayi.”

The contemplation on the spontaneous pastimes refers to contemplating on the eight-fold daily pastimes (ashtakaliya-lila) of Sri Radha and Krishna in Vraja.

The outline of these pastimes is mentioned in the Govinda-lilamritam of Sri Krishna Das Kaviraja:

kunjad goshtham nisante pravisati kurute dohanannasanadyam |
pratah sayam ca lilam viharati sakhibhih sangave carayan gah ||
madhyahne catha naktam vilasati vipine radhayaddhparahne |
goshtham yati pradoshe ramayati suhrido yah sa krishno ‘vatan nah ||
(1.4)

“At the end of the night, the Lord returns home from the forest; in the morning, he milks the cows and takes his meal. In the forenoon, he takes the cows to pasture and at noon meets with Srimati Radharani at Radha Kunda. In the afternoon, he returns to Nandagrama with the cows and cowherd boys, enjoying different pastimes with them through the evening. In the later evening he takes a meal and then goes off to meet

with Radha in the forest. May Lord Krsna, whose daily activities are such, be kind and deliver us all.”

However, inner participation in the eight-fold daily pastimes necessitates a considerable absorption in one’s internally conceived siddha-form, which is suitable for direct service of Sri Radha and Krishna, as well as acquaintance with the scenery of the pastime along with its numerous characters. Therefore, the practitioners first focus their attention on static meditation.

A classical depiction of such meditation is to be found in the invocation of the Caitanya Caritamrita:

divya-vrindaranya-kalpa-drumadhah |
srimad-ratnagara-simhasana-sthau ||
srimad-radha-srila-govinda-devau |
preshthalibhih sevyamanau smarami ||
(cc 1.1.16)

“I meditate on Sri Radha and Srila Govinda Deva, who are seated on a beautiful throne in a jewelled palace under the shade of the desire trees of Vrindavana, surrounded by many dear friends and handmaids who eagerly serve them.”

Such meeting takes place at yogapitha, “the seat of union”. Sri Radha and Krishna, along with their associates, assemble thrice daily on the platform of yogapitha to bless the practicing devotee and to accept his service. The morning-time meeting takes place at Gupta-kunda near Nandisvara, the mid-day meeting takes place in Madana-sukhada-kunja at Radha Kunda, and the nocturnal meeting takes place in a jewelled temple of the Maha-yogapitha and Govinda-sthali.

The golden platform of yogapitha is shaped like an eight-petaled lotus. Sri Radha and Krishna are surrounded by Their confidantes, namely the eight sakhis (girl-friends), who are located on the outer part of the inner eight petals of the lotus, the eight manjaris (maidservants) who are located on the inner part of the inner eight petals of the lotus, and the eight additional sakhis located on the eight outer petals of the lotus. Following his guru who has assumed a form similar to the confidantes of the Divine Couple, the aspirant renders various services to everyone in his own internal guru-given form of a maidservant.

Sri Narottama Das Thakura has written a captivating poem depicting the scenery of the yogapitha.

vrindavana ramya-sthan, divya-cintamani-dham |
ratana-mandira manohar ||
avrita kalindi-nire, raja-hamsa keli kare |
tahe sobhe kanaka kamal ||
tara madhye hema pith, ashta-dalete veshtita |
ashta-dale pradhana nayika |
tara madhye ratnasane, basiyachen dui-jane |
syama-sange sundari radhika ||
o riupa lavanya-rasi, amiya padiche khasi |
hasya parihasa sambhashane ||
narottama-dasa kay, nitya-lila sukha-may |
sadai sphuruk mora mane ||
(Prarthana)

“What an enjoyable place, this Vrindavana, the abode of celestial touchstone! There is a delightful jewelled temple surrounded by the Yamuna River, which is filled with playing swans and golden lotus flowers.

In one such large golden lotus is a podium surrounded by eight large petals in which stand the chief girlfriends of Radha. In the very centre is a jewel-bedecked throne upon which the beautiful Radharani is seated in the company of the blackish and enchanting Sri Krsna.

Their forms are like a mountain of loveliness from which nectar is tumbling like waterfalls. They laugh and exchange joking conversation. Narottama Dasa says: “The eternal pastimes of the Lord are full of happiness; may they always be manifest in my mind!”

Sri Caitanya and Sri-Sri Radha-Krishna

The confidential pastimes of Sri Radha and Krishna are far removed from the residents of the mundane realm. Nevertheless, Sri Krishna, accepting the feelings and lustre of Sri Radha, descended into this world to relish the nectarine taste of His own service and to spread devotion on the path of raga to the mankind. In his kindness, He broke open the dam of divine love, providing an easy gateway for the present-day practitioners to walk through into the kingdom of pastimes.

Therefore it is customary in the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition to first engage in remembering the daily pastimes of Sri Caitanya, thereafter moving into the realm of Vraja in the wake of the natural flow of His feelings.

evam sri-caitanya-devam nishevyam siddha-dehena sri-krishna-sevangam
vidadhyat ||
(Paddhati of Dhyanacandra, 78)

“Having served Sri Caitanya Deva, one should engage in the service of Sri Krishna in one’s siddha-form.”

Sri Visvanatha Cakravarti echoes the same in his Sriman Mahaprabhor Ashtakaliya-lila Smarana-mangala-stotram:

sri-gauranga-vidhoh sva-dhamani navadvipe ’shta-kalodbhavam |
bhavyam bhavya-janena gokula-vidhor lila-smriter aditah || (11)

“The pastimes of the moonlike Sri Gauranga are manifest in His own abode Navadvipa during the eight phases of the day. They should be meditated upon prior to the remembrance of the pastimes of the moon of Gokula.”

The eight-fold daily pastimes of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu are summarized as follows:

ratryante sayanotthitah sura-sarit snato babhau yah prage |
purvahne sva-ganair-lasaty upavane tair bhati madhyahnikे ||
yah puryam aparahnake nija-grihe sayam grihe ’thangane |
srivasasya nisa-mukhe nisi vasan gaurah sa no rakshatu || (ibid. 2)

“At the end of the night, He arises from His sleep; in the morning He takes bath in Ganges, the river of the gods. In the forenoon and mid-day, He exhibits many beautiful pastimes with His devotees in the gardens. In the afternoon, he roams about in the village; in the evening he returns to His home. In the late evening and throughout the night, He stays in the courtyard of Srivasa; may this Gauranga Mahaprabhu protect me!”

These jubilant pastimes of Sri Caitanya are like an ocean from which countless streams of Sri Krishna’s pastimes flow in the wake of His moods.

krishna-lilamrita-sar, yara sata-sata dhar |
dasa-dig bahe yaha haite ||
se caitanya-lila hay, sarovara akshay |
mano-hamsa caraha tahate || (cc 2.25.271)

“Krishna’s actions are the ultimate nectar of the gods; their hundreds and hundreds of currents stream in every direction. Send the swan of your mind to swim on the lake of Caitanya, the fathomless spring from which they arise.”

Therefore, one’s devotion for Sri Radha and Krishna grows in proportion to one’s devotion to Sri Caitanya.

yatha yatha gaura-padaravinde | vindeta bhaktim krita-punya-rasih ||
tatha tathotsarpati hridy akasmad | radha-padambhoja-sudhambu-rasih
|| (Caitanya-candramrita 89)

“One who has accumulated a great deal of merit, will find that as his devotion to Caitanya’s lotus feet increases, the ocean of nectar that is the lotus feet of Radha manifests itself suddenly in his heart.”

While the service of the lotus feet of Sri Radha and Krishna may be far removed from the residents of this world, if one is swept away by the waves of the loving rapture of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, he will easily be tossed to the farther shore of the ocean of Yugala-seva.

gaura-prema-rasarnave, se tarange jeba dube |
se radha-madhava-antaranga || (Prarthana)

“He who dives into the waves of the ocean of the rapturous mellows of Gaura’s love will become a confidential associate of Sri Radha and Madhava.”

Let, therefore, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu reign victorious in the hearts of the practising devotees who aspire to dedicate their lives at the feet of Sri Radha and Govinda!

(My heart goes out to one of my Godbrothers without whom this blog would never have seen the light.)

Raganuga-tattva-vijnana (Srila Ananta das Babaji)

What is raganuga-bhakti?

We have learnt about *sadhana-bhakti* in the chapter ‘A Scientific Study of Bhakti’.

Sadhan- bhakti is of two types -

- *Vaidhi*
- *Raganuga*

Vaidhi-bhakti is when we perform *bhakti* because of scriptural injunctions, while *raganuga-bhakti* has only one qualification – greed. When we are greedy for Sri Krishna-*prema* and this is the sole reason why we practice *bhakti*, then we call it *raganuga-bhakti*.

When we practice *bhakti* following in the footsteps of ragatmika devotees, we can say we are performing *raganuga-bhakti*. Hence, if we want to know about *raganuga-bhakti*, first of all we have to learn what *ragatmika-bhakti* is.

Srila Rupa Goswamipad has defined *ragatmika-bhakti* as follows -

“When we have natural loving and extremely strong thirst for Sri Krishna and it makes us supremely absorbed in Him – it is called ‘*raga*'; that *raga-bhakti* is ‘*Ragatmika-bhakti*.’”

– (B.R.S.)

“Very loving and strong thirst for Sri Krishna is the primary (main) characteristic of *raga-bhakti* while absorption in Him is its secondary characteristic.”

– (C.C.Madhya.22.86)

‘Very strong thirst’ indicates that we feel an intense desire to please Sri Krishna with our *seva*– this is the main characteristic.

This immense greed makes us supremely absorbed in Sri Krishna - this is the secondary characteristic of *raga-bhakti*.

When we are completely absorbed in something, we lose touch with the external world, since we only think about how to make the ever-sportive Sri Krishna happy? How to serve Him according to our *bhava*? In this state we are only concerned with His *seva* – nothing else enters the heart of a devotee. ‘*Swarasikai*’ means the devotee has an intense greed to serve

Sri Krishna and make Him happy by serving Him according to the *rasa* that he possesses. For example - if the devotee is in parental *rasa* he treats Sri Krishna like a child and has an immense longing to make Him taste that *rasa*. The devotee's desire to make Sri Krishna happy is so enormous that he is absolutely immersed in Him. This is *ragatmika-bhakti* and it is present completely in the eternal associates of the Lord in Vraja dham – in fact it is present only in Vraja-dham and never outside Vraja.

“The *bhakti* that is present openly in the Vrajavasis is ‘*ragatmika-bhakti*’; when someone practices devotion following in the footsteps of *ragatmika-bhakti*, then we call it *raganuga- bhakti*.”
– (B.R.S.)

“*Ragatmika-bhakti* is present chiefly in the Vrajavasis, and *Raganuga-bhakti* is that which follows in the footsteps of *ragatmika-bhakti*.
– (C.C.Madhya.22.85)

Srimat Jiva Goswamipad has stated the characteristics of *raga-bhakti* as follows –

“There are devotees who feel slight interest in *raga-bhakti*; however they have still not actually felt *raga-bhakti*. *Raga-bhakti* is like a radiant moon; when a little trace of the moonlight of the moon-like *raga-bhakti* falls in these devotees, their heart dazzles like crystal. Then they hear from the scriptures about the wonderful *seva* that ragatmika devotees perform, and then they are interested to achieve the same. Here we should note the point that the devotee's heart should be clean – it should not be polluted with lust, anger, jealousy and the like. If such a devotee hears from the *sadhus* and the scriptures about the perfect *seva* rendered by the ragatmika devotees he becomes interested. Now with this interest, if he follows the footsteps of the ragatmika devotees, we can say he is performing *raganuga-bhakti*.

In this context ‘hear from the *sadhus* and scriptures’ means the devotee should hear about the loving *seva* performed by the Vrajavasis and how Sri Krishna relishes the *rasa* of their *seva*. When the devotee hears and glorifies these pastimes his enthusiasm knows no bounds; just as when a moon ray disperses through a prism it looks all the more beautiful, similarly the hearing and glorifying enters the clear heart of a devotee

and he becomes more joyous. Thus the devotee is enthused with interest in *prema-seva*. This induces him in the path of *raganuga-bhakti*. Here ‘interest’ means the devotee realizes that the *bhakti-shastras* that reveal the *bhava* of the eternal Vrajavasi associates of Sri Krishna as the best for hearing and he wants to follow those instructions only. This happens when the devotee has past *samskara* in this field. From the very beginning the devotee is greedy for Sri Krishna-*seva* (please note: only that kind of *seva* which the Vrajavasis do) and does not practice *bhakti* simply because the scriptures order us to do so.

“*Ragatmika-bhakti* is full of pure loving service. Some rare fortunate person is tempted by hearing about it and then he follows in the footsteps of the eternal Vrajavasi associates. A *raganuga* devotee does not practice *bhakti* just because of scriptural injunctions.”

– (C.C.Madhya. 22.87-88)

It is true that when we feel tempted, we do not care for scriptural injunctions; however if we want to gain His *seva* it becomes necessary to follow the processes prescribed by the *bhakti-shastras*.

Srila Vishwanath Chakravartipad has ordained –

“When we hear about the sweet *bhava* of the Vrajavasis we feel tempted; we do not care whether the scriptures tell us to practice *bhakti* or do not tell us. If we want to practice *bhakti* simply because the scriptures order us to do so we cannot say we were greedy for *seva*.”

– (Raga-vartma Chandrika)

However if we want to achieve the topmost goal that is *Vraja-prema*, then we must necessarily practice *bhajan* according to the rules prescribed in the *raganuga*-scriptures. This is because –

“If someone performs exclusive Hari-*bhakti* by rejecting the *shrutis*, *smritis*, purans and the pancharatra – we find that he only creates trouble.”

(Brahma-Yamal-Tantra)

Earlier we have mentioned something about ‘interest’. Now the fact is that majority of the devotees do not have this interest in the preliminary stage. Yet, when they perform *bhajan* according to the rules of *bhakti* and they continue to hear about the *raga-bhakti* of the Vrajavasis, they develop interest. Then they become *raganuga* devotees. When we hear

from the devotees who are always immersed in pure love then we quickly gain interest. We also strive to follow these devotees in the same mood as they possess. This means that if we feel greedy after hearing about the loving *seva* of the eternal associates who are in *madhurya-bhava*, we too start practicing in *madhurya-bhava*. *Raganuga-bhajan* is the spiritual practice by which we can attain that same stage of love as those devotees whom we are following (the eternal Vrajavasis in the *madhurya-bhava*). We have to follow scriptural rules in this process, since the *raganuga* scriptures aim to tell the *raganuga* devotees about the behavior of the eternal associates, and thus they inuse vigorous interest in us.

“*siddhasya lakshanam yat syat sadhanam sadhakasya tat.*”

Meaning - “We have to practice to get all those qualities that they already possess.”

When we really gain interest then the scriptures will follow us. It means that in the early stage of interest we should perform *bhajan* according to the rules and regulations prescribed in the scriptures, and after we gain complete interest, the rules follow us – this is the difference between early stage and mature stage.

Srimad-Bhagavatam (2.1.7) says -'

prāyeṇa munayo rājan
nivṛttā vidhi-śedhataḥ
naирguṇya-sthā ramante sma
guṇānukathane hareḥ

Srimat Jiva Goswamipad has explained this verse as follows – “*Raganuga-bhakti* starts from the time we develop the slightest hint of interest. No one steps into *raganuga* because the scriptures order to do so. Therefore some people call it ‘*avihita*’ (not according to the rules). However, the ones who step in the path of *bhakti* not caring for the scriptural injunctions – we cannot say that they are not practicing *bhakti*, because we see in Srimad-Bhagavatam from above -

‘O king, very often sages, who are beyond the rules prescribed in the scriptures, are immersed in relishing Sri Hari-*katha*.’

For this reason the *vidhi-marga* is weak since the devotees in this case practice *bhakti* because the scriptures order them to do so, while the devotees practicing *raganuga-bhakti* do so not caring for the scriptural order – hence it is much stronger – we should know this fact.”
– (B.S.310)

As soon as a devotee starts with *Raganuga-bhakti* it makes him disinterested in anything other than *bhakti*. This is synonymous with greed. Srimad-Bhagavatam states that when we bend towards Sri Hari-*katha* then it increases our interest gradually to such an extent that all topics other than Sri Krishna lose importance for us.

Now let us learn the various types of *Raga-bhakti*.

The Gradual Enhancement in *Raga-bhakti*

Although love for God is always great, it does depend on the devotee's identity and Sri Bhagavan's *svarupa*. When the divine form expresses majesty and sweetness most completely to a devotee, then it means that the devotee's love for Him is also most complete. Vrajendra-Nandana Sri Krishna is *Svayam Bhagavan*. He is the only One Who manifests majesty and sweetness most completely and hence a devotee's love too is most complete when it is for Vrajendra-Nandana Sri Krishna. Again love depends on how much sweetness a devotee can relish and the relation he has with Sri Krishna. In Vraja there are four types of *bhava* –

dasya (servitude),
sakhya (friendly)
vatsalya (parental)
madhurya (conjugal)

Amongst these *bhava*, *sakhya bhava* brings more pleasure than *dasya bhava*, *vatsalya bhava* is more enjoyable than *sakhya bhava* and the relish is maximum in *madhurya-bhava*.

We can classify *ragatmika-bhakti* into two –

1. *sambandha-rupa*
2. *kama-rupa*

A Vrajavasi feels related with Sri Krishna and thinks – “I am Govinda’s servant” or “I am Govinda’s friend” or “I am Govinda’s parent”. This is ‘*sambandha-rupa*’. In this the devotee serves Sri Krishna according to his relation. In *kama-rupa* too the devotee has a relation with Sri Krishna; however in this *bhakti* eroticism is so dominant that it deserves special mention. This is present in the Vraja-beauties who are the source of *madhurya rasa*. Although they have a relation with Sri Krishna – that is – they consider Him to be their Beloved – however because their relation is extra-marital, their love is not bound by any particular name. Their love is so strong that it crosses all barriers and establishes a loving relation with Sri Krishna. Thus their love is incomparable in all creation. Although the scriptures refer to it as ‘*kama*’ (lust) it is supremely strong pure love or *prema*.

“The most dominant love of the fair sex of Vraja is referred to as ‘*kama*’. The dear and wise associates of Sri *Bhagavan* such as Uddhava crave for this sort of ‘*kama*’.”
– (B.R.S.)

The *prema* of the *Gopikas* is inexpressibly sweet and is called as ‘*kama*’. It is entirely devoid of any desire for sense-gratification and although its external symptoms resemble ‘*kama*’ its aim is nothing but to make Sri Krishna happy. It is indeed an inconceivable mystery!

Srimat Jiva Goswamipad has written in Priti Sandarbha –

“Vraja-*Gopikas* are in the mood of sweethearts. Therefore their activities resemble those of *kama*; for this reason we call their mood as ‘*kama*’. It is entirely different from the material lust (*smara*) caused by the Love-god. There are many differences between the two. Ordinarily ‘lust’ indicates desire, while ‘*prema*’ means we are aware of what is favourable for the person whom we love and we do everything to that effect. Sri Krishna is the object of love and the *Gopis* do whatever is good for Him. Such feeling is *prema*. This is why although the external symptoms of both *kama* and *prema* are almost similar they are extremely unlike one another. *Kama* indicates selfishness whereas *prema* means we endeavour to do what is favorable for the one we love. Thus the pure dominant *prema* in the Vraja-*Gopis* is referred to as ‘*kama*’ only because of external activities and we call their *bhakti* as ‘*kama-rupa*’.”

We have already mentioned how *madhurya-bhava* is the most enjoyable of all the *bhavas*. Let us see why so.

In *dasya -bhava* the devotee performs *seva* such as fanning, offering of betel-leaves, massaging of feet etc.

In *sakhya-bhava* too we notice the same activities, however when a *sakha* defeats Gopal in a game, He has to undergo punishment. Then He has to carry the *sakha* on His shoulder. Sometimes the friends tease Him by tugging at His clothes and at other times they offer Him food that they have bitten into. All these activities are not possible for a devotee in the mood of servitude. Thus we see that *sakhya-bhava* is higher than *dasya bhava*.

Vatsalya-bhava contains the activities of *dasya-bhava*, however the parents scold and beat Sri Krishna, instruct Him about what is right and wrong, displays extreme care regarding His food and health.

Thus *vatsalya-bhava* is higher than *sakhya* and *dasya bhava*. Again we find that the activities of *dasya*, *sakhya*, and *vatsalya* are all present in *madhurya-bhava*. Over and above it contains activities such as winking or gesturing with eyes, gazing with longing in the heart, embracing, kissing etc. Such sweet activities are not present in the other *bhava*. The Vraja-beauties manifest these activities to the fullest degree. Therefore they are established on the highest pedestal in the empire of *prema*.

You may ask – the relish of a certain *bhava* depends on the taste of the particular devotee – how can we judge the individual taste and declare *madhurya-bhava* as the highest? After all, the judgment depends on the devotee, does it not?

We beg to answer – you are right; the devotee considers his *bhava* to be the topmost. It is alright for one in parental mood (*vatsalya-bhava*) to feel the parental mood to be the best. However if we analyze impartially then we can decide the degree of the taste. The one who has no *rasa* cannot decide on topics regarding *rasa*. Hence one who is a *rasika* (situated in his own *rasa*), yet is impartial towards other *rasa*, is the right person to make the judgment so as to which *rasa* is the most relishing. Such a person is Uddhava Mahashaya. He was a devotee of *dasya-rasa* mingled with *sakhya rasa*. Sri Krishna sent him to Vrindavana to console the *Gopis*. When he arrived here he saw the remarkable exultation of *viraha* surging in the ocean of *prema* experienced by the *Gopis*. He realized the extreme greatness of *Gopi-prema* (*madhurya-bhava*) and begged to become a blade

of *grasas* or at least a moss in Vrajadham so that a speck of dust from the lotus feet of the *Gopis* would bathe him. We see this in Srimad-Bhagavatam. This proves the superiority of *madhurya-bhava*.

Our next question would be – if *Gopi-prema* is indeed superior, then why does everybody not aspire for *madhurya-bhava*?

The answer is: Although *madhurya-bhava* is the topmost, a devotee may be interested in the other *bhavas* such as *dasya*, depending on his past *samskara* or may be in this life itself he has gained the *kripa* of some great soul who is in that *bhava*. Let us understand this better.

Agreed that sweet dishes are more popular, they are considered the best; yet one may like sour, salty, pungent, or bitter taste and not like the other tastes so much. It differs from individual to individual. Similarly although *madhurya-bhava* is the topmost a devotee may not be interested in *madhurya-bhava* and instead be interested in *dasya*, *sakhya* etc.

Of course all this is regarding the *sadhaka* only. The *ragatmika* devotees are situated naturally in their respective states. A *ragatmika* devotee is one who loves Sri Krishna infinite times more than he loves himself.

The *ragatmika* devotees are bliss personified – just like Sri Krishna. They do not perform any *sadhana*. As soon as they get Sri Krishna's *darshan* their past *rati* is exulted. Amongst all the *ragatmika* devotees the Vraja-beauties are the highest and they are full of *Mahabhava*.

Sri Radha is the greatest amongst the Vraja-beauties since the *Mahabhava* called *madan* is present only in Her.

The *madan-Mahabhava* (or *madan-akhya Mahabhava*) is the zenith of *prema*.

We can classify *madhurya-bhava* (conjugal mood) into two types –

svarakiya (bound by marriage)

parakiya (extra-marital relation)

Svarakiya beloveds comprise of the 16108 queens of Dwaraka. They are lawfully wedded to Sri Krishna according to the Vedic rites. They are always alert to obey His command and steadfast in the scriptural injunctions regarding chastity.

On the other hand, the Vraja *devis* have rejected their dear ones and *Arya-path* (the rules of the civilized society) – simply out of their extraordinary love for Sri Krishna. They serve Him in an extra-marital relation. The Vraja *devis* are not bound to Him through any Vedic rites such as keeping the priest and fire-God as witnesses. They meet Him only because they love Him. Hence the relation they share with Sri Krishna is due to inconceivable love. They have had to forsake their relatives and the path of good conduct to establish this relation – they had to drown all the rules of *dharma* and *adharma*. This is the pinnacle of *anuraga*. As a result their *prema* has reached the topmost height that is *Mahabhava*. Only the Vraja *devis* are in true *parakiya-bhava*. Of course they are the personifications of Sri Krishna's *svarupa-shakti* (internal potency) and hence they are His eternal consorts.

“*Parakiya bhava* is the height of *rasa* and it exists nowhere other than in Vraja dham.”

– (C.C. Adi.4.47)

Srila Rupa Goswamipad says – “When Sri Krishna relishes the exulted erotic *rasa* that is heightened due to *parakiya bhava* – He proves that He is indeed The *Rasika-Shekhar*.”

– (U.N.)

The wonderful distinction between Sri Krishna and other divine forms is His *rasa*-exultation. Sri Krishna's potency *Yogmaya* who is an expert in making the impossible possible shrouds the intellect of the Vraja *devis* and makes them forget that they are His eternal beloveds. She does this so that Sri Krishna and the Vraja *devis* unite in ecstatic *rasa* only due to extreme *anuraga* and not because of any social bonding. In this she enables both Sri Krishna and the Vraja-beauties to relish the *rasa* of *prema*.

(Sri Krishna is saying) –

“*Yogmaya* will make the *Gopis* feel I am their lover (not married to them). I will not know this and neither will the *Gopis* and we will continue eternally to steal one another's hearts. We will forsake the path of righteous conduct and unite with each other. Some times we will meet and at other times we will not – it will depend on luck. I will relish all this essence of *rasa*. Through this relish I will shower mercy on my devotees by describing the pure love of Vraja-dhama. When the devotees

hear this account (of the pure love of the *Gopis*) they will give up Vedic rules and worship me in *raga-marga*.”

- (C.C.Adi.4.29-33)

We already know the ragatmika devotees are in different types of *bhava*; however Sriman Mahaprabhu wants us to be *anugata* of a certain type of *ragatmika-bhava* – and which one is that?

Kama-rupa bhakti

We have already learnt that *Ragatmika-bhakti* is of two types –

- *sambandha-rupa*
- *kama-rupa*

We can further classify *kama-rupa bhakti* into -

- *sambhog-echchamayi*
- *tad-bhavaech-chatmika*

“When the *yutheshwaris* (group-leaders) such as Srimati Radharani wish to please Sri Krishna with loving sports, their *bhakti* is called *sambhog-echchamayi* (such *Gopis* are called ‘*nayikas*’), while ‘*tad-bhavaech-chatmika*’ refers to those *sakhis* whose only desire is to unite Sri Krishna with the *nayikas* such as Srimati Radharani or Chandravali.”

– (B.R.S.)

These *sakhis* are concerned only about their *yutheshwari*’s pleasure even when they are in Sri Krishna’s company. They consider the pleasure of their group-leader as greater than their own happiness. Their pleasure lies in relishing the sweet joy arising out of their union. Therefore they never desire a physical relationship with Sri Krishna. When the *yutheshwaris* unite with Sri Krishna these *sakhis* derive so much joy that is many times greater than they would have gained from the physical association with Sri Krishna. This *bhava* of the *sakhis* is so wonderful that it astonishes even the *nayak* Sri Krishna and the *nayika*, so much so, that Sri Krishna and the *nayika* too desire this special *bhava*. Since this *sakhi-bhava* is higher than the *bhava* of the *nayika*, it is called the ‘chief *kamanuga bhakti*’.

“The nature of a *sakhi* is indeed remarkable; she does not wish to make love to Sri Krishna. She arranges the love-sports between Srimati Radharani and Sri Krishna and gains innumerable times more pleasure

out of it than from her own association with Him. Srimati Radharani is like a wish- fulfilling creeper of Sri Krishna-*prema*, while the *sakhis* are its leaves, flowers, and buds. When the nectarine love of Sri Krishna nourishes the creeper (Srimati Radharani) then the leaves and flowers feel more joyous than they would have felt had they been watered directly.”

– (C.C.Madhya.8.207-210)

“When Sri Krishna touches Srimati Radharani, then Her *sakhis*, although they may be far from Her, express shivering, perspiration, goose bumps etc. that are the signs of ecstatic pure love; and when Sri Krishna very joyously drinks the nectar of Srimati Radharani’s lips then the *sakhis* express intoxication - this is a most astonishing event!”

– (Sri Govinda-Lilamritam)

These *sakhis* are as beautiful and talented as any *yudheshwari*. They are absolutely in charge of the love-sports, fun, and frolic. They are Vraja-beauties who are the caskets of erotic *rasa*. Sri Krishna and His beloveds love them more than their lives. They extol Sri Krishna to His sweetheart and sing her glory to Him. In this manner they arouse their passion for each other and arrange for Their *abhisara* (secret meeting). They hand over the sweetheart to Sri Krishna, joke with them, console them, arrange their dresses, are experts at revealing the feelings of Sri Krishna and His sweetheart to the other, hide the *nayika*’s faults, instruct her so as to how she can cheat her husband and the elders, unite the *nayak* and the *nayika* at the right moment, offer the right *seva* at the right time, scold the *nayak* and the *nayika*, dispatch messages, restore the *nayika*’s life when she is in *viraha*, foil the plans of the opposite party – these are some of the *sevas* of these *sakhis*.

These *sakhis* are of 5 types –

1. *sakhi*
2. *nityasakhi*
3. *pransakhi*
4. *priyasakhi*
5. *param-preshtha-sakhi*

All these *sakhis* can be classified according to their nature as – *Vishama-sneha*,

Sama-sneha and Adhik-sneha.

The *sakhis* who are *vishama-sneha* love Sri Krishna little more than they love Srimati Radharani – e.g. Dhanishtha and Vindhya.

The *sakhis* who sometimes exhibit little more love for Sri Krishna and at other times little more love towards Srimati Radharani are *sama-sneha*. E.g. *priya-sakhis* such as Kurangakshi and *param-preshtha sakhis* such as Lalita and the Eight principle *sakhis* (popularly known as the *Ashta-sakhis*). *Pran-sakhis* and *nitya-sakhis* such as Kasturi and Manimanjari love Srimati Radharani more and are called *Radha-snehadhika*.

Lalita, Vishakha, Chitra, Indurekha, Champaklata, Rangadevi, Tungavidya and Sudevi are *param-preshtha sakhis*. Although they love Sri Krishna and Srimati Radharani equally, they feel “we belong only to Radha” – hence they reveal more love for Srimati Radharani. It is a fact that they serve Sri Krishna only because He is Srimati Radharani’s Love and never as their own lover. Even though they make love to Sri Krishna – it is only to make Srimati Radharani happy.

“Although the *sakhis* do not like to make love to Sri Krishna, Radhika coaxes them to do so. She sends them to Sri Krishna under many pretexts since She derives much more pleasure from that than Her own association with Him. Srimati Radharani and the *sakhis* express especially pure love and thus nourish the pleasure of *rasa*. When Sri Krishna sees their love He feels satisfied.”

– (C.C.Madhya.18.212-214)

The *param-preshtha sakhis* love Srimati Radharani very much and this love ultimately culminates in Sri Krishna-*prema*. And although they express less or more love for Sri Radha-Krishna from time to time – it is their way of manifesting love naturally and they do not do so voluntarily. It is possible that we have more love for one person yet show equal love for both. Srila Rupa Goswamipad says –

“The *priya-narma sakhis* such as Lalita have immense love for Sri Radha-Krishna, yet they express more love for Srimati Radharani and at other times more love for Sri Krishna – this is the nature of the *sakhis*.”

– (U.N.)

The *visham-sneha sakhis* such as Dhanishtha love Sri Krishna more than Srimati Radharani, but they do not have any *sakhi* following them. They are in a minority. There is no process of *bhajan* following their path.

Now the question arises which *sakhis* of Srimati Radharani are the topmost? Naturally we would like to perform *bhajan* under their subjugation alone.

Manjari-bhava

Sri Rupa Manjari, Sri Rati Manjari, Sri Lavanga Manjari etc are *adhik-snehadhika* or *Radha- snehadhika*. They love Srimati Radharani more. We call them ‘*manjaris*’. In all situations they relish immeasurable and inexpressible ever-new pleasure of *seva*. Although they do not expect any pleasure – all they desire is *seva* – yet it is the nature of *manjari-bhava* and Sri Sri Radha- Krishna’s very confidential *seva* that they feel happy on their own. Their *bhava* is so immense that even when they are close to Sri Krishna Who is Madan-Mohan; they retain their individual freedom and yet submerge Him in the ocean of joy simply by doing *seva*. Their *rati* is the only one of its kind; it reaches the height of wonder and becomes ‘*bhavollasa rati*’.

“When the *rati* of *sakhis* (for Srimati Radharani) such as Lalita is equal or less than the passion for Sri Krishna, then we call their *rati* for Srimati Radharani as the ‘passing *rati*’, and that *rati* also nourishes their passion for Sri Krishna. However when the *rati* for Srimati Radharani is more than the passion for Sri Krishna, and keeps on increasing due to constant absorption in that *rati*, we call that passion as ‘*bhavollasa*’.”
– (B.R.S.)

This *bhavollasa-rati* is the permanent *bhava* of the *manjaris* such as Sri Rupamanjari. When we determinedly follow in the footsteps of the *manjaris* in this *bhava* and perform *seva* then our *bhava* is called ‘*manjari-bhava*’.

This *manjari-bhava* alone is the ‘hitherto unoffered’ gift of compassionate Sriman-Mahaprabhu; Sri Rupa and Sanatana have practiced and preached this *bhava* only.

Srila Narottama das Thakur Mahashaya has written in his *Prema-Bhakti-Chandrika* –

“Do not follow the *sakhis* who are in the mood of *sama-sneha* and *vishama-sneha*; I shall discuss only the *adhik-sneha* *sakhis*. They remain constantly with Srimati Radharani and indulge in charming talks about Sri Krishna – they are the *narma-sakhis*. Sri Rupa-manjari is their leader while Sri Rati Manjari, Lavanga Manjari, Manjulali, Sri Rasa Manjari and Kasturika are the chief *manjaris*. They serve with love, joy and enthusiasm. I shall follow them and ask them to engage me in the loving service of the Divine Couple.

I shall understand what *seva* I should do by a mere hint from them. Bouncing with beauty and talents I shall follow them with deep love and stay amidst the *sakhis*. When the Divine Couple will sit surrounded by the *sakhis*, I will serve them at the right time. When the *sakhi* gestures I will fan Them with the fly-whisk and offer betel-leaf at Their sweet lips. I will meditate constantly on the lotus feet of the divine Couple with deep love. Whatever I meditate upon during my *sadhana* I shall get in my *siddha-deha* – this is the only process in the path of eternal love.” – (P.B.C.)

A *raganuga* devotee should take the shelter of the eternal associates such as Sri Rupa Manjari and surrender unto them; in this manner we should worship in *manjari-bhava* (given to us by our Spiritual Master). We should be more enthusiastic about serving Srimati Radharani than serving Sri Krishna and think of ourselves as Srimati Radharani’s very near and dear person. We may ask

– ‘All the scriptures proclaim Sri Krishna-*prema* as the topmost achievable goal, then why should we love Srimati Radharani more than Sri Krishna?’ The reply is that – Sri Krishna is controlled by Srimati Radharani. When we love Her, we will attain Sri Krishna-*prema* much more and this will happen automatically.

Srila Rupa Goswamipad has written –

“*vayam-idam-anubhuya shikshayama, kuru chature ! saha radhayaiva sakhyam, priya-sahachari ! yatra vadhamantar-bhavati hari-pranaya-pramoda-lakshmih.*”
- (U.N.)

Srila Vishwanath Chakravartipad has explained this verse as follows in his Ananda-Chandrika purport –

Sri Mani Manjari instructed a new *manjari* – “My dear clever girl, I am telling you from my own experience, it is better you make friends with

Srimati Radha. You may ask – why should I form a loving relation with Srimati Radha? Rather, is it not better to establish a loving relation with Sri Krishna? No, it is not. I'll tell you why – please listen carefully. No doubt it is highly pleasurable to get Sri Hari's love; but if you love Srimati Radharani deeply then that precious pleasure will present itself to you on its own. This is because love for Sri Krishna is included within your love for Srimati Radha. Hence if you make friends with Her – it is needless to say that - a loving relation with Sri Krishna will form naturally.

When you become Srimati Radharani's firm *sakhi*, then Sri Krishna will consider you as His beloved's dear friend and so He will love you all the more. He will not love you so much if you make friends with Him directly, however He will love you more if you love Her. So I am telling you if you can prove your love for Srimati Radharani then Sri Krishna will love you even if you do not try for it. Sri Krishna is happier when our love for Srimati Radharani is more than our love for Him. Also when Srimati Radharani does *man* or if the elders shut Her up in the house, then Sri Krishna will need you desperately to help Him meet Her. Then He will, on His own, run behind you to make friends with you. You see, you don't have to work hard to make friends with Him.”

Especially if we wish to relish the sweet *rasa* of Sri Krishna then worshiping the lotus feet of Srimati Radharani becomes inevitable. Srila Raghunath das Goswamipad has written –

“The one who has not worshiped the dust of Srimati Radharani's lotus feet, has not taken shelter of Sri Vrindavana that is decorated with Her footprints, has not conversed with the great devotees who are deeply immersed in Srimati Radharani's servitude, how will such a person ever relish the most mysterious fathomless ocean of *rasa* that is Sri Krishna?”
– (Stavavali)

This is the sole reason why Sripad Raghunatha das Goswamicharan has rejected the position of Srimati Radharani's *sakhi* and has begged Her to exclusively make him Her maidservant –

“O Devi Radhike, to become a servant of Your lotus feet is the highest position; leaving this I do not desire anything else (such as the position of Your *sakhi*). I pay obeisance to Your *sakhi*-hood eternally, however

please let me always remain rooted in the position of Your maidservant – this is my pledge.” - (V.K.)

Srimati Radharani’s servitude is not a mean thing – it is the highest position or the most blessed status. Srimati Radharani’s maidservant is a servant in spite of being a *sakhi*. She has the right to the entire sweet *rasa*. First she relishes sweet *rasa* and then she performs *seva*. Therefore Srimati Radharani’s servitude is overflowing with *rasa*.

Sometimes, by Srimati Radharani’s wish *sakhis* such as Lalita do unite with Sri Krishna, yet the *manjaris* never have a conjugal relation with Him. They are so much averse to it that even if Sri Krishna begs them for it and even if their group leader orders them to do so – the *manjaris* never ever have the slightest wish to make love to Sri Krishna in spite of such an activity being extremely joyous. Sri Vrindavana-Mahimamritam says –

“The *manjari* is exclusively immersed in relishing the *rasa* of serving the lotus feet of Srimati Radharani, and she never accepts love-dalliance with Sri Krishna even in her dreams (definitely not when awake). When Sri Krishna forcibly tears her bodice and makes an advance towards her, then the *manjari* tearfully protests and laments – and beholding this scene - Srimati Radharani, the Beloved of my life laughs.’

Even *sakhis* such as Lalita do not get the pleasure of serving the Divine couple in a manner that the *manjaris* can serve. We are fortunate to get such *seva* when we are completely surrender at Srimati Radharani’s lotus feet.

“I seek the refuge of Srimati Radharani’s maidservants headed by Sri Rupa Manjari – who can move freely and unhesitatingly in the sports ground of Sri Sri Radha-Krishna’s love-making - that even the *pran-preshta sakhis* such as Lalita cannot – and they constantly please Srimati Radharani, Who is the controller of Sri Vrindavana, with their sweet *seva*, such as offering *tambul*, massaging feet, offering water and helping in *abhisar*.”
– (Vraja-Vilasa-Stava)

We, the Gaudiya Vaishnavas, who wish to become Srimati Radharani’s maidservants, pray from the bottom of our hearts –

“When will I get the association of my *sakhi* and sew flower-garlands for both of Them? O when will I stand in front of them fanning Them with the fly-whisk? And anoint Them with *aguru* and *chandan*? When, on the command of the *sakhi*, will I offer *tambul*? And adorn Their foreheads with *sindur* and *tilak*? When will I behold their charming and loving pastimes with my eyes? And gaze at Their moon like faces after seating Them on the throne? I wish to relish that sweetness with all my heart – when will Narottama das get such mercy?”

– (Prarthana)

Let us learn how to achieve this superlative state by practicing bhajan in *manjari-svarupa*.

How to perform *Raganuga bhajan*

The Vrajavasis are the eternal associates of Sri Krishna and they have a very special *bhava* for Him. When we hear about their *bhava* and how they express it, if we feel greedy to achieve the same *bhava*, then we are qualified for *Raganuga bhajan*. Srila Rupa Goswamipad says this in B.R.S.

—
“*tesham bhavaptaye lubdho bhavaedatradhikaravan.*”

He has also described in detail how such a qualified devotee should perform *Raganuga bhajan* – “*krisham smaran janan-chasya preshtham nija-samihitam,*

*tat-tat-katharata shchasou kuryad-vasam vraje sada.
seva sadhaka-rupena siddha-rupena chatrahi,
tad-bhava-lipsuna karya Vraja-lokanusaratah.*”

Meaning - "We should meditate on our Beloved Sri Krishna and His Beloved, associate with devotees who are in the same mood as ourselves (*swajatiya* devotee) and if possible, we should reside in Vrindavana in our *sadhak*-body also. If we are incapable of doing so then we should at least live here mentally. We should take the shelter and surrender unto the Vrajavasi-devotee who is dear to Sri Krishna, and craving to get the same *bhava* as that devotee, we should constantly perform *seva* in our *sadhak-svarupa* (externally) and in our *siddha-svarupa* (mentally).”

– (B.R.S.)

Srila Vishwanath Chakravartipad has explained the above two verses as follows –

“In these two verses Srila Rupa Goswamipad has explained the proper way to perform *Raganuga bhajan*. ‘*Preshta*’ (in the above verse) refers to our Beloved Sri Nanda-Nandan in His budding youth. We should worship Sri Krishna in this form alone, but at the same time we should constantly remember His eternal associates who have similar desire as we and we should reside in Vraja dham in this manner. If possible we should physically live in some place in Vraja dham such as Vrindavana etc. and in case we are incapable of doing so, it is our duty to live there at least in mind.

‘*Sadhak*-form’ means the body that we are in at present, and ‘*siddha-deha*’ indicates the body that is worthy of serving in the divine world, that on which we should meditate upon. In this divine form (*siddha-deha*) we should serve under the command of Sri Radha, Lalita, Vishakha, Sri Rupa- manjari and other *sakhis* who are very dear to Sri Krishna and they wish to relish the sweet *bhava* of Sri Krishna. In the *sadhak*-body we should serve following the instructions of the Goswamis such as Sri Rup and Sanatan. This signifies that in *siddha-svarupa* we should perform *seva* mentally under the guidance of Sri Radha, Lalita, Vishakha and Sri Rupa-manjari, while in *sadhak* body we should do *seva* under the subjugation of the Vrajavasis such as Sri Rup and Sanatan. This is our duty.

Here ‘*anusaratah*’ does not mean ‘*anukaran*’ or imitation (we should not imitate the Goswamis or the eternal divine associates), rather it indicates ‘*anusaran*’ - which means – we should serve according to their command and following their *bhava*.”

True, in *Raganuga* path meditating on the divine pastimes is the main *sadhana*, however in the primary stage we are not qualified for *leela-smaran*. Therefore we should concentrate more on hearing, chanting and following the other rules of *bhakti*. Then as our *chitta* gets more and more purified, we are drawn towards *leela-smaran*. Slowly our *smaran* becomes more intense. Ultimately when we reach the zenith of *bhajan*, *leela-smaran* naturally becomes the major part of *bhajan*. We should note that all the parts of *bhakti* mentioned in *vaidhi-bhakti* are useful in *Raganuga bhajan* also.

Srila Rupa Goswamipad mentions this in the verse –

“*shravanot-kirtanadini vaidha-bhaktyuditani tu, yanyangani cha tanyatra vigneyani manishibhish.*”

- (B.R.S.)

Here hearing and chanting also includes accepting the shelter of Sri Gurudev's lotus feet and other fundamentals of *bhakti* as well. We should realize that all the rules of *bhakti* that we have already mentioned, and they are the parts of *vaidhi-bhakti* – we should stick to them in *Raganuga bhajan* also. If we do not obey the instructions of the Vrajavasi Goswamis such as Sri Rupa Goswami, Sanatan Goswami etc., how can we say we are surrendered unto them? Then how can we follow in their footsteps? The serious devotees should practice only those rules that are in accordance with their *bhava* and never do what is contrary to it – such as *aham grahopasana*, *mudra*, *nyas*, meditating on Dwaraka, worshiping Sri Rukmini etc. Although the *agam-shastras* mention these processes of *bhakti*, a *Raganuga sadhak* should not perform them.

Raganuga practice has two limbs – external and internal. External practice is done with our *sadhak*-body, while we perform internal *sadhana* by meditating on our *siddha-deha*. In the *sadhak*-body we should hear, chant, forsake material pleasures, and serve The Deities with actual ingredients. We should meditate on our *siddha-deha* and serve Sri Krishna Who is our Beloved with this body for only the *siddha-deha* is worthy of serving the divine Couple. We should seek refuge of Srimati Radharani Who is the object of our love and surrender unto Her and Her dear ones. It is our duty to strive for that brilliant *rasa* and following the instructions of Sri Rupa-manjari we should collect objects in meditation for internal *seva* and serve the divine couple as the time and situation demands.

“*bahya antar ihar dui to sadhan, bahya – sadhak-dehe kore shraban kirtan. mone – nija siddha-deha koriya bhabon, ratridine kore braje radha-krishner seban.*”

Meaning - "Raganuga bhajan comprises of two practices – external and internal. Externally, we should hear and chant, while we should meditate on our *siddha deha* and serve Sri Radha-Krishna in Vraja dham all day and night."

– (C.C. Madhya.22.89-90)

Manjari-bhava-sadhana has two forms of worship

Sri Krishna's pastimes are of two types – manifested unmanifested

When material people can see the divine pastimes with material eyes, we call such *lilas* as '*prakat lila*' or manifested pastimes.

On the other hand, when the people of this world cannot see the divine pastimes, we call such pastimes as '*aprakat lila*' or 'unmanifested pastimes.' Both the *lilas* are identical.

The difference lies in who is able to see it and who is not. The unmanifested pastimes do not mix with worldly people and mundane objects, while the *prakat lila* is mixed up with the material world.

Although the *prakat lila* is not subject to change – just like Sri Krishna's form that is always divine – it appears to have a beginning and an end. However these *lilas* are not controlled by time and place – we should realize this.

These pastimes too occur by His wish alone and His *svarupa shakti* controls them.

"We can worship Sri Krishna's unmanifested pastimes in two ways – *swarasikai* and *mantramayi*"
– (Sri Krishna-Sandarbha.153)

Mantramayi worship

Sri Krishna is present in *Yogpitha* in different places. He is surrounded by His associates who are seated in various positions.

When we meditate on them as such and worship them with *mantras* mentioned in the scriptures, we call it *mantramayi* worship.

In Vraja-dhama there are different places where the *Yogpitha-lila* takes place. In this worship, Sri Krishna is present with His associates in one particular place and the entire worship takes place in this place only – therefore *mantramayi* worship resembles a lake with still water.

Swarasikai worship

Swarasikai lilas are those pastimes of Sri Krishna that are according to our mood (in the case of a *Manjari* it is the sweet mood or conjugal mood).

They do not occur at the same place and at the same time. They are without a beginning, middle and end. They are extremely variegated. Each pastime is unique. Different pastimes occur in different places and at different times. These *lilas* resemble a flowing river.

“These *lilas* take place as and when He wishes and differs from situation to situation.”

– (Sri Krishna-Sandarbha, 153)

Just as a river may have lakes in between, the *swarasikai leela* (that is like a river) have the *Yogapitha lila* (that resembles a lake) within it. When we meditate on these variegated pastimes throughout the day, we call it *swarasikai* worship.

Boudhayan Smriti states the meditation in *mantramayi* worship as follows –

“govindam manasa dhyayed gavam madhye sthitam shubham, barha peeda-samyuktam venuvadanatparam, gopijanaih parivritam vanya-pushpavatamsakama.”

Meaning - "Meditate on Sri Govinda in your mind – he is present in all, He is adorning a crown of peacock-feathers, ready to play on His flute, surrounded by the *Gopis* and His ear-rings are made of wild flowers."

Sri Gopal-Tapani Shruti too mentions *mantramayee* worship as follows –

“Tada hovacha – hairanyo gopaveshamabhrabham tarunam kalpadrumashritam. Tadiha shloka bhavanti – ‘satpundarikanayanam meghabham vaidyutambaram, dwibhujam mounamudradhyam vanamalinamishwam. gopa-gopi-gavarritam sura-druma-talashritam, divyalankaranopetam ratnamandapamadhyagam. kalindi-jala-kallola-sangimaruuta-sevitam, chintayech-chetasa krishnam mukto bhavati samsriteh.’ ‘govindam sach-chidananda-vigraham.’ Iti.

Meaning - Lord Brahma said –“Sri Krishna is dressed as a cowherd boy, He is cloud-complexioned, adolescent and His eyes are shaped like lotus petal. He is clad in yellow dhoti, has two hands and is silent. He is wearing a garland of wild flowers and He is the Controller. Brilliant ornaments adorn Him and the *Gopas*, *Gopis* and the cows surround Him. He is seated on a gem-studded throne beneath a wish-fulfilling tree. The breeze blowing across the Kalindi River and laden with water droplets is serving Him. If we serve such Sri Krishna in meditation, we will be verily

liberated from the material ocean. We should worship Him with words such as ‘Govinda’, ‘sach-chidananda’ etc.”

Mantramayee worship is of two types –

- *yogapitha* worship
- *archa-vigraha* worship

We should perform *Yogapitha*-worship in meditation according to the descriptions given in Sri Govinda-Lilamrita, Sri Krishna-Bhavanamrita etc. Also Sri Govinda is Himself present on every altar in a silent form to accept the loving service from His devotees. When we serve Him with utmost love, He will give up His silence and instruct us how to serve Him better. He may speak to the devotee in a dream or when he is awake. However when Sri Krishna speaks to a devotee in the awakened state, it is extremely confidential and our preceptors have forbidden us to discuss this in detail – therefore such devotees have not recorded it in writing. Sri Hari-Bhakti-Vilas is the topmost Smriti have stated the guidelines regarding this form of worship.

Sri Krishna’s *Lila*-

shakti wants Him to enjoy various *lilas*; therefore she manifests the right *lilas* at his right time. The *swarasikai leela* enfolds the *mantramayi lila* in her arms and is flowing in all its colourful variegatedness since eternity. During the *prakat-*

lila (the pastimes that material people can see with mundane eyes) when Sri Krishna leaves Vrindavana and goes to Mathura, then the associates of Vraja are scorched with *viraha*. However even then, the *swarasikai leela* continues in a shrouded manner and it contains the *Yogapitha lila*. But, although the associates do realize this, they do not accept this as real.

Due to extreme *viraha*, they feel it is but a *sphurti*. Srila Rupa Goswamipad has said –

“Sri Krishna is always sporting with the *Vrajadevis* in Vrindavana and performing loving pastimes such as the *Rasa-lila* – they are never separated from Him.”

– (U.N.)

Srimat Jiva Goswamipad has explained this statement as follows

– “These words certainly refer to the *aprakat lila* (the pastimes that

cannot be seen with mundane eyes). 'Vrindavana' indicates the 'unmanifested Vrindavana'." This means that Sri Krishna is always sporting with the Vrajavasis. There is no question of separation.

Padma Puran too states –

"go-gopa-gopika sange kridati kamasaḥ"

Meaning - "The enemy of Kamasa (Sri Krishna) sports with the cows, *Gopas* and *Gopis*."

How the Gaudiya Vaishnavas should relish the eternal pastimes

'Kridati' indicates the simple present tense. This means that Sri Krishna is always engaged in divine play in Vrindavana. Sri Brahma glorified Lord Govinda in Brahma-Samhita as follows –

"Vrindavana is an abode of gem-studded palaces and is decorated with innumerable wish-fulfilling trees. There He is taking care of countless Surabhi-cows. Hundreds of thousands of *Gopa* beauties surround Him and serve Him most lovingly. I adore That Primeval Being – Sri Govinda." This verse proves *swarasikai lila*.

Sri Sri Nabadweep is non-different from Vraja-dham and Sri Gaursundar is the united form of Sri Sri Radha-Krishna. Therefore the Gaudiya Vaishnavas should relish the sweetness of both these Holy places and assist the eternal pastimes in the form of loving devotees. As *sadhaks* we should at first perform *Yogapitha*-meditation (*mantramayi* worship) in Sridham Nabadwip and worship Sri Gaursundar along with His associates in the mind.

When Sriman-Mahaprabhu is engrossed in *Vraja-bhava* along with His confidantes, we too should enter the *Yogapitha seva* in *Manjari-svarupa* and perform mental worship of Sri Sri Radha-Madhav surrounded by the *sakhis* (*mantramayi* worship). This continues into meditating on the various pastimes throughout the day (*ashta-yam*) and we call this the 'swarasikai-worship'.

“Whatever we meditate upon during *sadhana*, we shall get in *siddha-svarupa*”.

– (P.B.C.)

Following this rule the *sadbak* is blessed by serving in both the *lilas* in the eternal abodes in *siddha-svarupa*.

“Here I shall get Sri Gaurachandra and there Radha-Krishna”

– (Srila Narottama das Thakur *Mahashaya*)

This is the most confidential truth of *raganuga*-practice by those Gaudiya Vaishnavas who are humbly surrendered unto Sriman-Mahaprabhu and the preceptors appointed by Him such as Sri Rupa and Sanatana.

In fact, this is the path of bhajan revealed by Sriman-Mahaprabhu, preached and practiced by His confidential associates.

Radha and Krishna in Vrindavana? Only attainable by raganuga-bhakti

"Oh Almighty Lord, Creator of the billions of universes! We praise Your Divine Power!

You create, maintain, and annihilate Your creation.

By Your power everything is moving. Everything rests upon You like pearls resting on a thread.

Nobody can understand Your Divine energies.

In awe and reverence we sing your glories. There is nobody who is more mighty than you.

Wherever we look, we see the expression of Your glorious power.

We should all bow down and worship Your almighty greatness.

By not worshiping You, we all will be living in vain."

"Oh our Beloved!

During the day when you have gone to the forest, every moment without seeing you passes like a yuga (millennium).

Then, upon Your return from the forest at dusk, although we eagerly gaze upon Your exquisitely beautiful lotus face adorned with curly locks, we become greatly perturbed by the occasional blinking of our eyes.

At that time, it seems that creator of eyelids is really cruel to us."

Here we can read two prayers, all directed to God, Krishna. Both prayers glorify the Supreme Lord, Sri Krishna.

But still there is a big difference in the mood (bhava) of these two prayers.

The first prayer is spoken in the mood of awe and reverence (aishvarya-bhava) and the second prayer in the mood of sweetness and love (madhurya-bhava).

Both address the same Supreme Lord, Sri Krishna, but one is on the platform of tattva (knowledge-bound) and one is on the platform of rasa (love-bound).

Sri Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and He is the creator of all universes. Still, He is playing His flute and He is dancing the rasa-dance in sweet Vrindavana.

There is a whole theology about "How Krishna manages the creation-affairs and all that is to it", but this article is not about explaining all the Vishnu-forms Who are responsible for creating, maintaining and destroying.

Here we want to discuss the "inner" difference of the mood (bhava) of the above mentioned prayers.

Especially we want to focus on the inner bhava of the second prayer. This prayer we can find in the "Gopi-Gita" of the Srimat Bhagavatam. In this beautiful "gita" (song) the Gopis declare their unique love to Vrajendra Nandana Sri Krishna.

Now, we can approach God in these two moods: Awe and reference or love and intimate sweetness.

When we read these two prayers, we can feel where our heart is drawn to.

If it is attracted by the power, the majesty, and the sheer almighty of the Lord, we will be able to practice a path similar to this inner mood. We call this path ***vaidhi-bhakti***.

If our heart is attracted by the second prayer, where the most loving, intimate and sweet aspects of the Lord are described, we will be able to practice a path similar to this inner mood. We call this path ***raganuga-bhakti***.

*vaidhi-bhaktir bhavet sastram bhaktau cet syat pravartakam
raganuga syac ced bhaktau lobha eva pravartakah*

"When bhakti is caused by scriptural injunctions (*HERE: How great and powerful is God!*), it is called

vaidhi-bhakti, but when its cause is spiritual greed alone, it is called raganuga-bhakti."

(Raga-vartma-candrika, text 2)

We follow bhakti because we read something like this:

*cari varnasrami yadi krishna nabi bhaje
sva-dharma koriya-o raurave padi maje*
(Caitanya-caritamrita)

“Those in the four social orders who do not worship Krishna will fall into hell, even if they perform their occupational duties.”

We are driven here by the injunction and by the resulting fear of neglecting.

This devotional path or bhajana-marga that is thus prompted by scriptural injunctions is called *vaidhi-marga*.

And the devotion that is prompted by greed, caused by hearing about the pastimes of Sri Krishna, is called *raganuga-marga*.

vaidhi raganuga ceti sa dvidha sadhanabbidha

(Bhakti-Rasamrita-Sindhu, Srila Rupa Goswami)

“Practice is of two kinds, namely vaidhi and raganuga.”

The word “vaidhi” is derived from the Sanskrit word “vidhi”, referring to the commandments of the scriptures.

The word “raganuga” is a compound of two words, namely raga, “loving attachment”, and anuga, “following in the wake of”.

If we want to love Sri Krishna in Vrindavana, we will have to perform raganuga-bhakti. There is no other way.

In the beginning, we have to know and understand that Krishna is God, but to attain Him in Vrindavana, we have to "forget" it.

Now, who loves Krishna to the utmost degree?

Indeed, in the Vedas we learn that the inhabitants of Vrindavana love Krishna the most.

Of all of them, the cowherd-girls, the gopis, love Him the most.

Of all the cowherd-girls, Srimati Radhika loves Him the most.

So in this day and age (Kali-Yuga), we are uniquely fortunate that not long ago, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu (Radha and Krishna in one person) appeared here on earth to teach us EXACTLY this wonderful and totally unique love.

*anarpita-carim cirat karunayavatirnah kala
samarpayitum unnatojjvala-rasam sva-bhakti-sriyam
harih purata-sundara-dyuti-kadamba-sandipitah
sada hridaya-kandare sphuratu vah saci-nandanah*

"May the Supreme Lord who is known as the son of Srimati Saci-devi be transcendently situated in the innermost chambers of your heart. Resplendent with the radiance of molten gold, He has appeared in the Age of Kali by His causeless mercy to bestow what no incarnation has ever offered before: the most sublime and radiant mellow of devotional service, the mellow of conjugal love."

(Caitanya Caritamrita, Adi-lila 1.4)

This "unnatojvala-rasa", this most sublime love was never available before.

This highest love can only be attained by performing raganuga-bhakti.

We heard that the inhabitants of Vrindavana are filled to the brim with this most sublime love, most of all Srimati Radhika.

Now Sriman Mahaprabhu not only gave us "the love of the Vrajavasi", which is fantastic nevertheless, but He came to give us the love, which Radhika and her most intimate girlfriends have in their purest hearts.

Sriman Mahaprabhu is in the mood of Radhika and like Her, He lets us "experience" exactly what She feels.

So we can attain a love only experienced by the maidservants of Radhika, the so-called "manjaris".

Sriman Mahaprabhu appeared to give us this love.

This is widely known as "manjari-bhava".

By following the manjaris in Vrindavana, headed by Sri Rupa Manjari (who is Srila Rupa Goswami in Gaura-lila and the author of many essential books on bhakti), we can achieve the highest goal of life: pure love of Radha and Krishna. This goal is called prema.

When we follow our "role-models", the manjaris of Radhika, we perform raganuga-bhakti.

They have raga in the heart and soul (atmika), eternally so. Their bhakti is thus called ragatmika-bhakti.

So we actually do "anuga", we do "follow". We follow their raga, their inner love. Therfore our bhakti is called raganuga-bhakti.

*virajantim abhivyaktam vrajavasi-janadishu
ragatmikam anusrita ya sa raganugocyate*
(BRS 1.2.270)

“The devotion which is clearly present in the associates of the Lord in Vraja is called devotion filled with loving attachment (ragatmika-bhakti), and devotion following in the wake of this ragatmika-bhakti is called raganuga-bhakti.”

So we can approach Krishna differently and He always "mirrors" our approach.

*ye yatha mam prapadyante
tams tathaiva bhajamy aham
mama vartmanuwartante
manushyah partha sarvasah*
(Bhagavad-gita 4.11)

"All of them-as they surrender unto Me -
I reward accordingly.
Everyone follows My path in all respects, O son of Pritha."

It is the mood which leads and drives us on our path of bhakti.

*vaidhi-raganuga-marga-bhedenā parikirtitah
dvividhah khalu bhavo'tra sadhanabhinivesajah*
(BRS 1.3.7)

“The paths of vaidhi and raganuga are known to be separate from each other. Engagement in these two forms of practice certainly awakens two distinct varieties of bhava.”

The goals of these two paths of bhakti are understood as follows:

Vaidhi-bhakti:

vidhi-bhakte parshada-dehe vaikunthete yaya
(CC 2.24.87)

“Through vidhi-bhakti, one will attain the form of an associate in Vaikuntha.”

*aisvarya-jnane vidhi-bhajana kariya
vaikunthake yaya catur-vidha mukti pana*
(CC 1.3.17)

Raganuga-bhakti:

“Those who worship according to scriptural commandments, being aware of the Lord’s superhuman prowess, attain the four kinds of liberation in Vaikuntha.”

raga-bhaktye vraje svayam-bhagavane paya
(CC 2.24.85)

“Through raga-bhakti, one will attain the Lord Himself in Vraja.”

*raganuga-marge tanre bhaje yei jana |
sei-jana paya vraje vrajendra-nandana*
(CC 2.8.221)

“He who worships on the path of raganuga will attain Vrajendranandana (Sri Krishna) in Vraja.”

Sriman Mahaprabhu Himself shows us the way to attain the highest and sweetest possible love:

*sakala jagate more kare vidhi-bhakti
vidhi-bhaktye vraja-bhava paite nahi sakti
aisvarya-jnanete saba jagat misrita
aisvarya-sithila-preme nahi mora prita*
(CC 1.3.15-16)

“Everyone in this world worships Me through vidhi-bhakti. Vidhibhakti has no power for attaining the feelings of Vraja. The devotion of the world is mixed with knowledge of My divine prowess. I do not delight in love deluted with prowess.”

*karma, tapa, yoga, jnana, vidhi-bhakti, japa, dhyana
iha haite madhurya durlabha
kevala ye raga-marge, bhaje krishne anurage
tare krishna-madhurya sulabha*
(CC 2.21.119)

“Sweetness is very difficult to attain through fruitive activities, austerity, yoga, intellectual speculation, vidhi-bhakti, recitation of mantras or meditation. The sweetness of Sri Krishna is easily attainable only for the one who affectionately worships Him on the path of raga.”

Srila Ananta das Babaji explains this wonderfully in his commentaries on Raga-vartma-chandrika:

"There are two kinds of sadhana-bhakti, vidhi-bhakti and raga-bhakti. Vidhi-bhakti has its roots in the orders of the scriptures and raga-bhakti in sacred greed (lobha).

The exclusive terrain for this raga-bhakti, born of lobha, is Sri Vraja-dhama. The topmost absorption in the most beloved Sri Krishna or the absorption in great loving thirst after Him is called raga and the devotion which is filled with such raga is called ragatmika-bhakti.

This is present in the eternally perfect associates of the Lord in Vraja. When one hears from the saints about this excellent love of Sri Krishna's eternal associates, who are fixed in this ragatmika-bhakti, for Him, and thus starts treading the path of sacred greed in order to attain a similar feeling, then this is called raganuga-bhakti.

Sadhakas can follow in the footsteps of the eternally perfect people of Vraja; this path is called raganuga-bhakti. However, they can never practise ragatmika-bhakti, for this is the innate treasure of the eternally perfect associates of the Lord.

*There are again two kinds of ragatmika-bhakti: **sambandhatmika-bhakti and kamatmika-bhakti** (relationship only-bhakti and amourous relationship-bhakti).*

The dasya, sakhya and vatsalya rasas of Vraja are sambandhatmika-bhakti and the sweet love of the girls of Vraja is called kamatmika-bhakti.

Hence raganuga-bhakti is also twofold

– sambandhanuga and kamanuga.

In this particular age of Kali, Sriman Mahaprabhu has blessed the sadhakas, who take shelter of His lotus feet by giving them the qualification to serve Sri

*Vrishabhanu-nandini Sri Radharani,
who is situated at the pinnacle of kamatmika-bhakti, as a maid servant by practicing
the greed-propelled manjari-bhava-sadhana."*

In Raga-vartma-Chandrika (text 6), we find the sources of this important lobha (greed):

"There are two causes for the appearance of greed: The mercy of God or the mercy of another anuragi devotee.

There are again two kinds of mercy bestowed by a devotee: praktana and adhunika. Praktana means mercy bestowed by a raganuga in a previous life, and adhunika is mercy bestowed in the present birth.

*The praktana devotee takes shelter of the lotus feet of a raganuga guru after the greed has arisen in him,
and the adhunika will get that greed only after having surrendered to the feet of such a guru.*

It is said (in Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu):

*"The only causes of the appearance of greed is the mercy of Krishna or His devotee.
Therefore some call the path of raganuga bhakti push̄ti marga (the path of mercy)."*

Both paths of bhakti, vaidhi-bhakti and raganuga-bhakti are included in the "sadhana-bhakti"-stage, since bhakti is divided into three categories in accordance with its development:

sa bhaktih sadhanam bhavah prema ceti tridhodita
(BR 1.2.1)

“This devotion is said to be of three kinds, namely practice (sadhana), feeling (bhava) and love (prema).

Sadhana-bhakti:

*kriti-sadhyā bhavet sadhyā-bhava sa sadhanabhidha
nitya-siddhasya bhavasya prakatyam hridi sadhyata*
(BRS 1.2.2)

“That, which is accomplished through the functions of the senses, and through which a loving devotional feeling (bhava) is attained, is called devotion in practice (sadhana-bhakti). The appearance of an eternally perfected feeling within the heart is called the stage

of the attainment of perfection.” As the practice ripens, it culminates into specific loving feelings (bhava) towards God.

Bhava-bhakti:

*suddha-sattva-viseshatma prema-suryamsu-samya-bhak
rucibhis citta-masrinya-krid asau bhava ucyate*
(BRS 1.3.1)

“A distinct manifestation of divine existence, similar to a ray from the sun of prema, tenderness of consciousness experienced as different tastes – this is called bhava.”

Foundational feelings of love of God are known to be of five kinds, namely

- (1) a peaceful, neutral relationship,
- (2) the affection of a servant,
- (3) the affection of a friend,
- (4) the affection of a parent, and
- (5) the affection of a consort, either as a wife or as a paramour lover.

As the foundational feeling is further cultivated, it ripens into a wholesome rapturous experience of love for God (prema).

Prema-bhakti:

*samyan-masrinita-svanto mamatvatisayankitah
bhavah sa eva sandratma budhah prema nigadyate*
(BRS 1.4.1)

“When bhava softens the heart altogether, endowed with an abundance of possessive feelings towards Him, being very intense by nature, the wise call it prema.”

Srila Rupa Goswami says that BOTH paths are parallel paths. Both paths of bhakti start exactly alike:

*guru-padashrayas tasmat
krishna-dikshadi-shikshanam
vishrambhena guroh seva*

sadhu vartanuvartamanam
(Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu, 1.2.74)

"First we accept the shelter of the lotus feet of a bona fide spiritual master. From him we beg for diksha-initiation and then we try to learn how to perform devotional service from him. We are obeying the orders of the spiritual master with faith and devotion, and we are following in the footsteps of great *acaryas* (teachers) under the direction of the spiritual master".

Srila Rupa Goswami states 64 angas (limbs/parts) of sadhana-bhakti and both sadhakas (vaidhi and raganuga) perform those angas, but their inner mood and motivation is different. Externally it looks the "same", but internally it is very different.

We often hear that raganuga-bhakti is a stage of "matured" vaidhi-bhakti, meaning that we come to the stage of raganuga-bhakti after we qualified ourselves through maturity in vaidhi-bhakti. Nowhere we can find "pramana" (evidence) to this conclusion.

Like mentioned before, both vaidhi-bhakti and raganuga-bhakti are two equal and PARALLEL paths. It is not that one follows the other.

Sometimes we also hear that "raganuga-bhakti starts with the stage of ASAKTI".

This is not true and again, no evidence can be found for this claim. Both paths start with bhajana-kriya and both end with the attainment of prema.

Now which kind of prema we attain was already discussed before.

By vaidhi-bhakti we attain Vaikuntha-prema and by raganuga-bhakti we attain Vrindavana-prema.

But both bhakti-paths lead the sadhaka through the stages of **sraddha, sadhu-sanga, bhajana-kriya, anartha-nivritti, nistha, ruci, asakti, bhava and finally prema**.

The only qualification is given here in Raga-vartma-candrika:

*vrajalila parikarastha sringaradi bhava madhurye srute dhir idam mama
bhuyat iti lobhotpattikale sastra yukty apeksha na syat satyam ca tasyam
lobhatvasyaivasiddheh | nahi kenacit sastra drishtya lobhah kriyate napi*

*lobhaniya vastu praptau svasya yogyayogyatva vicarah ko'py udbhavati.
kintu lobhaniya vastuni srute drishte va svata eva lobha utpadyate*
(RVC 1.5)

“If, upon hearing of the sweetness of the feelings, headed by passion, of Sri Krsna’s associates in the Vraja-lila, one thinks:

‘Let me also attain such feelings,’ then at this time one need not depend either on the revealed scriptures or on favorable logical considerations. ‘If such dependence remains, it cannot be said that greed has appeared. Greed never arises in anyone because of scriptural considerations, and in anyone who is desirous to attain the object of the greed, no considerations of qualification or lack of qualification arise. Rather, greed arises only by hearing about the object of greed or by seeing it.”

It is not that we have to be "highly" qualified and extremely pure-hearted to be able to start raganuga-bhakti. It was discussed that actually only by the mercy of Guru and Krishna (in this life or in past lives) is it possible to enter raganuga-bhakti. Only by being in the association of those who already have this sacred greed (lobha) we can enter the "classroom" of raganuga-bhakti. We personally experienced such an "entrance":

A very good friend of ours never ever heard ANYTHING from Krishna in her life and by meeting a raganuga-bhakti sadhu she was overwhelmed by hearing him speak about Radha and Krishna in Vrindavana.

She immediately took shelter of this wonderful Vraja-vasi sadhu and began practicing raganuga-bhakti.

There was no concern about "being qualified or not".

Only by hearing about the pastimes of the Divine Couple she received that sacred greed.

*vikriditam vraja-vadhubbhir idam ca vishnoh
sraddhanvito yah sruuyad atha varnayed va
bhaktim param bhagavati parilabhyam kamam
hrid-rogam asv apahinoty acirena dhirah*
(Srimat Bhagavatm 10.33.39)

“One, who hears or describes the loving sports of Sri Krishna and the young maidens of Vraja with full faith (sraddha), will quickly drive away the heart-disease of lust, become sober, and attain supramundane devotion of the Lord.”

Srila Jiva Goswami makes a wonderful point here:

Hearing about these pastimes **DRIVES** away lust and **THEN** bhakti can enter fully into the heart.

It is **NOT** the other way: First we must have a pure heart by performing 30 years of vaidhi-bhakti and then we can hear these wonderful pastimes. Hearing from a bona fide source is the greatest means to attain Vraja-bhakti.

For this we have to practice raganuga-bhakti.

Vaidhi-bhakti can not bring us to Goloka Vindavana.

Only by following in the footsteps of the manjaris of Srimati Radhika under the guidance of our Guru-manjari can we enter that Supreme Abode.

Rāgānugā-bhakti: From interest to perfection

The ultimate cause:

*krsna-tad-bhakta-karunya-matra-labhaika-hetuka \
pusti-margataya kaiscid iyam raganugocyate*
|| BRS 1.2.309 ||

"The mercy of Krsna and His devotees is the only cause of attaining raganuga-bhakti. Some call this type of devotion pusti-marga."

The path of rāga mārga is very rarely attained and hard to understand, and it is very difficult to enter into without the mercy of the great saints that are fixed in bhajana.
(Srila Ananta das Babaji, tika to RVC)

Interest:

The interest of the sadhaka in raganuga-bhakti starts with **hearing (sravanam)**.

*tat tad bhavadi madhurye srute dhir yad apekshate |
natra sastram na yuktim ca tal lobhotpatti lakshanam ||*
(BRS. 1.2.292)

"When **one hears** about the sweetness of their feelings and so forth, and a desire for attaining the same awakens in the consciousness without dependence on scripture and logic, this is a symptom of the awakening of greed (lobha).

*rāgamayī bhaktira hoy rāgātmikā nāma;
tābā śuni lubdha hoy kon bhāgyavān
lobhe vṛajavāsi-bhāvē kore anugati;
śāstra-yukti nāhi māne - rāgānugāra prakṛti*
(C.C.)

"Devotion full of sacred passion is called rāgātmikā. If a fortunate soul becomes greedy for that devotion **after hearing** about it he will eagerly follow the feelings of the people of Vraca without bothering about scriptural injunctions and logical arguments. Such is the nature of rāgānugā bhakti."

*The devotion that is prompted by greed, **caused by hearing about the pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa**, is called rāgānugā mārga.*
(Srila Ananta das Babaji, tika to RVC)

"If one thinks: 'Let me attain such sweet feelings also', **after hearing about feelings** such as the transcendental erotic feeling towards Kṛṣṇa of His associates (the gopīs) in Vraja, then one need not wait for favorable sanctions from the revealed scriptures or logical arguments."

(Srila Vishvanatha Cakravartipada, RVC)

When one becomes slightly experienced **by hearing the sweet stories from Śrīmad Bhāgavata and the līlā-granthas of the rasika bhaktas** that preach the same conclusion about the feelings, forms and attributes of the Vrajavāśīs like Śrī Nanda and Yaśodā that please all the senses of Śrī Kṛṣṇa one becomes independent from scriptural injunctions and logical arguments and develops a certain consciousness, a desire for those sweet feelings - and that is called the root cause of sacred greed.

(Srila Ananta das Babaji, tika to RVC)

GREED:

By hearing from raganuga-sadhus, greed develops.

"Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has personally given the following definition of lobha (sacred greed) in Śrī Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu: 'When the heart yearns for the sweetness of the mutual feelings of Kṛṣṇa and His eternal associates in Vraja, and one is not dependent on scriptural injunctions or logical arguments, then that is the definition of 'the cause of sacred greed'."

(Srila Vishvanatha Cakravartipada, RVC)

"There are two causes for the appearance of the aforementioned sacred greed: The mercy of God or the mercy of another anurāgī devotee. There are again two kinds of mercy bestowed by a devotee: prāktana and ādhunika. prāktana means mercy bestowed by a rāgānugā bhakta in a previous life, and ādhunika is mercy bestowed in the present birth. The prāktana-devotee takes shelter of the lotus feet of a rāgānugā guru after the sacred greed has arisen in him, the ādhunika will get that sacred greed only after having surrendered to the feet of such a guru. It is said (in Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu): "The only causes of the appearance of sacred greed is the mercy of Kṛṣṇa or His devotee. Therefore some call the path of rāgānugā bhakti also puṣṭi mārga (the path of grace)."

(Srila Vishvanatha Cakravartipada, RVC)

After giving the definition of the cause of sacred greed the blessed author now describes the causes for attaining this greed. **Greed for rāgānugā bhajana can only be attained by the grace of Śrī Kṛṣṇa or the grace of the great saints that are themselves passionately attached to the sweet feelings of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's associates.** Kṛṣṇa rarely bestows His mercy on new aspirants, therefore almost always this sacred greed arises by the grace of the aforementioned saints.

There are two kinds of sacred greed that arises by the grace of the saints - *prāktana* and *ādhuniki*. Those who have attained *lobha* **by the mercy of rāgānugā saints in previous births** will revive the cultivation of that *lobha* in their present birth and go on with *rāgānugā bhajana*, taking shelter of the feet of a guru according to their previous lives' *samskāra* (cultivation), which can be *dasya* or *sakhyā* or so. **Those who did not cultivate such greed in their previous lives first take shelter of the lotus feet of a guru, and after they hear about the great love of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His eternal associates the greed awakens within them.** **There is no other means than the grace of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His pure devotees to attain this greed for rāgānugā bhajana**, and the blessed author has proven it by quoting a śloka from *Bhakti Rasamṛta Sindhu*. In his commentary on this śloka Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has written: *kṛṣṇeti - mātra padasya vidhi mārge kutracit karmādi samarpaṇam api dvāram bhavatīti tad vicchedārthaḥ prayoga iti bhāva.* "The word *mātra* is used in the above śloka 'kṛṣṇa tad-bhakta kāruṇya mātra lābhaika hetukā' because sometimes the offering of fruitive activities can lead to entry into *vaidhī bhakti*, whereas *rāgānugā bhakti* is only (*mātra*) attained through grace." Greed for *rāgānugā bhakti* is more rarely attained than *bhāva* or *rati* in *vidhi bhakti*, and it is only attainable through grace (Śrī Mukunda Dāsa Gosvāmī). The devotees from the *Vallabha Sampradāya* call this *rāgānugā mārga puṣṭi mārga* (the path of grace).
(Srila Ananta das Babaji, tika to RVC)

The greed "thickens" (purification)

The sadhaka in whom the greed for raganuga-bhakti has awakened, purifies his heart so that this sacred greed gets thicker, before turning into deep taste (RUCI). Only then can the moonlight of the raga of the eternal associates shine into the heart of the sadhaka.

Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself describes (in *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* 11.14.26) how the devotee on the path of sacred passion advances and becomes more purified and more obsessed with sacred greed by the day, **from the initial stage of surrender to the feet of a**

guru up to the point in which he directly attains the Lord:

'The more one's mind gets purified by hearing and chanting of My beautiful pastimes, the better one is able to discern the subtle reality (of the Self), just as the eye is better able to perceive more and more subtle things when it is treated with medicinal ointment'.

(Srila Vishvanatha Cakravartipada, RVC)

Here we see that the path of raganuga-bhakti starts with "guru-pada-ashraya", surrendering to Sri Gurudeva who then mercifully makes the sadhaka qualified to serve in raganuga-bhakti by giving him the diksha-mantras and who instructs the sadhaka on the path to perfection.

When the greed of a rāgānugā aspirant leads him down the road of rāga, keeping his beloved object in the centre, then it awakens a special taste for the forms and pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His associates. At first the greed of an aspirant will be scattered over many different subject matters and cannot focus on the actual beloved object, but when sādhana bhajana ripens this greed will give up all other subject matters and will focus on the beloved. In this paragraph the blessed author shows how this sacred greed gradually develops.

After the rāgānugīya practitioner has taken shelter of the lotus feet of Śrī Guru the stream of his bhajana starts flowing as he engages in hearing and chanting the glories of the Lord in the company of the devotees. Thus his heart is gradually cleansed from vices like lust and becomes completely immaculate. The purer his heart gets through this cleansing-process, the stronger the sacred greed will get in his heart.

(Srila Ananta das Babaji, tika to RVC)

Clearly raganuga-bhakti starts with bhajana-kriya.

Now it will be described how the rāgānugīya bhakta gradually advances through the stages of anartha nivṛtti (cessation of bad habits), niṣṭhā (fixation), ruci (taste), and āsakti (attachment to the beloved deity) up to the stage of prema (love of God) and the direct attainment of his beloved deity.

(Srila Vishvanatha Cakravartipada, RVC)

Srila Jiva Goswami writes:

ajata-tadrīsa-rucina tu sad-viseshadara-matradrita raganugapi vaidhi-samvalitaivanushtheyā |

*tatha loka-samgrahartham pratishthitena jata-tadrisa-rucina ca |
atra misratve ca yatha-yogyam raganugayaiki krityaiva vaidhi kartavya ||*
(*Bhakti-sandarbha* 312)

“Those in whom such taste (rucī) has not awokened, but who have a special interest for it, should engage in a mixture of raganuga and vaidhi. For the sake of establishing an example for the people of the world, the one in whom such ruci has awokened will do the same. Therefore, as appropriate, raganuga should be performed together with vaidhi.”

On the path of raganuga-bhakti, meditating on the divine pastimes is the main sadhana, however in the primary stage we are not qualified for lila-smaran (meditation on the pastimes). Therefore we should concentrate more on hearing, chanting and following the other rules of bhakti. Then as our consciousness gets more and more purified, we are drawn towards lila-smaran. Slowly our smaran becomes more intense. Ultimately when we reach the zenith of bhajan, lila-smaran naturally becomes the major part of bhajan.”...The very nature (dharma) of the mind is rāga (attachment, passion), and hence mental worship is the root cause of rāgānugā bhajana. Still the external practice of hearing and chanting must not be neglected or given up— this is to be noted specifically. The perfection of allegiance to the Vraja-people cannot be achieved by giving up external practices like hearing and chanting. As much as the external practices like hearing and chanting nourish the internal practice of smarana, that much the internal practice also awakens taste for external practices. Since they nourish each other equally, efforts to fix one's mind on līlā smarana without taking shelter of external practices will not become fruitful. And again, efforts to perform only external practices without practising līlā smarana cannot be called rāgānugā mārga's bhajana. Hence both are required.

All those new aspirants who are unable to meditate on their own siddha dehas or on Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's pastimes, but rather find this difficult to do, should initially not be too eager for līlā smarana. If they, along with hearing and chanting etc., practise some light and easy smarana while hearing and chanting texts like Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya's 'Prārthanā' and 'Prema Bhakti Candrikā', Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda's 'Stavamālā', Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmīpāda's 'Stavāvalī', Śrīla Kṛṣṇa dāsa Siddha Bābā's 'Prārthanāmṛta Taraṇgī', that glorify gopī bhāva or rāgānugā bhajana, and at the same time try to cultivate mañjari bhāva within the heart, the heart will easily become qualified to practise līlā smarana.
(*Srila Ananta das Babaji, Raganuga-tattva-vijnana*)

From greed to deep attachment (ruci)

In his Bhakti Sandarbha (310), Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has written:

atra viṣayinah svabhāviko viṣaya saṁsargecchatiśayamayaḥ premā rāgah yathā cakṣur ādināṁ saundaryādau; tādṛśa evātra bhaktasya śrī bhagavatyapi rāga ityucyate...

yasya pūrvokte rāga viśeṣe rucir eva jātāsti na tu rāga viśeṣa eva svayaṁ tasya tādṛśa rāga sudhākara karābhāsa samullasita hr̥daya sphatika maṇeh śāstrādi śrutasu tādṛśyā rāgātmikāyā bhakteḥ paripatiṣvapi rucir jāyate. tatas tadiyam rāgam rucyānugacchanti sā rāgānugā tasyaiva pravartate.

"The natural love and desire of a sense enjoyer for his favorite sense objects is called rāga. Just as the eyes are attracted to beautiful scenes and other senses are attracted to their favorite sense objects and need no encouragement in this, similarly when the heart of a devotee is naturally attracted to the Lord then this anxious thirst of love is called rāga...

*When even a semblance of the moonrays of the aforementioned rāga (which is situated within the hearts of the eternal associates of Kṛṣṇa) falls on the crystal-like heart of a devotee who attained a little taste for this aforementioned rāga, **but did not really developed the real rāga yet**, then the whole heart rejoices, and when he learns about it from the scriptures he develops a taste for the expert devotional service of these rāgātmikā devotees."*

The purport of this is that when those devotees whose hearts are clear from lust, anger, greed and envy hear from the scriptures and the mouths of the saints about the loving skill in devotional service of the rāgātmikā bhaktas their taste (ruci) will awaken.

With such ruci they will follow them and thus their real rāgānugā bhakti will commence.

Thus it is to be understood.

(Srila Ananta das Babaji, tika to RVC)

So, to feel the REAL "raga" in the heart, we have to be on the stage of RUCI, but this doesn't mean that the PRACTICE of raganuga-bhakti starts at RUCI. Like Srila Jiva Goswami wrote (see above too):

*ajata-tadrisa-rucina tu sad-viseshadara-matradrita raganugāpi vaidhi-samvalitaivanushtheyā |
tatha loka-samgrahartham pratishthitena jata-tadrisa-rucina ca |
atra misratve ca yatha-yogyam raganugayaiki krityaiva vaidhi kartavya || |
(Bhakti-sandarbha 312)*

*"Those in whom such taste (ruci) has not awokened, but who have a special interest for it, **should engage in a mixture of raganuga and vaidhi**. For the sake of establishing an example for the people of the world, the one in whom such ruci has awokened will do the same. Therefore, as appropriate, raganuga should be performed together with vaidhi."*

Thus the sadhaka's "job" is to purify the heart by hearing and chanting and being in the anugatya of Sri Gurudeva, thereby serving the Vaishnavas and performing all items of bhakti which are favorable to the desired goal.

yathā yathātmā parimṛjate'sau mat pūnya gāthā śravaṇābhidhānaiḥ
tathā tathā paśyati vastu sūkṣmāṁ cakṣur yathāivāśjana samprayuktam
(Bhāg. 11.14.26)

Śrī Kṛṣṇa told Uddhava: "O Uddhava! Just as the eyes that are anointed with siddha ointments gradually become cleansed and free from disease so that they will be able to perceive more and more subtle objects, similarly the practising devotee will perceive more and more subtle things as his heart gets purified by hearing and chanting about My sacred pastimes."

In his commentary on this verse Śrīpāda Viśvanātha Cakravartī has written:
ādi bhajanam ārabhya kevalayā bhaktyaivātma śodhana tāratamyena śravaṇa
kīrtana smaraṇādi tāratamyāt man mādhuryānubhava tāratamyāṁ prāpnotītyāha
yathā yatheti. -

As one commences the path of bhajana and cleanses one's heart more and more through the practice of pure devotion, consisting of hearing, chanting and remembering the glories of the Lord, one will be able to experience My sweetness more and more. This is described in this verse."

(Srila Ananta das Babaji, tika to RVC)

From RUCI to perfection (PREMA)

Now it will be described how the rāgānugīya bhakta gradually advances through the stages of anartha nivṛtti (cessation of bad habits), niṣṭhā (fixation), ruci (taste), and āsakti (attachment to the beloved deity) upto the stage of prema (love of God) and the direct attainment of his beloved deity.

In the Ujjvala Nilamāṇi it is said that 'those who are specially attracted to the ecstasy of the Vrajavāsīs and thus perform rāgānugā bhajana will attain that

abundance of eagerness that is fit for performing *rāgānugā bhajana* and will take birth in *Vraja* in groups of one, two or three in their own time, according to their eagerness.' Here the word *anurāgaugha* means 'that eagerness that makes one qualified for doing *rāgānugā bhajana*'. The *anurāga* mentioned here does not refer to the *sthāyi bhāva* (permanent mood) of that name, because the *sthāyi bhāva* named *anurāga* cannot be attained within a material body.

The words 'having taken birth in *Vraja*' means the *sādhana siddhas* take birth from the womb of a *gopikā*, just as *Kṛṣṇa*'s eternally beloved *gopīs* appear with Him when He descends to earth (*prakaṭa līlā*). After that, gradually *sneha*, *māna*, *pranaya*, *rāga*, *anurāga* and *mahābhāva* will become manifest in the *gopikā*-body of that *sādhaka* on the strength of associating with the *gopīs* that are endowed with *mahābhāva* and by hearing and chanting and seeing the greatness of *Kṛṣṇa*'s eternally liberated *gopīs*.

These feelings could not possibly have arisen in the material body of the *sādhaka*, in his previous birth. In this way the extraordinary characteristics of *Śrī Kṛṣṇa*'s beloveds in *Vraja* has been shown. In *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* it is said that the *gopīs* attained the pinnacle of transcendental bliss by seeing *Govinda*. Without Him, they experienced a moment to last like a hundred ages. Their statement (in *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* 10.31.15) 'Without seeing You, we consider a second to last like an age', is a symptom of *mahābhāva*.

(*Srila Vishvanatha Cakravartipada, RVC*)

Kṛpā-kaṇikā Vyākhyā (*Srila Ananta das Babaji*)

Now it is described how the *sādhaka* attains the personal service of his beloved deity in His *līlā*-kingdom, after attaining the perfection of *prema*. **Two kinds of *sādhana* have been described of the *rāgānugīya* devotees - the external practice of hearing and chanting in the *sādhaka*-body and the desired mental service in the self-conceived *siddha* body.**

When the *sādhaka*'s obstacles, such as *anarthas* (different kinds of mischief) are removed by the continued practice of *bhajana*, he gradually becomes fixed up, gets (lasting) taste for *bhajana* and becomes genuinely attached to the Lord. Then, when *rati* and *prema* are attained the practice in the *sādhaka deha* is completed.

In other words, when all the stages of the stream of *sādhanā* - faith, surrender, taking shelter of the lotus feet of *Śrī Guru*, serving *Śrī Guru* and *Vaiṣṇava*, hearing, chanting, remembering, meditating, becoming free from mischief, becoming fixed up, acquiring taste, becoming attached to the Lord and *rati* - have been fulfilled - then

one reaches the culmination named prema.

It is described in the book named Śrī Ujjvala Nilamaṇi how, after attaining this prema, all these rāgānugīya sādhakas that do bhajana in the madhura rasa with the feelings of sakhīs or mañjarīs, will attain the personal service of the Lord in the kingdom of līlā:

*tad bhāva baddha rāgā ye janās te sādhane rataḥ
tad yogyam anurāgaughaṁ prāpyotkāntaṁ hānusārataḥ*

*tā eko'thavā dvi-trāḥ kāle kāle vraje'bhan
(Śrī Haripriyā Pra.- 49 and 50)*

"Those who are especially attracted to the feelings of the gopīs and are thus engaged in rāgānugā bhajana, attain the abundance of anurāga that is proper for rāgānugā, and according to their eagerness, take birth in Vraja at different times as Vraja-gopīs alone or in groups of two or three."

In the above verse the word anurāgaughaṁ means the eagerness that is proper for rāgānugā, not the sthāyi bhāva named anurāga, because only stages up to prema can appear in the sādhaka body. The stages above prema, from sneha up to mahābhāva, that are required to attain personal service in the mood of the gopīs, can only appear in a transcendental gopī-body, for a sādhaka body is unable to tolerate the coolness of meeting with Śrī Kṛṣṇa or the heat of separation from Him. The words 'vraje'bhan', meaning "taking birth in Vraja", must be understood to mean that the sādhana siddhas appear in the womb of a gopikā in the same way as the eternally beloved Vraja-vadhūs of Śrī Kṛṣṇa appear during the manifest pastimes. After that, on the strength of the association of nitya-priyās like Śrī Rādhā and Lalitā they gradually attain sneha, māna, prāṇaya, rāga, anurāga and mahābhāva through seeing, hearing and glorifying Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His associates. Without this mahābhāva the personal devotional service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in a gopī body cannot be attained. The example of this is given by Śrī Śukadeva in the Śrīmad Bhāgavata, when he described how the gopīs went on their way to dance the Rāsa with Kṛṣṇa after they heard Śrī Kṛṣṇa playing His flute, but some gopīs were locked into their inner chambers because they were sages from the Dāṇḍaka-forest in their previous birth who were unable to get the association of the nitya siddha gopīs, although they had

taken birth in Vraja as gopīs. Since they were thus unable to attain mahābhāva and could also not get the aid of Yogamāyā, the gopīs who were locked into their houses by their relatives felt such great pangs of separation from Śrī Kṛṣṇa that on the strength of their meditations on Him they were quickly able to attain this stage of mahābhāva, that is usually only attained through a gradual process, and thus became blessed by attaining the Rāsa-dance. Thus the blessed author says that in the sādhaka body of the previous birth it is not possible to awaken the stages from sneha up to mahābhāva. Therefore the extraordinary characteristics of the Śrī Gopikās in Vraja are described in Śrīmad Bhāgavata:

*gopīnām paramānanda āśid govinda darśane
kṣaṇām yuga-śatam iva yasām yena vinābhavat (10.19.16)*

"The gopīs, that experience a single moment without Śrī Kṛṣṇa to be like a hundred ages, attained the topmost bliss when they saw Govinda." Then again in the Śrī Gopī Gīta we can find the Śrī Gopikās speaking the following words to Śrī Kṛṣṇa:

*atati yad bhavān ahni kānanām truṭīr yugāyate tvām apaśyatām
kūṭila kuntalam śrī mukhamām ca te jada udikṣatām pakaśmakrd drśām
(10.31.15)*

"When You go out into the forest in the daytime to tend Your cows we consider even a split second that we don't see You to be like an age, and then when You return home in the evening we consider the Creator, who made our eyelids blink, so that our eyes cannot gaze constantly at Your face, that is decorated with curly locks, to be dull and arasika." This experience of a moment like a hundred ages is a characteristic of mahābhāva. Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmī writes in his definition of *rūḍha mahābhāva* -

*nimeśāsaḥatāsanna janatā hṛd vilodanam
kalpa kṣaṇatvām khinnatvām tat saukhye'py ārti śaṅkayā
mohādyā bhāve'pyātmādi sarva vismaranām sada
kṣaṇasya kalpatetyādyā yatra yoga viyogayoh*

(Ujjvala Nilamani Sthāyibhāva Prak. - 161. 162)

"In the stage of *rūḍha mahābhāva*, either during union or during separation, the gopīs show the following physical expressions of permanent emotions (anubhāvas): they cannot tolerate a moment of separation, their hearts are disturbed by approaching people, they consider an age (when they are together with Kṛṣṇa) to be like a moment,

they suffer when they are anxious about Kṛṣṇa's happiness, even if He is happy, they forget all about themselves even when they are free from delusion and they consider a moment to be like an age (when they are separated from Kṛṣṇa)."

Raganuga bhakti - simple and pure 2.0

Statement:

Raganuga-bhakti starts only at the stage of RUCI.

Answer:

sa ca lobho rāga vartma vartināṁ bhaktānāṁ guru-padāśraya lakṣaṇam
ārabhya svābhīṣṭa vastu sākṣāt prāpti samayam abhivyāpya 'yathā
yathātma parimṛjyate'sau mat puṇya gāthā śravaṇābhidhānaiḥ, tathā
tathā paśyati vastu sūkṣmaṁ cakṣur yathaivāñjana samprayuktam. iti
bhagavad ukter bhakti hetukāntaḥ karaṇa śuddhi tāratamyāt prati dinam
adhikādhiko bhavati.

Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself describes (in Śrīmad Bhāgavata 11.14.26) how the devotee on the path of sacred passion advances and becomes more purified and more obsessed with sacred greed by the day, from the initial stage of surrender to the feet of a guru up to the point in which he directly attains the Lord: 'The more one's mind gets purified by hearing and chanting of My beautiful pastimes, the better one is able to discern the subtle reality (of the Self), just as the eye is better able to perceive more and more subtle things when it is treated with medicinal ointment'.

- Raga vartma chandrika (Srila Vishvanatha Cakravartipada)

Kṛpā-kanikā Vyākhyā by Srila Ananta das Babaji:

The definition of the generation of sacred greed has been given as follows: It is the craving to relish the sweet mutual feelings of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the residents of Vraja, that awakens after hearing stories about it from devotional scriptures like Śrīmad Bhāgavata and which is independent from scriptural injunctions and logical arguments.

Practically, the craving for one's beloved object is named 'greed'. When the greed of a rāgānugā aspirant leads him down the road of rāga, keeping his beloved object in the centre, then it awakens a special taste for the forms and pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His associates. At first the greed of an aspirant will be scattered over many different subject matters and cannot focus on the actual beloved object, but when sādhana

bhajana ripens this greed will give up all other subject matters and will focus on the beloved. In this paragraph the blessed author shows how this sacred greed gradually develops.

After the rāgānugīya practitioner has taken shelter of the lotus feet of Śrī Guru the stream of his bhajana starts flowing as he engages in hearing and chanting the glories of the Lord in the company of the devotees. Thus his heart is gradually cleansed from vices like lust and becomes completely immaculate. The purer his heart gets through this cleansing-process, the stronger the sacred greed will get in his heart. The blessed author then quotes a verse from Śrīmad Bhāgavata, which emanated from Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus mouth, to prove his point –

yathā yathātmā parimṛjate'sau mat puṇya gāthā śravaṇābhidhānaiḥ
tathā tathā paśyati vastu sūkṣmaṁ cakṣur yathaivāṣjana samprayuktam
(Bhāg. 11.14.26)

Śrī Kṛṣṇa told Uddhava: "O Uddhava! Just as the eyes that are anointed with siddha ointments gradually become cleansed and free from disease so that they will be able to perceive more and more subtle objects, similarly the practising devotee will perceive more and more subtle things as his heart gets purified by hearing and chanting about My sacred pastimes."

In his commentary on this verse Śrīpāda Viśvanātha Cakravartī has written: ādi bhajanam ārabhya kevalayā bhaktyaivātma śodhana
tāratamyena śravaṇa kīrtana smaraṇādi tāratamyāt man
mādhuryānubhava tāratamyāṁ prāpnotītyāha yathā yatheti.

"As one commences the path of bhajana and cleanses one's heart more and more through the practice of pure devotion, consisting of hearing, chanting and remembering the glories of the Lord, one will be able to experience My sweetness more and more. This is described in this verse."

atha rāgānugā bhakti majjanasyānartha nivṛtti niṣṭhā-rucyāsaktyantaram
prema-bhūmikārūḍhasya sākṣāt svābhīṣṭa-prāpti-prakāraḥ pradarśyate.
yathojjvala nīlamaṇau "tad bhāva baddha rāgā ye janās te sādhane ratāḥ.
tad yogyam anurāgaughaṁ prāpyotkaṇṭhānusārataḥ. tā ekaśo'thavā dvi-
trāḥ kāle kāle vraje'bhavan" iti. anurāgaughaṁ rāgānugā

bhajanautkaṇṭhyam natvanurāga sthāyinam sādhaka-dehe'nurāgotpattyasambhavāt. vraje'bhavann iti avatāra samaye nitya priyādyā yathā āvirbhavanti tathaiva gopikā-garbhe sādhana-siddha api āvirbhavanti. tataś ca nitya-siddhādi gopīnām mahā-bhāva-vatīnām saṅga mahimnā darśana śravaṇa kīrtanādibhiḥ sneha māna praṇaya rāgānurāga mahā-bhāvā api tatra gopikā-dehe utpadyante. pūrva janmani sādhaka-dehe teṣām utpattyasambhavāt. ataeva vraje kṛṣṇa preyasīnām asādharaṇāni lakṣaṇāni. yad uktam - "gopīnām paramānanda āśid govinda darśane. kṣaṇam yuga-śatam iva yāsām yena vinā bhaved" iti. "trūṭir yugāyate tvām apaśyatam" ityādi ca. kṣaṇasya yuga-śatāyamānatvam mahā-bhāva lakṣaṇam.

Now it will be described how the rāgānugīya bhakta gradually advances through the stages of anartha nivṛtti (cessation of bad habits), niṣṭhā (fixation), ruci (taste), and āsakti (attachment to the beloved deity) upto the stage of prema (love of God) and the direct attainment of his beloved deity. In the Ujjvala Nīlāmani it is said that 'those who are specially attracted to the ecstasy of the Vrajavāsīs and thus perform rāgānugā bhajana will attain that abundance of eagerness that is fit for performing rāgānugā bhajana and will take birth in Vraja in groups of one, two or three in their own time, according to their eagerness.' Here the word anurāga means 'that eagerness that makes one qualified for doing rāgānugā bhajana'. The anurāga mentioned here does not refer to the sthāyi bhāva (permanent mood) of that name, because the sthāyi bhāva named anurāga cannot be attained within a material body. The words 'having taken birth in Vraja' means the sādhana siddhas take birth from the womb of a gopikā, just as Kṛṣṇa's eternally beloved gopīs appear with Him when He descends to earth (prakaṭa līlā). After that, gradually sneha, māna, praṇaya, rāga, anurāga and mahābhāva will become manifest in the gopikā-body of that sādhaka on the strength of associating with the gopīs that are endowed with mahā-bhāva and by hearing and chanting and seeing the greatness of Kṛṣṇa's eternally liberated gopīs. These feelings could not possibly have arisen in the material body of the sādhaka, in his previous birth. In this way the extraordinary characteristics of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's beloveds in Vraja has been shown. In Śrīmad Bhāgavata it is said that the gopīs attained the pinnacle of transcendental bliss by seeing Govinda. Without Him, they experienced a moment to last like a hundred ages. Their statement (in

Śrīmad Bhāgavata 10.31.15) 'Without seeing You, we consider a second to last like an age', is a symptom of mahābhāva.

- RAGA VARTMA CHANDRIKA

kṛṣṇa-tad-bhakta-karunya-matra-labhaika-hetuka \
puṣṭi-mārgataya kaiścid iyam rāga-nugocyate
|| BRS 1.2.309 ||

"The mercy of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees is the only cause of attaining rāga-bhakti. Some call this type of devotion puṣṭi-mārga."

- Srila Rupa Goswami

sa ca bhagavat kṛpā hetuko'nurāgī bhakta kṛpā hetukaś ceti dvividhaḥ.
tatra bhakta kṛpā hetuko dvividhaḥ prāktana ādhunikaś ca. prāktanaḥ -
paurva bhavika tādṛśa bhakta kṛpotthah, ādhunikah etaj janmāvadhi
tādṛśa bhakta kṛpotthah. ādye sati lobhānantaram tādṛśa guru
caraṇāśrayaṇam. dvitīye guru caraṇāśrayānantaram lobha pravṛttir
bhavati. yad uktam:

kṛṣṇa tad bhakta kārunya mātra lobhaika hetukā
puṣṭi mārgatayā kaiścid iyam rāga-nugocyate

"There are two causes for the appearance of the aforementioned sacred greed: The mercy of God or the mercy of another anurāgī devotee. There are again two kinds of mercy bestowed by a devotee: prāktana and ādhunika. prāktana means mercy bestowed by a rāga-nugā bhakta in a previous life, and ādhunika is mercy bestowed in the present birth. The prāktana-devotee takes shelter of the lotus feet of a rāga-nugā guru after the sacred greed has arisen in him, the ādhunika will get that sacred greed only after having surrendered to the feet of such a guru. It is said (in Bhakti Rasāmr̄ta Sindhu): "The only causes of the appearance of sacred greed is the mercy of Kṛṣṇa or His devotee. Therefore some call the path of rāga-nugā bhakti also puṣṭi mārga (the path of grace)."

- RAGA VARTMA CHANDRIKA

Kṛpā-kaṇikā Vyākhyā by Srila Ananta das Babaji:

After giving the definition of the cause of sacred greed the blessed author now describes the causes for attaining this greed. Greed for rāga-nugā bhajana can only be attained by the grace of Śrī Kṛṣṇa or the

grace of the great saints that are themselves passionately attached to the sweet feelings of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's associates. Kṛṣṇa rarely bestows His mercy on new aspirants, therefore almost always this sacred greed arises by the grace of the aforementioned saints.

There are two kinds of sacred greed that arises by the grace of the saints - prāktana and ādhunikī. Those who have attained lobha by the mercy of rāgānugā saints in previous births will revive the cultivation of that lobha in their present birth and go on with rāgānugā bhajana, taking shelter of the feet of a guru according to their previous lives' saṃskāra (cultivation), which can be dāsy or sakhy or so. Those who did not cultivate such greed in their previous lives first take shelter of the lotus feet of a guru, and after they hear about the great love of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His eternal associates the greed awakens within them. There is no other means than the grace of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His pure devotees to attain this greed for rāgānugā bhajana, and the blessed author has proven it by quoting a śloka from Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu. In his commentary on this śloka Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has written: kṛṣṇeti - mātra padasya vidhi mārgे kutracit karmādi samarpaṇam api dvāraṁ bhavatīti tad vicchedārthaḥ prayoga iti bhāva. "The word mātra is used in the above śloka 'kṛṣṇa tad-bhakta kāruṇya mātra lābhaika hetukā' because sometimes the offering of fruitive activities can lead to entry into vaidhī bhakti, whereas rāgānugā bhakti is only (mātra) attained through grace." Greed for rāgānugā bhakti is more rarely attained than bhāva or rati in vidhi bhakti, and it is only attainable through grace (Śrī Mukunda Dāsa Gosvāmī). The devotees from the Vallabha Sampradāya call this rāgānugā mārga puṣṭi mārga (the path of grace).

Statement:

The devotee must be highly qualified to do lila-smaranam. When the mind is still contaminated, we can't meditate on the pastimes of Radha and Krishna. It will always be our own material fantasy.

Answer:

Lila-smaranam can only take place in the real sense at the stage of asakti. But Srila Jiva Goswami mentions in his Bhakti Sandarbha that there are 5 stages of "REMEMBERANCE".

Sri Jiva Goswami has written about smaranam as five developmental stages:

General smaranam, dharana, dhyana, drhuvanusmriti, and samadhi. He also speaks of various types of smaranam in an order of progression from nama smaranam, to rupa smarnam, to guna smaranam, and ultimately lila smarnam.

For doing lila-smaranam, the heart must be pure and the devotee should be deeply in love with the Divine Couple (stage of ASAHTI).

But to say that we can't meditate on Radha and Krishna's lila AT ALL because our mind is contaminated is nowhere mentioned in any shastra. By hearing about the pastimes of the Divine Couple our mind and heart gets purified. So even if in the beginning we only "imagine" THEM with our "material mind", this is never useless or in vain.

By being in the shelter of Sri Gurudeva and by practicing bhakti under his guidance, we become more and more pure in our hearts and then the stages of perfect remembrance will swiftly be attained.

Nobody claims that all devotees are IMMEDIATELY able to practice PERFECT LILA-smaranam.

We practice first in the stage of bhajana-kriya. This is compared to an unripened fruit. When our bhajan matures and we progress through the higher stages within bhakti, this fruit becomes ripe.

*yugala carana sevi, nirantara ei bhavi,
anuragi thakibo sadaya.
sadhana bhavibo yaha, siddha-dehe pabo taha
raga pathera ei se upaya (55)*

- Prema Bhakti Chandrika

"I will always think of the devotional service of the lotus-feet of the Divine Pair, and I will always remain attached to that. Whatever I think of during my spiritual practice, I will attain in my siddha deha when I reach perfection. This is the means of raga bhakti."

*sadhane ye dhana cai, siddha dehe taha pai,
pakkapakka matra se vicara
apakke sadhana riti, pakile se prema-bhakti,
bhakati lakshana tattva sara (56)*

- Prema Bhakti Chandrika

"The treasure I desire as a practitioner I will get when I attain my spiritual body; it's just a question of being ripe or unripe. The ripe stage is the stage of pure loving devotion and the unripe stage is the stage of practice. That is the essential truth about devotional principles."

True, in Raganuga path meditating on the divine pastimes is the main sadhana, however in the primary stage we are not qualified for leela-smaran. Therefore we should concentrate more on hearing, chanting and following the other rules of bhakti. Then as our chitta gets more and more purified, we are drawn towards leela-smaran. Slowly our smaran becomes more intense. Ultimately when we reach the zenith of bhajan, lila-smaran naturally becomes the major part of bhajan. We should note that all the parts of bhakti mentioned in vaidhi-bhakti are useful in Raganuga bhajan also.

Srila Rupa Goswamipad mentions this in the verse –
“shravanot-kirtanadini vaidha-bhaktyuditani tu, yanyangani cha tanyatra
vigneyani manishibhiih.”

- (B.R.S.)

Here hearing and chanting also includes accepting the shelter of Sri Gurudev's lotus feet and other fundamentals of bhakti as well. We should realize that all the rules of bhakti that we have already mentioned, and they are the parts of vaidhi-bhakti – we should stick to them in Raganuga bhajan also. If we do not obey the instructions of the Vrajavasi Goswamis such as Sri Rupa Goswami, Sanatan Goswami etc., how can we say we are surrendered unto them? Then how can we follow in their footsteps? The serious devotees should practice only those rules that are in accordance with their bhava and never do what is contrary to it.

In Srimad-Bhagavata (10.33.39) while narrating the rasa-lila, the crest jewel of all pastimes, Sukadeva Muni describes the most powerful glories of devotion —

vikriditam vrajavadhubhir idam ca vishnoh sraddhanvito'nusrinuyad atha
varnayed yah bhaktim param bhagavati pratilabhyam kamam hrid rogam
asvapahinotyacirena dhirah

"Whoever faithfully hears and narrates the loving pastimes of Sri Krishna with the ladies of Vraja will attain the topmost devotion for the Lord, will swiftly become grave and give up the heart's disease of lust."

In this verse the saying 'he attains the highest devotion to the Lord' is an asamapika kriya or unfinished act, whereas the words kamam hrid rogam asvapahinoti, 'he will swiftly give up the hearts disease of lust' is a samapika kriya or a completed act.

Thus it is established that while lust is not yet conquered the symptoms of topmost loving devotion are already present, and that later, by the force of the most powerful and independent bhakti, the heart's disease of lust will be destroyed.

In the Vaishnava-toshani commentary on this verse it is explained - "atra tu hrid rogapahanat purvam eva parama bhakti praptih tasmat parama balavad evedam sadhanam iti bhavah" that the common principle is that first lusty and other material desires are destroyed, and then one attains prema-bhakti. Here, however, the attainment of prema-bhakti is described, though lusty desires still exist.

This indicates that hearing or describing the rasa-lila is a very powerful process of devotion by which one quickly attains prema-bhakti.

The Gosvamis explain here that the word para- bhakti refers to the most exalted prema-bhakti, existing in the Vraja gopis.

What to speak of the existence of lust, even a very sinful person can perform bhakti.

So the "qualification" to START with the practice of REMEMBERANCE is the mercy of our beloved Sri Gurudeva who instructs us in this matter. But without HEARING and CHANTING we can never attain REAL lila-smaranam.

prathamataḥ krṣṇāṁ smaran iti smaraṇasyātra rāgānugāyāṁ
mukhyatvāṁ rāgasya manodharmatvāt. preṣṭham niya bhāvocita līlā¹
vilāsināṁ krṣṇāṁ vṛndāvanādhīśvaram. asya krṣṇasya janāṁ ca kīdr̥śāṁ
niya samīhitāṁ svābhilaṣaṇīyāṁ śrī vṛndāvaneśvarī lalitā viśākhā śrī rūpa
mañjaryādikam. krṣṇasyāpi niya samīhitatve'pi tajjanasya ujjvala bhāvaika
niṣṭhatvāt niya samīhitatvādhikyam. vraje vāsam iti asāmarthyē manasāpi.
sādhaka śarīreṇa vāsas tu uttara ślokārthataḥ prāpta eva. sādhaka rūpeṇa

yathāvasthita dehena. siddha rūpeṇāntaś cintitābhīṣṭa tat sākṣāt sevopayogi dehena. tad bhāva lipsunā - tad bhāvah sva preṣṭha kṛṣṇa visayakah sva samīhita kṛṣṇa janāśrayakaśca yo bhāva ujjvalākhyas tam labdhum icchatā. sevā mana-saivopasthāpitaiḥ sākṣād apyupasthāpitaś ca samucita dravyādibhiḥ paricarya kāryā. tatra prakāram āha vraja lokānusārataḥ sādhaka-rūpeṇānugamyamānā ye vrajaloκāḥ śrī rūpa gosvāmyādayaḥ ye ca siddha-rūpeṇānugamyamānāḥ vrajaloκāḥ śrī rūpa mañjaryādayas tad anusārataḥ. tathaiva sādhaka-rūpeṇānugamyamānā vrajaloκāḥ prāpta kṛṣṇa-sambandhino janaś candrakāntyādayaḥ danḍakāraṇya-vāsi munayaś ca bṛhad-vāmana prasiddhāḥ śrutayaś ca yathāsambhavam jñeyāḥ. tad anusāratas tat tad ācāra dṛṣṭyety arthaḥ. tad evam vākya-dvayena smaraṇam vrajavāsaṁ ca uktvā śravaṇādīnāpy āha - śravaṇotkīrtanādīnīti. guru pādāśrayaṇādīnī tvākṣepa labdhāni. tāni vinā vrajaloκānugatyādikam kim api na sidhyed ity ato manīṣibhir iti manīṣayā vimṛśyaiva svīyabhāva samucitāny eva tāni karyāṇi na tu tad viruddhāni.

"First of all, through the words 'remembering Kṛṣṇa' (Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu 1.2.294), it is indicated that remembrance (smaraṇa) is the main item of rāgānugā bhakti. Rāga is a special feature of the mind. The beloved is the Lord of Vṛndāvana, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who enjoys pastimes suitable to His own feeling. With 'His people also' is meant: His beloved eternal associates in Vraja, that transcendental personality that the practising devotee favours, like Vṛndāvaneśvarī Śrī Rādhikā, Śrī Lalitā, Viśākhā, Śrī Rūpa Mañjari, and so on. Although they are Kṛṣṇa's favorites, they are also more favorite to those devotees who desire to enter into the brilliant erotic relationship with Kṛṣṇa. If one can not live in Vraja physically, one must at least mentally do so. But the next verse (1.2.295) clearly explains how one must live in Vraja physically. Living with the sādhaka rūpa means in the physical body of the practising devotee, and the siddha rūpa means one's own desired mentally conceived spiritual body, that is suitable for direct transcendental service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. tad bhāva lipsunā means: being eager to attain the brilliant erotic feelings towards Kṛṣṇa of one's favorite devotees in that feeling, like Śrī Rādhikā and the gopīs. How to serve? With paraphernalia that are collected either mentally or physically. How to follow in the footsteps of the people of Vraja? In one's physical body one follows in the footsteps of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and other saints that lived in Vraja and in the mentally conceived spiritual body one follows in the footsteps of Śrīmatī

Rūpa Mañjarī and other eternal associates of Kṛṣṇa.

The people of Vraja that should be followed in the sādhaka rūpa, such as Candrakānti, the sages of the Daṇḍaka-forest, whose story is related in the Bṛhad Vāmana Purāṇa, as well as the śrutis (Upaniṣads), have attained their spiritual relationship with Kṛṣṇa. One should act like these Vrajavāsīs. In this way the first two verses described smaraṇa and living in Vraja and the third verse (1.2.296) describes practices such as hearing about Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. **All other limbs of devotional practice, such as taking shelter of the feet of the guru, are attained through the practice of hearing and chanting. Without hearing and chanting one's allegiance to the people of Vraja will be unsuccessful, hence the word manīṣibhiḥ was used.** This means that intelligent persons will, with the help of their sense of discrimination, practise those limbs that are favorable to one's own devotional feelings and not those that are opposed to that.

- RAGA VARTMA CHANDRIKA

Statement:

It is very bad and dangerous if devotees start to meditate on their siddha deha before the stage of asakti.

Answer:

"tatra rāgānugā-mārgē'nutpanna-rati-sādhaka-bhaktair api svepsita-siddha-deham manasi parikalpya bhagavat-sevādikam kriyate | jāta-ratīnām tu svayam eva tad-deha-sphūrtih | asya tūtpannā madhura-jātīyā ratih krameṇānurāga-daśām prāptāsti, atas tad-deha-sphūrtih sadaiva | "

There, on the raganuga-path, even the sadhaka bhaktas whose rati/bhava has not yet arisen, mentally conceive of their desired siddha dehas, and thus serve the lord, etc.

When rati has arisen, that body is perceived automatically.

In the arisen rati of the madhura-kind, one gradually attains the stage of anuraga; then that deha will be always perceived."

- Srila Krishna das Kaviraja Goswami's TIKA on "Krishna Karanamritam", verse 2

Meaning:

Although we may not be in the stage of rati (passion), the raganuga sadhaka has to perform bhajan by meditating on his siddha-deha. When we reach the rati stage, we do not have to meditate consciously on our siddha-deha; it becomes spontaneous.

Raganuga-bhakti and vaidhi-bhakti (excerpt from "Raga-Vartma-Chandrika" by Sri Pad Vishvanatha Cakravartipad)

TEXT 3:

**vaidhi bhaktir bhavet sastram bhaktau cet syat pravartakam
raganuga syac ced bhaktau lobha eva pravartakah**

"When devotion is prompted by scriptural injunctions, then that is called vaidhi-bhakti, but when it is prompted simply by spiritual greed, then it is called raganuga-bhakti."

Kripa-kanika Vyakhyā:

We have explained that there are two kinds of sadhana bhakti - 'vaidhi' and 'raganuga', and the author is giving the characteristics of these two kinds of devotion here.

When devotion is prompted by orders received from the scriptures, which means that the revealed scriptures describe how those who are averse to worshipping Lord Hari will have to suffer by wandering through many miserable species of life as well as through hell, and one commences bhajana out of fear of this suffering, then this is called vaidhi-bhakti.

In Sri Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu the definition of vaidhi-bhakti is given -

**yatra raganavaptatvat pravrittir upajayate
sasanenaiva sastrasya sa vaidhi bhaktir ucyate (1.2.6)**

"That devotion that knows no attachment or greed, but that is prompted by the orders from the scriptures is named vaidhi-bhakti." In his commentary on this verse Srila Visvanatha Cakravartipada has written - rago'tra sri murter darsanad dasama skandhiya tat tal lila sravanac ca bhajana lobhah - "The word raga can be used when one's worship is prompted by sacred greed after seeing the beautiful deity of the Lord or by hearing about His pastimes in the Tenth Canto of Srimad Bhagavata." When worship is not prompted by such greed, but by the orders of the scriptures, then it is called vaidhi-bhakti.

In Srimad Bhagavata (11.5.2-3) there is a clear scriptural warning to those who are averse to worshipping Lord Hari, in the words of the Lord:

mukha bahuru padebhyah purushasyasramaih saha
catvaro jajnire varna gunair vipradayah prithak
ya esham purusham sakshad atma-prabhavam isvaram
na bhajantyavajananti sthanad bhrashtah patantyadah

"From the face, arms, thighs and feet of the Purusha (the Universal form) the four social orders like the brahmanas, the gunas like sattva and the four stages of life, like householder life, gradually emanated. Those within the varnasrama system who do not worship their own origin Sri Hari, and therefore disobey and disrespect Him will fall down from their social station."

cari varnasrami yadi krishna nahi bhaje;
sva-dharma koriya-o raurave padi maje (C.C.)

"Those in the four social orders who do not worship Krishna will fall into hell, even if they perform their occupational duties."

The devotion or bhajana marga that is thus prompted by scriptural injunctions is called vaidhi marga. And the devotion that is prompted by greed, caused by hearing about the pastimes of Sri Krishna, is called raganuga marga. Srimat Rupa Gosvamipada has given the following definition of raganuga:

virajantim abhivyaktam vrajavasi-janadishu
ragatmikam anusrita ya sa raganugocaye
(Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu 1.2.270)

"The devotion which is clearly present in the eternal associates of Vraja is called ragatmika bhakti, and devotion in the wake of this ragatmika bhakti is called raganuga bhakti."

ragatmika bhakti mukhya vrajavasi-jane
tara anugata bhakti raganuga name (C.C.)

"The people of Vraja practise ragatmika bhakti and the devotion that follows in its wake is called raganuga."

In his Bhakti Sandarbha (310) Srimat Jiva Gosvamipada has written:

atra vishayinah svabhaviko vishaya samsargecchatisayamayah prema ragah yatha cakshur adinam saundaryadau; tadrisa evatra bhaktasya sri bhagavatyapi raga ityucyate. yasya purvokte raga viseshe rucir eva jatasti na tu raga visesha eva svayam tasya tadrisa raga sudhakara karabhasa samullasita hridaya sphatika maneh sastradi srutasu tadrisya ragatmikaya bhakteh paripatishvapi rucir jayate. tatas tadiyam ragam rucyanugacchanti sa raganuga tasyaiva pravartate.

"The natural love and desire of a sense enjoyer for his favourite sense objects is called raga. Just as the eyes are attracted to beautiful scenes and other senses are attracted to their favourite sense objects and need no encouragement in this, similarly when the heart of a devotee is naturally attracted to the Lord then this anxious thirst of love is called raga. When even a semblance of the moon rays of the aforementioned raga (which is situated within the hearts of the eternal associates of Krishna) falls on the crystal-like heart of a devotee who attained a little taste for this aforementioned raga, but did not really developed the real raga yet, then the whole heart rejoices, and when he learns about it from the scriptures he develops a taste for the expert devotional service of these ragatmika devotees."

The purport of this is that when those devotees whose hearts are clear from lust, anger, greed and envy hear from the scriptures and the mouths of the saints about the loving skill in devotional service of the ragatmika bhaktas their taste will awaken. With such ruci they will follow them and thus their raganuga-bhakti will commence. Thus it is to be understood. (3)

TEXT 4:

**bhaktau pravrittir atra syat taccikirsha suniscaya
sastral lobhat tac cikirshu syatam tad adhikarinau**

"Engagement in devotion according to the devotional scriptures means having an exclusive desire to perform devotional practices. The two kinds of candidates for devotional service (vaidhi and raganuga) commence for two different reasons: fear of scriptural injunctions (the vidhi bhakta) and intense sacred greed (the raganuga bhakta) respectively."

Kripa-kanika Vyakhyā:

In the bhakti sadhana-marga there is no consideration of individual qualification or distinction between different levels of practitioners, as is the case in the jnana, karma and other sadhana-margas. Bhakti is a sadhana path that can be followed by anyone. Bhakti is beneficial for all, whether well behaved or ill behaved, knowledgeable or ignorant, detached or attached. Since bhakti is the path for everyone there is no obstacle for anyone to tread it. Thus the only factor that causes one to commence the practice of bhakti is simply a strong desire to take part in its different events. This desire can arise for two reasons, one is fear of the scriptural injunctions, which means that the scriptures prescribe that all living entities should worship the Lord, and one commences bhakti out of fear that otherwise there will certainly be trouble. The other one arises when one hears from the scriptures about the expert love of the Lord's eternal associates and out of sacred greed one begins to desire bhajana. In this way there are two kinds of candidates for bhakti. Srimat Rupa Gosvami has given definitions of both these kinds of candidates, for vaidhi and raganuga bhakti.

The definition of the vaidhi-marga's candidate is as follows:

yah kenapyati bhagyena jata sraddho'sya sevane
natisakto na vairagya bhagasyam adhikaryasa
(Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu 1.2.14)

"When, by a stroke of inconceivable luck, a person develops faith and liking for serving Krishna (bhakti marga) due to having associated with great saints, but has not yet attained firm attachment to the Lord and is only slightly averse to bodily attachments - such a person is eligible for sadhana bhakti." The candidate for raganuga is described as follows:

ragatmikaika nishtha ye vrajavasi janadayah
tesham bhavaptaye lubdho bhaved atradhikaravan
(Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu 1.2.291)

"A person who is simply greedy after the unalloyed, ecstatic ragatmika bhakti-love for Krishna of the Vrajavasis, is a candidate for raganuga bhakti."

The difference between the candidates for vaidhi and raganuga bhakti is that eligibility for vaidhi bhakti is caused by 'sraddha' (faith) and eligibility for raganuga bhakti is caused by 'lobha' (sacred greed).

The candidate for vaidhi bhakti gradually advances in his sadhana by keeping his faith in the purports of the scriptures and some ruci gradually awakens as a result of his reverential attitude towards the Lord, and meets with his sraddha. But this ruci remains a secondary factor, and his bhajana continues mainly on the basis of his sraddha. And the candidates for raganuga bhakti are prompted by greed after the sweet feelings of the nitya siddha Vrajavasis. Their practice of ruci-sadhana gradually develops and meets with deep sraddha; but here sraddha remains the secondary factor and ruci the primary. He remains engaged in bhajana that bears the shape of sraddha, but in which ruci is primary. This is definitely different in kind from the sraddha that prompts vaidhi bhakti and much more powerful also, because the absorption that raganuga bhakti causes within the consciousness is never created on purpose, since ruci is the innate function of the heart. This is the difference between eligibility for vaidhi and raganuga bhakti. However, there is no difference in the course of devotion or bhajana itself. In other words, all the items that are named as the items of vaidhi bhakti, such as hearing and chanting, are also to be practised in raganuga bhakti (the author will clearly describe that himself later). (4)

TEXT 5:

**tatra lobho lakshitah svayam sri rupa gosvami caranair eva -
tat tad bhavadi madhurye srute dhir yad apekshate
natra sastram na yuktim ca tal lobhotpatti lakshanam
(B.R.S. 1.2.292)**

**vrajalila parikarastha sringaradi bhava madhurye srute dhir idam
mama bhuyat iti lobhotpatti-kale sastra yukty apeksha na syat
satyam ca tasyam lobhatvasyaivasiddheh. nahi kenacit sastra
drishtya lobhah kriyate napi lobhaniya vastu praptau svasya
yogyayogyatva vicarah ko'py udbhavati. kintu lobhaniya vastuni
srute drishte va svata eva lobha utpadyate.**

"Srila Rupa Gosvami has personally given the following definition of lobha (sacred greed) in Sri Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu: 'When the heart yearns for the sweetness of the mutual feelings of Krishna and His eternal associates in Vraja, and one is not dependent on scriptural injunctions or logical arguments, then that is the definition of 'the cause of sacred greed'. If one thinks: 'Let me

attain such sweet feelings also', after hearing about feelings such as the transcendental erotic feeling towards Krishna of His associates (the gopis) in Vraja, then one need not wait for favorable sanctions from the revealed scriptures or logical arguments. If such impetuses (scriptures and arguments) are there, then it cannot be justly called 'sacred greed'. This greed never arises in anyone on such bases, nor does the candidate ever consider whether he is qualified for this path of raganuga bhakti or not. Rather, simply after hearing about the desired subject matter, or seeing it, that sacred greed will arise in him. "

Kripa-kanika Vyakhyā:

Here the blessed author describes the cause of greed for raganuga bhakti, which is rooted in sacred greed, the means to attain that greed and the symptoms of that greed. When one becomes slightly experienced by hearing the sweet stories from Srimad Bhagavata and the lila-granthas of the rasika bhaktas that preach the same conclusion about the feelings, forms and attributes of the Vrajavasis like Sri Nanda and Yasoda that please all the senses of Sri Krishna one becomes independent from scriptural injunctions and logical arguments and develops a certain consciousness, a desire for those sweet feelings - and that is called the root cause of sacred greed. Srimat Jiva Gosvamipada has written in his Gopala Campu-grantha (Purva 1.81):

harir gopa-kshauni-pati mithunam anye ca vividha
na nah krumam cittam mridulayitum isa lavam api
aho! tesham prema vilasati harau yas tu balavan
harer va yas teshu drutayati sa eva pratipadam

"Nor Hari Himself, nor Goparaja Sri Nanda, nor Vrajesvari Yasoda nor any of the other people of Vraja could soften my cruel heart even slightly. But, aho! By constantly meditating on the natural love of the Vrajavasis for Sri Krishna and Sri Krishna's natural love for the Vrajavasis my heart is awakening and starting to melt!" This is the definition of the awakening of lobha.

Although attachment to the Lord is basically one and the same, there is a distinction according to the self-identification of the devotee and the way in which the Lord manifests Himself. Vrajendranandana is the Original

Personality of Godhead, the full manifestation of both aisvarya and madhurya and the full object of loving attachment. The devotees also are eligible to taste the sweetness of the Lord according to the amount of love they have for Him, which in turn nourishes their own self-identification in relation with Him. In Vraja there are four main rasas - dasya, sakhya, vatsalya and madhura. Of them, sakhya is more relishable than dasya, vatsalya more relishable than sakhya and madhura more relishable than vatsalya. Madhura bhava should be known as supreme.

The love of the Lord's servants is to be known as filled with awe and reverence. Although Krishna's servants in Vraja, like Raktaka and Patraka, do not consider Him to be the Supreme Lord, they see Him as the son of Vrajesvara Nanda Maharaja, a local prince and in this way they see Sri Krishna as the Lord. Sakhya bhava should be accepted as a greater form of love, because Sri Krishna's friends like Sridama and Subala consider themselves to be equal to Him and their love is free from awe and reverence. In this carefree loving attitude: kandhe cade kandhe cadaya kore krida rana; krishne seve krishne koraya apana sevana (C.C.) "They mount His shoulders, allow Him to mount their shoulders and playfully fight with Him. Thus they serve Krishna and let Krishna serve them also." Thus we can see the special sweetness of Sri Krishna surrounded by the cowherdboyfriends, who are all endowed with sakhya bhava, in Srimad Bhagavata:

syamam hiranya paridhim vanamala barha,
dhatu prabala natavesam anuvratamse
vinyasta hastam itarena dhunananam abjam,
karnotpalalaka kapola mukhabja hasam
(Bhagavata 10.23.22)

"Sri Syamasundara wore yellow garments, had a garland of forestflowers around His neck, an enchanting crown of peacockfeathers on His head, a dancing dress which was colored by mineral pigments such as rubies around His waist, He kept His left arm on the shoulder of a friend who stood next to Him and He twirled a playlotus around in His right hand. He wore lotus flowers in His ears, His cheeks were flanked by enchanting curly locks and His lotuslike face was beautified by a soft sweet smile." From this statement it is understood that Sri Krishna's manifestation is much more attractive when He is with His devotees who take shelter of a fraternal mood towards Him than when He is with

His devotees who take shelter of a mood of servitude.

Then again, Sri Krishna's manifestation is even sweeter when He is with the devotees who have taken shelter of a parental mood towards Him, like His father and mother, than when He is with His friends. In Srimad Bhagavata Sri Suka Muni describes it thus:

krītagasam tam prarudantam akshini kashantam anjan mashini sva panina
udvikshamanam bhaya vihvalekshanam haste grihitva
bhishayantyabagurat
(10.9.11)

"During the Dama-bandhana lila Krishna, who had been naughty, wept and rubbed His eyes with His hands so that His eyeliner was spilled all over His face. Although Sri Yasoda saw that her son was overwhelmed by fear she held His hand and chastised Him just to frighten Him."

Because in this pastime Krishna was most absorbed He manifest Himself in an even more attractive way when He was with His devotees that had taken shelter of a parental mood than when He was with His fraternal devotees. He will never display a manifestation of fear in front of His servants or friends, as He did when He was thus absorbed in feelings of fear. According to the progression of absorption in transcendental pastimes one must definitely also accept a progression of sweetness.

Then again, the sweet love of the Vrajasundaris, that are endowed with maha-bhava, is seen as most special, because they have forgotten everything else out of great absorption in their love for the Lord, even more than those in the fraternal or parental moods. Hence the manifestation of the Lord is also truly incomparable when He is in their vicinity. When Sri Krishna sat down next to the gopis on the bank of the Yamuna during the Rasa-night, Sri Suka Muni described the great manifestation of His sweetness as follows:

tatropavishto bhagavan sa isvaro; yogesvarantar hṛidi kalpitasanah
cakasa gopi parishad gato'rcitas trailokya lakshmyeka padam vapur
dadhat

(Bhagavata 10.32.14)

"Sri Krishna, the Original Godhead, for whom the kings of yogis make a seat in their hearts during their meditations, sat down on a seat that the

gopis made for Him with their garments. When He was thus honoured and surrounded by the Gopa-sundaris He displayed a form that contained the beauty of all the three worlds."

Of these mahabhava-endowed Vrajasundaris the love of madanakhya mahabhava-endowed Sri Radharani is again the greatest, and in Her vicinity Sri Krishna manifests Himself in the most beautiful way. The sakhis and manjaris that take shelter of Her are blessed by entering into an ocean of Yugala Madhuri. Sriman Mahaprabhu and the acaryas that have taken shelter of Him have preached the worship of Radha's service or manjari bhava to the world. When the aspirant attains the grace of a great soul who has taken shelter of this manjari bhava, and he hears about the expertise in Yugala-service of Vraja's eternal maidservants like Rupa Manjari and Rati Manjari he becomes greedy after this feeling without bothering about scriptural injunctions or logical arguments. This is what prompts the raganuga bhajana of the Gaudiya Vaishnavas. When one does depend on scriptural injunctions or logical arguments one can not really speak of greed, for no one will become greedy through scriptural knowledge. When one sees the desired object or hears about it greed will automatically awaken and there will be no consideration whatsoever of being qualified or not for attaining the desired object.

ragamayi bhaktira hoy ragatmika nama;
taha suni lubdha hoy kon bhagyavan
lobhe vrajavasi-bhave kore anugati;
sastra-yukti nahi mane - raganugara prakriti (C.C.)

"Devotion full of sacred passion is called ragatmika. If a fortunate soul becomes greedy after that devotion after hearing about it he will eagerly follow the feelings of the people of Vraja without bothering about scriptural injunctions and logical arguments. Such is the nature of raganuga bhakti." (5)

TEXT 6:

sa ca bhagavat kripa hetuko'nuragi bhakta kripa hetukas ceti
dvividhah. tatra bhakta kripa hetuko dvividhah praktana
adhunikas ca. praktanah - paurva bhavika tadrisa bhakta
kripotthah, adhunikah etaj janmavadhi tadrisa bhakta kripotthah.

**adye sati lobhanantaram tadrisa guru caranasrayanam. dvitiye
guru caranasrayanantaram lobha pravrittir bhavati. yad uktam:**

**krishna tad bhakta karunya matra lobhaika hetuka
pushti margataya kaiscid iyam raganugocyate**

"There are two causes for the appearance of the aforementioned sacred greed: The mercy of God or the mercy of another anuragi devotee. There are again two kinds of mercy bestowed by a devotee: praktana and adhunika. praktana means mercy bestowed by a raganuga bhakta in a previous life, and adhunika is mercy bestowed in the present birth. The praktana-devotee takes shelter of the lotus feet of a raganuga guru after the sacred greed has arisen in him, the adhunika will get that sacred greed only after having surrendered to the feet of such a guru. It is said (in Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu): "The only causes of the appearance of sacred greed is the mercy of Krishna or His devotee. Therefore some call the path of raganuga bhakti also pushti marga (the path of grace)."

Kripa-kanika Vyakhyā:

After giving the definition of the cause of sacred greed the blessed author now describes the causes for attaining this greed. Greed for raganuga bhajana can only be attained by the grace of Sri Krishna or the grace of the great saints that are themselves passionately attached to the sweet feelings of Sri Krishna's associates. Krishna rarely bestows His mercy on new aspirants, therefore almost always this sacred greed arises by the grace of the aforementioned saints.

There are two kinds of sacred greed that arises by the grace of the saints - praktana and adhuniki. Those who have attained lobha by the mercy of raganuga saints in previous births will revive the cultivation of that lobha in their present birth and go on with raganuga bhajana, taking shelter of the feet of a guru according to their previous lives' samskara (cultivation), which can be dasya or sakhyā or so. Those who did not cultivate such greed in their previous lives first take shelter of the lotus feet of a guru, and after they hear about the great love of Sri Krishna and His eternal associates the greed awakens within them. There is no other means than the grace of Sri Krishna and His pure devotees to attain this

greed for raganuga bhajana, and the blessed author has proven it by quoting a sloka from Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu. In his commentary on this sloka Srimat Jiva Gosvamipada has written: krishneti - matra padasya vidhi marge kutracit karmadi samarpanam api dvaram bhavatiti tad vicchedarthah prayoga iti bhava. "The word matra is used in the above sloka 'krishna tad-bhakta karunya matra labhaika hetuka' because sometimes the offering of fruitive activities can lead to entry into vaidhi bhakti, whereas raganuga bhakti is only (matra) attained through grace." Greed for raganuga bhakti is more rarely attained than bhava or rati in vidhi bhakti, and it is only attainable through grace (Sri Mukunda Dasa Gosvami). The devotees from the Vallabha Sampradaya call this raganuga marga pushti marga (the path of grace). (6)

...

TEXT 10:

tac ca sastram sarvopanishat sarabhutam 'yesham aham priya
atma sutas ca sakha guruh suhrido daivam ishtam' ityadi vakya
nicayakara sri bhagavata maha puranam eva. tatha tat pratipadita
bhakti vivarana cancu sri bhakti rasamritarnavadikam api.
tatratyam vakya-trayam yatha - krishnam smaram janam casya
preshtham nija samihitam. tat tat katha ratas casau kuryad vasam
vraje sada. iti. seva sadhaka rupena siddha rupena catra hi. tad
bhava lipsuna karya vrajalokanusaratah. iti. sravanotkirtanadini
vaidhi-bhaktyuditani tu. yanyangani ca tanyatra vijneyani
manishibhih. iti. trikam atra kamanuga pakshe eva vyakhyayate.

"In Srimad Bhagavata Maha Purana, which is the essence of all the Upanishads, Lord Kapila speaks the following words (3.25.38): 'To the devotees I am the beloved, the very Self, the son, the friend, the spiritual master, the well-wisher, Fate, or the chosen deity.' And the 'Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu' of Srimad Rupa Gosvami, which describes the devotion propounded by Srimad Bhagavata, provides the following three verses: 'The devotee should remember Krishna and an eternally liberated devotee of Krishna's of his own choice. He should always live in Vraja and be attached to topics concerning Krishna and that favorite devotee of his.' (1.2.294); 'Both in his material and in his (mentally conceived) spiritual body should one follow in the footsteps of the people of

Vraja, always desiring their feelings and activities.' (1.2.295); and: 'The practitioner of raganuga bhakti should also perform all the limbs of vaidhi bhakti, such as hearing and chanting, as far as they are favorable. This is what the learned say. (1.2.296)" These three verses explain the position of the kamanuga devotee (those serving in a transcendental erotic feeling)."

Kripa-kanika Vyakhyā:

Before, we have indicated that the scriptural injunctions are the means to attain the desired transcendental feelings. Now it is described which scriptures we must rely on for that. Srimad Bhagavata Mahapurana, which is the essence of all the Upanishads and Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu, the book which contains all the divine bhagavata rasa that was bound within the whorl of Srimat Rupa Gosvamipada's lotus like heart and that explains all the devotion that was propounded by Srimad Bhagavata - from all these scriptures the rules of worship of ragatmika bhakti and its subsequent raganuga bhajana is learned.

The blessed author first quotes a verse (3.25.38) from Srimad Bhagavata, which was spoken by Sri Kapiladeva - yesham aham priya atma sutas ca sakha guruh suhrido daivam ishtam. Bhagavan Kapiladeva says:

"I am their (My devotees') lover, soul, son, friend, preceptor, heart's friend and worshipable deity."

When Srimat Jiva Gosvamipada describes raga bhakti in Bhakti Sandarbha (310) he quotes this verse and explains it as follows: "In this verse the word priya refers to Sri Krishna as the lover of the gopis, atma refers to the Param Brahma, in which form the four Kumaras and other santa-bhaktas see Him, suta means the son of Sri Vrajesvara (Nanda Maharaja), sakha the friend of Sridama and others, and guru the superior of Pradyumna and others. All these devotees are interlocked in a loving relationship with Sri Krishna. He is someone's brother, someone else's maternal uncle, someone else's husband, etc., and in many ways He manifests Himself as the heart's friend (suhrit) of all these devotees that have all these different relationships with Him. For His servant Daruka He manifests Himself as the worshipable deity (ishta-deva), this is very well known.

Previously it has been said that the love which carries the strong desire to attain union with the Lord is called raga. But the raga which Rudra showed towards the Lords form of Mohini Murti is not to be accepted like that. This is because the Lord accepted the appearance of Mohini Murti to deceive Sri Rudra, and when Rudra saw this appearance of Mohini Murti his mind became very agitated by desires to unite with Mohini. The attachment that Rudra had for Mohini cannot be called raga, because he had been deluded by maya and had attained feelings of lust. This lust was caused by his enchantment with Her form, therefore this cannot be accepted as raga.

The devotion that is thus prompted by raga (divine attachment), in which particular attachments exist with defined self-identifications such as consort hood, and that mainly consists of hearing, chanting, remembering, serving the lotus feet and offering oneself is called ragatmika bhakti. This raga bhakti manifests itself automatically, just like the waves of the Ganga. This is sadhya bhakti, not sadhana bhakti. This means that there is no procedure of sadhana here. The kind of devotion that follows in the wake of this sadhya bhakti that consists of sravana, kirtana and so, is named raganuga bhakti.

In Sri Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu Srimat Rupa Gosvami describes raganuga bhajana in three verses. The first of them is - krishnam smaran janam casya preshtham nije samihitam. tat tat katha ratas casau kuryad vasam vraje sada (1.2.294)

'Remembering one's own beloved Nandanandana Krishna and His dearmost associates of one's own choice and taste, being attached to speaking about them and living in Vraja (if possible physically, if not then at least always mentally)." The second verse: seva sadhaka rupena siddha rupena catra hi; tad bhava lipsuna karya vrajalokanusaratah

"On the path of raganuga bhakti one is engaged in the service of Sri Krishna in one's sadhaka rupa, which means the present physical body, as well as in one's siddha deha, which means one's mentally conceived, own desired body, desiring the ecstatic love of Sri Krishna's beloved devotees that are situated in Vraja and following in their footsteps."

The third verse runs: sravanotkirtanadini vaidha bhaktyuditani tu; yanyangani ca tanyatra vijneyani manishibhish

"All the items of devotion that were discussed for vaidhi bhakti are also practised and depended upon in raganuga bhakti. The wise devotees practise the items that are proper for their own mood, but they do not act contrary to their own mood."

The blessed author will later explain these three verses in connection with kamanuga.

The devotion that follows in the wake of ragatmika bhakti is called raganuga bhakti. The devotion that is manifest in Krishna's eternal associates in Vraja is called ragatmika bhakti. This ragatmika bhakti is twofold - sambandha rupa and kama rupa. The devotion of servants like Raktaka and Patraka, friends like Sridama and Subala and parents like Nanda and Yasoda are called sambandha rupa ragatmika bhakti, while only the amorous devotion of Sri Radha and the other beautiful girls of Vraja is famous as kama rupa ragatmika bhakti. Just as there are two kinds of ragatmika bhakti, namely sambandha-rupa and kama rupa, there are also two kinds of raganuga followers of them - sambandhanuga and kamanuga. Sriman Mahaprabhu and the Gaudiya Vaishnava Acaryas that surrendered to His lotus feet have preached the kamanuga bhakti-love of radha dasya, or manjari bhava sadhana to the world. Therefore, the blessed author has determined that he would explain these above three verses in the scope of kamanuga bhakti. (10)

TEXT 11:

**prathamatah krishnam smaran iti smaranasyatra raganugayam
mukhyatvam ragasya manodharmatvat. preshtham nija bhavocita
lila vilasinam krishnam vrindavanadhisvaram. asya krishnasya
janam ca kidrisam nija samihitam svabhilashaniyam sri
vrindavanesvari lalita visakha sri rupa manjaryadikam.
krishnasyapi nija samihitatve'pi tajjanasya ujjvala bhavaika
nishthatvat nija samihitatvadhikyam. vraje vasam iti asamarthyे
manasapi. sadhaka sarirena vasas tu uttara slokarthatah prapta
eva. sadhaka rupena yathavasthita dehena. siddha rupenantas
cintitabhishta tat sakshat sevopayogi dehena. tad bhava lipsuna -
tad bhavah sva preshtha krishna vishayakah sva samihita krishna
janasrayakasca yo bhava ujjvalakhyas tam labdhum icchata. seva
manasaivopasthapitaih sakshad apyupasthapitais ca samucita
dravyadibhih paricarya karya. tatra prakaram aha vraja**

lokanusaratah sadhaka-rupenanugamyamana ye vrajalokah sri rupa gosvamyadayah ye ca siddha-rupenanugamyamanah vrajalokah sri rupa manjaryadayas tad anusaratah. tathaiva sadhaka-rupenanugamyamana vrajalokah prapta krishna-sambandhino janas candrakantyadayah dandakaranya-vasi munayas ca brihad-vamana prasiddhah srutayas ca yathasambhavam jneyah. tad anusaratas tat tad acara drishtyety arthah. tad evam vakya-dvayena smaranam vrajavasam ca uktva srav Nadinapy aha - sravanotkirtanadiniti. guru padasrayanadini tvakshepa labdhani. tani vina vrajolanugatyadikam kim api na sidhyed ity ato manishibhir iti manishaya vimrisyaiva sviyabhava samucitany eva tani karyani na tu tad viruddhani.

"First of all, through the words 'remembering Krishna' (Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu 1.2.294), it is indicated that remembrance (smarana) is the main item of raganuga bhakti. Raga is a special feature of the mind. The beloved is the Lord of Vrindavana, Sri Krishna, who enjoys pastimes suitable to His own feeling. With 'His people also' is meant: His beloved eternal associates in Vraja, that transcendental personality that the practising devotee favours, like Vrindavanesvari Sri Radhika, Sri Lalita, Visakha, Sri Rupa Manjari, and so on. Although they are Krishna's favorites, they are also more favorite to those devotees who desire to enter into the brilliant erotic relationship with Krishna. If one can not live in Vraja physically, one must at least mentally do so. But the next verse (1.2.295) clearly explains how one must live in Vraja physically. Living with the sadhaka rupa means in the physical body of the practising devotee, and the siddha rupa means one's own desired mentally conceived spiritual body, that is suitable for direct transcendental service to Sri Krishna. tad bhava lipsuna means: being eager to attain the brilliant erotic feelings towards Krishna of one's favorite devotees in that feeling, like Sri Radhika and the gopis. How to serve? With paraphernalia that are collected either mentally or physically. How to follow in the footsteps of the people of Vraja? In one's physical body one follows in the footsteps of Srila Rupa Gosvami and other saints that lived in Vraja and in the mentally conceived spiritual body one follows in the footsteps of Srimati Rupa Manjari and other eternal associates of Krishna. The people of Vraja that should be followed in the sadhaka rupa,

such as Candrakanti, the sages of the Dandaka-forest, whose story is related in the Brihad Vamana Purana, as well as the srutis (Upanishads), have attained their spiritual relationship with Krishna. One should act like these Vrajavasis. In this way the first two verses described smarana and living in Vraja and the third verse (1.2.296) describes practices such as hearing about Krishna's pastimes. All other limbs of devotional practice, such as taking shelter of the feet of the guru, are attained through the practice of hearing and chanting. Without hearing and chanting one's allegiance to the people of Vraja will be unsuccessful, hence the word manishibhih was used. This means that intelligent persons will, with the help of their sense of discrimination, practise those limbs that are favorable to one's own devotional feelings and not those that are opposed to that. "

Kripa-kanika Vyakhyā:

The blessed author has quoted three verses from Sri Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu and has explained that in terms of the kamanuga devotees, beginning with the first verse, where the devotee practises the remembrance of Sri Krishna, who enjoys according to His own feelings, and his own favorite associates of Krishna, such as Sri Radha, Lalita, Visakha and Sri Rupa Manjari. Raga is the natural function (dharma) of the mind, and so is smarana. Therefore the blessed author says that smarana is the main and major item of raganuga bhajana. Srila Narottama Thakura Mahasaya has said: sadhana smarana lila, ihae na koro hela, kaya mane koriya susara. manera smarana prana, madhura madhura dhama, yugala vilasa smriti sara. sadhya sadhana ei, iha boi ara nai, ei tattva sarva vidhi sara (Prema Bhakti Candrika). "Do not neglect the practice of lila smarana, keep this as the essence with body and mind. The very life-force of the mind is smarana, which is the abode of all sweetness, and the essence of smarana is the pastimes of Radha and Krishna. This is the means, this is the goal, and there is nothing apart from this. This truth is the essence of all regulative principles."

Smarana is the very life-force of the mind; a mind that does not remember the Lord is like a lifeless corpse. The body that contains no soul serves as food for the dogs and jackals, and in the same way the enemies of lust and anger always bite the mind that is not engaged in remembering the Lord. When life is still in the body the dogs and jackals

flee away in fear, and similarly when lust and greed see that the mind is animated by remembrance of the Lord they will flee far away. Not only that, the glories of smarana are unlimited.

smaratah pada kamalam atmanam api yacchati; kintvarthakaman bhajato
natyabhishthan jagad guruh (Bhag. 10.80.11)

"The Universal Teacher Sri Krishna even gives His very self to the person who remembers His lotus feet. What then to speak of giving him money and sense gratification, which is not even desired by the devotees?"

In his commentary on this verse Sri Jiva pada has written: smaratah smarate. sakshat pradurbhuya atmanam smartur vasikarotityarthah (Bhakti Sandarbhah 277)

'Sri Krishna will personally appear before the person who remembers Him and give Himself to him, which means that He is subdued by the devotee who remembers Him.'

Srimat Jiva Gosvamipada has mentioned four kinds of smarana: nama smarana, rupa smarana, guna smarana and lila smarana. Of them, lila smarana is the best, for it automatically includes nama, rupa and guna smarana. The remembrance of the pastimes of Radha and Krishna is the essence of all regulative principles, for it is both the means and the goal. Therefore it is the remembrance of the pastimes of Radha and Krishna that make raganuga bhajana so special. The raganugiya sadhaka remembers the eightfold daily pastimes of Sri-Sri Radha-Madhava and Their girlfriends like Lalita and Visakha and they meditate how they render devotional service in allegiance to the manjaris headed by Sri Rupa Manjari. Such raga bhajana is the unprecedented merciful gift of Sriman Mahaprabhu. The remembrance of Sri-Sri Radha Madhava's intimate pastimes is not possible without the remembrance of Sri Gauranga's pastimes, and thus we see that in the Gaudiya Vaishnava Sampradaya there is a system of remembering the eight-fold daily pastimes of Sri-Sri Gaura Govinda.

The raganugiya sadhakas perform their bhajana while residing in Vraja, and it is said that when one is unable to reside in Vraja physically one must reside there mentally. For instance: madhvabhave gudam dadyat.

"Honey is needed, but when that is not available one must use brown sugar."

Vraja Vasa is one of the five main items of bhajana that has inconceivable potencies. This is a most confidential item of bhajana. In the Puranas it is described that simply by living in Mathura-mandala for one day one attains Haribhakti, which is prayed for even by the liberated souls. Therefore it is always advised to the sadhakas to live in Vraja and to engage in discussing topics of the pastimes of the beloved deity. Living in Vraja-bhumi specifically enables one to visualize the pastimes of one's beloved Sri-Sri Radha-Madhava.

In his commentary to Brihad Bhagavatamrita 2.4.1 Srimat Sanatana Gosvamipada has written:

kutracid brahmandasyantar bahis ca muktipade'pi adrishtam ato vananam
antar madhye nivasata tat parshadoktam sri vaikunthaloka
sadhananushthanadikam sarvam eva vismritam vimohad iveti yathatyanta
mohat sarvam vismritam bhavet tathetyarthah. yad va vismrtam
ivetyanvayah. tatas ca vimohad iti etad bhumi-sobhaya cittakarshanad
ityarthah. evam mathnati sarvesham mano vilodayatiti mathura sabdartho
dhvanitah

"The beauty I beheld in Vraja-bhumi, this extraordinary beauty I had not seen anywhere in the universe, or beyond it, or even in the muktipada, where the liberated souls dwell. By staring at the beauty of Sri Vrindavana and by living in its forests I became so enchanted that I even forgot about practising the sadhana that was prescribed to me by the Lord's associates and that was going to elevate me to Vaikuntha. Nowhere did I experience such beauty, such bliss that attracted my mind and made me forget everything. Because Vraja-dhama thus agitates (manthana) everyone's minds and causes one to forget everything else it is known by the name of Mathura.

In the sadhaka-body, which is the present physical body, as well as in the siddha rupa, which is the mentally conceived spiritual body which is suitable for direct service to Them, or the Guru-given manjari-svarupa, raganugya devotees serve Sri-Sri Radha-Madhava in the wake of the people of Vraja and nourish the powerful desire to relish the wonderfully brilliant erotic sweetness of Their forms, attributes and pastimes in their

hearts. Just as one serves Sri-Sri Radha-Madhava in the external sadhaka-body with different articles according to the particular time, similarly one meditates on rendering such services mentally with the same articles collected with the siddha rupa in the Yogapitha (this is called mantramayi upasana). Then again one meditates on rendering service to Sri-Sri Radha-Madhava in one's siddha svarupa in the kingdom of the eightfold daily transcendental pastimes according to the right time (this is called svarasiki upasana).

The sadhaka should serve in two ways, in allegiance to the people of Vraja. As far as he is able to, the sadhaka should render service or do bhajana like Sri-Sri Rupa-Sanatana by living in Vraja, keeping their example of renunciation, dispassion and loyalty before him, and in his siddha rupa he should mentally render service in allegiance to Vraja-people like Sri Rupa Manjari. Or he will attain devotional service in the form of a gopi in Vraja by doing bhajana in allegiance to nitya siddha-gopis, sakhis like Candrakanti[1], the munis who lived in the Dandaka-forest or the goddesses who preside over the srutis and that were described in the Brihad Vamana Purana. The sadhaka should mentally render service while following in their footsteps, in allegiance to their activities. sadhane bhavibo yaha, siddha dehe pabo taha (Prema Bhakti Candrika) "According to what I have thought of during my sadhana I will get a siddha deha." Following this rule the sadhaka will be blessed by attaining the service he meditated upon in the lila-kingdom with his siddha-body. There are two kinds of raganuga bhajana –
'bahya' 'antara' ihara dui to sadhana;
bahya - sadhaka dehe kore sravana kirtanamane - nija siddha deha koriya bhavana;
ratri dine kore vraje krishnera sevana (C.C. Madhya 22)

"There are two kinds of practice: External and internal. Externally one practises hearing and chanting within one's physical sadhaka-body, and internally one meditates on one's own siddha-body, in which one serves Krishna in Vraja day and night."

Without practising limbs of bhajana such as hearing and chanting within the external sadhaka body the sadhaka cannot attain perfection in either destroying maya, becoming free from vices in his own bhajana or in his allegiance to the people of Vraja. With hearing and chanting is meant following as much as possible the 64 items of bhajana, starting with

taking shelter of a guru, that Srimat Rupa Gosvami has mentioned in his Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu grantha. Some people imitate the gopi deha with the sadhaka deha, dressing and ornamenting the physical body like women do, but this is not approved of by the Vaishnavacaryas like Sri Rupa and Sanatana Gosvami. An intelligent sadhaka should use his discriminating intelligence and follow the items of bhajana properly. He should not act contrary to his own feelings, for that will cause obstructions to his attainment of prema. (11)

[1] In the Padma Purana it is seen that a Gandharva-maiden named Candrakanti, after seeing the wonderful beauty of the Sri Gopala Murti, became eager to play with Him, and thus descended in a partial incarnation and worshipped Gopala by dancing for Him with other girls. After thus attaining Him in a divine form which was suitable for His enjoyment she received a boon from Brahma, Sri Gopala's pure devotee, that she could descend entirely and meet with Sri Vrishabhanu's daughter. In his commentary on Sri Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu Sri Jiva has written that this Gandharva-daughter Candrakanti, who serves as an example of deep absorption in raganuga sadhana, is Sri Radha's vibhuti (form of Her prowess), but that at the time she achieved perfection Sri Radha gave her Her friendship, and considered that all her activities, both in sadhana and in siddhi, were performed by Herself. For this reason the devotional scriptures indicate that Candrakanti and Srimati are non-different (commentary on Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu 1.3.14).

- commentary by Radhakunda Mahanta Sri Srimat Ananta das Babaji
- translation by Sripad Advaita das

Raganuga-bhakti only possible with a pure heart?

Someone wrote to me, of course with a false name (LOL), telling me that I misrepresent my beloved Gurudeva, Srila Ananta das Babaji.

He quoted with emphasis to the last three lines:

yasya purvoktam raga-viseshe rucir eva jatasti na tu raga-visesha eva svayam, tasya tadrisa-raga-sudhakara-karabhasa-samullasita-hridaya-sphatika-maneh sastradi-srutasu tadrisyam ragatmikaya bhakteh paripatishv api rucir jayate | tatas tadiyam ragam rucy-anugacchanti sa raganuga tasyaiva pravartate ||
(*Bhakti-sandarbha* 310)

“When even a semblance of the moonrays of raga shines upon the crystal-like heart of a person in whom a taste for the aforementioned specific raga has awakened, but who himself does not possess distinct raga, his heart rejoices. He then hears from the scriptures about such ragatmika-bhakti and consequently develops a taste for the same. Following his taste for such raga, he engages in raganuga-bhakti.”

These are the original words of my Gurudeva:

...tatparya ei ye, ye bhakter hrdoy svaccha arthat kama krodha matsaryadi bhave dusit nohe, sei bhakta sastra o sadhu mukhe ragatmika bhakter premamayi seva paripatir visay sravana korile tahate tahar rucir udoy hoy a thake...

...that bhakta whose heart is transparent, which means, not polluted by lust anger, envy and other feelings, if such a bhakta hears from shastra and sadhus about the loving expertise of the ragatmika bhaktas he gets ruci for that...

With these lines, he wanted to make the point that I say in my recent raganuga-blog something different than my Gurudeva, namely that I wronlgy claim raganuga starts with bhajana-kriya and my Gurudeva says not...

Of course I understand my Gurudeva:

He is talking here about a VERY high stage in raganuga-bhakti. A stage, where the heart is crystal-like (pure).

This is the stage of raganuga-bhava-bhakti and here, the REAL taste and the REAL raganuga-bhakti "starts"...with a heart full of loving feelings

and emotions.

Here also REAL smaranam takes place.

Also he may generally refer to the more gross transgressions caused by envy, greed and lust which happen on the stage of raganuga-sadhana-bhakti and which pollute our heart.

My Gurudeva doesn't write here that "raganuga-bhakti begins at RUCI"...he just makes a very strong point that to practice raganuga-bhakti the heart should not be polluted with unwanted desires.

Now, even at the stage of bhava-bhakti there are still some subtle anarthas or unwanted desires...so, does this mean that we have to wait until the stage of bhava-bhakti, where the heart may still be "polluted" by traces of anarthas? Never.

These are the opening lines from my Gurudeva's commentary to the following verse from Raga Vartma Chandrika (2.7):

Now it is described how the sadhaka attains the personal service of his beloved deity in His lila-kingdom, after attaining the perfection of prema. Two kinds of sadhana have been described of the raganugya devotees - the external practice of hearing and chanting in the sadhaka-body and the desired mental service in the self-conceived siddha body. When the sadhaka's obstacles, such as anarthas (different kinds of mischief) are removed by the continued practice of bhajana, he gradually becomes fixed up, gets (lasting) taste for bhajana and becomes genuinely attached to the Lord. Then, when rati and prema are attained the practice in the sadhaka deha is completed. In other words, when all the stages of the stream of sadhana - faith, surrender, taking shelter of the lotus feet of Sri Guru, serving Sri Guru and Vaishnava, hearing, chanting, remembering, meditating, becoming free from mischief, becoming fixed up, acquiring taste, becoming attached to the Lord and rati - have been fulfilled - then one reaches the culmination named prema. It is described in the book named Sri Ujjvala Nilamani how, after attaining this prema, all these raganugya sadhakas that do bhajana in the madhura rasa with the feelings of sakhis or manjaris, will attain the personal service of the Lord in the kingdom of lila:

**tad bhava baddha raga ye janas te sadhane ratah
tad yogyam anuragaugham prapyotkanthanusaratah**

**ta eko'thava dvi-trah kale kale vraje'bhavan
(Sri Haripriya Pra.- 49 and 50)**

"Those who are especially attracted to the feelings of the gopis and are thus engaged in raganuga bhajana, attain the abundance of anuraga that is proper for raganuga, and according to their eagerness, take birth in Vraja at different times as Vraja-gopis alone or in groups of two or three."

The verse is:

atha raganuga bhakti majjanasyanartha nivritti nishtha-rucyasyaktyantaram prema-bhumikarudhasya sakshat svabhishta-prapti-prakarah pradarsyate. yathojvala nilamanau "tad bhava baddha raga ye janas te sadhane ratah. tad yogyam anuragaugham prapyotkanthanusaratah. ta ekaso'thava dvi-trah kale kale vraje'bhavan" iti. anuragaugham raganuga bhajanautkanthyam natvanuraga sthayinam sadhaka-dehe'nuragotpattyasambhavat. vraje'bhavann iti avatara samaye nitya priyadya yatha avirbhavanti tathaiva gopika-garbhe sadhana-siddha api avirbhavanti. tatas ca nitya-siddhadi gopinam maha-bhava-vatinam sanga mahimna darsana sravana kirtanadibhih sneha mana pranaya raganuraga maha-bhava api tatra gopika-dehe utpadyante. purva janmani sadhaka-dehe tesham utpattyasambhavat. ataeva vraje krishna preyasinam asadharanani lakshanani. yad uktam - "gopinam paramananda asid govinda darsane. kshanam yuga-satam iva yasam yena vina bhaved" iti. "trutir yugayate tvam apasyatam" ityadi ca. kshanasya yuga satayamanatvam maha-bhava lakshanam.

Now it will be described how the raganugya bhakta gradually advances through the stages of anartha nivritti (cessation of bad habits), nishtha (fixation), ruci (taste), and asakti (attachment to the beloved deity) upto the stage of prema (love of God) and the direct attainment of his beloved deity. In the Ujjvala Nilamani it is said that 'those who are specially attracted to the ecstasy of the Vrajavasis and thus perform raganuga bhajana will attain that abundance of eagerness that is fit for performing raganuga bhajana and will take birth in Vraja in groups of one, two or three in their own time, according to their eagerness.' Here the word anuragaughā means 'that eagerness that makes one qualified for doing raganuga bhajana'. The anuraga mentioned here does not refer to the sthayi bhava (permanent mood) of that name, because the sthayi

bhava named anuraga cannot be attained within a material body. The words 'having taken birth in Vraja' means the sadhana siddhas take birth from the womb of a gopika, just as Krishna's eternally beloved gopis appear with Him when He descends to earth (prakata lila). After that, gradually sneha, mana, pranaya, raga, anuraga and mahabhava will become manifest in the gopika-body of that sadhaka on the strength of associating with the gopis that are endowed with maha-bhava and by hearing and chanting and seeing the greatness of Krishna's eternally liberated gopis. These feelings could not possibly have arisen in the material body of the sadhaka, in his previous birth. In this way the extraordinary characteristics of Sri Krishna's beloveds in Vraja has been shown. In Srimad Bhagavata it is said that the gopis attained the pinnacle of transcendental bliss by seeing Govinda. Without Him, they experienced a moment to last like a hundred ages. Their statement (in Srimad Bhagavata 10.31.15) 'Without seeing You, we consider a second to last like an age', is a symptom of mahabhava.

Clearly we can see that the raganuga-devotee goes through all the stages of bhakti.

In his essay "Ragaqnuga-tattva vijnana", my beloved Gurudeva writes:

Srimat Jiva Goswamipad has stated the characteristics of *raga-bhakti* as follows –

“There are devotees who feel slight interest in *raga-bhakti*; however they have still not actually felt *raga-bhakti*. *Raga-bhakti* is like a radiant moon; when a little trace of the moonlight of the moon-like *raga-bhakti* falls in these devotees, their heart dazzles like crystal. Then they hear from the scriptures about the wonderful *seva* that ragatmika devotees perform, and then they are interested to achieve the same. Here we should note the point that the devotee’s heart should be clean – it should not be polluted with lust, anger, jealousy and the like. If such a devotee hears from the *sadhus* and the scriptures about the perfect *seva* rendered by the ragatmika devotees he becomes interested. Now with this interest, if he follows the footsteps of the ragatmika devotees, we can say he is performing raganuga-*bhakti*.

In this context ‘hear from the *sadhus* and scriptures’ means the devotee should hear about the loving *seva* performed by the Vrajavasis and how Sri Krishna relishes the *rasa* of their *seva*. When the devotee hears and glorifies these pastimes his enthusiasm knows no bounds; just as when a moon ray disperses through a prism it looks all the more beautiful, similarly the hearing and glorifying enters the clear heart of a devotee and he becomes more joyous. Thus the devotee is enthused with interest in *prema-seva*. This induces him in the path of *raganuga-bhakti*. Here ‘interest’ means the devotee realizes that the *bhakti-shastras* that reveal the *bhava* of the eternal Vrajavasi associates of Sri Krishna as the best for hearing and he wants to follow those instructions only. This happens when the devotee has past *samskara* in this field. From the very beginning the devotee is greedy for Sri Krishna-*seva* (please note: only that kind of *seva* which the Vrajavasis do) and does not practice *bhakti* simply because the scriptures order us to do so.

“*Ragatmika-bhakti* is full of pure loving service. Some rare fortunate person is tempted by hearing about it and then he follows in the footsteps of the eternal Vrajavasi associates. A *raganuga* devotee does not practice *bhakti* just because of scriptural injunctions.”

– (C.C.Madhya. 22.87-88)

It is true that when we feel tempted, we do not care for scriptural injunctions; however if we want to gain His *seva* it becomes necessary to follow the processes prescribed by the *bhakti-shastras*.

Srila Vishwanath Chakravartipad has ordained –

“When we hear about the sweet *bhava* of the Vrajavasis we feel tempted; we do not care whether the scriptures tell us to practice *bhakti* or do not tell us. If we want to practice *bhakti* simply because the scriptures order us to do so we cannot say we were greedy for *seva*.”

– (Raga-vartma Chandrika)

However if we want to achieve the topmost goal that is Vraja-*prema*, then we must necessarily practice *bhajan* according to the

rules prescribed in the *raganuga*-scriptures. This is because – “If someone performs exclusive *Hari-bhakti* by rejecting the *shrutis*, *smritis*, purans and the pancharatra – we find that he only creates trouble.”

(*Brahma-Yamal-Tantra*)

Earlier we have mentioned something about ‘interest’. Now the fact is that majority of the devotees do not have this interest in the preliminary stage. Yet, when they perform *bhajan* according to the rules of *bhakti* and they continue to hear about the *raga-bhakti* of the Vrajavasis, they develop interest. Then they become *raganuga* devotees. When we hear from the devotees who are always immersed in pure love then we quickly gain interest. We also strive to follow these devotees in the same mood as they possess. This means that if we feel greedy after hearing about the loving *seva* of the eternal associates who are in *madhurya-bhava*, we too start practicing in *madhurya-bhava*. *Raganuga-bhajan* is the spiritual practice by which we can attain that same stage of love as those devotees whom we are following (the eternal Vrajavasis in the *madhurya-bhava*). We have to follow scriptural rules in this process, since the *raganuga* scriptures aim to tell the *raganuga* devotees about the behavior of the eternal associates, and thus they inuse vigorous interest in us.

“*siddhasya lakshanam yat syat sadhanam sadhakasya tat.*”

Meaning – “We have to practice to get all those qualities that they already possess.”

When we really gain interest then the scriptures will follow us. It means that in the early stage of interest we should perform *bhajan* according to the rules and regulations prescribed in the scriptures, and after we gain complete interest, the rules follow us – this is the difference between early stage and mature stage.

Srimad-Bhagavatam (2.1.7) says –’

prāyeṇa munayo rājan
nivṛttā vidhi-śedhataḥ

nairguṇya-sthā ramante sma
guṇānukathane hareḥ

Srimat Jiva Goswamipad has explained this verse as follows – “*Raganuga-bhakti* starts from the time we develop the slightest hint of interest. No one steps into raganuga because the scriptures order to do so. Therefore some people call it ‘*avihita*’ (not according to the rules). However, the ones who step in the path of *bhakti* not caring for the scriptural injunctions – we cannot say that they are not practicing *bhakti*, because we see in Srimad-Bhagavatam from above -

‘O king, very often sages, who are beyond the rules prescribed in the scriptures, are immersed in relishing Sri Hari-*katha*.’

For this reason the *vidhi-marga* is weak since the devotees in this case practice *bhakti* because the scriptures order them to do so, while the devotees practicing *raganuga-bhakti* do so not caring for the scriptural order – hence it is much stronger – we should know this fact.”

– (B.S.310)

As soon as a devotee starts with *Raganuga-bhakti* it makes him disinterested in anything other than *bhakti*. This is synonymous with greed. Srimad-Bhagavatam states that when we bend towards Sri Hari-*katha* then it increases our interest gradually to such an extent that all topics other than Sri Krishna lose importance for us.

Two verses onward in his Bhakti Sandarbha, Srila Jiva Goswami writes:

ajata-tadrisa-rucina tu sad-viseshadara-matradrita raganugapi vaidhi-
samvalitaivanushtyea |
tatha loka-samgrahartham pratishthitena jata-tadrisa-rucina ca |
atra misratve ca yatha-yogyam raganugayaiki krityaiva vaidhi kartavya || |
(Bhakti-sandarbha 312)

“Those in whom such taste (ruci) has not awakened, but who have a special interest for it, should engage in a mixture of raganuga and vaidhi. For the sake of establishing an example for the people of the world, the one in whom such ruci has awakened will do the same. Therefore, as appropriate, raganuga should be performed together with vaidhi.”

Check these videos and you will find out if I represent or misrepresent my beloved Gurudeva:

(They are from my Gurudeva and from a very senior Godbrother of mine who TRULY represents my Gurudeva)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dtiLrO6UUuA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jq933oDhqgM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=65M8znYkgsA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fh1B9pMZI-8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fxRxcHNHRS&list=PLtKQrMkJOVOZ9w1OeyBsP9R4Gu0xfIwB>

(This is a FULL PLAYLIST, just click on "PLAYLIST" or "PLAY ALL")

We start with raganuga-sadhana-bhakti.

Then we arrive at raganuga-bhava-bhakti and then at raganuga-prema-bhakti.

For a very nice understanding read this:

<http://www.jiva.org/the-two-divisions-of-pure-bhakti-part-2/>

Raganuga-bhakti, siddha pranali & minor acaryas

(This is a fictive dialogue, based on real events)

Sadhaka:

Dearest Gurudeva, you very nicely instructed me in the matter of raganuga-bhakti.

Recently some Vaishnavas were of the opinion that actually we have to practice vaidhi-bhakti until we reach the stage which Srila Rupa Goswami named "RUCI" in his Bhakti-Rasamrita-Sindhu.

They claimed that Srila Jiva Goswami wrote in the Bhakti Sandarbha that we can only start with raganuga-bhakti at the stage of ruci.

What can you say about this?

Gurudeva:

My dear child. First of all, like I instructed you before, we have to know about raganuga-bhakti and vaidhi-bhakti.

They are two different paths of bhakti. Also, their causes and their destinations are completely different.

Here are again the main shastric references to these two eternally distinct paths:

vaidhi raganuga ceti sa dvidha sadhanabhidha || (bhakti rasamrita sindhu 1.2.5)

“Practice is of two kinds, namely vaidhi and raganuga.” The word “vaidhi” is derived from the Sanskrit word “vidhi”, referring to the commandments of the scriptures. The word “raganuga” is a compound of two words, namely raga, “loving attachment”, and anuga, “following in the wake of”. The general characteristics of these two paths are explained as follows:

*vaidhi-bhaktir bhavet sastram bhaktau cet syat pravartakam |
raganuga syac ced bhaktau lobha eva pravartakah || (raga vartma chandrika 1.3)*

“When devotion is caused by scriptural injunctions, it is called vaidhi-bhakti, but when its cause is spiritual greed alone, it is called raganuga-bhakti.”

*yatra raganavaptatvat pravrittir upajayate |
sasanenaiva sastrasya sa vaidhi-bhaktir ucyate || (brs 1.2.6)*

“That devotion which knows no attachment or greed, but which is prompted by the commandments of the scriptures, is called vaidhi-bhakti.”

*virajantim abhivyaktam vrajavasi-janadishu |
ragatmikam anusrita ya sa raganugocyate || (brs 1.2.270)*

“The devotion which is clearly present in the associates of the Lord in Vraja is called devotion filled with loving attachment (ragatmika-bhakti), and devotion following in the wake of this ragatmika-bhakti is called raganuga-bhakti.”

*vaidhi-raganuga-marga-bhedenā parikirtitah |
dvividhah khalu bhavo'tra sadhanabhinivesajah || (brs 1.3.7)*

“The paths of vaidhi and raganuga are known to be separate from each other.

Engagement in these two forms of practice certainly awakens two distinct varieties of bhava.”

The goals of these two paths of devotion in practice are understood as follows:

vidhi-bhakte parshada-dehe vaikunthete yaya || (caitanya caritamrita 2.24.87)

“Through vidhi-bhakti, one will attain the form of an associate in Vaikuntha.”

*aisvarya-jnane vidhi-bhajana kariya |
vaikunthake yaya catur-vidha mukti pana ||*
(cc 1.3.17)

“Those who worship according to scriptural commandments, being aware of the Lord’s superhuman prowess, attain the four kinds of liberation in Vaikuntha.”

raga-bhakte vrale svayam-bhagavane paya || (cc 2.24.85)

“Through raga-bhakti, one will attain the Lord Himself in Vraja.”

*raganuga-marge tanre bhaje yei jana |
sei-jana paya vraje vrajendra-nandana ||*
(cc 2.8.221)

“He who worships on the path of raganuga will attain Vrajendranandana (Sri Krishna) in Vraja.”

In the realm of Vraja, the sweet and intimate human-like pastimes of God prevail. Only in such an atmosphere love can attain its pinnacle. Love which is filled with awareness of the Lord’s almighty is of an inferior quality. As stated by the Lord Himself:

*sakala jagate more kare vidhi-bhakti |
vidhi-bhaktye vraja-bhava paite nahi sakti ||*
aisvarya-jnanete saba jagat misrita |
aisvarya-sithila-preme nahi mora prita ||
(cc 1.3.15-16)

“Everyone in this world worships Me through vidhi-bhakti. Vidhi-bhakti has no power for attaining the feelings of Vraja. The devotion of the world is mixed with knowledge of My divine prowess. I do not delight in love diluted with prowess.”

It is thus evident that there is a need to deeply reflect on the nature and practice of raganuga-bhakti for anyone who desires to perfect his loving faculty in relationship with God. There is no other means for tasting the ambrosial sweetness of the Vraja-pastimes of the Lord!

*karma, tapa, yoga, jnana, vidhi-bhakti, japa, dhyana |
iha haite madhurya durlabha ||*
kevala ye raga-marge, bhaje krishne anurage |
tare krishna-madhurya sulabha ||
(cc 2.21.119)

“Sweetness is very difficult to attain through fruitive activities, austerity, yoga, intellectual speculation, vidhi-bhakti, recitation of mantras or meditation. The sweetness of Sri Krishna is easily attainable only for the one who affectionately worships Him on the path of raga.”

So you can see, it is very very clear.

Of course the items or "angas" of bhakti which will be performed may be "the same", like chanting, hearing, worshiping, etc...but the difference is the inner consciousness.

A raganuga-sadhaka only practices the items of bhakti which are conducive to his inner mood, which support the sadhaka in following the people of Vraja.

Srila Vishvanath Cakravartipada write in his Raga-Vartma-Chandrika:

How to follow in the footsteps of the people of Vraja? In one's physical body one follows in the footsteps of Srila Rupa Gosvami and other saints that lived in Vraja and in the mentally conceived spiritual body one follows in the footsteps of Srimati Rupa Manjari and other eternal associates of Krishna.

The people of Vraja that should be followed in the sadhaka rupa, such as Candrakanti, the sages of the Dandaka-forest, whose story is related in the Brihad Vamana Purana, as well as the srutis (Upanishads), have attained their spiritual relationship with Krishna. One should act like these Vrajavasis. In this way the first two verses described smarana and living in Vraja and the third verse (1.2.296) describes practices such as hearing about Krishna's pastimes. All other limbs of devotional practice, such as taking shelter of the feet of the guru, are attained through the practice of hearing and chanting. Without hearing and chanting one's allegiance to the people of Vraja will be unsuccessful, hence the word manishibhish was used. This means that intelligent persons will, with the help of their sense of discrimination, practise those limbs that are favorable to one's own devotional feelings and not those that are opposed to that.

And:

The scriptures show five kinds of devotional practices to make clear which other limbs of devotion are to be practised in raganuga bhakti, what they are like, what are their characteristics, what is to be done and what is not to be done. They are: those filled with the desired feeling, those related to the desired feeling, those favorable to the desired feeling, those not opposed to the desired feeling and those opposed to the desired feeling. Of them some are both the practice and the goal (the only difference between them being that the former is an 'unripe' stage and the latter is the 'ripe stage'), some are the direct cause of attaining the goal (prema), some the indirect cause, some are helpful, some are harmful and some are neutral. All these divisions have been shown.

So, quite honestly, if a sadhaka takes shelter of a raganuga Gurudeva, this Gurudeva will surely know how to instruct the disciple on what to practice and what not.

Sripad Satyanarayana das Babaji writes on this subject:

Śrī Kapila defines bhakti as activities of the senses in relationship to Bhagavān, with no motive other than pleasing Him, and without being obscured by non-essential activities suited to the pursuit of jñāna or karma, executed according to the injunctions stated in the bhakti literature by a person who has accepted a mantra from a spiritual teacher.

This bhakti has two divisions, vaidhī and rāgānuga bhakti. In the beginning, as sādhana, vaidhī bhakti lacks in intensity and is asvābhāvī — practiced externally, without natural inclination to it. When this practice attains successful maturity, however, it becomes natural (svābhāvī) at the perfect stage (sadhya) as vaidhī-bhāva-bhakti.

If from the beginning, this bhakti is practiced with a natural inclination and a sense of relationship to Kṛṣṇa, even if only imperfectly or not very intensely, it is called rāgānuga sādhana bhakti. When it attains successful maturity, it becomes rāgānuga bhāva bhakti. This distinction between vaidhī bhāva bhakti and rāgānuga bhāva bhakti is also described in Bhakti-rasāmrta-sindhu.

From this explanation of Viśvanātha Cakravartī Thākura, it is very clear that vaidhī bhakti and rāgānuga bhakti are two separate classes of bhakti from their very inception, and they continue to remain separate even in their mature state. Confusion arises because vaidhī bhakti does lead to a svābhāvī bhakti which has something in common with rāgānuga bhakti — natural inclination. However, practice of vaidhī bhakti does not automatically lead to rāgānuga bhakti. The seeds of vaidhī and rāgānuga are separate and yield separate results. Although the same terminology is used for both of them, namely sādhana bhakti, bhāva bhakti and prema bhakti, one must know that these three divisions of bhakti relating to vaidhī and rāgānuga are completely distinct. This is very clearly stated in Bhakti-rasāmrta-sindhu 1.2.1 and 1.2.5-6.

Sadhaka:

Thank you. So it may look from the outside as if a vaidhi- and a raganuga-bhakta are "doing" the same, but with a different inner mood or feeling?

Gurudeva:

Yes.

Now let us go on. You said that some Vaishnavas claim that the sadhaka has to be on Srila Rupa Goswami's mentioned stage "RUCI" in order to practice raganuga-bhakti.

Let us just see what Srila Vishvanatha Cakravartipad has to say about this:

atha raganuga bhakti majjanasyanartha nivritti nishtha-rucyasaktyataram prema-bhumikarudhasya sakshat svabhishta-prapti-prakarah pradarsyate. yathojvala nilamanau "tad bhava baddha raga ye janas te sadhane ratabh. tad yogyam anuragaugham praptyotkanthanusaratah. ta ekaso'thava dvi-trah kale kale vraje'bhavan" iti. anuragaugham raganuga bhajanautkanthyam natvanuraga sthayinam sadhaka-dehe'nuragotpattyasambhavat. vraje'bhavann iti avatara samaye nitya priyadya yatha avirbhavanti tathaiva gopika-garbhe sadhana-siddha api avirbhavanti. tatas ca nitya-siddhadi gopinam maha-bhava-vatinam sanga mahimna darsana sravana kirtanadibhish sneha mana pranaya raganuraga maha-bhava api tatra gopika-dehe utpadyante. purva janmani sadhaka-dehe tesham utpattyasambhavat. ataeva vraje krishna preyasinam asadharanani lakshanani. yad uktam – "gopinam paramananda asid govinda darsane. kshanam yuga-satam iva yasam yena vina bhaved" iti. "trutir yugayate tvam apasyatam" ityadi ca. kshanasya yuga satayamanatvam maha-bhava lakshanam.

Now it will be described how the raganugya bhakta gradually advances through the stages of anartha nivritti (cessation of bad habits), nishtha (fixation), ruci (taste), and asakti (attachment to the beloved deity) upto the stage of prema (love of God) and the direct attainment of his beloved deity. In the Ujjvala Nilamani it is said that 'those who are specially attracted to the ecstasy of the Vrajavasis and thus perform raganuga bhajana will attain that abundance of eagerness that is fit for performing raganuga bhajana and will take birth in Vraja in groups of one, two or three in their own time, according to their eagerness.' Here the word anuragaughā means 'that eagerness that makes one qualified for doing raganuga bhajana'. The anuraga mentioned here does not refer to

the sthayi bhava (permanent mood) of that name, because the sthayi bhava named anuraga cannot be attained within a material body. The words 'having taken birth in Vraja' means the sadhana siddhas take birth from the womb of a gopika, just as Krishna's eternally beloved gopis appear with Him when He descends to earth (prakata lila). After that, gradually sneha, mana, pranaya, raga, anuraga and mahabhava will become manifest in the gopika-body of that sadhaka on the strength of associating with the gopis that are endowed with maha-bhava and by hearing and chanting and seeing the greatness of Krishna's eternally liberated gopis. These feelings could not possibly have arisen in the material body of the sadhaka, in his previous birth. In this way the extraordinary characteristics of Sri Krishna's beloveds in Vraja has been shown. In Srimad Bhagavata it is said that the gopis attained the pinnacle of transcendental bliss by seeing Govinda. Without Him, they experienced a moment to last like a hundred ages. Their statement (in Srimad Bhagavata 10.31.15) 'Without seeing You, we consider a second to last like an age', is a symptom of mahabhava.

Clearly he mentions the progression of the raganuga sadhaka through Srila Rupa Goswami's stages of bhakti.

Now, I also know exactly which verses Srila Jiva Goswami is writing:

yasya purvoktam raga-viseshe rucir eva jatasti na tu raga-visesha eva svayam, tasya tadrisa-raga-sudhakara-karabhasa-samullasita-hridaya-sphatika-maneh sastradi-srutasu tadrisy a ragatmikaya bhakteh paripatishv api rucir jayate | tatas tadiyam ragam rucy-anugacchanti sa raganuga tasyaiva pravartate | |
(*Bhakti-sandarbha* 310)

"When even a semblance of the moonrays of raga shines upon the crystal-like heart of a person in whom a taste for the aforementioned specific raga has awakened, but who himself does not possess distinct raga, his heart rejoices. He then hears from the scriptures about such ragatmika-bhakti and consequently develops a taste for the same. Following his taste for such raga, he engages in raganuga-bhakti."

Srila Ananta das Babaji Maharaja writes about this:

...tatparya ei ye, ye bhakter hrday svaccha arthat kama krodha matsaryadi bhav dusit nohe, sei bhakta sastra o sadhu mukhe ragatmika bhakter premamayi seva paripatir visay sravana korile tahate tahar rucir uday hoy a thake...

...that bhakta whose heart is transparent, which means, not polluted by lust, anger, envy and other feelings, if such a bhakta hears from shastra and sadhus about the loving expertise of the ragatmika bhaktas he gets ruci for that...

This is not about raganuga-sadhana-bhakti beginning from letter "A", but about raganuga-bhakti with deep taste, leading to raganuga-bhava-bhakti and then to raganuga-prema-bhakti.

Nowhere here can we read:

"YOU CAN'T PRACTICE RAGANUGA-BHAKTI WITH A DIRTY HEART". The opposit is true: raganuga-sadhana-bhakti has much more power to clean the heart than vaidhi-sadhana-bhakti.

For the full manifestation of the RAGA of the RAGATMIKA devotees in our hearts, yes, our hearts must be pure.

Until that point, we eagerly practice raganuga-bhakti-sadhana in the anugatya of Sri Gurudeva.

Here, "not polluted by lust, anger or greed" is not referring to the stage of being FULLY LIBERATED from all unwanted desires. It means that the rays of raga will make a pure heart rejoice quite a lot.

When the rays of raga fall on an impure heart, it will have not the same effect or impact. But it will purify our hearts more and more by the mercy of Gurudeva, the sadhus and Krishna.

But what if our hearts are not yet like crystals? But we still feel greedy for practicing raganuga-bhakti?

Srila Jiva Goswami gives us hope:

*ajata-tadrisa-rucina tu sad-viseshadara-matradrita raganugapi vaidhi-samvalitaivanushtheya |
tatha loka-samgrahartham pratishthitena jata-tadrisa-rucina ca |
atra misratre ca yatha-yogyam raganugayaiki krityaiva vaidhi kartavya ||*
(Bhakti-sandarbha 312)

“Those in whom such taste (rucī) has not awakened, but who have a special interest for it, should engage in a mixture of raganuga and vaidhi. For the sake of establishing an example for the people of the world, the one in whom such ruci has awakened will do the same. Therefore, as appropriate, raganuga should be performed together with vaidhi.”

Exclusive and pure raganuga-bhakti really commences when the heart is pure.

But that doesn't mean that raganuga-bhakti-sadhana starts at the stage of RUCI.

Like Sripad Satyanarayana das Babaji wrote:

If from the beginning, this bhakti is practiced with a natural inclination and a sense of relationship to Kṛṣṇa, even if only imperfectly or not very intensely, it is called rāgānuga sādhana bhakti. When it attains successful maturity, it becomes rāgānuga bhāva bhakti. This distinction between vaidhī bhāva bhakti and rāgānuga bhāva bhakti is also described in Bhakti-rasāmr̥tasindhu.

We follow a mixture of vaidhi and raganuga-bhakti until our hearts are like crystals and then we are solely on the path of raganuga-bhakti.

Now, here we have to consider the use of the word "RUCI" here.

"RUCI" simply means taste. Now, Srila Rupa Goswami categorized the stages within bhakti from sraddha (faith) to prema (pure love) and he gave each consequent stage a meaningful word.

In Srila Rupa Goswami's ascending stages within bhakti, "RUCI" is the stage after "NISTHA" (firm faith), when nearly all unwanted desires are gone (anarthas). So Srila Rupa Goswami's used the word "RUCI" (taste) to explain a VERY HIGH stage within bhakti. But this is not what Srila Jiva Goswami writes about here. "RUCI" means "TASTE" here in these verses and Srila Vishvanatha Chakravartipada confirms too that a slight taste (ruci) is sufficient to start practicing raganuga-bhakti.

We don't practice ONLY vaidhi-bhakti until we qualify for raganuga-bhakti. Like said above, it may be like a mixture, but when taste (ruci) awakens in our heart to follow the Vrajavasis, we start with raganuga-bhakti.

Like the word "BHAVA". Srila Rupa Goswami uses this word, bhava, in describing the very stage before PREMA, purest love of God. But actually BHAVA means literally "MOOD, EMOTION, FEELING". There are material bhavas and spiritual bhavas. Same with the word "RATI". It means "DEEP AFFECTION". I can have RATI for my children, but this has nothing to do with the stage Srila Rupa Goswami is describing as "RATI".

The symptoms of the awakening of greed for attaining feelings akin to the Lord's eternal associates is described as follows:

*tat tad bhavadi madhurye srute dhir yad apekshate |
natra sastram na yuktim ca tal lobhotpatti lakshanam ||*
(brs. 1.2.292)

“When one hears about the sweetness of their feelings and so forth, and a desire for attaining the same awakens in the consciousness without dependence on scripture and logic, this is a symptom of the awakening of greed (lobha).”

*vrajalila parikarastha sringaradi bhava madhurye srute dhir idam mama bhuyat iti
lobhotpattikale sastra yukt ypeksha na syat satyam ca tasyam
lobhatasyaivasiddheh | nahi kenacit sastra drishtya lobhah kriyate napi lobhaniya
vastu praptau svasya yogyayogyatva vicarah ko'py udbhavati. kintu lobhaniya vastuni
srute drishte va svata eva lobha utpadyate ||*
(rvc 1.5)

“If, upon hearing of the sweetness of the feelings, headed by passion, of Sri Krsna's associates in the Vraja-lila, one thinks, 'Let me also attain such feelings,' then at this time one need not depend either on the revealed scriptures or on favorable logical considerations. If such dependence remains, it cannot be said that greed has appeared. Greed never arises in anyone because of scriptural considerations, and in anyone who is desirous to attain the object of the greed, no considerations of qualification or lack of qualification arise. Rather, greed arises only by hearing about the object of greed or by seeing it.”

Srimat Rupa Gosvami has given definitions of both these kinds of candidates, for vaidhi and raganuga bhakti. The definition of the vaidhi-marga's candidate is as follows:

*yah kenapyati bhagyena jata sraddho'sya sevane
natisakto na vairagya bhagasyam adhikaryasan*
(*Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu* 1.2.14)

“When, by a stroke of inconceivable luck, a person develops faith and liking for serving Krishna (bhakti marga) due to having associated with great saints, but has not yet attained firm attachment to the Lord and is

only slightly averse to bodily attachments - such a person is eligible for sadhana bhakti."

The candidate for raganuga is described as follows:

*ragatmikaika nishtha ye vrajavasi janadayah
tesham bhavaptaye lubdho bhaved atradhikaravan
(Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu 1.2.291)*

"A person who is simply greedy after the unalloyed, ecstatic ragatmika bhakti-love for Krishna of the Vrajavasis, is a candidate for raganuga bhakti."

The difference between the candidates for vaidhi and raganuga bhakti is that eligibility for vaidhi bhakti is caused by 'sraddha' (faith) and eligibility for raganuga bhakti is caused by 'lobha' (sacred greed). The candidate for vaidhi bhakti gradually advances in his sadhana by keeping his faith in the purports of the scriptures and some ruci gradually awakens as a result of his reverential attitude towards the Lord, and meets with his sraddha. But this ruci remains a secondary factor, and his bhajana continues mainly on the basis of his sraddha. And the candidates for raganuga bhakti are prompted by greed after the sweet feelings of the nitya siddha Vrajavasis. Their practice of ruci-sadhana gradually develops and meets with deep sraddha; but here sraddha remains the secondary factor and ruci the primary. He remains engaged in bhajana that bears the shape of sraddha, but in which ruci is primary. This is definitely different in kind from the sraddha that prompts vaidhi bhakti and much more powerful also, because the absorption that raganuga bhakti causes within the consciousness is never created on purpose, since ruci is the innate function of the heart. This is the difference between eligibility for vaidhi and raganuga bhakti.

However, there is no difference in the course of devotion or bhajana itself. In other words, all the items that are named as the items of vaidhi bhakti, such as hearing and chanting, are also to be practised in raganuga bhakti

Sadhaka:

Thank you very much for this wonderful explanation. I can see that we always have to see the context and the meaning of the chosen words of the acaryas.

Another thing: the same Vaishnavas also claimed that the eternal svarupa (the siddha deha) should not be revealed to the sadhaka at the stage of BHAJANA-KRIYA, but only at the stage of ASAFTI.

If we receive the information of our siddha deha and our mind is still contaminated, we will always be bound to imagine our siddha deha wrongly, fully engrossed in the three modes of nature.

They say that this kind of meditation on the siddha deha is useless at the stage of BHAJANA KRIYA.

Gurudeva:

Everyone is entitled to their opinions.

Let us consider this clearly:

First of all, do you possess any picture of Radha and Krishna?

Sadhaka:

Yes.

Gurudeva:

Do you sometimes meditate on such a picture?

Sadhaka:

Yes.

Gurudeva:

So, according to the opinion of certain devotees, your meditation on such a 2 dimensional picture is useless, since your mind is still contaminated.

This is really not a very good argument. Also, it would mean that the picture of Radha and Krishna has no power and of course neither the "picture" in your mind from your siddha deha which was revealed to you by Sri Gurudeva.

But the fact is that your mind will be PURIFIED by such meditation. This is causeless mercy. Neither the picture of Radha and Krishna nor the mental picture of your siddha deha is "powerless" or "imagination". Both are real, both are eternal spiritual forms.

It is true however that real meditation on our svarupa and on the svarupas of Radha and Krishna takes place at the stage of ASAHTI, when our mind is fully free from all contaminations.

But it is VERY beneficial for the sadhaka to start practicing this mediation in the stage of BHAJANA KRIYA.

Do you know a rasagulla? The sweet made of cheese?

Sadhaka:

Yes...very delicious.

Gurudeva:

So if I show someone a rasagulla and he has no idea what it is, will he be greedy for it?

Sadhaka:

Maybe not really...

Gurudeva:

But if I explain to the person the glories of this sweet, and he gets an idea about it, will greed awake?

Sadhaka:

For sure.

Gurudeva:

It is the same with the siddha deha. The information about it makes the sadhaka greedy to REALIZE this wonderful form. So he starts to meditate on it under the guidance of his Gurudeva.

On the path of raganuga-bhakti, meditating on the divine pastimes is the main sadhana, however in the primary stage we are not qualified for lila-smaran.

Therefore we should concentrate more on hearing, chanting and following the other rules of bhakti.

Then as our chitta gets more and more purified, we are drawn towards lila-smaran. Slowly our smaran becomes more intense.

Ultimately when we reach the zenith of bhajan, lila-smaran naturally becomes the major part of bhajan.

We should note that all the parts of bhakti mentioned in vaidhi-bhakti are useful in Raganuga bhajan also. Srila Rupa Goswamipad mentions this in the verse –

*“shravanot-kirtanadini vaidha-bhaktyuditani tu,
yanyangani cha tanyatra vigneyani manishibhib.”*
– (B.R.S.)

Here hearing and chanting also includes accepting the shelter of Sri Gurudeva's lotus feet and other fundamentals of bhakti as well. We should realize that all the rules of bhakti that we have already mentioned, and they are the parts of vaidhi-bhakti – we should stick to them in Raganuga bhajan also.

If we do not obey the instructions of the Brijwasi Goswamis such as Sri Rupa Goswami, Sanatana Goswami etc., how can we say we are surrendered unto them? Then how can we follow in their footsteps? The serious devotees should practice only those rules that are in accordance with their bhava and never do what is contrary to it – such as aham-grahopasana, mudra, nyas, meditating on Dwaraka, worshiping Sri Rukmini etc. Although the agam-shastras mention these processes of bhakti, a Raganuga sadhaka should not perform them. Raganuga practice has two limbs – external and internal.

External practice is done with our sadhaka-body, while we perform internal sadhana by meditating on our siddha-deha. In the sadhaka-body we should hear, chant, forsake material pleasures, and serve The Deities with actual ingredients. We should meditate on our siddha-deha and serve Sri Krishna Who is our Beloved with this body for only the siddha-deha is worthy of serving the divine Couple. We should seek refuge of Srimati Radharani Who is the object of our love and surrender unto Her and Her dear ones. It is our duty to strive for that brilliant rasa and following the instructions of Sri Rupa-manjari we should collect objects in meditation for internal seva and serve the divine couple as the time and situation demands.

*“bahya antar ihar dui to sadhan, bahya –
sadhak-dehe kore shraban kirtan.*

*mone – nija siddha-deha koriya bhabon,
ratridine kore braje radha-krishner seban.”*

“Raganuga bhajan comprises of two practices – external and internal. Externally, we should hear and chant, while we should meditate on our siddha deha and serve Sri Radha-Krishna in Vraja-dham all day and night.”

(C.C. Madhya.22.89-90)

You can never reach the stage of RUCI without knowing ANYTHING about your siddha deha. For the stage of "RUCI", we need to have a firm RELATIONSHIP with the Divine Couple.

Without knowing WHO YOU ARE, your spiritual form, it is impossible to have a PERSONAL relationship with Them.

Basically, I know what the argument is about: the revealing of the siddha deha by Sri Gurudeva is not accepted by the opposing Vaishnavas, right?

Sadhaka:

Yes. They say that the revealing of the siddha deha, siddha pranali, was never given to Sriman Mahaprabhu nor to the 6 Goswamis of Vrindavana and they never revealed the siddha deha to anyone.

They say the word "SIDDHA PRANALI" is not to be found in any of the literature of the Goswamis. They say it was "invented" by some minor acaryas like Sripad Dhyanachandra Goswami or Sripad Siddha Krishna das Babaji.

Gurudeva:

Have they been present at the time of Sriman Mahaprabhu? Were the eyewitnesses? Surely not.

One thing we have to understand FIRMLY: the revealing of the siddha deha is a VERY CONFIDENTIAL thing. It is between Gurudeva and disciple. It is the most intimate and the most private exchange.

There are many reasons why the 6 Goswamis have not clearly mentioned the PROCESS of revealing the siddha deha, but they wrote about our eternal forms many times. Just check Srila Rupa Goswami's Bhakti-Rasamrita Sindhu or the Caitanya Caritamrita.

One reason is because the 6 Goswamis are the eternal associates of Mahaprabhu. Who would volunteer to give Srila Rupa Goswami "siddha pranali"? Who would reveal to Mahaprabhu that He is combined form of Radha and Krishna?

Do we REALLY know that Srila Rupa Goswami NEVER gave siddha pranali to anyone?

It was and is still the most private thing.

You see, without the revealing of the siddha deha, the process of diksha is not completed.

Diksha and siddha pranali are firmly connected.

It is however nowhere mentioned that this is a compulsory item of diksha and must be given at once to anyone or everyone who gets harināma for instance.

The Guru should judge who is qualified to receive it at all, and if so, when.

What means diksha?

*divyam jshānam hy atra mantre bhagavat-svarūpa-jshānam,
tena bhagavatā sambandha-viśeṣa-jshānash ca
- Bhakti-sandarbha, Anuccheda 283*

Divya-jshāna is transcendental knowledge contained within a mantra which reveals the form and identity of the Supreme Lord (bhagavat-svarūpa) as well as knowledge of the sādhaka-jīva's particular relationship with the Lord.

So, diksha is giving us divya-jnana, divine knowledge, about the Divine Couple and about us and about our relationship.

Without knowing our eternal form, how can we have an active relationship?

Srila Jiva Goswami says "SPECIFIC RELATIONSHIP". This means not a "jīva to Krishna - relationship", but a relationship where you KNOW your Self in relationship to Radha Krishna.

Therefore Sri Gurudeva reveals to the qualified sadhaka after some time past diksha the siddha deha and the sadhaka then starts to meditate on it. This is all the mercy of Sri Gurudeva.

*yasya prasadad bhagavat-prasado
yasyaprasadan na gatih kuto 'pi
dhyayan stuvams tasya yashas trisandhyam
vande guroh sri-charanaravindam*

"By the mercy of the spiritual master one receives the benediction of Krsna.

Without the grace of the spiritual master, one cannot make any advancement.

Therefore, I should always remember and praise the spiritual master. At least three times a day I should offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of my spiritual master."

What happens at the time of initiation, diksha?

At this very significant moment of holy initiation, something extremely wonderful happens.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu himself confirms this in the Caitanya-caritamrita:

*diksa-kale bhakta kare atma-samarpana
sei-kale krsna tare kare atma-sama*

At the time of initiation, when the devotee offers himself up to the Lord, then the Lord makes him equal to himself. He bestows to the devotee a body which is spiritual like his own so that the devotee can engage in the service of his lotus feet.

Now this verse has very very deep meanings. Clearly there are happening things on two "levels": EXTERNALLY and INTERNALLY. Externally, the spiritualization of the devotee's material body takes place miraculously.

Sri Kunja Bihari das Babaji writes:

The transformation of the devotee's body is a gradual process. In his commentary on the words "they gave up their bodies of material elements" in Bhagavata-purana (10.29.10), Visvanatha presents the following argument:

Other than a devotee surrendered to the Lord, no one, not the jnanin, nor the yogin, nor any other transcendentalist is actually completely free from the material qualities. This was stated by the Lord to Uddhava (BhP 11.25.26). One should understand this in the following way: the devotee's body is considered to be nirguna because, on the order of his spiritual master, all of his senses are engaged in the transcendental service of the Lord his ears in hearing about Krishna, his tongue in chanting the Lord's names and glories, his mind in remembering Krishna, his entire body in prostrating himself in supplication to the Deity and his hands in various types of service. Thus, because all his senses are engaged in receiving transcendental materials connected with the Supreme Lord, they also become transcendental. On the other hand, as much as the senses receive non-spiritual data, they will be influenced by material qualities. As a result, from the beginning of the devotional process, the devotee's body is partly material and partly spiritual. According to the indications of the Bhagavata verse (11.2.40) which compares advancement in devotional service to the satisfaction felt by a hungry man while eating, his gaining of strength and relief from the discomforts of hunger, one can understand that the process is progressive, for as much as one has eaten, that is the proportion to which he will feel these beneficial effects. Thus, as one progresses in spiritual life, the spiritualized portion of his body increases and the material portion is gradually reduced. When one reaches the stage of prema then his body is completely spiritualized and there is no mundane portion left. Thus the death of a devotee that is seen by all is to be known as nothing more than a kind of illusion and not at all real. The non-devotees consider that the devotee's body must also die. This false doctrine is maintained by the Lord just to keep devotional service closed to atheistic and self-interested persons. An example of this is the so-called "Club Pastime" of the Lord in which he created the illusion of the demise of the Yadu dynasty. One should know that this too is non-factual. On some occasions, the Lord does not make such an illusory show but rather seeks to illustrate the glories of devotional service, as in the case of Dhruva. Dhruva went to Vaikuntha in the selfsame body,

thus it is to be concluded that the apparent death of Narada was also an illusion created by the Lord.

The next question then is, what is to be gained by thinking that a devotee's body is beyond the material qualities? And conversely, what is lost by thinking it to be material? Why do disease, etc., manifest in a devotee's body if it is transcendental?

The response to these questions is as follows: By thinking a devotee's body to be transcendental, one's material existence comes to an end. To think it material results in increasing material entanglement and hellish suffering. Evidence is the Padma-purana verse beginning with vaishnave jati-buddhih. The Lord allows the appearance of death and diseases in a devotee's body just to increase the materialists' entanglement: it should be considered a test of faith. Caitanya Mahaprabhu said the very same thing in connection with the appearance of sores on Sanatana Gosvami's body: "The Lord Krishna made these pus-filled sores appear on Sanatana's body just to test me. If I had not embraced him due to disgust at seeing them, I would have committed an offence and been punishable by the Lord."

So much to the "happenings" of the material body of a devotee.

Let us now come to the internal aspect of this beautiful verse. Sri Krishna bestows to the devotee a body which is spiritual like his own so that the devotee can engage in the service of his lotus feet.

Here we have the actual evidence for the bestowing of siddha-pranali. At the time of initiation (diksha), we receive not only the mantras BUT ALSO a very wonderful gift of Sri Krishna: our siddha-deha, our eternal perfected body.

Srila Jiva Goswami enlightens us:

*vaikunthasya bhagavato jyotir-amsa-bhuta vaikuntha-loka-sobha-rupa ya ananta
murtayas tatra vartante, tasam ekaya saha muktasyaikasya murtir bhagavata
kriyata iti vaikuntasya murtir iva murtir yesham ity uktam ||*
Pṛiti- sandarbha 10

"In the spiritual world, the Supreme Lord has unlimited spiritual forms; they all are expansions of Himself illuminating that world. With each one

of those forms, the Lord enjoys pastimes with a single individual liberated soul."

So two things happen at the time of initiation:

Srila Sanatana Goswami writes that our material body will be transformed by the touchstone of bhakti into a "spiritualized" body. Like a rod of iron is taking on all qualities of a fire when held long enough into it, so our material body will "take on" all qualities of bhakti. But this doesn't mean that our material body changes into a siddha deha. It is true that our material body is "spiritualized" but still it will perish and we still will have to leave it "behind".

A siddha-deha has no begining. What begins at the time of initiation is that we START to shift our IDENTIFICATION from our mortal body to our Krishna-given form.

At first we mentally conceive of the siddha deha. By progressing on the path of bhakti, at the higher stages like asakti and rati, this mentally conceived siddha deha becomes "REAL" to our love-filled eyes and we drop our identification with our material though "spiritualized" body. At the time of death, when we have reached PREMA, Yogamaya lets us take birth in a universe where the eternal pastimes of the Divine Couple are manifested. We then go through the stages of childhood up to youth and when we reach our certain age, we eternally stay at that age and then again by Yogamaya's power, we ARE in the eternal pastimes which are unmanifested.

Since our minds think in logical terms and since we live in linear "time-thinking", it is impossible to fully understand such a miraculous concept.

Sadhaka:

I am blown away by this explanation. So we need to understand that all is the mercy of Sri Gurudeva.

What about that some "minor acaryas" invented the process of siddha pranali?

Gurudeva:

Without mercy, nothing is possible.

Compared to the 6 Goswamis, every acarya is "minor". But we have to be very careful here to label such great sadhus as "minor". What are our motives to say that these are "minor" acaryas?

You see, one great acarya, Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur wrote a wonderful book, called "JAIVA DHARMA". there, right in the beginning, the Gurudeva of the sannyasi tells him his siddha deha and later on the two main devotees receive siddha pranali from their Gurudeva on the spot. At the end of this book, Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur explains even the process of siddha pranali. You can check the latest edition on pages 803/804.

Now, Sripad Dhyanachandra Goswami and his famous Gurudeva, who was an associate of Sriman Mahaprabhu, are also mentioned there:

The *Śrī Gaura-govindārcana-smarāṇa-paddhati* by Śripāda Gopālaguru Gosvāmī, the *Śrī Gaura-govindārcana-smarāṇa-paddhati* by Śripāda Dhyānacandra Gosvāmī, and the *Śrī Gaura-govindārcana-paddhati* by Śripāda Siddha Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābā are collectively known as *paddhati-traya*, and are the *bhajana-paddhatis* of the Śrī Caitanya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya. Following the format established by Śrī Gopālaguru Gosvāmī, Śrī Dhyānacandra composed his book and included the *Asṭa-kāliya-lilā-smarāṇa-krama*.

A *paddhati* is a handbook or manual meant to aid a *sādhaka* in performing *bhajana* successfully. This particular *paddhati*'s focus is to help the *sādhaka* attain *manjari-bhāva*.

Among the five chief disciples of Śrī Vakrēvara Paṇḍita, Gopālaguru was the special object of Mahāprabhu's mercy. He was the son of Murāri Paṇḍita, and his name was Makaradvaja Paṇḍita, although Mahāprabhu called him Gopāla. When Śrī Gaura lived in Nilācala, Gopāla engaged in His service. Even though he was still a child, he was very skillful in his *sevā*. The Lord showed very strong *vātsalya* affection for him, and personally gave him the title "Gopālaguru."

One day, Caitanya Mahāprabhu went outside the village to tend to his bodily needs. Gopāla was standing some distance away with a waterpot in his hand ready to serve the Lord. He noticed that the Holy Name, which always blissfully danced on Mahāprabhu's tongue, was not to be heard. Wondering how this could be, he then saw that the Lord was holding his tongue with his hand. After a short while, Gopāla, being full of curiosity, inquired from the Lord, "Prabhu! Why are you holding your tongue like that?" Mahāprabhu answered, "The words *kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa* always dance on my tongue, and even when I'm unclean they don't stop. One is forbidden to chant the

kṛṣṇa-nāma mahā-mantra when he is unclean. Transgressing that injunction is an offense. For this reason, I hold my tongue to keep it still."

Gopāla replied, "Prabhu! Elegant words don't adorn my little mouth, but still, in order to understand, I am asking. Your beautiful body doesn't have a trace of uncleanness. It is *sac-cid-ānanda-maya* and always pure. Your 'going to the bathroom' is an illusion. That's just your pretending to be human. You are independent, but if an ordinary *jīva* should die while evacuating, without chanting the Holy Name, how will he attain the transcendental state?"

Hearing these profound words from the boy, the Lord replied, "Gopāla, you have spoken correctly. In chanting the *śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāma* there is no consideration of cleanliness or uncleanness. Chanting is always auspicious for the *jīva*. You have caused me to remember the highest injunction. From today, you shall bear the title *guru*." Mahāprabhu told the devotees this story, and the news quickly spread everywhere. Soon all the Vaiṣṇavas began to call Gopāla "Śrī Gopālaguru."

Gopālaguru Gosvāmī became the *ācārya* of the Gambhirā Maṭha, and when he became old, he wanted to arrange for someone to continue the worship of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kānta. To obtain a suitable *sevaka*, he offered a mental prayer to the lotus feet of Śrīman Mahāprabhu. One night, the Lord appeared to Gopālaguru and said, "Gopāla! The *sevaka* you seek will be the first person you see tomorrow morning. Accept him without hesitation. Like you, he will be learned in all the transcendental *śāstras*. He will preserve well the worship of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kānta and reveal my glories to the whole world."

Hearing this order from Mahāprabhu in his dream, Gopālaguru became ecstatic. The next morning, after his morning duties, he went to his doorway. The first person he saw was a very peaceful young *brāhmaṇa* who had been standing there waiting to see him. When the youth approached, he offered *dayḍavats* to Gopālaguru's lotus feet. The Gosvāmī remembered his dream and blissfully offered the young man his blessings. Seeing his peaceful nature and absorption in *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, Gopālaguru gave him *mantra-dikṣā*, etc., and named him Śrī Dhyānacandra.

After receiving initiation, Śripāda Dhyānacandra served his *guru* with great devotion. Gopālaguru Prabhu engaged him in caring for Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kānta. After a short while in *govinda-sevā*, he received the dress of a Vaiṣṇava ascetic from his *guru*, and was then ordered to visit Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma.

Śrila Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura often referred in his books to Śrī Gopālaguru and Śrī Dhyānacandra, and in several cases quoted from their *paddhatis*. In his *Jaiva-dharma*, practically the last third of the book is devoted to them as they converse with the characters Vijaya-kumāra and Vrajanātha. In the beginning of chapter 26, Bhaktivinoda writes,

Bābāji Mahāśaya says, "In the house of Kāsi Miśra at Śrī Puruṣottama, Śrī Gopālaguru Gosvāmī, the disciple of Śrī Vakreśvara, nowadays occupies the honored seat of Śrīman Mahāprabhu. Have *darśana* of his holy feet and take his instruction respectfully. He is now the custodian of the teachings of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī."¹

¹ Śrila Thakura Bhaktivinoda, *Jaiva-dharma*, trans. Bhakti Sadhak Nishkinchana Maharaj (Madras: Sri Gaudiya Math, 1975), 383.

At the end of chapter 30, we find the following:

One afternoon Vijaya and Vrajanātha, sitting on the seashore, were looking to the sporting waves of the sea and thought within themselves that human life was also full of waves like that. Nobody knows what shall come to pass the next moment. We must learn the process of worship through the way of love from Śri Gurugosvāmi. Vrajanātha said, "I have seen the method that Śri Dhyānacandra Gosvāmi has propounded. If we can get some instruction from our preceptor, it may perhaps produce good results. I shall make a copy of that method." Having thus resolved, he prayed to Śri Dhyānacandra Gosvāmi to let him have a copy of that method. Śri Dhyānacandra said, "I am not in a position to give you any copy of that. You shall have to secure permission from Śri Gurugosvāmi." When both of them proposed to Śri Gosvāmi about the matter, he said, "Well, come to me with the copy." According to that permission, Vijaya and Vrajanātha both took the copy of that method. They thought that at leisure moments they would go to Gurugosvāmi and make the matter clear from him.

Śri Dhyānacandra Gosvāmi was a past master in all subjects. Especially in the matter of worship of Hari he was second to none. He was the first and foremost of all the disciples of Śri Gopālaguru Gosvāmi. He taught Vijaya and Vrajanātha all the truths about *hari-bhajana*, considering them quite competent to learn all the matters about worship. From time to time Vijaya and Vrajanātha used to have all their doubts about the matter removed. They at first made the relation between the daily conduct of life and the daily character of Śriman Mahāprabhu clear from Śri Gurugosvāmi and engaged themselves enthusiastically to *asṭa-kālīna-bhajana*, or worship in eight different ways during the eight *praharas* (three hours making a *prahara*) of the whole day and night.²

As *Jaiva-dharma*'s story continues, Śri Gopālaguru Gosvāmi instructs his students extensively in the matters of *rasa* and *līlā-tattva*. Then later on, he elaborates on the *ekādaśa-bhāva*³ they had received from their *guru* at the time of *dikṣā*. Bhaktivinoda also includes a discussion of these eleven items in his *Harināma-cintāmaṇi* and *Caitanya-sikṣāmṛta*.

Near the end of *Jaiva-dharma*, Gopālaguru Gosvāmi says:

Śriman Mahāprabhu entrusted Śri Svarūpa Dāmodara Prabhu with the work of writing a treatise on the *rasa-tattva* and its method of practice. On the order of the Lord he divided this treatise into two parts. In one part he has described the most sophisticated esoteric method, and in the other the gradual course. And again he instituted this esoteric method in Śri Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmi, who illustrated it in his writings. He taught the gradual course to Śrimad Vakreśvara Gosvāmi, who is the very treasure of this *maṭha*. I spoke that method to Śri Dhyānacandra, who has kept a note of it, which you have already collected from him.⁴

² Ibid., 429

³ The eleven items pertaining to their *siddha-dehas*

⁴ *Jaiva-dharma*, 568.

*manera smaranya prāṇa, madhura madhura nāma,
 jugala-bilāsa smyti-sāra
 sādhya sādhana ei, ihā boi āra nāi,
 ei tattva sarva-siddhi-sāra*

"Chanting these sweet names and practicing *smaraya* in the mind is my very life. Contemplating this *rādhā-kṛṣṇa-yugala-vilāsa* is the essence of *līlā-smaraya*. This *tattva* is both the means and the goal, and is the cream of all mystic *siddhis*. Other than this, there is no other way." (*Prema-bhakti-candrikā* 61)

Sadhaka:

Wow...I never knew much about Sripad Dhyanachandra Goswami...only that he wrote the famous handbook (paddhati).

Also, another last thing, they say that we will never be able to meditate on our eternal form if we don't chant at least 64 rounds daily.

Gurudeva:

Like I mentioned, the REAL THING happens at the stage of ASAHTI. There, we really can see and feel our siddha deha and do proper smaranam.

But all depends on MERCY...

It is a very thing to chant at least 64 rounds everyday...but how do we chant these rounds? With feelings or mechanically?

When we chant with feeling and under the guidance of our Gurudeva, everything is possible.

Realization can come in a flash. Mercy is the most important thing.

We clean our hearts, then mercy can descend.

But if we think that WE ARE THE DOERS, nothing will be DONE.

*nitya-siddha krishna-prema 'sadhya' kabhu naya
sravanadi-suddha-citte karaye udaya*

Krishna-prema is a potentiality which eternally exists in the hearts of the living entities.

It is not something to be gained from another source.

When the heart is purified by hearing and chanting (under the guidance of sad-guru) this love naturally awakens.

We can NEVER force bhakti to come in our heart...but it can happen in one second...by the mercy of a sadhu.

sa ca bhagavat kripa hetuko'nuragi bhakta kripa hetukas ceti divividhah. tatra bhakta kripa hetuko divividhah praktana adhunikas ca. praktanah - paurva bhavika tadrisa bhakta kripotthah, adhunikah etaj janmavadhi tadrisa bhakta kripotthah. adye sati lobhanantaram tadrisa guru caranasrayanam. dvitiye guru caranasrayanantaram lobha pravrittir bhavati. yad uktam: krishna tad bhakta karunya matra lobhaika hetuka pushti margataya kaiscid iyam raganugocyate

"There are two causes for the appearance of the aforementioned sacred greed: The mercy of God or the mercy of another anuragi devotee. There are again two kinds of mercy bestowed by a devotee: praktana and adhunika. praktana means mercy bestowed by a raganuga bhakta in a previous life, and adhunika is mercy bestowed in the present birth. The praktana-devotee takes shelter of the lotus feet of a raganuga guru after the sacred greed has arisen in him, the adhunika will get that sacred greed only after having surrendered to the feet of such a guru. It is said (in Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu): "The only causes of the appearance of sacred greed is the mercy of Krishna or His devotee. Therefore some call the path of raganuga bhakti also pushti marga (the path of grace)." (RVC)

After giving the definition of the cause of sacred greed the blessed author now describes the causes for attaining this greed. Greed for raganuga bhajana can only be attained by the grace of Sri Krishna or the grace of the great saints that are themselves passionately attached to the sweet feelings of Sri Krishna's associates. Krishna rarely bestows His mercy on new aspirants, therefore almost always this sacred greed arises by the grace of the aforementioned saints.

There are two kinds of sacred greed that arises by the grace of the saints - praktana and adhuniki. Those who have attained lobha by the mercy of raganuga saints in previous births will revive the cultivation of that lobha in their present birth and go on with raganuga bhajana, taking shelter of the feet of a guru according to their previous lives' samskara (cultivation), which can be dasya or sakhy or so. Those who did not cultivate such greed in their previous lives first take shelter of the lotus feet of a guru, and after they hear about the great love of Sri Krishna and His eternal associates the greed awakens within them. There is no other means than the grace of Sri Krishna and His pure devotees to attain this

greed for raganuga bhajana, and the blessed author has proven it by quoting a sloka from Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu.

In his commentary on this sloka Srimat Jiva Gosvamipada has written: krishneti - matra padasya vidhi marge kutracit karmadi samarpanam api dvaram bhavatiti tad vicchedarthah prayoga iti bhava.

"The word matra is used in the above sloka 'krishna tad-bhakta karunya matra labhaika hetuka' because sometimes the offering of fruitive activities can lead to entry into vaidhi bhakti, whereas raganuga bhakti is only (matra) attained through grace."

Greed for raganuga bhakti is more rarely attained than bhava or rati in vidhi bhakti, and it is only attainable through grace (Sri Mukunda Dasa Gosvami).

The devotees from the Vallabha Sampradaya call this raganuga marga pushti marga (the path of grace).

'sadhu-sanga', 'sadhu-sanga' -- sarva-sastre kaya
lava-matra sadhu-sange sarva-siddhi haya

"The verdict of all revealed scriptures is that by even a moment's association with a pure devotee, one can attain all success.

Sadhaka:

With a full heart, I thank you.

Gurudeva:

My blessings to you.

This fiction is based on the precious input of:

- my Gurudeva Srila Ananta das Babaji
www.jayasriradhe.com

- Sripad Prem Gopal Goswami
<http://nityanandavamsha.com/2012-06-04-14-51-36/prabhupad-s-premgopal-g>

- Sripad Haricarana das
<http://haricarana.blogspot.de/>

- Sripad Satya Narayana das Babaji
<http://www.jiva.org/the-two-divisions-of-pure-bhakti-part-2/>

thanks

Srila Narottama das Thakur on raganuga-bhakti (with the tika of Srila Ananta das Babaji)

(from Śrī-Śrī Prema Bhakti Candrikā)

rāgera bhajana patha, kohi ebe abhimata,
loka veda sāra ei vāñī
sakhīra anugā hoiyā, vraje siddha deha pāiyā,
ei bhāve jūḍābe parāṇi (48)

"Now I will tell you the opinion of the saints and the scriptures about the path of spontaneous devotion. These words are the essence of the popular and Vedic teachings. If you follow in the footsteps of the sakhīs you will attain a spiritual body in Vraja. In this way you will gratify your spiritual self."

Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's tīkā — loka veda sāra ei vāñī — iyam vāñī loka-vedayoh sāra rūpāḥ.

The ways of rāgānugā bhakti :

Sudhā Kaṇikā vyākhyā — From this tripadī onwards the worshipable Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya describes expertise in the ways of rāgānugā bhajana, most of all of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's great gift, the practice of mañjarī bhāva. First he says: rāgera bhajana patha, ebe kohi abhimata, loka veda sāra ei vāñī. This means that abhimata, according to the scriptures and the saints, we will speak of rāgera bhajana patha, the subject of rāga mārga bhajana. This vāñī, teaching, of mine is the loka veda sāra, the essence of popular and scriptural sayings. This means that the words of the experienced followers of the path of rāga and rāga scriptures like Śrī Gopāla Tāpanī Śruti and Śrīmad Bhāgavata, the essence of the Vedānta, scriptures that elaborately describe all subject matters concerning rāga mārga bhajana, are the greatest. First of all we can understand from these words of the blessed author that his teachings are not his mental fancies, and on the other hand we can understand in essence that the subject of rāga mārga is elaborately described by the scriptures and the saints. Therefore those who want to know the essence of rāga mārga bhajana should most certainly study this Prema Bhakti Candrikā of Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya.

rāga mārga bhajana is an elaborate and confidential subject matter. This rāga bhakti is directly present within the eternally perfect residents of Vraja, the eternal associates of the Lord. Devotion in allegiance to them is called rāgānugā bhakti. Therefore 'rāgera bhajana patha' is understood to mean the path of rāgānugā bhakti here.

virājantīm abhivyaktaṁ vrajavāsi janādiṣu
rāgātmikām anusṛtā yā sā rāgānugocaye
(B.R.S. 1.2.273)

"The devotion which is evidently present within the residents of Vraja is called rāgātmikā and the devotion in its wake is called rāgānugā." Therefore without first knowing the characteristics of rāgātmikā we cannot understand rāgānugā bhakti. The definition of rāgātmikā is as follows —

iṣṭe svārasikī rāgah paramāviṣṭatā bhavet
tanmayī yā bhaved bhaktih sātra rāgātmikoditā
(B.R.S. 1.2.272)

"The natural complete absorption in one's own chosen deity, or the loving thirst that lies as root to that paramount absorption is called rāga and devotion with an abundance of such rāga is called rāgātmikā bhakti."

The purport of this is that the natural deep loving thirst towards the chosen deity is called the svarūpa lakṣaṇa or the intrinsic characteristic of rāga. Just as the senses automatically engage in the tangible sense objects and do not depend on any encouragement, similarly the deep loving thirst towards the own desired Lord is natural for the rāga bhakta — it is not caused by anyone's encouragement.

Just as water turns into ice due to contact with frost, grass and other things can enter into water, but cannot enter into ice, similarly when loving thirst becomes very deep the heart of the loving devotee cannot seek even the slightest personal happiness anymore other than the happiness of Kṛṣṇa. Then all activities become centered around Kṛṣṇa's happiness. This deep thirst causes one to be fully absorbed in the chosen deity; this is the taṭastha lakṣaṇa or marginal characteristic of rāga. ākṛti prakṛti dui svarūpa lakṣaṇa; kārya dvārā jñāna ei taṭastha lakṣaṇa (C.C.) "Both the form and the nature are the intrinsic characteristics, and the

knowledge acquired through activities is the marginal characteristic." This rāgamayi or rāgātmikā bhakti is only present within the eternally perfect associates of the Lord in Vraja. Those who perform bhajana after becoming greedy after the particular feelings of the rāgātmikā Vraja-people and who follow the feelings of the rāgātmikā devotees according to their own mood, are practising a devotion named rāgānugā bhakti. Following the practice of this rāgānugā bhakti the moonlight of rāga that shines within the hearts of the eternally perfect Vraja-people begins to rise within the heart of the practitioner of rāgānugā bhakti and begins to shine there. *yasya pūrvokte rāga višeṣe rucir eva jātāsti na tu rāga višeṣa eva svayam tasya tādṛṣa rāga sudhākara karābhāsa samullasita hr̄daya sphatika-maneḥ śāstrādi śrutāsu tādṛṣā rāgātmikāyā bhakteḥ paripāṭīṣvapi rucir jāyate* (Bhakti Sandarbha—310) "When the moonlight in the heart of the eternally perfect rāgātmikā bhaktas shines on the crystal-like hearts of those devotees who became attracted to the aforementioned kind of passionate love, but who have not awakened that special passion themselves yet, and when they hear about the expertise, that is the loving - mental, physical or vocal - activities of these rāgātmikā bhaktas from the mouths of Guru and sādhu or from the scriptures, they also gain taste for such expert activities."

The purport of this is that when the hearts of the devotees are crystal clear, free from the contaminations of lust and anger, and they hear about the loving activities of the eternally perfect rāgātmikā bhaktas from the mouths of Guru, sādhu or śāstra, their hearts will light up just as crystal lights up when the moonlight shines on it, and taste will awaken for these devotees' loving activities. Driven by this taste they engage in a kind of devotion that follows in its wake and which is called rāgānugā bhakti. Without allegiance to the rāgātmikā bhaktas this rāgānugā bhajana can never reach perfection.

vraja lokera bhāve yei koroye bhajana; sei jana pāy vraje
vrajendranandana
śruti sab gopīgaṇera anugata hoyā; vrajeśvarī suta bhaje gopī bhāva loiyā
vyūhāntare gopī deha vraje jabe pāilo; sei dehe kr̄ṣṇa saṅge rāsa krīḍā
koilo
gopī anugati vinā aiśvarya jñāne; bhajileho nāhi pāy vrajendra nandane
tāhāte dr̄ṣṭānta— lakṣmī korilā bhajana; tathāpi nā pāilo vraje
vrajendranandana

"Whoever performs bhajana in the mood of the people of Vraja will attain Vrajendra-nandana in Vraja. All the Upaniṣads followed the path of the gopīs and worshipped the son of the Queen of Vraja in the mood of the gopīs. In another creation they attained gopī-bodies in Vraja, with which they performed the Rāsa-play with Kṛṣṇa. Even when worshipping Him, if it is not done in allegiance to the gopīs or with feelings of awe and reverence, Vrajendra nandana will not be attained. The example of that is Lakṣmī. She worshipped Kṛṣṇa, but still did not attain Vrajendra nandana in Vraja."

Vraja's eternally perfect associates of Kṛṣṇa come in four moods — of servanthood, friendship, parental love and conjugal love and thus there are also four kinds of people who yearn for these four kinds of moods. Those who yearn for the mood of servanthood will follow the eternally perfect servants Raktaka, Patraka and so, those who yearn for the mood of friendship will follow Kṛṣṇa's friends like Subala or Madhumaṅgala, those who yearn for parental love will follow parents like Nanda and Yaśodā, and those who yearn for amorous love will follow Śrī Rādhikā, Lalitā and others. In these way everyone accomplishes rāgānugā bhajana. In this particular Kali-age Śrīman Mahāprabhu and the Gosvāmīs like Śrī Rūpa and Raghunātha dāsa, who have surrendered to His lotus feet, have distributed the worship of mañjarī bhāva or rādhā dāsyā which is in the topmost class of amorous love. This is the beloved rāgānugā bhajana of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya. Hence Śrī Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has said: sakhīra anugā hoiyā, vraje siddha deha pāiyā, sei bhāve juṛābe parāṇī — "Being a follower of the sakhīs I will attain a spiritual body in Vraja. That feeling will soothe my heart." The fish-like hearts of the kiṅkarīs or mañjarīs who have surrendered to Śrī Rādhā's lotus feet, freely swim in the ocean of rasa that arises from the meeting of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the embodiment of deep transcendental flavours and eros personified, with Śrī Rādhārāṇī, who is filled with mahābhāva, and this gives them an ecstasy which is incomparable with any other bliss within the transcendental kingdom. The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava practitioners who have surrendered to Śrīman Mahāprabhu's lotus feet will become greedy after this practice of mañjarī bhāva by the grace of Śrī Guru or the sādhus from their own tradition. When they take shelter of Śrī Guru's lotus feet they will become acquainted with their own nitya siddha mañjarī svarūpa and their intrinsic ekādaśa bhāva (eleven-fold spiritual personality). In this way they continue doing bhajana externally, in their

material practitioner-bodies, by hearing and chanting the Lord's glories, and in their mentally conceived spiritual mañjarī-bodies thinking around the clock about Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's pastimes and their devotional service therein in allegiance to Śrī Lalitā and the sakhīs and Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī and the other mañjarīs. After they attain the perfection of bhajana, or prema, Śrī Kṛṣṇa's Yogamāyā-energy will bless the practitioners by giving them the direct devotional service of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā Mādhava in their mentally conceived spiritual body within the kingdom of līlā. In this way their hearts will be soothed or cooled off by attaining the long desired and thirsted-for service of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in the mood of a maidservant of Śrī Rādhā. Nothing else can soothe the hearts of the Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava practitioners — sei bhāve juṛābe parāṇī. (48)

rādhikāra sakhī yoto , tāhā vā kohibo koto,
 mukhya sakhī koribo gaṇana
 lalitā viśākhā tathā, citrā campakalatā
 rāṅgadevī sudevī kathana (49)
 tuṅgavidyā indurekhā, ei aṣṭa sakhī lekhā,
 ebe kohi narma sakhīgaṇa
 rādhikāra sahacarī, priya preṣṭha nāma dhari,
 prema sevā kore anukṣaṇa (50)

"How can I count the number of Rādhikā's girlfriends? I will simply mention the chief sakhīs: Lalitā, Viśākhā, Citrā, Campakalatā, Rāṅgadevī, Sudevī, Tuṅgavidyā and Indurekhā - these are the eight chief sakhīs. Now I will mention the narma-sakhīs (mañjarīs). These assistants of Śrī Rādhikā are called priya preṣṭha and are constantly rendering loving devotional service."

The dearmost girlfriends :

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā— In the previous tripadī Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya spoke of doing bhajana in allegiance to the nitya siddha rāgātmikā sakhīs and mañjarīs while defining rāgānugā bhajana, and now he is introducing us to some of the chief sakhīs and mañjarīs by mentioning their names. After knowing the svarūpas of Śrī Rādhā's sakhīs and mañjarīs we must proceed towards some tattva vicāra (consideration of principles), for the pastimes are built on the foundation of tattva siddhānta (philosophical and technical knowledge). All the Vedic scriptures ascertain that Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Original Personality of Godhead,

full in all opulences and might, the supreme truth and the cause of all causes. This embodiment of spirit (sac cid ānanda vigraha), the Almighty Śrī Kṛṣṇa, has innumerable potencies, of which three are predominant — the internal spiritual potency, the marginal potency of the individual souls and the external illusory potency. Of these, the internal potency is the greatest, for it is Śrī Kṛṣṇa's intrinsic energy. The ability to perform something is called śakti or power, and according to its activities this intrinsic energy shows three aspects — hlādinī, sandhinī and samvit. Of these, the hlādinī potency is the greatest, for although Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the embodiment of full and paramount ecstasy, He relish His intrinsic bliss through the hlādinī energy and makes His devotees relish the same. The special feature of this is that the hlādinī energy dwells within Śrī Kṛṣṇa's form in a formless, energetic way to make Him relish His intrinsic ecstasy and that formless hlādinī energy dwells on His outside in the form of its presiding goddess to make Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the embodiment of full and deep erotic flavours, relish the sweetness of wonderful erotic mélows. This is Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī Śrī Rādhā. The special activities of the hlādinī śakti make it gradually turn from rati, prema, sneha, māna, prāṇaya, rāga and anurāga into mahā bhāva. This mahābhāva is the real form of Śrī Rādhārāṇī. Just as a puppet of sugar consists of sugar inside out, similarly each limb of Śrī Rādhārāṇī is made of mahābhāva or the prīti rasa known as mahā bhāva inside out. Lalitā and the other sakhīs are the expanding phalanx of Śrī Rādhā. In this connection Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta (Madhya Ch.8) describes:

krṣṇera ananta śakti, tāte tin pradhāna; cicchakti, māyā śakti, jīva śakti
nāma
antaraṅgā, bahiraṅgā, taṭasthā kohi yāre; antaraṅgā svarūpa śakti sabāra
upore
sac cid ānandamoy krṣṇera svarūpa; ataeva svarūpa śakti hoy — tin rūpa
ānandāmīśe hlādinī, sad amīśe sandhinī; cid amīśe samvit yāre jñāna kori
māni
krṣṇake āhlāde tāte nāma hlādinī; sei śakti dvāre sukha āsvāde āpani
sukha rūpa krṣṇa kore sukha āsvādana; bhaktaganē sukha dite hlādinī
kāraṇa
hlādinīra sāra amīśa tāra prema nāma; ānanda cinmaya rasa premā
ākhyāna
premā parama sāra mahā bhāva jāni; sei mahābhāva rūpā rādhā

ṭhākurāṇī

premera svarūpa — deha prema vibhāvita; kṛṣṇera preyasī śreṣṭhā jagate
vidita

sei mahābhāva hoy cintāmaṇi sāra; kṛṣṇa vāñchā pūrṇa kore — ei kārya
yār

mahābhāva cintāmaṇi rādhāra svarūpa; lalitādi sakhī tāra kāya vyūha rūpa

Not only Lalitā and the other sakhīs— all the girls of Vraja are Śrī Rādhārāṇī's expanding phalanx! According to their forms and dispositions they make Śrī Kṛṣṇa relish various kinds of wonder-filled sweet flavours, and for this reason Śrī Rādhārāṇī has expanded Herself into innumerable forms as all the Vraja-girls.

ākāra-svabhāva bhede vraja devīgaṇa; kāya vyūha rūpa tāra rasera kāraṇa
bahu kāntā vinā nahe rasera ullāsa; līlāra sahāya lāgi bahuta prakāśa
tāra madhye vraje nānā bhāva rasa bhede; kṛṣṇake korāya rāsādika
līlāsvāde

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta Ādi Ch.4)

"The Vraja-goddesses (gopīs) appear in different forms and with different natures. They are all Rādhā's expansions and they are the cause of rasa. Without the presence of many consorts there can be no joy in rasa, therefore many consorts are manifested to assist in the pastimes. Of them, there are many kinds of consorts in Vraja with different dispositions and different flavours, that make Kṛṣṇa relish the Rāsa-līlā and other pastimes."

In the form of Her expanding phalanx, the countless gopikās, that have different moods and flavours, divided in four classes, namely the own party, the enemies' party, the friendly party and the neutral party, Śrī Rādhārāṇī makes Śrī Kṛṣṇa relish wonderfully sweet erotic flavours.

Taking the root form Śrī Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī as the pivot, the four parties are there, mentioned according to their feelings. Śrī Lalitā, Viśākhā and other dearmost girlfriends are Śrī Rādhārāṇī's own party, Śrī Candrāvalī, Padmā, Śaibyā and others are the enemies' party, Śyāmalā and others are the friendly party and Bhadrā and others are the neutral party. The most relish is given by the own party and the enemies' party. Although all the Vraja-girls are expansions of Śrīmatī Bhānunandinī, and

therefore there can be no question of any of them being Her equal, still Vraja's śṛṅgāra rasa has given Śrī Candrāvalī and others the feeling of equality with Śrīmatī in order to create the wonderful feelings of khaṇḍitā, māna and kalahāntaritā in Her, to make Śrī Kṛṣṇa relish wonderfully sweet mellites. In the nourishment of all these emotional conditions the own party, containing Śrī Lalitā and others, play a very wonderful role. Although Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's love is all-pervading, and therefore requires no one's help in nourishment, still this love can never find nourishment without the aid of the sakhīs, just as brahman cannot carry the nourishment of rasa to display the wonder of līlā without the aid of its spiritual energy.

vibhur api sukha rūpaḥ
svaprakāśo'pi bhāvah kṣaṇam api na hi rādhā-kṛṣṇayor yā ṛte svāḥ.
pravahati rasa puṣṭim cidvibhūtir iveśah śrayati na padam āsām kah
sakhīnām rasajñah (Govinda Līlāmṛta 10.17)

sakhī vinu ei līlā puṣṭi nāhi hoy; sakhī līlā vistāriyā sakhī āsvādoy (C.C.) "Without the aid of the sakhīs these pastimes cannot be nourished. The sakhīs expand these pastimes and the sakhīs make them relishable." Śrī Rādhā has five kinds of such sakhīs — asyāḥ vṛndāvaneśvaryāḥ sakhya pañca-vidhāḥ matāḥ sakhyaś ca nitya sakhyaś ca prāṇa sakhyaś ca kaścana. priya sakhyaś ca parama preṣṭha sakhyaś ca viśrutāḥ (Ujjvala Nīlamanī) —'sakhīs, nitya sakhīs, prāṇa sakhīs, priya sakhīs and parama preṣṭha sakhīs. These are again divided into three classes — viṣama snehā, sama snehā and adhika snehā. Kusumikā, Vindhya, Dhaniṣṭhā and others are sakhīs, they are viṣama snehā and śrī kṛṣṇa snehādhikā (they love Kṛṣṇa more than Rādhā). Kasturi, Maṇi Mañjarī and others are nitya sakhīs and Śaśimukhī, Vāsantī, Lāsikā and others are prāṇa sakhīs — they are adhika snehā or rādhā snehādhikā (they love Rādhā more than Kṛṣṇa) and are called mañjarīs. Kuraṅgākṣī, Sumadhyā, Madanālāsā are priya sakhīs and Lalitā, Viśākhā and the other leading aṣṭa sakhīs are the parama preṣṭha sakhīs— they are sama snehā, which means that though they love Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa equally, they still constantly cherish the self esteem of 'We are Rādhā's'. First the blessed author mentions the main eight sakhīs : 'lalitā viśākhā tathā, citrā campakalatā, raṅgadevī, sudevī kothan. tuṅgavidyā indurekhā, ei aṣṭasakhī lekhā. To teach the practising devotees some details about the sakhīs we are mentioning their names, dresses, natures and activities, on

the basis of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Gaṇoddeśa Dīpikā (by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī).

Lalitā : Śrī Lalitā is the greatest of all the eight sakhīs and she is 27 days older than Śrī Rādhārāṇī. She is also known as Anurādhā and is decorated with a vāmā prakharā (harsh-stood-up) nature. Her bodily complexion is of Gorocanā and her dress is like peacock feathers. Her mother's name is Śāradī, her father's Viśoka, her husband is a cowherd named Bhairava, who is a friend of Govardhana Malla.

Śrī Lalitā is the leader of all of Śrī Rādhārāṇī's girlfriends, and all the feelings of the pastimes of the Divine Pair are under her control. She is expert in causing a loving quarrel and in making a truce, during vighraha (quarrel), praudhi vāda (proud words), answers and rational arguments she angrily lowers her head and is concealed by the luster of the sakhīs. When the Divine Pair get into a loving quarrel she gives the sakhīs presence of mind and enthusiastically coordinates the quarrel. Then, when the time has come for Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's reconciliation or meeting she may go there, but she will stay there as if indifferent. She is very expert in making floral ornaments, umbrellas, beds and grove cottage-constructions and she is learned in conjuring tricks and composing riddles. Her service is making betelleaves with camphor and her kuñja is named Lalitānandana Kuñja. In her yūtha there are sakhīs like Ratnaprabhā, Ratikalā, Subhadrā, Bhadrarekhā, Sumukhī, Dhaniṣṭhā, Kalahaṁsī and Kalāpinī.

Viśākhā : She is the second of the aṣṭa sakhīs, and her behaviour, attributes and dedication are exactly like her priya sakhī Śrī Rādhā's. She was born on exactly the same moment as Śrī Rādhā. Her bodily complexion is like lightning, her dress shines like clusters of stars, her father's name is Pāvana, her mother is Jatīlā's niece Dakṣinā and her father's name is Vāhika Gopa. Viśākhā is expert in humorous dealings with the Divine Pair, hence she is called narma sakhī. Her advice is hard to overrule and she can speak joking words to Śrī Kṛṣṇa like no other. She knows the hearts of the Divine Couple and is expert in bringing messages and in sāma (appeasement), dāna (offering presents) and bheda (separating)-customs when the Divine Couple have an erotic dispute. She is very good at making leaf-tilaka, garlands, crowns etc., magic tricks, puppet dance etc., collecting paraphernalia for Sūrya-pūjā, speaking different languages and in musical arts like the Dhrupada. Her service is

dressing and ornamenting and her kuñja is named Viśākhānandada. Her yūtha consists of Mālatī, Mādhavī, Candralekhā, Kuñjarī, Hariṇī, Capalā, Surabhī, Śubhānanā and other sakhīs.

Campakalatā : Campakalatā is the third of the eight sakhīs. Her bodily complexion resembles a blooming Campaka flower, she is one day younger than Śrī Rādhā and her garments shine like Cāṣa-birds. Her father is named Ārāma, her mother Bāṭikā, and her husband Caṇḍākṣa Gopa. Her attributes are like those of Viśākhā.

She is very expert in conveying messages and in concealing the purport of her activities. She is an eloquent speaker and knows various ways to discredit her enemies and glorify her own party. She is very expert in making pickles of fruits, flowers and roots, she is better than anyone in the making of clay pots, testing the six basic flavours and making sweets. For the last she is called 'Miṣṭa-hastā', or sweet handed one. Her kuñja is named Campakalatānandada Kuñja and her service is making jewel strings and fanning with a yaktail fan. The eight sakhīs in her yūtha are named Kuraṅgākṣī, Sucaritā, Maṇḍalī, Maṇikuṇḍalā, Candrikā, Candralatikā, Kandukākṣī and Sumandirā.

Citrā: She is the fourth sakhī. Her bodily complexion resembles vermillion and her garments shine like glass. She is 26 days younger than Śrī Rādhā and is happy when Śrī Kṛṣṇa is happy. Her father is the cousin of Vṛṣabhānu-rājā, named Catura, her mother is named Carcikā and her husband Piṭhara. She has free access to all expertise in performing her duties. She recognises all indications, knows languages from different areas and she can recognise honey, milk and other things on mere sight. She makes glass trays, bowls and glasses, can make waves appear in water, knows astrological books and the science of recognising animals. One of her duties is to plant and guard trees and she is most expert in making delicious drinks. Her kuñja is named Citrānandada Kuñja and her service is making clove-garlands. The eight sakhīs in her yūtha are Rasālikā, Tilakīnī, Śaurasenī, Sugandhikā, Ramilā, Kāma Nāgarī, Nāgarī and Nāgavelikā.

Tuṅgavidyā: Tuṅgavidyā is the fifth sakhī. She is five days older than Śrī Rādhā, her body shines like vermillion, her dress is yellow and her nature is dakṣiṇā prakharā (submissive, yet harsh). Her mother is named Medhā, her father is Puṣkara and her husband Bāliśa. Tuṅgavidyā is

expert in eighteen sciences is expert in arranging truces, is the object of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's great trust, is expert in scriptures on Rasa (aesthetics), Nīti (manners), Nāṭaka (drama) and Ākhyāyika (narrations), and she is a music teacher. Her kuñja is named Tuṅgavidyānandada and her service is singing and dancing. The eight sakhīs in her yūtha are Mañjumēdhā, Sumadhurā, Sumadhyā, Madhurekṣaṇā, Tanumadhyā, Madhusyandā, Guṇacūḍā and Varāṅgadā.

Indulekhā: Indulekhā is the sixth sakhī. Her complexion is bright like Haritāla (yellow), her dress shines like pomegranate flowers, she is three days younger than Śrī Rādhā. Her mother is named Belā, her father Sāgara and her husband Durbala. Her nature is vāmā prakharā (harsh and unwilling). Indulekhā is especially able in mantras from the Sarpa-sāstras (serpentine scriptures), Vijñāna Mantra and astrology. She can make wonderful necklaces, paint teeth, test gems and make silken ribbons. The science of writing mantras of good fortune is given to her handpalms. Thus she extends the topmost fortune of creating mutual passion between Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava.

Raṅgadevī: Raṅgadevī is the seventh sakhī. Her bodily luster resembles the filaments of a lotus, her dress is red like a Javā-flower. She is seven days younger than Śrī Rādhā and her attributes resemble those of Campakalatā. Her father is named Raṅgasāra, her mother Karuṇā and her husband Vakrekṣaṇa, who is again the younger brother of Lalitā's husband Bhairava. She extends astonishing humour and laughter (raṅga means fun, Ed.) to her priya sakhī Śrī Rādhārāṇī even before Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In the past she performed penances to attain a mantra to attract Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Sudevī: She is the eighth sakhī, the mild-natured twin-sister of Raṅgadevī. Her form, attributes and nature all resemble those of her twin-sister, so much so that if you look at her it seems as if you are seeing Raṅgadevī. The younger brother of Raṅgadevī's husband Vakrekṣaṇa, named Raktekṣaṇa, is the husband of Sudevī. She stays with Śrī Rādhā, and her services are arranging Her hair, making Her eyeliner and massaging Her body. She is most expert in teaching the male and female parrots how to sing, in playing boat, arranging cock-fighting, consulting from astrological books and by reading hand-lines, knowing the sounds of birds and animals and what flowers blossom when the

moon rises. She knows the science of fire and is expert in giving a massage with oil.

After that Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: ebe kohi narma sakhīgaṇa; rādhikāra sahacarī, priya preṣṭha nāma dhari, prema sevā kore anukṣaṇa— After mentioning Śrī Rādhārāṇī's dearmost girlfriends like Lalitā and so, he now mentions the narma sakhī mañjarīs. Although they are Śrī Rādhārāṇī's very dear sakhīs they are also her affectionate maidservants who are always immersed in Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's service. Although they are in the class of sakhīs they are still dedicated to devotional service and their forms consist solely of the flavours of service. Hence their service is very relishable, hearty and filled with the erotic flavours of the Divine Pair. They must be specially known by the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava-practitioners, for it is in their allegiance that they must serve. That is mentioned in the following tripadī. (49-50)

sama snehā viṣama snehā, nā koriho dui lehā
kohi mātra adhika snehā-gaṇa
nirantara thāke saṅge, krṣṇa kathā līlā raṅge
narma sakhī ei sab jana (51)

"Equal affection for Rādhā and Krṣṇa or more affection for Krṣṇa than for Śrī Rādhā - do not become attached to that. I will just speak about preference for Śrī Rādhā! They are always in Her company, blissfully telling Her about Krṣṇa. They are all called narma sakhīs."

Allegiance to the adhika snehās :

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā — Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya establishes allegiance to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas' adhika snehā mañjarīs or rādhā snehādhikā mañjarīs by saying: sama snehā viṣama snehā nā koriho dui lehā, kohi mātra adhika snehāgaṇa. Previously we have mentioned the difference between Śrī Rādhārāṇī's five types of sakhīs, namely viṣama snehā or śrī krṣṇa snehādhikā, those who have a greater love for Krṣṇa, sama snehā or those who love Śrī Rādhā-Krṣṇa equally and adhika snehā or those who love Śrī Rādhā more than Śrī Krṣṇa. The blessed author says: "We will not do bhajana in allegiance to those who love Śrī Rādhā-Krṣṇa equally or those who love Śrī Krṣṇa more than Śrī Rādhā. Therefore na koriho dui lehā — We do not have to lehā, love them or be affectionate towards them." This does not mean that we should not love them or be

indifferent towards them, for those who practise mañjarī bhāva have proper faith, respect, love and friendship for all the girlfriends of Śrī Rādhārāṇī. Therefore the word lehā is understood to mean special love or allegiance to their feelings here. In his description of the distinction between the feelings of the viṣama snehā and sama snehā sakhīs on the one hand and the feelings of the rādhā snehādhikā mañjarīs on the other hand, Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has written —

sañcārī syāt samonā vā kṛṣṇa ratyā suhṛd ratih
adhikā puṣyamāṇā ced bhāvollāsa itīryate (B.R.S.2.5.128)

"Those amongst Śrī Rādhārāṇī's sakhīs whose love for Śrī Rādhā is equal to or slightly less than their love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa have love for Kṛṣṇa as sthāyi bhāva within which their love for Rādhā is counted as a sañcārī bhāva (injected, infused, inserted feelings), for that nourishes their basic love for Kṛṣṇa. But those sakhīs who love Rādhā more than Kṛṣṇa and whose feelings are increased due to constant absorption in this have the status of bhāvollāsa because their feelings have come to dominate all feelings, although they are officially sañcārī bhāvas. Thus, despite it all, this adhika snehā must be counted as a sthāyi bhāva."

The Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavas who have taken shelter of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's lotus feet and who follow the Six Gosvāmīs, headed by Rūpa and Sanātana, are following this upāsanā (mode of worship) of mañjarī bhāva or bhāvollāsa. Thus the rāgānugā bhajana of the Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavas who follow the nitya siddha mañjarīs of Vraja, who love Rādhā more than Kṛṣṇa, will be accomplished. Therefore the blessed author does not mention the bhajana in allegiance to viṣama snehā or sama snehā and only shows the path of allegiance to the adhika snehās or mañjarīs. This is the great gift of Śrīman Mahāprabhu and the most beloved goal of the Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavas. In the kingdom of bhāva sādhana, mañjarī bhāva is the pinnacle of relish that a living entity can ascend to!

Then, while defining the reason for which the adhika snehā mañjarīs relish more, Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya says: nirantara thāke saṅge, kṛṣṇa kothā līlā raṅge, narma sakhī ei sab jana "All the sakhīs are eternal companions in Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's pastimes, because although the feelings of the Divine Pair are all-pervading, they cannot find nourishment without the support of the sakhīs. Still there are no other associates than the mañjarīs who continuously stay with Śrī Rādhā-

Mādhava during Their pastimes. By Śrī Rādhārāṇī's wish Lalitā and other sakhīs sometimes are heroines (lovers) of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, therefore due to their equal feelings they cannot be there when the Divine Pair are having Their intimate pastimes — there would be shyness and embarrassment. But the mañjarīs who are endowed with bhāvollāsa are especially absorbed in the different services of the Divine Pair and due to their oneness in feelings with Her, Śrī Rādhārāṇī considers them to be non different from Her own body. Thus the mañjarīs never become heroines. They are also present when Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava have Their intimate meetings to engage in Their private service. At that time the Divine Pair consider them the āveśa mūrtis (embodiments of Their ecstatic absorption) of Their rasika pastimes, and thus there is no reason for Them to feel embarrassed and only these mañjarīs are constantly in the company of the Divine Pair. In his Śrī Vṛṇdāvana Mahimāmṛta (8th Śatakam) Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatīpāda has written about the sweet mood of the mañjarīs and how they are always present —

kṣaṇam caraṇa vicchedācchrīsvaryāḥ prāṇa hāriṇīm;
padāravinda saṁlagna tayaivāhar-niśam sthitām
bahunā kiṁ sva kāntena krīḍantyāpi latā gṛhe;
paryāṇkādhiṣṭhāpitāṁ vā vastrair vācchāditāṁ kvacit
.....

rādhā padābja sevānya sprhā kāla trayojjhitām
rādhā prīti sukhāmbhodhāv apāre buditāṁ sadā
rādhā padāmbujād anyat svapnānte'pi na jānatām
rādhā sambandha saṁdhāvat prema sindhaugha mālinīm
sesāšeṣa mahā vismāpaka kaiṣora rūpiṇīm;
kṣaṇe kṣaṇe rasāsvāda prodañcat pulakāvalīm
sarvāṇga kānti saundarya apāraiḥ sarva mohinīm
rādhā karmākulatayā tatra tatra vicālinīm

"Since they will die if they are separated from the lotus feet of their Īśvari Śrī Rādhārāṇī, the mañjarīs stay with Her lotus feet day and night. What more can I say? When Śrīmatī enjoys with Her lover in the vine cottage She will take the mañjarī with Her onto the bed and sometimes even covers her with the sheets! The mañjarī does not desire anything but the service of Śrī Rādhā's lotus feet in all three phases of time — past, present, or future, and is always immersed in a boundless ocean of

ecstatic love for Rādhā. Even in dreams she does not know anything else but the lotus feet of Rādhā. She is beautified by waves of the billowing ocean of prema for Śrī Rādhā, she has an adolescent female form that astonishes even the great gods and the entire universe, and she wears big goosebumps due to relishing rasa on her body at every moment. Rādhā's maidservants captivate everyone by the endless luster and beauty of their every limb and they always anxiously wander around here and there in Rādhā's service."

In this way the kiñkarīs are always with Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, enjoying their services when They meet, and in times of separation they relieve virahinī Rādhā from the pangs of separation by kṛṣṇa-kathā līlā raṅge, enjoying discussing topics of Kṛṣṇa. Then, when they view the pastimes of the Divine Pair, they keep these intimate pastimes marked on the canvases of their hearts with the pencils of prema, so that they can describe these blissful pastimes again to Śrīmatī at the time of separation. In this way they give shape to playful Śyāma in front of Śrīmatī. Also for this prasaṅga (conversational) form of devotional service the mañjarīs always stay with Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Although they are always engaged in acts of service they are still known as narma sakhīs (intimate joking girlfriends). They extend tasty jokes to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, to Śrī Rādhārāṇī and again to the Divine Pair both, to give them topmost happiness according to the time. Hence it is said: "They are all called narma sakhīs." (51)

śrī rūpa mañjarī sāra, śrī rati mañjarī āra,
lavaṅga mañjarī mañjulālī.
śrī rasa mañjarī saṅge, kasturikā ādi raṅge,
prema sevā kore kutūhole (52)

"Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī, Śrī Rati Mañjarī, Lavaṅga Mañjarī, Mañjulālī Mañjarī, Śrī Rasa Mañjarī, Kasturikā and others are blissfully rendering loving devotional service with each other."

nitya siddhā mañjarīs—

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā — In this tripadī the blessed author mentions the names of the chief narma sakhīs or nitya siddha rāgātmikā mañjarīs by saying: śrī rūpa mañjarī sāra, śrī rati mañjarī āra, labaṅga mañjarī mañjulālī; śrī rasa mañjarī saṅge, kasturikā ādi raṅge, prema sevā kori

kutūholi. First of all it is said : śrī rūpa mañjarī sāra. Here the word sāra is accepted to mean 'chief'. Of all the mañjarīs Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī is the greatest and the chief. In allegiance to her and under her control all the mañjarīs perform and accomplish their services to Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava. Just as Śrīman Mahāprabhu would not listen to anyone's poetry before having it examined by Śrīpāda Svarūpa Dāmodara, the great knower of rasa, because if it contained rasābhāsa (incompatible flavours) or viruddha siddhānta (controversial theories) the Lord would suffer intolerably, similarly in Vraja, the new mañjarīs attain the eligibility to engage in the rasika service of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, when they passed Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī's examination. Otherwise it is not possible for anyone to attain the yugala sevā. We get a clear indication of this from Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya's 'Prārthanā pada'. Here Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya describes his own mañjarī svarūpa. When he first attains the good fortune of yugala sevā he will collect all the paraphernalia for this yugala sevā on Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī's order, and remain standing behind her—

śrī rūpa paścāte āmi rohibo bhīta hoiyā; doñhe puna kohiben āmā pāne cāiyā

sadaya hṛdaye doñhe kohiben hāsi; kothāy pāile rūpa ei nava dāsī?
 śrī rūpa mañjarī tabe doñha vākya suni; mañjulālī dilo more ei dāsī āni!
 ati namra citta āmi ihāra jānilo; sevā kārya diyā tabe hethāya rākhilo
 heno tattva doñhākāra sākṣāte kohiyā; narottame sevāya dibe niyukta
 koriyā

"I will shyly stand behind Śrī Rūpa as Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa look at me again, smile and ask Rūpa with kind hearts: "O Rūpa! Where did you get this new maidservant?" Hearing Their inquiry, Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī then tells Them: 'Mañjulālī Mañjarī (the spiritual name of Śrīla Lokanātha Gosvāmī) has given me this maidservant to bring her before You!"

Knowing her to be very humble I kept her to serve You!" While she told Them this personally she will engage Narottama in Their service."

Here the words namra citta (humble attitude) indicates Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya's qualification for yugala sevā in mañjarī svarūpa and it is also clear from this that she has passed Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī's examination. Again, from the words sevā kārya diyā tabe hethāya rākhilo it is also clearly understood that Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī is in charge of bestowing yugala sevā. Therefore, following the words sādhane bhāvibo jāhā, siddha dehe

pābo tāhā of the upcoming tripadī nr.55 it is understood that during the time of sādhana the sādhakas must mainly follow Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī in rendering service in their mentally conceived spiritual body. In this couplet the names of six mañjarīs are mentioned, with the word ādi (beginning with) after 'Kasturi Mañjarī'. This ādi indicates that Śrī Guṇa Mañjarī and Vilāsa Mañjarī are also meant to be mentioned here. To facilitate the remembrance of the adhika snehās we are mentioning the acquaintances to the eight mañjarīs' complexions, dresses etc., offered by Śrīla Gopāla Guru Gosvāmī and Śrīla Dhyānacandra Gosvāmī in their Śrī Śrī Gaura Govindārcana Smaraṇa Paddhatis—

Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī—

kuñjo'sti rūpollāsākhyo lalitā kuñjakottare; sadā tiṣṭhati tatraiva suśobhā
rūpa mañjarī
priya narma sakhī mukhyā sundarī rūpa mañjarī; gorocanā samāṅga śrīḥ
keki patrāṁśuka priyā
sārddha tridaśa varṣāsau vāma madhyātvam āśritā; raṅgaṇa mālikāṁ ceti
pravadanti manīśīṇah
iyāṁ labaṅga mañjaryā ekenāhnā kanīyasī; ratnabhānuḥ pitā mātā
yamunā durmedhakah patiḥ
śvarśūś ca jaṭilā nāmnī pāda sevana tatparā; kalau gaura rase rūpa
gosvāmitvāṁ samāgataḥ

"In the north of Lalitānandada Kuñja is the kuñja named "Rūpollāsa, where the very beautiful Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī always resides. She is the chief of the priya narma sakhīs, or mañjarīs, she is very beautiful, her bodily luster resembles gorocana pigments, her dress is decorated with peacock feathers, she is 13 years and 6 months of age, and has attained the nature of vāma madhya. The learned also call her 'Raṅgaṇa-mālā'. She is one day younger than Labaṅga Mañjarī, her father is named Ratnabhānu, her mother 'Yamunā', her husband Durmedha and her mother-in-law Jaṭilā. She is dedicated to the devotional service of massaging the feet. In the age of Kali she has descended in the Gaura-avatāra as Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī."

Śrī Rati Mañjarī —

ratyambujākhyah kuñje'stīndulekhā kuñja dakṣiṇe. tatraiva tiṣṭhati sadā
 surūpā rati mañjarī
 tārāvalī dukūleyam tādit tulya tanu-cchabiḥ . dakṣiṇā mr̄dvikā khyātā
 tulasi tī vadantī yām
 asyā vayo dvimāsādhyā hāyanāstu trayodaśa. pitāsyā vṛṣabhaḥ kānto
 divākhyah sāradā prasūḥ
 śvaśruś ca sannikā proktā cāmara sevanānvitā; iyam śrī raghunāthākhyam
 prāpto gaura rase kalau

"In the kuñja known as Ratyambuja (the lotus of Rati), south of Indulekhā's kuñja, the beautiful Rati Mañjarī always resides. Her dress is decorated with a cluster of stars and her body shines like lightning. She has a mild, submissive nature and is nick-named 'Tulasi'. She is 13 years and two months old. Her father is Vṛṣabha, her husband Diva and her mother is named Sāradā. Her mother in law is named Sannikā and her service is fanning. In the age of Kali she has descended as Śrī Raghunātha Dās Gosvāmī."

Śrī Labaṅga Mañjarī —

kuñjasya tuṅgavidyāyāḥ kuñjah pūrvatra vartate; labaṅga sukhado nāmnā
 sudṛśām sumanoharaḥ
 labaṅga mañjarī tatra mudā tiṣṭhati sarvadā; sā tu rūpākhyā mañjaryā
 ekenāhnā varīyasī
 udyad vidyut samāna śrīs tārāvalī paṭāvṛtā; śrī kṛṣṇānandadā nityam
 dakṣinā mr̄dvika matāḥ
 vaya eka dinam sārddha hāyanāstu trayodaśa; śvaśrūḥ suśīlā pitaraū
 yamunā ratna bhānukau
 patisyān maṇḍalibhadraḥ sarvābharaṇa sevīkā; śrī sanātana nāmāsau
 khyātā gaura rase kalau

"East of Tuṅgavidyā's kuñja is the captivating grove of fair-eyed girls named 'Labaṅga Sukhada', where Śrī Labaṅga Mañjarī always blissfully resides. She is one day older than Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī, her body shines like an excellent lightning strike, her dress is decorated with a galaxy of stars and she always delights Śrī Kṛṣṇa with a soft and submissive nature. Her age is 13 years, 6 months and 1 day. Her mother is named Yamunā, her father Ratnabhānu, her mother-in-law Suśīlā and her husband

Maṇḍalībhadra. She serves with all kinds of ornaments. In the present Gaura-avatāra she has appeared in the form of Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī."

Śrī Rasa Mañjarī —

rasānandaprado nāmnā citrā kuñjasya paścime; kuñjo'sti tatra vasati
sarvadā rasa mañjarī
śrī rūpa mañjarī samyag jīvātuḥ sā prakīrtitā; haṁsa pakṣa dukūleyaṁ
phulla campaka kāntibhāk
labaṅga mañjarī tulyā prāyeṇa guṇa sampadā; atīva priyatāṁ prāptā śrī
rūpa mañjarī śritā
sandhāna caturā seyam dautye kauśalam āgatā; trayodaśa śarad yuktā
dakṣinā mṛdvikā matā
pitā subhānur mātā ca prema mañjarī samjñikā; patir viṭaṅkaḥ śvaśrūr
ambhāvatī vastra sevikā
sā kalau raghunāthākhyā yukta bhaṭṭatvam āgatā

"West of Citrā's kuñja is the kuñja named 'Rasānanda-prada', where Śrī Rasa Mañjarī, who is dearer than life to Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī, always resides. Her bodily luster resembles that of Campaka flowers and her dress shines like swans' wings. Because she has taken shelter of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī, who is as qualified as Labaṅga Mañjarī, she has become the object of her great love. She is expert in different inquiries and in the duties of relaying messages. Her age is 13 and she is endowed with a soft and submissive nature. Her father is named Subhānu, her mother Prema Mañjarī, her husband Viṭaṅka and her mother-in-law Rambhāvatī. Her service is dressing. In this Kali age she has appeared as Śrī Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa."

Śrī Guṇa Mañjarī —

aiśāne campakalatā kuñjāt kuñjo'sti śobhanaḥ; guṇānandaprado nāmnā
tatrāste guṇa mañjarī
rūpa mañjarikā saukhyābhilāṣā sā prakīrtitā; javārājī dukūleyaṁ tadit
prakāra kānti bhāk
kaniṣṭheyam bhavet tasyās tulasyāstu tribhir dinaiḥ; śrī krṣṇāmoda
dākṣināyam āśritā prakharoditā
vayo'syā eka māsāḍhyā hāyanāstu trayodaśa; saptavimśatibhir yuktam
dinais ca samudīritam

candrabhānuḥ pitā mātā yamunā gobhaṭaḥ patih; śvaśrus tārāvalī jñeyā
śayyā sevā parāyaṇā
gopāla bhaṭṭa nāmāsau khyātā gaura rase kalau

"In the north eastern corner of Campakalatā's kuñja is the beautiful kuñja named 'Guṇānanda-prada' where Śrī Guṇa Mañjarī, who desires Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī's happiness, resides. Her bodily luster resembles lightning and her dress is colored (red) like Javā-flowers. She is three days younger than Tulasī Mañjarī and always delights Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Her nature is dakṣīna prakharā, submissive yet harsh, her age is 13 years, one month and 27 days. Her father is named Candrabhānu, her mother is named Yamunā, her husband Gobhaṭa, her mother-in-law Tārāvalī and her service is making the bed. In Śrī Gaura avatāra she descended in the form of Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa."

Śrī Vilāsa Mañjarī—

vaiśākha kuñjād āgneye kuñjo'sti sumanoharaḥ; vilāsānando nāmnātrāste
vilāsa mañjarī
vilāsa mañjarī rūpa mañjarī sakhyam āśritā; sva kāntyā sadṛśī cakre yā
divyāṁ svarṇa ketakīm
cañcarīka dukūleyaṁ vāmā mr̥dvītvam āśritā; kaniṣṭhā rasa mañjaryāś
caturbhīr divasair iyam
svar bhānuḥ durbalā pitā mātā patir viḍambakāḥ; śvaśrū ramābhīdhāsyāś
ca jala sevā parāyaṇā
jīva gosvāmitāṁ prāptā kalau gaura rase tvasau

"In the south eastern corner of Viśākhā's kuñja is the captivating grove named 'Vilāsānanda' where Vilāsa Mañjarī, who has a relationship of friendship with Rūpa Mañjarī, is residing. With her own bodily luster she makes all objects that face her shine like divine golden Ketakī-flowers, her dress shines like a Cañcarīka (bee) and her mood is contrary, yet mild (vāmā mr̥dvī). She is four days younger than Rasa Mañjarī, her age is twelve years old, 10 months and 26 days. Her father's name is Svarbhānu, her mother's Durbalā, her husband's Viḍambaka, and her mother-in-law's Ramā. Her service is providing water. In the Gaura-avatāra she is Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī."

Śrī Mañjulālī Mañjarī —

līlānandaprado nāmnā viśākhā kuñjakottare; tatraiva tiṣṭhati mudā śrī
 mañjulālī mañjarī
 rūpa mañjarikā sakhyā prāyeṇa guṇa sampadā; kiṁśuka puṣpa
 vastrāḍhyā tapta hema tanucchabiḥ
 līlā mañjarī nāmnāsyā vāma madhyātvam āśritā; śrī rādhikā mano'bhijjñā
 vastra sevā parāyaṇā
 vayaḥ saptāha yuktāsau sārddha tridaśa hāyanā; kalau gaura rase
 lokanātha gosvāmitāṁ gatā

"North of Śrī Viśākhā's kuñja is the grove named 'Līlānanda-prada' where Śrī Mañjulālī Mañjarī resides in topmost bliss. She is as qualified as Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī due to her loving friendship with her, her bodily complexion resembles molten gold, her dress is colored like a Kiṁśuka flower and another name of her is Līlā Mañjarī. Her nature is medium contrary (vāma madhya) and she serves Śrī Rādhārāṇī, knowing exactly what is on Her mind. She is dedicated to the service of dressing Her. Her age is 13 years, 6 months and 7 days and in the Gaura-avatāra she is Śrī Lokanātha Gosvāmī."

Śrī Kasturī Mañjarī —

kastūryānandado nāmnā sudevyāḥ kuñjakottare; tatraiva tiṣṭhati mudā
 sadā kastūrī mañjarī
 kāñcatulyāmbarā cāsau śuddha hemāṅga kāntibhāk;
 maṇīndra maṇḍanair yuktā śrikhaṇḍa sevanotsukā
 vayas tridaśa varṣāsau vāmāmr̥dvītvam āśritā; śrī kṛṣṇa kavirājākhyāṁ
 prāptā gaura rase kalau

"North of Sudevī's kuñja is 'Kastūryānanda-kuñja' where Kastūrī Mañjarī always resides. Her body shines like pure gold, her dress shines like glass, she is decorated with the finest ornaments, she renders sandal-service, her age is 13, her nature is vāma mr̥dvī (contrary, yet soft) and in this age of Kali she has appeared in the Gaura-avatāra as Śrī Kṛṣṇa dāsa Kavirāja."

Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: "In the company of these nitya siddhā mañjarīs I will enthusiastically and blissfully render loving service to Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava — prema sevā kori kutūholī. Here the word kutūholī must be understood to have a special meaning. In his 'Camatkāra Candrikā', Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda has used the word 'kutūhala' to

express his eagerness to have darśana of captivating scenes. Hearing and chanting are also synonyms of darśana, or beholding, here. The only cause and propeller of rāgānugā bhajana is the heart's sacred greed to attain feelings similar to those of the expert nitya siddhā kiñkarīs as they render service to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, by hearing and chanting of Their sweet forms, attributes and pastimes. When the rāgānugīya sādhaka becomes greedy after the feelings, expertise or service of the aforementioned nitya siddhā mañjarīs, he will meditate on his loving devotional service in his mentally conceived spiritual body in allegiance to them and in their company, and attains them in bhāva siddhi (perfection of developing the desired feelings). It is believed that the word kutūholī is used to indicate that.

Another meaning of kutūholī is said in the dictionary to be kautukī which is used in the Vaiṣṇava scriptures as 'amusement', 'joy', 'astonishment', 'eagerness', 'amazement', 'festival', 'humor' etc. All these meanings are to be known to reach perfection in meditation on devotional service rendered to the Yugala Kiśora in allegiance to the nitya siddhā kiñkarīs and in their company. In other words, meditations on and attainment of such devotional service in svarūpa siddhi is accomplished with pleasure, joy, astonishment, eagerness, amazement, as a festival for the eyes and mind and in great humour. The intelligent devotees will easily become acquainted with evidence of all this by studying the rasa sāstras, out of fear of increasing the bulk of this book I did not mention them.

Some editions of this book mention the alternative reading of prema sevā kore kutūholī. In this the meaning is found that the abovementioned nitya siddhā mañjarīs render loving service to Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava with such kutūhala or kautuka. With this reading the following tripadī is seen with comparatively greater consistency. (52)

e sabhāra anugā hoiyā, prema sevā nibo cāiyā,
iṅgite bujhibo sab kāja.
rūpe guṇe ḍagamagi, sadā hobo anurāgī,
vasati koribo sakhīra mājha (53)

"I will render loving devotional service in allegiance to them all. Simply on their hints I will understand what is my duty. I will always be passionately absorbed in Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's forms and qualities while residing amongst the sakhīs."

Prayer for loving service —

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā — In this tripadī Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya reveals his aspiration for attaining the loving service in the wake of the nitya siddha mañjarīs and the consequent qualification. First of all he says — e sab anugā hoiyā, prema sevā nibo cāiyā, īṅgite bujhībo sab kāj. Vraja bhajana cannot reach siddhi without one following in the footsteps of the nitya siddha rāgātmikā pārśadas (the eternally perfect associates of Kṛṣṇa). rāgamayī bhaktir hoy rāgātmikā nāma; tāhā śuni lubdha hoy kon bhāgyavān; lobhe vrajavāsī-bhāve kore anugati (C.C.) "Devotion full of spiritual attachment is called rāgātmikā bhakti. If a fortunate soul becomes greedy after that he will start following the people of Vraja." By following the Vraja-gopīs the sages of the Daṇḍaka forest and the personified Vedas became themselves Vraja-gopīs and attained the service of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in Vraja, but on the other hand the goddess of Vaikuṇṭha, Lakṣmī devī, could not attain Śrī Kṛṣṇa's company, despite the fact that she lived in Vraja and performed penances there. This is described in Śrīmad Bhāgavata and other Purāṇas. In this connection Śrīman Mahāprabhu told Veṅkaṭa Bhaṭṭa —

śruti sab gopīgaṇer anugata hoiyā; vrajeśvarī su ta bhaje gopībhāva loiyā vyūhāntare gopī deha vraje jabe pāilo; sei dehe kṛṣṇa saṅge rāsa krīḍā koilo

gopa jāti kṛṣṇa — gopī preyasī tāhār; devī vā anya strī kṛṣṇa nā kore aṅgikāra

lakṣmī cāhe sei dehe kṛṣṇera saṅgama; gopikā anugā hoiyā nā koilo bhajana

anya dehe nā pāiye rāsa vilāsa; ataeva 'nāyam' śloka kohe veda vyāsa (C.C.)

"All the personified Vedas followed the gopīs and worshipped the son of the Queen of Vraja in their mood. When they attained a gopī body in another age they could play the Rāsa-dance with Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is of the cowherd-caste and the cowherd girls are His sweethearts — He will not accept goddesses or other ladies in that feature. Lakṣmī wanted to associate with Kṛṣṇa, but she did not worship Him in allegiance to the gopikās. She could not attain the Rāsa dance in another body, thus Vedavyāsa spoke the verse 'nāyam śriyo'ṅga u nitanta rateḥ prasādaḥ (Bhāg. 10.47.60)."

The blessed author says: 'Following in the footsteps of Śrī Rūpa and other mañjarīs' prema sevā nibo cāiyā, which means: "From them I will accept the loving service of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā Mādhava." Here not just the word 'service' has been used, but 'loving service'. This has a special purpose. Love is the best ingredient for serving the Lord, if there is no love in the heart of the servant, the Lord cannot attain pleasure from the fruits, water and foodstuffs offered by him. Hence it is said in Padyāvalī

nānopacāra kṛta pūjanam ārta bandhoh premnaiva bhakta hṛdayam
sukha vidrutam syāt
yāvat kṣudanti jaṭhare jaraṭhā pipāsā tāvat sukhāya bhavato nanu
bhakṣya peye

"O devotee! The heart of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who is the friend of the distressed, melts when He is lovingly worshipped with different ingredients. For instance, as long as there is powerful hunger and thirst within the stomach, water and food will be a source of happiness." The eager love of the devotee will awaken a strong desire within the heart of the Lord to accept the ingredients of his service.

Rādhā's maidservants are the embodiments of sevā rasa, and their svarūpas entirely consist of sevā rasa. Their love is so pure and great that their hearts' love culminates into a form of service. Their love is just like iron that gets red hot in identification with the fire in which it is laid by the blacksmith. Their love and their service become so identical that they become an indivisible thing. Hence it is said prema sevā. This prema sevā is to be asked from the nitya siddha kiñkarīs. Rādhā-Mādhava's prema sevā is their own treasure. When they are so kind to bestow it upon a sādhaka then he is able to achieve it. The words prema sevā nibo cāiyā indicate that the sādhaka's expertise in bhajana and the resultant loving eagerness are all there to invoke their grace. Through their anxious prayers such eager kiñkarī bhāva sādhakas must beg the loving service of Śrī Rādhā Mādhava from them (the nitya siddhas). They are also most merciful and when they see the eagerness of such a qualified new maidservant they bless her with the proper devotional service — this is suggested with the words prema sevā nibo cāiyā.

After that it is said: iṅgite bujhibo sab kāja. By Śrī Rādhārāṇī's grace the kiñkarīs are able to understand the hints She makes through any medium — Her glances, words, hands and feet — śrīśvarī dṛṣṭi vāg ādi sarveṅgita

vicakṣanām (Śrī Vṛndāvana Mahimāmṛtam 8.33) "Rādhā's maidservants are able to understand all of their Prāñeśvarī's hints, expressed through the glances and the words." They are also expert in all respects in understanding the hints given by the sakhīs and the mañjarīs headed by Śrī Rūpa. Their service is rendered in parakīya madhura rasa, and unless they understand all hints, rendering service will be impossible for them. Once an intense love game was taking place within the kuñja. sakhīs and mañjarīs quietly kept their eyes at the slits in the kuñja-walls to fill their eyes with the relish of the yugala mādhurī. When the sound 'ṭu' is heard Their absorption in play is broken. Unless the sakhīs and mañjarīs understand this hint in all respects they won't be qualified for service and their attainment of service will be impossible. Apart from rendering service within the kuñja, the kiñkarī must also be expert in catching Śrīmatī's hints when She is at home. In the morning Jaṭilā enters Śrī Rādhārāṇī's bedroom to wake Her up. Hearing the calls of Her mother-in-law Śrīmatī, who is tired of Her nocturnal pastimes, wakes up and sits up in Her bed. Viśākhā-sakhī becomes afraid when she sees the signs of lovemaking on Śrīmatī's limbs — if that old hag sees it everything is lost! Viśākhā then gives a hint with her eyes to Śrīmatī's surrendered maidservants and these maidservants, who understand each hint, will immediately conceal the signs of lovemaking with a dye unguent. In this way one needs to be expert in understanding all hints while rendering devotional service within parakīya madhura rasa — "iṅgite bujhībo sab kāj".

After that it is said: "rūpe guṇe ḍagamagi, sadā hobo anurāgī, vasati koribo sakhī mājha" "I will always remain attached to and immersed in Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's yugala rūpa." This means that I will always remain immersed in the sweet relish of the Yugala's ever-fresh forms and attributes and in the sweetness of Their devotional service." Another meaning is that by following the mañjarīs one becomes qualified to attain prema sevā and expertise in performing all duties. The sādhaka will then be immersed in the bodily beauty of a rādhā kiñkarī and in their different attributes such as humility and good behaviour. This meditation of the mañjarī bhāva sādhaka on the forms and qualities of the own siddha svarūpa runs as follows —

śrī guroś caraṇāmbhoja kṛpāsikta kalevarām; kiśorīm gopa vanitām
nānālaṅkāra bhūṣitām

pṛthu tuṅga kuca dvandvāṁ catuḥ ṣaṣṭhi kalānvitām; rakta citrāntarīyam
 āvṛta śuklottarīyakām
 svarṇa citrāruṇa prānta muktādāma sukāñcalīm;
 candanāguru kāśmīra carccitāṅgīm madhusmitām
 sevopāyana nirmāṇa kuśalāṁ sevanotsukām; vinayādi guṇopetāṁ śrī
 rādhā karuṇārthiṇīm
 rādhā kṛṣṇa sukhāmoda mātra ceṣṭāṁ supadminīm;
 nigūḍha bhāvāṁ govinde madanānanda mohinīm
 nānā rasa kalālāpa śālinīm divya rūpiṇīm; saṅgīta rasa sañjāta bhāvollāsa
 bharānvitām
 tapta kāñcana śuddhābhām sva saukhya gandha varjjitām; divāniśāṁ
 mano madhye dvayoh prema bharākulam; evam ātmānam īśāṁ
 bhāvayed bhaktim āśritah

The Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava sādhaka who has taken shelter of the path of bhakti always thinks of himself as someone with the adolescent body of a cowherd girl, which is adorned with various ornaments and is sprinkled with the honey of the Guru's grace, whose breasts are firm and raised, who is well trained in 64 arts, who wears a red variegated dress and a white veil, a nice blouse endowed with a pearl string and wonderful golden and red borders (that were all given by Śrī Rādhārāṇī as prasāda when She was satisfied with service rendered to Her), whose body is anointed with sandalwood pulp, aloe and vermillion, whose face is adorned with a sweet smile, who is very expert in manufacturing articles for the service of the Yugala, who is very enthusiastic to render devotional service, who is endowed with all saintly qualities such as humility, who hankers for Śrī Rādhā's grace, whose every activity is aimed at making Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa happy, who is a nice Padminī girl (the best of four kinds of girls), who has intimate feelings for Śrī Govinda, who is in His turn captivated by erotic bliss upon seeing her (according to the quality and quantity of his love the loving devotee awakens a certain amount of desire to accept his service in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's heart, that is its nature. Even in dreams Śrī Rādhā's maidservants do not desire to amorously unite with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Thus, although they are fit to be Yūtheśvarīs due to being very beautiful and qualified, when Śrī Kṛṣṇa sees their sevāmaya vigraha He becomes overwhelmed by erotic bliss and desires to unite with them — this is their secret feeling towards Govinda. In this way their feelings are more special and secretive than

those of the sakhīs), who speaks in a very rasika and artistic manner, who has a lustrous, divine body and who is full of joyful feelings caused by saṅgīta rasa (musical flavours). In this way the sādhaka always establishes his self esteem in the form of a beautiful and qualified adolescent cowherd girl with a love-filled heart, thinking himself to reside amongst the sakhīs. (53)

vṛndāvane dui jana, catur-dike sakhīgaṇa
samaya bujhībo rasa sukhe
sakhīra iṅgīte hobe, cāmara ḫulābo kobe,
tāmbūla yogābo cāñda mukhe (54)

"This Divine Couple resides in Vṛndāvana, surrounded by Their girlfriends. I will blissfully serve Them according to the time (of the year or the day). When will the sakhīs give me a hint to fan Them with a yaktail-fan or to place betelleaves in Their moon-like mouths?"

Service in rasa sukha —

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā— In this tripadī Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya gives an indication of anurāgamaya sevā-meditation of the rāga sādhakas who are in mañjarī bhāva. In the previous tripadī an indication was given of the siddha svarūpa of the sādhaka. In this siddha svarūpa the anurāgī rāgānugā practitioner mentally dwells amongst the sakhīs and mañjarīs in Vraja-dhāma, the kingdom of līlās. How the sādhaka then renders mānasī sevā is thus indicated — "vṛndāvane dui jana, caturdike sakhīgaṇa, samaya bujhīya rasa sukhe. sakhīra iṅgīta hobe, cāmara ḫulābo kobe, tāmbūla yogābo cāñda mukhe" Within the matchlessly beautiful environment of Śrī Vṛndāvana, the kingdom of rasa, the sādhaka meditates on the Divine Pair, that is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who is the śringāra rasarāja mūrti, the king of transcendental erotic mellows, and Śrī Rādhārāṇī, who is the embodiment of mahābhāva, and Who is endowed with matchless beauty, attributes and passionate love. The Yugala Kiśora is surrounded by the sakhīs, who are the reflections of Śrī Rādhārāṇī, and who are swimming in the high waves of the ocean of rasa and prema of Śrī Rādhā-Śyāma which is full of laughter and joking, beauty, love and passion. In his 'Prārthanā Gītikā' Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has drawn a wonderful bhāva picture of this —

vṛndāvana ramya sthāna, divya cintāmaṇi dhāma
 ratana mandira manohara
 āvṛta kālindī nīre, rāja haṁsa keli kore,
 tāhe śobhe kanaka kamala
 tāra madhye hema-pīṭha, aṣṭa dalete veṣṭīta,
 aṣṭa dalete pradhānā nāyikā
 tāra madhye ratnāsane, bosī āchena dui jane,
 śyāma saṅge sundarī rādhikā
 o rūpa lāvanya rāśi, amiyā podiche khasi,
 hāsyā parihāsa sambhāṣane
 narottama dāsa koy, nitya līlā sukhamoy,
 sadāi sphuruka mora mone

"The lovely place named Vṛndāvana is an abode made of divine thought-gems. There is a charming jewelled temple, surrounded by the current of the Yamunā and her rivulets, where lordly swans are playing amongst beautiful golden lotus flowers. In the middle is a golden platform surrounded by eight petals, where the leading heroines (aṣṭa-sakhīs) reside. In the middle of that is a jewelled throne upon which two persons are sitting - Śyāma and His beautiful Rādhikā. An abundance of nectarean elegance drips from Their transcendental forms and They are engaged in laughing and joking with Each other. Narottama dāsa says: "May these eternal pastimes always remain manifest within my mind."

The blessed author has also written —

kadamba tarura dāla, nāmiyāche bhūme bhāla,
 phuṭiyāche phula sāri sāri
 parimale bharalo, sakala vṛndāvana,
 keli kore bhramarā bhramarī

"So many rows of flowers blossom on the branches of the Kadamba-tree that they are bowing down to the ground. All of Vṛndāvana is permeated with their fragrance and this causes the male and female bees to play around."

rāi kānu vilasaye raṅge
 kibā rūpa lāvani, vaidagadhi khani dhani,
 maṇimaya ābharaṇa aṅge

"Rāī and Kānu are enjoying Their playful sports. How beautiful are Their forms, how clever are They, and how brightly Their ornaments are shimmering!"

rādhāra dakṣiṇa kara, dhari priya giridhara,
madhura madhura coli yāy
āge pāche sakhī-gaṇa, kore phula variṣaṇa
kono sakhī cāmara ḫulāya

"Dear Giridhārī walks along ever-so-sweetly, holding Rādhā's right hand. Behind and in front of Them the sakhīs shower flowers and some sakhī fans Them with a yaktail fan."

parāge dhūsara sthala, candre kore suśītala,
maṇimaya vedīra upore
rāī kānu kara jodi, nr̄tya kore phiri phiri,
paraśe pulake tanu bhare

"Rāī and Kānu hold hands and dance around and around on a jewelled stage which is greyed by pollen and cooled by the moon, Their hairs standing on end of ecstasy when They touch Each other."

mṛgamaṇa candana, kore kori sakhīgaṇa,
variṣaye phula gandha rāje
śrama-jala bindu bindu, śobhā kore mukha indu,
adhare muralī nāhi bāje

"The sakhīs keep musk and sandalpaste in their hands and throw fragrant flowers. Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's moonlike faces are beautified by sweatdrops and Kṛṣṇa cannot play His flute anymore."

hāsyā vilāsa rasa, sarasa madhura bhāsa,
narottama manoratha bhoru
duhuka vicitra veṣa, kusuma racita keṣa,
locana mohana līlā koru

"Narottama's desires are fixed on the mellows of Their joking pastimes and Their sweet and juicy talks. With Their wonderful dresses and Their flower-decorated hairs They perform pastimes that enchant the eyes." The descriptions of those who have directly experienced the sweetness of the pastimes of the Yugala Kiṣora and Their sakhīs with their bhāva-eyes in the līlā-kingdom of Śrī Vṛndāvana, are the very life sustenance of

the meditations of the sādhakas. The sāmājika sādhakas (sensitive devotees) can experience how nicely a picture of the sweet pastimes of the Yugala with Their sakhīs in Vṛndāvana has been drawn in the above mentioned pada. The rāgānugīya sādhakas can understand when their time has come to render blissful rasika devotional service to Śrī Yugala Kiśora, as They are surrounded in the transcendental kingdom of Śrī Vṛndāvana by Their sakhīs, who are a great ocean of beauty, attributes and pastimes. samaya bujhiyā means serving according to the hot or cold season, according to the time of the day in circumstances as abhisāra (love journey), milana (meeting), vilāsa (love making) and viccheda (separation), and in the two different branches of service, paricaryā (practical service) and prasaṅga (hearing and chanting etc.). rasa sukhe means the happiness that arises from the passionate service of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava and Their sakhīs, and the happiness that arises from relishing the sweetness of Their forms, attributes and pastimes. svayāṁ bhagavān (the Original Personality of Godhead) paratama tattva (the topmost principle of transcendental truth) mādhurya mūrati (the embodiment of sweetness) vrajendra nandana (the prince of Vraja) Śrī Kṛṣṇa is a billowing ocean of nectarean beauty, attributes and pastimes, and through rāgānugā bhakti the relish of this sweet rasa is available. The ocean of sweetness of this Kṛṣṇa expands beyond limits when He is in the company of Śrī Rādhārāṇī and Her girlfriends. Only Śrī Rādhā through Her mādanākhyā mahābhāva is able to fully relish this limitlessly sweet rasa. Śrī Kṛṣṇa says—

adbhuta ananta pūrṇa mora madhurimā; trijagate ihār keho nāhi pāy sīmā ei prema dvāre nitya rādhikā ekali; āmāra mādhuryāmṛta āsvāde sakali (C.C.)

"My sweetness is wonderful, limitless and complete, and no one in the three worlds can match with it. Through Her prema only Rādhikā can relish all of My nectarean sweetness."

By Śrī Rādhārāṇī's grace the sakhīs and mañjarīs that have taken shelter of Her lotus feet are constantly swimming in the boundless ocean of rasa of the Yugala's sweetness. Nothing in the spiritual world can match this bliss of sweet savour. This is the highest stage of rasika bliss that a jīva can reach through sādhana bhajana. Here again it is to be known that this rāgānugā bhajana can never be practised in this current human body, that consists of five gross material elements. Therefore during his

sādhana the sādhaka conceives of another, very captivating body, that resembles that of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī and others, and which is known as siddha deha, within his mind. By the grace of Śrī Gurudeva, who is experienced in bhajana, the sādhakas become acquainted with this siddha deha. Śrī Gurudeva, who is non different from Śrī Bhagavān, introduces the rāgānugā sādhaka to his eternally perfect transcendental body, along with ekādaśa bhāva (the eleven-fold spiritual personality) which is an abode of beauty within the spiritual sky, on the strength of his antaryāmītva śakti, the power received from the Supreme Lord, Who is the Inner Monitor. The Gosvāmīs have called such a body (siddha deha) the body which is suitable to render direct personal service to Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava. In this siddha deha the sādhaka lives within the circle of sakhīs in Vraja-bhūmi, meditating on rendering direct devotional service to Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava with them. Those who have gained a slight vision of this siddha deha have also experienced the wonderful rasika bliss of such a mental service. No one is able to explain this merely through writing comments.

After this Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya said : sakhīra īṅgita hobe, cāmara ḫulābo kobe, tāmbūla jogābo cāñda mukhe — The hearts and minds of Rādhā's maidservants are so merged with Śrī Rādhārāṇī's feelings, that Śrī Rādhārāṇī considers them to be non different from Her own body. By the wish of Śrī Rādhārāṇī Her girlfriends may sometimes enjoy pastimes of intimate meeting with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but Her maidservants do not accept this position even in dreams. Therefore these maidservants are blessed with an even more intimate service to the Yugala than the sakhīs.

tāmbūlārpaṇa pāda-mardana payo dānābhīsārādibhir
vṛndāraṇya maheśvarīm priyatayā yās toṣayanti priyāḥ
prāṇa preṣṭha sakhī kulād api kilāsaṅkocitā bhūmikāḥ
kelī bhūmiṣu rūpa mañjarī mukhās tā dāsikāḥ samśraye

(Vraja Vilāsa Stava —38)

"I take shelter of Śrī Rādhikā's maidservants, headed by Rūpa Mañjarī, that always engage in serving betelleaves, massaging the feet, serving water, and arranging for the Divine Couple's secret trysts. These maidservants are even more dear to the great Queen of Vṛndāraṇya (Śrī Rādhikā) than the prāṇa preṣṭha sakhīs (the girlfriends that are dearer to Her than life), and She is therefore not at all shy before them!" When,

during the kuñja vilāsa, the Śrī Yugala become exhausted, the sakhīs give hints to the mañjarīs that they should engage in their scheduled services, and on these indications the mañjarīs proceed to the playground of the Yugala without hesitation and engage in services such as providing water and betelleaves and fanning Them.

rati-raṇe śramayuta, nāgarī nāgara
mukha bhari tāmbūla yogāya
malaya-ja kuñkuma, mṛga-mada karpūra,
militahi gāta lāgāya

aparūpa priya sakhī prema!
nija prāṇa koṭi, dei niramañchai,
naha tula lākho bāṇa hema

"How wonderful is the love of the priya sakhīs! They serve Nāgarī (heroine Rādhikā) and Nāgara (hero Kṛṣṇa) with millions of lives when They are tired of love-making, by filling Their mouths with betelleaves and by anointing Their bodies with sandalwood paste, vermillion, musk and camphor. Their love is so pure that it cannot even be compared to gold molten a hundred thousand times over!"

manorama mālya, duhu gole arpai,
vījai sīta mṛdu bāta
sugandhī sītala, koru jala arpaṇa,
yaiche hota duhu sāñta

"They offer enchanting garlands to Their necks, give Them cool breezes by fanning Them, and relieve Them from Their heated affliction by offering Them cool and fragrant water."

duhuka caraṇa puna, mṛdu saṁvāhana,
kori śrama korolohi dūra
iṅgite śayana, korolo duhu sakhī-gaṇa
sabahu manoratha pūra

"These sakhīs again softly massage Their feet and thus remove Their fatigue. On Their indication they put the Divine Pair to rest and fulfill any of Their other desires."

kusuma śeje duhu, nidrita herai,
sevana parāyaṇa sukha.

rādhā mohana dāsa, kiye herabo,
meṭabo sab mano-dukha

"These girls, that are totally dedicated to their devotional service, then put the Divine Pair to sleep on a bed of flowers. All the mental distress of Rādhā Mohana dāsa is mitigated when he sees this."

yugala caraṇa sevi, nirantara ei bhāvi,
anurāgī thākibo sadāya.
sādhana bhāvibo yāhā, siddha-dehe pābo tāhā
rāga pathera ei se upāya (55)

"I will always think of the devotional service of the lotus-feet of the Divine Pair, and I will always remain attached to that. Whatever I think of during my spiritual practice I will attain in my siddha deha when I reach perfection. This is the means of rāga bhakti."

The similarity of practice and perfection—

Sudhākanikā vyākhyā — The varieties and the results of the sevā cintana of the rāgānugīya sādhaka that was hinted at by the blessed author in the previous tripadī are further described in this tripadī. rāgānugīya gauḍīya vaisṇava sādhakas establish their abhimāna (self esteem) into the own siddha svarūpa received from Śrī Guru and then proceed in meditating on their devotional services within Śrī-Śrī Gaura-Govinda's aṣṭakāla līlā. gauḍīya vaisṇavācārya Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has briefly described the aṣṭakālīn līlā within his own composition 'Smaraṇa Maṅgala Stotram'. On the basis of this, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāja Gosvāmīpāda has very elaborately described Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's aṣṭakālīn līlā in his scripture Śrī-Śrī Govinda Līlāmṛta, and thus blessed the assembled devotees with a celestial Ganges-current of līlā rasa. In later times Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda has given more elaborate descriptions of those pastimes that were only briefly described in Govinda Līlāmṛta in his scripture Śrī Kṛṣṇa Bhāvanāmṛta, and thus increased the storehouse of aṣṭakāla līlā rasa in all respects. Since it is not possible to perceive the pastimes of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Govinda without meditating on the pastimes of Śrī-Śrī Gaurāṅga, later the resident of Govardhana Śrīla Kṛṣṇa dās Siddha Bābā was visited by Śrī Rādhārāṇī Herself, Who ordered Him to publish something that would suit meditation on Śrī-Śrī Gaura-Govinda's aṣṭakālīn līlā. After receiving this order from his worshipable

goddess, Śrīla Siddha Bābā compiled the Śrī Gaura Govinda Līlāmṛta Guṭikā, making the manual completely fit for the practice of līlā smaraṇa. To make the assembly of sādhakas relish the aṣṭakālīn līlā rasa through the realisations of the mahājanas, Śrīla Siddha Bābā compiled a large anthology of aṣṭakālīn līlā called 'Bhāvanā Sāra Saṅgraha'. In this way the mahājanas of yore largely increased the jewel-storehouse of Śrī-Śrī Gaura-Govinda's aṣṭakālīn līlās, that make up the confidential worship of the rāgānugīya gauḍīya vaiṣṇavas that have taken shelter of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's lotus feet. While constantly meditating on these aṣṭakālīn līlās the gauḍīya vaisṇava sādhakas meditate on their own favorite services within these pastimes. Hence Śrī Thākura Mahāśaya is saying: 'yugala caraṇa sevi, nirantara ei bhāvi, anurāgī thākibo sadāy' — "I will always think of the devotional service of the lotus-feet of the Divine Pair, and I will always remain attached to that." While considering the limb of smaraṇa within the framework of the nine kinds of devotional practice in his Bhakti Sandarbha-scripture, Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has shown the necessity of thinking of Śrī Hari, by quoting evidence from Śrī Garuḍa Purāṇa—

ekasminn apy atikrānte muhūrte dhyāna varjite
dasyubhir muśitenaiva yuktam ākranditum bhṛśam

"One must weep for each moment that was not spent meditating on Śrī Hari, just as one cries out after having been robbed of all one's possessions by a robber." Thus the mahājanas have prescribed aṣṭakāla līlā smaraṇa, so that the bhakti sādhakas would not lose one moment of the eight time periods of the day and night, and so that they would be blessed with the loving service of the lotus feet of their beloved deities. Those who do not depend on scriptural injunctions, but are only subdued by devotional greed and eagerness to follow the bhāva of the nitya siddha rāgātmika vrajavāsīs (which is not the same as imitating them), and who are eternally engaged in rendering mental service to Śrī Śrī Rādhā Mādhava, while meditating on Their pastimes, are called rāgānugīya rasika bhaktas. Hence it is written about the practice of rāgānugā bhakti—

bāhya antara ihāra dui to sādhana; bāhya — sādhaka dehe kore śravaṇa kīrtana

mane ni ja siddha deha koriyā bhāvana; rātri dine kore vraje krṣṇera sevana (C.C.)

"There are two kinds of sādhana — external and internal. Externally one practises hearing and chanting with the sādhaka body, and internally one mentally conceives of one's siddha deha in which one serves Kṛṣṇa in Vraja day and night."

Therefore rāgānugīya gauḍīya vaiṣṇava sādhakas are averse to the mundane world and wander around in the kingdom of bhāva in svarūpāveśa. In this way they always spend their lives passionately doing bhajana. anurāgī thākibo sadāy. While thus doing bhajana in allegiance to the nitya siddha svarūpa-śaktis one becomes identified with their feelings. Then, by the grace of the śrī guru rūpā mañjarī the sādhaka attains siddhi and he will be blessed with Śrī Śrī Rādhā Mādhava's kuñja sevā in mañjarī svarūpa in Vraja-dhāma.

Hence Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya says: 'sādhane bhāvibo yāhā, siddha dehe pābo tāho, rāga pathera ei se upāya'. There is a most transcendentally scientific truth hidden in the manual of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas' meditation on aṣṭakāla līlā. In the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (3.14.1) it is seen — yayā kratur asmi loke puruṣo bhavati tathetaḥ pretya bhavati sa kratuṁ kurvīta, meaning: "Whatever mentality a jīva maintains in the world, he will be endowed with that mentality also when he goes from this place (meaning: when he leaves his current body). Let therefore the aspirant take shelter of this mentality." In the Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad (4.4.5) it is seen: sa yathākāmo bhavati tat kratūr bhavati tat karma kurute yat karma kurute tad abhisampadyate iti. "The jīva acts according to his desires, completes these actions and consequently reaps their fruits."

Elsewhere in the Upaniṣad it is seen: yathā yathopāsate tad eva bhavantīti — "As one worships and meditates, so one becomes." In the Gītā (8.6), the Lord has said: yaṁ yaṁ vāpi smaraṇ bhāvam tyajantyante kalevaram. tam tam evaiti kaunteya sadā tad bhāva bhāvitah - "Whatever one constantly thinks of during life is what one will remember at the time of leaving the body, and whatever one thinks of while leaving the body will be attained in the next existence." This is the scientific truth about the power of constant meditation, which is also found in Śrīmad Bhāgavata —

kīṭah peśaskṛtam dhyāyan kud�ām tena praveśitah
yāti tat sātmatām rājan pūrva rūpam asantyajam

"As a powerful cockroach besieges a worm in his hole, he causes the weak worm to assume the form of a cockroach due to constant meditation on him in sheer terror, without the worm even having to leave his body!" If deep meditation on mundane objects has such power, then there should be no room for doubt about the transcendental devotional power of meditating on the Lord, Who has a transcendental form which is supremely true, by a true devotee. Śrī Kṛṣṇa tells Śrī Uddhava (Bhāg. 11.15.26) —

yathā saṅkalpayed buddhyā yadā vā mat parah pumān
mayi satye mano yuñjamāns tathā tat samupāśnute

"A devoted person who meditates on Me, Who am also called satya saṅkalpa, He Who keeps His promises, will get any of his thoughts fulfilled exactly according to his wishes." Such meditation of the sādhaka, which induces the shelter of the Supreme Lord and which is a powerful assistant to bhakti, which is the essence of the Lord's pleasure potency, can never result into vain imagination. In his sādhana he is meditating on his service to Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava throughout the eight times of the day, and he will achieve this in his siddha deha, or his mentally conceived mañjarī-body which was received from Śrī Guru. This can never be altered or watered down. This is the greatest means of attaining the desired siddhi in rāga bhajana. (55)

sādhane ye dhana cāi, siddha dehe tāhā pāi,
pakkāpakka mātra se vicāra
apakke sādhana rīti, pākile se prema-bhakti,
bhakati lakṣaṇa tattva sāra (56)

"The treasure I desire as a practitioner I will get when I attain my spiritual body; it's just a question of being ripe or unripe. The ripe stage is the stage of pure loving devotion and the unripe stage is the stage of practice. That is the essential truth about devotional principles."

The essence of the truth:

Sudhā Kaṇikā vyākhyā— In the previous tripadī Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya explained how sādhana and siddhi are qualitatively identical, and in this tripadī he uses an analogy to ascertain this more firmly —'sādhane ye

dhana cāi, siddha dehe tāhā pāi, pakkāpakka mātra se vicāra' sādhana bhakti, bhāva bhakti and prema bhakti are sequential, qualitatively identical, stages of each other. The treasure of direct loving service that the rāgānuga sādhaka desires as he performs his sādhanā of meditating on Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's service, he will attain when he achieves prema siddhi in his siddha svarūpa. When laulyamayī bhakti (greedy devotion) is not yet fulfilled, but moves towards siddhi, it is called sādhana bhakti. When this becomes intense it is called prema bhakti. Hence it is said — siddhasya lakṣaṇam् yat syāt sādhanam् sādhakasya tat (Bṛhad Bhāg. tīkā) "What is the characteristic of siddhi, is the practice of the sādhaka." sādhana bhakti always keeps the desire for the attainment of prema bhakti or direct service awake; this is the nature of sādhana bhakti. Hence the blessed author says: sādhane ye dhana cāi. Insatiability is the nature of bhakti; the more advanced the sādhaka becomes in his devotional practice, the more eagerness and anxiousness he will feel rising in his heart. This eagerness and anxiousness will help the sādhaka to attain the kingdom of prema siddhi or direct service. There is also a great relish in sādhana bhakti, especially in the līlā smaraṇa of the rāga sādhakas. Their meditation is just like rendering direct service, therefore the wonderful relish they savour during their sādhana is incomparable. Then if the sādhaka is satisfied with that and he does not awaken a feeling of lacking of prema or direct devotional service, finally a situation of self-satisfaction may arise in which the sādhaka's advancement in bhakti sādhanā will be blocked. sādhane ye dhana cāi — these words explain this fact in a hidden way.

The wealth craved for in the stage of sādhana, meaning the direct loving service of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava in Vraja yearned for by the sādhaka, will be attained within the siddha deha after prema is attained, this is for sure — siddha dehe tāhā pāi. After giving initiation into kāma bīja and kāma gāyatrī Śrī Gurudeva bestows siddha prāṇālī, so that the disciple gets knowledge of his distinct relationship with the deity and about the śrī yugalopāsanā, the means to worship the Divine Pair. In it the disciple will become acquainted with the name, complexion, age, nature and the other of the eleven aspects of his or her siddha svarūpa. The learned knowers of the truth call that initiation ceremony through which all sins are destroyed and divine knowledge is bestowed, dīkṣā — divyam jñānam् yato dadyāt kuryāt pāpasya saṅkṣayam tasmād dīkṣeti sā proktā deśikais tattva kovidaih. In the 283rd paragraph of Śrī Bhakti Sandarbha, Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda gives the following explanation of the above

mentioned words *divyam jñānam* - *divyam jñānam* hyatra śrīmatī mantre bhagavat svarūpa *jñānam* tena bhagavatā sambandha viśeṣa *jñānam* ca yathā padmottara khaṇḍādāv astāksarādikam adhikṛtya vivṛtam asti, meaning: "Here the word *divya jñāna* refers to knowledge of the empowered mantra being the very form of the Lord, and that through it the aspirant will achieve knowledge of his specific relationship with the Lord, Who is the Presiding Deity over the mantra. In this connection there is an explanation of mantras like the 8-syllable mantra in the *Uttara Khaṇḍa* of Śrī Padma Purāṇa, wherein this meaning of the words *divya jñāna* is determined." In the *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava* sampradāya the knowledge of this specific relationship means the *ekādaśa-bhāva*, the eleven-fold relationship of the sādhaka with the mantra *devatā Śrī Gopījana vallabha*, or *mañjarī svarūpa*. In the *Pātāla Khaṇḍa* of the *Padma Purāṇa* we find descriptions of how the practitioners who have take shelter of *madhura-rasa* and who know the principle of *Kṛṣṇa-rasa*, meditate on their *siddha deha* which is suitable for mentally rendered devotional service. '*nādevo devam arcayet*' '*devo bhūtvā devam yajet*'. In other words, 'unless the sādhaka is a god he cannot worship Godhead', and 'being himself a god, he can worship Godhead'. These scriptural statements of rule and prohibition firmly establish the need for the bhakta who aspires for the service of the Lord to do *bhajana* while thinking of himself as a personal associate of the Lord. Such meditation of the *pārṣada rūpa* (form of an associate of the Lord) by the sādhaka is a meditation on the *siddha deha*.

Some think: "At first the sādhaka can take shelter of an imagined mental body, and then later, when the Lord is satisfied with his *sādhana* *bhajana*, according to the rule of *yādr̥ṣī bhāvanā yasya siddhir bhavati tādr̥ṣī*, He will make the sādhaka's *ātmā* His associate. In this way, although the *pārṣada* body of the sādhaka is real, it is an imagination in the stage of meditation." This is, however, not the conclusion approved of by the śāstras and the *mahājanas*. In Śrīmad Bhāgavata (3.15.14) it is described: *vasanti yatra puruṣāḥ sarve vaikuṇṭha mūrtayah*. *ye'nimitta-nimittena dharmenārādhayan harim* "Those persons who live in *Vaikuṇṭha* have transcendental bodies just like *Vaikuṇṭha* (Lord Viṣṇu) and they worship Lord Śrī Hari there constantly through causeless devotional service." Commenting on this śloka, Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has written in the 10th paragraph of his *Prīti Sandarbha* — *vaikuṇṭhasya bhagavato jyotir amśa bhūtā vaikuṇṭhaloka śobhā-rūpā yā anantā mūrtayah tatra vartante*

tāsām ekayā saha muktasyaikasya mūrtih bhagavatā kriyata iti
vaikuṇṭhasya mūrtir iva mūrtir yeṣām ityuktam. The basic meaning of
this saying by Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda is that there are two kinds of
associates of the Lord in the Supreme Abode, one that is engaged in the
Lord's direct service, and the other that is eternally present in
innumerable transcendental, yet non-functioning forms, that are like
sparks from the Lord's radiant form and are the treasures of Vaikuṇṭha-
loka's beauty. Each of the innumerable jīvas is an eternal servant of the
Lord, and each of them is staying in the abode of the Lord in a body that
is suitable for the Lord's service. By the grace of bhakti one becomes
qualified for the service of the Lord and by the Lord's grace that body
will be attained.

In the siddha prāṇālī that is received from the lotus feet of Śrī Guru
within the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya, the acquaintance with this
body is attained. No one should consider this to be imaginative. This is
eternal and real. Of all the innumerable abovementioned forms situated
in the abode of the Lord there is one form in which the Lord will accept
the sādhaka. On the strength of his meditation Śrī Gurudeva is aware of
this and is conferring the proper siddha deha to the disciple. While the
sādhaka performs his sādhana he establishes his self-esteem into this
form, and when he attains prema siddhi he is blessed with direct
devotional service within this body. pakkāpakka mātra se vicāra. pākile se
prema bhakti, apakke sādhana gati, bhakati lakṣaṇa tattva sāra. Just as a
fruit is bitter in the unripe stage and sweet and juicy in the ripe stage,
similarly when sādhana bhakti ripens it becomes known as prema.

Although in the stage of sādhana the relish is slightly transient, due to the
presence of anarthas and so, in the stage of prema bhakti the relish is
very deep. By saying apakke sādhana gati, Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya is
hinting at some of the principles of sādhana bhakti. One of the meanings
of the word gati is 'flow'. Just as the Mandākinī constantly flows towards
the ocean and will not stop unless and until it reaches the ocean, similarly
the Mandākinī-flow of sādhana bhakti constantly flows towards the
ocean of prema bhakti. Although its fruits are compared with ripe and
unripe stages, still the thirst for prema bhakti remains constantly awake
within the heart of the sādhaka, thus constantly awakening the tendency
towards sādhana bhakti within him that leads him towards the kingdom
of prema. That point is consistent in this part of the tripadī. Another
meaning of the word gati is that sādhana bhakti is the means to attain
prema bhakti, but is also the goal itself. This means that it embodies

prema bhakti, which has been indicated in the example of the ripe and unripe fruit. Or it means that sādhana bhakti is both the means and the goal, because the relish of sādhana bhakti is also not less. Even the premika bhaktas covet the relish of sādhana bhakti. Those who relish ripe mangoes also like the taste of unripe mangoes — in the form of mango pickles for instance. Another meaning of the word gati is 'sort'. Then apakke sādhana gati means the stages of sādhana bhakti from śraddhā (faith) up to āsakti are the unripe phase, bhāva bhakti or rati is the slightly ripe phase, and prema bhakti is the fully ripe stage. In some editions of this book we can find the reading 'apakke sādhana rīti'. Here rīti is understood to be indicating the aforementioned sequence.

Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya says this is bhakati lakṣaṇa tattva sāra, meaning that whatever is coveted during the stage of sādhana is attained at the time of siddhi. The only difference is that it is unripe in the phase of sādhana and ripe in the phase of siddhi. This is the essence of the devotional principle. Another meaning can be that the secrets of mañjarī bhāva sādhana that have been revealed from tripadī nr.52 'śrī rūpa mañjarī sāra' up to this current tripadī are the characteristics of the essence of the principles of bhakti or the carama niryāsa (ultimate extract). The characteristics of the essence of the principles of bhakti are selfless service to the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord. There is no comparison to the pure and selfless service of the mañjarīs to be found anywhere, they embody the summit of selflessness. (56)

narottama dāse koy, ei yeno mora hoy,
 vrajapure anurāge vāsa.
 sakhibāṇa gaṇanātē, āmāre likhibe tātē,
 taba hi pūrabo abhilāṣa (57)

"Narottama dāsa says: 'May I live in Vrajapura with deep devotional attachment. My desires will be fulfilled when I am counted and written down among the sakhibīs."

Living in Vraja with anurāga—

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā— In this tripadī Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya desires to live in Vraja with anurāga (constant attachment) and to be counted amongst the sakhibīs. Here we can understand that he prays for living in Vraja with anurāga both in the sādhaka- and the siddha-deha. First we shall speak of living in Vraja with anurāga within the sādhaka deha. anurāga here does not mean the anurāga which is counted amongst the

sthāyi bhāvas, for that can not take place within the sādhaka body. Thus Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya reveals the aspiration to live in Vraja with love, loving attachment and respect. Śrīmad Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda advises the rāgānugīya sādhakas to constantly live in Vraja— kuryad vāsam vṛaje sadā (B.R.S). Even more so, those who are unable to live in Vraja physically, are instructed to aspire to live in Vraja mentally. The reason for this is that, by the inconceivable power of Vraja-dhāma, bhāva will swiftly awaken within the heart of a non-offensive sādhaka as a result of living in Vraja — durūhādbhuta vīrye'smin śraddhā dūre'stu pañcāśa; yatra svalpo'pi sambandhaḥ saddhiyāṁ bhāva janmane (B.R.S. 1.2.238) "Associating with sādhus, hearing the Bhāgavata, serving the vigraha, performing nāma saṅkīrtana and residing in Vraja — each of these five items of sādhanā are so incomprehensible and wonderfully powerful, that, even if they are performed without faith, even the slightest contact with them by the non-offensive sādhaka will awaken bhāva within his heart." The question may be asked now: "In his proper sequence of sādhanā bhajana the sādhaka must ascend different steps, from śraddhā up to āsakti, to be able to arrive in the kingdom of bhāva— how can then even the slightest contact with these five items of sādhanā awaken this bhāva? To this Śrī Rūpa answers: alaukika padārthānām acintyā śaktir īdrīśī; bhāvāṁ tad viśayaṁ cāpi yā sahaiva prakāśayet (B.R.S. 1.2.244) "These five extraordinary practices have such an inconceivable power that even the slightest touch with them can reveal both bhāva and the object of bhāva." But the sādhaka will have to live in Vraja with anurāga, meaning with respect, love and loving attachment, otherwise he will commit offences to the holy dhāma and as a result of the dhāma being dissatisfied with him there will be a very long delay in the attainment of the desired result. After he suffers for a long time and repents, the holy dhāma will become satisfied and will make the attainment of the desired result of living in the dhāma possible. Secondly, there is no other place anywhere in the universe like Vraja that can give such great arousal to the rāgānugīya sādhaka in his bhāvamaya vṛaja-vāsa upāsanā (ecstatic worship in the form of living in Vraja). Let alone the material world, for the perfection of Vraja-bhāva Śrī Uddhava Mahāśaya advised Gopa Kumāra to give up even Vaikuṇṭha, all the way up to Īrdhva Dvārakā (upper Dvārakā) and to live in the terrestrial Vraja. This is described in Śrī Brhad Bhāgavatāmṛta (2:5:243-244)—

tatraivotpadyate dainyāṁ tat premāpi sadā satām
 tat tac chūnyam ivāraṇya sarid giryādi paśyatām
 sadā hā-hā ravākrānta vadānānāṁ tathā hr̄di
 mahā santāpa dagdhānāṁ sva priyāṁ parimrgyatām

When the sādhus see the empty forests, rivers and mountains in the terrestrial Vraja, love and humility always automatically awakens within them. The sādhus there are always lamenting and always seek their beloved deity with greatly afflicted, anxious hearts." When Śrīla Gopā Kumāra arrived in the terrestrial Vraja he attained a similar mood —

sadā mahārtyā karuṇa svarai rudan nayāmi rātrīr divasāṁś ca kātarah
 na vedmi yad yat sucirād anuṣṭhitāṁ sukhāya vā tat tad udārti sindhave
 kathañcid apyākalayāmi naitat kim eṣa dāvāgni śikhāntare'ham
 vasāmi kiṁ vā paramāmṛtāccha suśitala śrī yamunā-jalāntah (2.6.3-4)

Śrī Gopakumāra told Śrī Jana-Śarmā: "O brahman! When I came to terrestrial Vraja I always wept with great anxiousness. In other words, I was so agitated that I called out 'O Lord!' with a pitiful voice. In this way day and night passed. For a long time I practised all these things, but whether it brought me great happiness or immersed me into an ocean of great misery, I don't know. I could not understand at all whether I was living day and night within the flame of a forestfire or whether I resided within the most sweet, clear and cool water of the Yamunā." This is a sweet picture of how to live in Vraja with anurāga within the sādhaka body. Śrī Rūpa, Sanātana, Raghunātha and the other of the six Gosvāmīs thus set the best example of how to live in Vraja with great anurāga. Also in this tripadī the desire is revealed to live with anurāga in Vraja, the playground of the Lord, directly within the siddha deha. In his 'Ānanda Candrikā'-tīkā of Śrī Ujjvala Nīlamaṇi (3.49-51) as well as in his 'Rāga Vartma Candrikā'-booklet, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda has shown with logic and reason how the sādhaka takes birth in the kingdom of līlā in his mentally conceived siddha deha and how he lives in Vraja with anurāga. The gist of his explanation runs as follows: "Those who are specially attracted to the ecstasy of the Vrajavāsīs and thus perform rāgānugā bhajana will attain that abundance of eagerness that is fit for performing rāgānugā bhajana and will take birth in Vraja in groups of one, two or three in their own time, according to their eagerness.' The words 'taking birth in Vraja' means the sādhana siddhas take birth from

the womb of a gopikā in their mentally conceived siddha dehas, just as Kṛṣṇa's eternally beloved gopīs appear with Him when He descends to earth (prakaṭa līlā). After that, gradually sneha, māna, pranaya, rāga, anurāga and mahābhāva will become manifest in the gopikā-body of that sādhaka on the strength of associating with the gopīs that are endowed with mahā-bhāva and by hearing and chanting and seeing the greatness of Kṛṣṇa's eternally liberated gopīs. In the sādhaka deha one can advance upto the stage of prema. The stages of sneha up to mahābhāva can not arise within the sādhaka deha. Without taking birth from the womb of a gopī in the house of a cowherd one can not get a proper acquaintance according to the human-like pastimes there, like: "Whose daughter is this sakhī? Whose wife is she? Whose daughter-in-law is she?" After the sādhaka-body perishes, that loving devotee, who is fully engaged in his sādhana and who has eagerly desired direct devotional service for a long time, will once, by the Lord's grace, receive the gift of the desired service and the audience of the Lord and His eternal associates, either in a dream or directly, even though he has not yet attained the manifestations of prema like sneha and so. Just as the Lord once bestowed a spiritual body on Śrī Nārada Muni (after he had a similar snap vision of the Lord in his previous birth), similarly He will give the sādhaka the transcendental gopikā-body he has meditated on all the while. Yogamāyā will make that body take birth from a gopikā-body in the manifest pastimes, when Śrī Kṛṣṇa descends to earth with His eternal associates, so that he can attain prema siddhi from the stage of sneha upwards. There will be not even the slightest delay in that, because the eagerness of the premika for attaining direct loving service at that time will take him immediately to the kingdom of līlā, there is no other means. Nevertheless for the ripening of prema-stages like sneha and because of attaining the siddhi of taking birth in a gopī-body in the nara līlā (human pastimes) he must first be taken to the prakaṭa līlā. The prakaṭa līlā also goes on without interruption, rotating like a firebrand throughout the innumerable universe. After the devotee whose prema has awoken leaves his body, Yogamāyā is so kind to give him birth in the house of a cowherd in the universe where Śrī Kṛṣṇa-līlā is manifest. In this way the sādhaka perfects his residence in Vraja in great anurāga in his siddha deha along with the nitya siddhas. Knowing him to have become qualified, the nitya siddha sakhīs will count him amongst their different groups and bless him by giving him the devotional service of the Divine Pair. In this way all the aspirations of the sādhaka are fulfilled.

Hence it is said — 'sakhīgaṇa gaṇanāte, āmāre likhibe tāte, tabahi pūrabo abhilāṣa'. Also in Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya's 'Prārthanā-pada this siddhānta is found —

hari hari! āra kobe emon daśā hobo
kobe vṛṣabhānu pure, āhīrī gopera ghare,
tanayā hoiyā janamibo

"Hari! Hari! When will I attain this condition? When will I be born as a daughter in the house of a cowherd in Vṛṣabhānu's town (Varṣānā)?"

yāvaṭe āmāra kobe, e pāṇi grahana hobe,
vasati koribo kobe tāya
sakhīra parama śreṣṭha, ye hoy tāhāra preṣṭha,
sevana koribo tāra pāya

"When will I be married in the village of Yāvat and when can I live there? When can I serve the feet of the best of sakhīs with everything that is most dear to Her?"

teñho kṛpāvān hoiyā, rātula caranē loiyā,
āmāre koribe samarpaṇa
saphala hoibe daśā, pūribe manera āśā,
sevi duhāra yugala caranā

"She will be merciful and take me to her reddish lotus feet, offering me to the lotus feet of the Yugala Kiṣora. My condition will become successful and my desires will be fulfilled when I can serve these lotus feet!" (57)

sakhīnām saṅginī rūpām ātmānām vāsanāmayīm
ājñā sevāparām tat tad rūpālaṅkāra bhūṣitām (58)

(Sanat Kumāra Saṁhitā)

"The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava sādhaka should think of himself as an adolescent cowherd girl, a female associate of Śrī Rādhārāṇī's girlfriends, engaged in the service of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa on the order of these sakhīs, and decorated with Śrī Rādhārāṇī's leftover garments and ornaments."

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's tīkā — sakhīnāṁ śrī lalitā-śrī rūpa mañjaryādīnāṁ saṅginī rūpām ātmānāṁ dhyāyed iti śeṣah. kimbhūtām? ājñā sevāparām ājñayā tāsām anumatyā sevā parām śrī rādhā mādhavayor iti śeṣah. punah kimbhūtām? tat tad rūpālaṅkāra bhūṣitām suprasiddha śrī kṛṣṇa manohara rūpeṇa śrī rādhikā nirmālyālaṅkāreṇa bhūṣitām nirmālyā mālyā vasanābharaṇās tu dāsyā ityukteḥ. punah kimbhūtām? vāsanāmayīm cintāmayīm īkṣate cintāmayam etam īśvaram ityādivat. (58)

Meditation on the siddha deha —

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā — Previously Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has established mañjarī svarūpa and mañjarī bhāva as the essential principles, and to prove it he is now quoting one verse from the Sanat Kumāra Samhitā Tantra and one verse from Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda's Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu. First he offers evidence from Śrī Sanat Kumāra Samhitā — sakhīnāṁ saṅginī rūpām ātmānāṁ vāsanāmayīm ājñā sevāparām tat tad rūpālaṅkāra bhūṣitām: "The rāgānugā sādhaka must meditate on himself as a female associate of sakhīs like Śrī Lalitā, Viśākhā or Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī, who is dedicated to the service of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava on their order, and whose own body, consisting of spiritual aspirations, is decorated by Śrī Rādhikā's (leftover) garlands, dresses and ornaments. Apart from following Śrī Lalitā, Viśākhā, Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī etc., the sādhaka also meditates on himself as a dedicated maidservant, engaged in loving devotional service according to the Guru-given siddha pranālī, following his/her own guru mañjarī. Thus he meditates on himself as a submissive maidservant or priya narma sakhī who follows Śrī Lalitā, Rūpa Mañjarī and so, and renders each and every loving service to Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava on the order of his Śrī Guru Mañjarī.

There is conforming evidence for this in Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya's own words — guru rūpā sakhī vāme, tribhaṅga bhaṅgima ṭhāme, cāmarera bātāsa koribo etc. (Prārthanā) "Standing on the left side of my Guru rūpa sakhī I will fan Them, standing in a threefold bending form." He who teaches rāgānugā bhajana by giving initiation into śrī kṛṣṇa mantra is a guru rūpa sakhī in Vraja-līlā. Though in Vraja-līlā Śrī Gurudeva is a superior sakhī he must be considered as the embodiment of the Supreme Lord's Grace—in external dealings the sādhaka should never deal with him in a fraternal manner, for this is opposed to the teachings of the sādhus and the scriptures.

Before this verse sakhīnāṁ saṅginī rūpām another verse can be found in

Śrī Sanat Kumāra Samhitā — ātmānam cintayet tatra tāsām madhye manoramām. rūpa yauvana sampannām kiśorīm pramadākṛtim "The sādhaka should meditate on himself as a captivating beautiful adolescent girl amongst Śrī Kṛṣṇa's gopī-consorts and their girlfriends." The word cintayet in this verse means to see oneself (the soul) or identify oneself as a girl who looks and feels like one of the nitya siddha sakhīs (the way in which it was revealed by Śrī Gurudeva in the siddha pranālī or ekādaśa bhāva). In other words, to firmly identify oneself as: "I am this body which is endowed with such-and-such a form and mood." When the sādhaka can establish such a firm self esteem he may consider himself to approach perfection (siddhi); such is the principle established by Śrī Jīva Gosvāmīpāda—astu tāvad bhajana prayāsaḥ kevala tādṛśatvābhimānanenāpi siddhir bhavatī "Let alone performing bhajana with full spiritual self esteem, siddhi is attained simply by considering oneself to belong to the Supreme Lord."

The rāgānugā bhajana of the Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavas is a wonderfully powerful spiritual psychology. Psychologists say that of all human powers the powers of thought, that are self-manifest within the brain, are the most powerful ones, since through research we can know that anything rising and falling, manufactured and destroyed, preached and dissipated is sitting on the golden throne of our thoughts. This is caused by our customary worship of this power. Its nature is independent, therefore it is not bound to any fixed place. Its unchecked course pervades all places, both on earth and in the firmament. The results of this power are indestructable, and those who keep this power within the brain will keep it also after their destruction. Just as the sky within a jug is not destroyed after the jug is destroyed, but merges within the firmament, similarly this great power is not destroyed when the human body is destroyed. Even after this the acting power rules over the next human mind. Just as the book or musical composition of a great author or musician does not heed facts like birth or death and continues to increase the delight of society or attains the status of a mental bouquet of love.

If the mundane mental faculties of mankind have such power, then the human brain can certainly not conceive of the power of spiritual psychology or the fixed meditation on God of the sādhaka, that becomes ever-so-more powerful with the aid of the power of devotion. Actually, by thinking of his siddha deha and being situated in identification with his svarūpa, the Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava sādhaka becomes fixed in meditation on his mental service of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava with the aid of thought-

power endowed with the like-minded grace-power of the wise men of yore. Thus there is no doubt at all that they will very swiftly attain absorption in bhāva and reach the kingdom of perfection. This is the utmost manifestation of spiritual psychology and the very sweet spiritual flavours of Godhead within the soul of the sādhaka.

In connection with the meditation of the sādhaka on the siddha deha it is to be particularly known that the sādhaka must mainly prepare his heart by meditating on gopī bhāva, since gopī bhāva is the practice of rāgānugā bhakti. Thus it is not sufficient just to meditate on oneself in the form of a gopī; the siddha deha is nourished by thinking of oneself in the form of a gopī and adopting the feelings of a gopī. It is advised to meditate on the pastimes of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa while adopting the feelings of a gopī — ataeva gopībhāva kori aṅgikāra; rātri dina cinte rādhā-kṛṣṇera vihāra. siddha deha cinti kore tāhāi sevana; gopībhāve pāy rādhā-kṛṣṇera carāṇa (C.C.) "Therefore do accept the feelings of a gopī and think of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's enjoyments day and night. Serve them with a mentally conceived siddha deha. When you adopt the feelings of a gopī you will attain the lotus feet of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa." Being absorbed in mañjarī bhāva, which is the highest stage of gopī bhāva, the sādhaka who aspires for loving devotional service will constantly think that he is a female associate of Śrī Lalitā, Viśākhā and Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī and that he is a maidservant dedicated to the service of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava according to their orders, adorned with Śrī Rādhā's leftover ornaments, her heart consisting of the determination to engage in the loving devotional service of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava and her body consisting of the ingredients of the flavours of Their service. (58)

kṛṣṇāṁ smaran janāṁ cāsyā preṣṭhamāṁ nija samīhitam
tat tat kathā rataś cāsau kuryād vāsamāṁ vraje sadā (59)

(Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu)

"Remembering Kṛṣṇa and his favorite beloved eternal associate of Kṛṣṇa, the practitioner should always reside in Vraja, greatly attached to conversing about them."

Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's tīkā — kṛṣṇāṁ smarann iti.
smaraṇasyātra rāgānugāyāṁ mukhyatvāṁ rāgasya manodharmatvāt.
śreṣṭhamāṁ nija bhāvocita līlā vilāsināṁ kṛṣṇāṁ vṛndāvanādhīśvaram. asya

kṛṣṇasya janam ca kīdrśam nija samīhitam svābhilaṣaṇīyam śrī
vṛndāvaneśvarī-lalitā-viśākhā-rūpa mañjaryādikam kṛṣṇasyāpi nija
samīhitatve'pi taj janasya ujjvala bhāvaika niṣṭhatvāt nija
samīhitatvādhikyam. vraje vāsam iti asāmarthye manasāpi sādhaka
śarīreṇa vāsam kuryāt. siddha śarīreṇa vāsas tu uttara ślokārthaḥ prāpta
eva.

Expertise in rāgānugā bhakti —

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā — Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya backs up his own words by citing the example of this śloka from Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu (1.2.294), written by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, the mūlācārya (founding teacher) of the Gauḍīya Sampradāya, who is the incarnation of Vraja's very Rūpa Mañjari. First of all he says: kṛṣṇam smaran janam cāsyā
preṣṭham nija samīhitam—"One should remember the most dear form of Kṛṣṇa (preṣṭham kṛṣṇam), the son of Nanda of kaiṣora age, and the devotees of that particular form of Kṛṣṇa (asya janam), who have the same type of desires (for serving Kṛṣṇa) as oneself (nija-samīhitam). Remembering such devotees, one should live in Vraja. If possible, one should physically live in Vṛndāvana, the place where Kṛṣṇa resided as Nanda's son. If one cannot do that, one should live there mentally."

This means that in rāgānugā bhajana the item of smaraṇa is predominant, since rāga is a mental religion (dharma). The very nature (dharma) of the mind is rāga (attachment, passion), and hence mental worship is the root cause of rāgānugā bhajana. Still the external practice of hearing and chanting must not be neglected or given up— this is to be noted specifically. The perfection of allegiance to the Vraja-people cannot be achieved by giving up external practices like hearing and chanting. As much as the external practices like hearing and chanting nourish the internal practice of smaraṇa, that much the internal practice also awakens taste for external practices. Since they nourish each other equally, efforts to fix one's mind on līlā smaraṇa without taking shelter of external practices will not become fruitful. And again, efforts to perform only external practices without practising līlā smaraṇa cannot be called rāgānugā mārga's bhajana. Hence both are required.

All those new aspirants who are unable to meditate on their own siddha dehas or on Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's pastimes, but rather find this difficult to do, should initially not be too eager for līlā smaraṇa. If they, along

with hearing and chanting etc., practise some light and easy smaraṇa while hearing and chanting texts like Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya's 'Prārthanā' and 'Prema Bhakti Candrikā', Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda's 'Stavamālā', Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmīpāda's 'Stavāvalī', Śrīla Kṛṣṇa dāsa Siddha Bābā's 'Prārthanāmṛta Taraṅginī', that glorify gopī bhāva or rāgānugā bhajana, and at the same time try to cultivate mañjarī bhāva within the heart, the heart will easily become qualified to practise līlā smaraṇa. Hence it is said: tat tad kathā-rataś cāsau — "Being attached to their topics", in other words, 'Being engaged in hearing and chanting about them.' Since Śrī Kṛṣṇa and topics concerning Him are non-different, Śrī Kṛṣṇa enters the pathways of the sādhakas' ears through the mouths of the sādhu bhaktas who converse about Him and thus enters into their hearts, where He removes all dirt in the form of gross or subtle mundane desires, thus making it a tidy place. This is clearly described in Śrīmad Bhāgavata (1.2.21) — śṛṇvatāṁ sva kathāḥ kṛṣṇaḥ puṇya śravaṇa kīrtanāḥ hṛdyantāḥ stho hyabhadraṇi vidhunoti suhṛt satām.

Finally, the blessed author says: kuryād vāsamṛtaḥ vraje sadā — "The rāgānugīya sādhakas should always live in Vraja." (Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī comments:) sāmarthye sati vraje śrīman nanda vraja-vāsa sthāne śrī vṛndāvanādau śarīreṇa vāsamṛtaḥ kuryāt tad abhāve manasāpītyarthāḥ "If possible one must live in Vraja physically, and if that is not possible one must either live there mentally or aspire to live in Vraja physically." In Bṛhad Gautamīya Tantra Śrī Kṛṣṇa personally glorifies residence in Vraja —

idam vṛndāvanam ramyam mama dhāmaiva kevalam;
atra ye paśavāḥ pakṣī mṛgāḥ kīṭā narāmarāḥ
ye vasanti mamādhiṣṇe mṛtā yānti mamālayam

.....

pañca yojanam evāsti vanamṛtaḥ me deha rūpakam; kālindīyaṁ
suṣumnaṁ khyā paramāmṛta-vāhinī
atra devāś ca bhūtāni vartante deha rūpataḥ; sarva devamayaś cāham na
tyajāmi vanamṛtaḥ kvacit
āvirbhāvas tirobhāvo bhaven me'tra yuge yuge;
tejomayam idam ramyam adṛśyam carma cakṣuṣā

"This Vṛndāvana is most charming and is My only abode. All the animals, birds, deer, insects, humans and demigods who reside here will attain My abode when they leave the body. This ten-mile Vṛndāvana is My very body and the spine is formed by Yamunā, the flow of supreme nectar. Here gods and humans live in subtle, extraordinary or spiritual bodies. I am the aggregate of all the demigods and I never leave this abode. I appear and disappear here age after age. This lovely Vṛndāvana is very powerful, as it consists of pure sattva and is invisible to the physical eye." Although it is the manifestation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's transcendental sandhinī śakti or existence potency, out of its own kindness this abode is also visible to the eyes of the sādhakas of this world, so that they are easily able to attain bhakti siddhi. Which fortunate sādhaka will not take shelter of this transcendental abode for the attainment of bhakti siddhi?

By taking shelter of Śrī Vraja-dhāma and engaging in items of devotion like hearing and chanting in the company of like minded rasika bhaktas, in the abovementioned way, and as a result of practising smaraṇa, the basket-like heart of the rāga sādhaka will be cleansed by the fragrant stream of bhakti's grace. Then the mind and intelligence will become fixed and the sādhaka will gradually become deeply attracted to the Lord. In this way the love-scented desires for service are reflected within the heart of the attracted sādhaka while he performs his bhajana. This first colours the heart, which is softened by gusto, then it will awaken the intelligence to give it certainty and then it will make the ego absorbed in svarūpa bhāva, a mood according to one's intrinsic self. Then the sādhaka will perform his bhajana nicely, his mind always planning and desiring service, his intelligence being fixed in spiritual knowledge, his ego identifying itself with the proper mood and personality and his consciousness getting deep roots into bhakti and getting deep transcendental visions. Then the senses will perceive all these divine emotions while continuing to engage in hearing and chanting. As the force of these emotions nourishes the sweetness of hearing and chanting, they automatically turn inwards and, taking shelter of their own intrinsic faculties, gradually enliven and entertain all the inner faculties of mind, intelligence and ego with the attained and experienced feelings. These are the sādhakas' bhajana anubhava (experiences in bhajana). (59)

yugala carane prīti, parama ānanda tathi,
rati prema-maya parabandhe

kṛṣṇa nāma rādhā-nāma, upāya koro rasa dhāma,
caraṇe podiyā parānande (60)

"Love for the lotus feet of the Divine Couple is a most blissful thing. Become lovingly attached to the love-filled topics narrated by the *ācāryas* who know Śrī Kṛṣṇa-bhakti rasa, and take to the holy names of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā, that are the abode of rasa, falling at Their feet in topmost ecstasy!"

Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's ṭīkā — parabandhe — prabandhe, śrī kṛṣṇa-bhakti rasa vijñā bhakta jana viracita premamaya kathāyāṁ mama ratir bhavatu. caraṇe rādhā mādhavayor iti śeṣaḥ — "May I be always lovingly attached to the loving topics about Śrī Kṛṣṇa bhakti rasa composed by the devotees who are realised in this. caraṇa stands for Rādhā-Mādhava's lotus feet."

Confidential bhajana :

Sudhā-kaṇikā vyākhyā — In this tripadī Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura Mahāśaya reveals some confidential items of the bhajana practised by the rāgānugīya sādhakas through his own prayers. First of all he says: *yugala carane prīti, parama ānanda tathi* — "May my love dwell in the lotus feet of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava", *tathi* meaning "there, or in this love, I will attain paramount bliss." In the Taittiriya Upaniṣad it is said '*saiśānandasya mīmāṁsa bhavati*' - The bliss of Hiraṇyagarbha, the progenitor, and others, is a hundred times greater than human happiness. Greater than that is again the bliss of the non-personal brahman — The śloka: *yato vāco nivartante aprāpya manasā saha; ānandaṁ brahmaṇo vidvan na vibheti kutaścana* shows how special and unlimited that bliss is. After that the words *ko hyevanyāt kah prāṇyād yad eva ākāśa ānando na syāt* show the bliss of the all-pervading principle of brahman. The Upaniṣadic words *ānandāddhyeva khalvimāni bhūtāni jāyante* proclaims the joyful message of universal bliss — "The whole universe attains birth from bliss, it is remaining in bliss and it is destroyed in bliss." From this it is learned that nothing can exist in this world outside of bliss. He who is ānanda rūpam amṛtam, He who is raso vai saḥ, He who is sarveśāṁ bhūtānāṁ madhu, that blissful, nectarean, flavourful and honey-filled Lord has created a world in which misery can never exist. Thus the happiness and distress that follows the course of the living entities' lives, are nothing else but the culmination of the karmik

reactions of the conditioned souls, who are actually vessels of spiritual light. Intrinsically the living entity is a particle of spiritual bliss, but because he has been averse to the Lord since beginningless time his heart is contaminated, and because he is devoid of spiritual knowledge he remains seated within material bodies and continues to suffer the beginningless pangs of material life. On the day that the conditioned soul turns inwards, and develops a service-attitude towards the Lord by the grace of a great saint, experiencing the Lord as dearer than the dearmost in his heart of hearts, on that day his awareness of his intrinsic nature awakens within his heart and his eternally perfect prema awakens, so that he becomes immersed in an ocean of transcendental bliss, forever relishing the sweetness of the all-blissful and all-delicious Lord. Within the relish of the Lord's sweetness the relish of the very embodiment of sweetness, the Original Personality of Godhead Bhagavān

Vrajendranandana (Kṛṣṇa) is the greatest of all, and then again the ocean of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweetness increases when He is in the company of Śrī Rādhārāṇī, hence there can be no comparison anywhere to the paramount bliss attained by those who are dedicated to loving the lotus feet of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava. Hence the blessed author has said: "yugala caraṇa prīti, parama ānanda tathi."

Then the blessed author said: rati premamaya parabandhe, meaning: "May I be lovingly attached to the books that were lovingly made by the Mahājanas of my own sampradāya (tradition), who are great knowers of Śrī Kṛṣṇa-bhakti rasa." Books like Śrīpāda Rūpa and Raghunātha's Stavamālā and Stavāvalī and Śrīla Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāja's Govinda Līlāmṛta are most relishable for the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava sādhakas practising mañjari bhāva, and these books greatly enhance their own bhāva. Each syllable of these books of the Mahājanas is premamaya, filled with prema - premamaya akṣara yāhāra. Each syllable of the scriptures composed by the Mahājanas is permeated by the rasa of their realisations, therefore they are greatly capable of cleansing the heart of all impurities and bestowing prema bhakti. This Prema Bhakti Candrikā of Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya is one of them. In connection with this I am mentioning an event that really took place: Once a high ranking government official (Judge) stayed in Ambikā Kālnā in West Bengal for a few days to perform some duties. At that time Siddha Śrī Bhagavān dās Bābājī Mahārāja was manifest in this world. Having heard about Siddha Bābā's glories from the local residents the judge once went to see him. When

Siddha Bābā saw him coming he asked him why he had come, and the gentleman said: "Bābā! Tell me how prema bhakti can be achieved!" Siddha Bābā immediately said: "prema bhakti can be purchased for 2 ānās (a very small amount of money in colonial India, like 5 paisā)!" When the gentleman heard these words of Siddha Bābā he was a little taken aback and said: "Bābā! Why are you joking with me?" Siddha Bābā replied with determination: "It's not a joke; for 2 ānās you can buy Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura Mahāśaya's Prema Bhakti Candrikā in Calcutta's Baṭa-talā. Always read this and you will attain prema bhakti."

Following Siddha Bābā's advice the gentleman purchased a copy of Prema Bhakti Candrikā and began to study it regularly. By the force of mahad ājñā (the order received from a saint) and because of constantly serving (reciting) the premamaya akṣara (love-filled syllables) of Prema Bhakti Candrikā he lost his taste for his job. He promptly gave up his job and began to sit at home, reciting Prema Bhakti Candrikā with great attachment as a rule. Because he gave up his job he immediately became uninteresting to his relatives and family members. He had no more liking for the enjoyments in his home, and one day he left home and began to wander around here and there like one indifferent. Wearing torn up dirty clothes and filling up his belly with foodstuffs attained by begging alms, he continued constantly reciting Prema Bhakti Candrikā, lovingly offering everything to Śrī Hari in his heart. Because he was at first such a high official and he had suddenly changed so radically the wordly people had begun to consider him crazy. In this way quite some time passed.

One day all the great pāṇḍitas of India were invited to a meeting in the Vibudha-jananī assembly in Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma. The aforementioned gentleman tried to enter into the assembly at its very outset, but the doorkeeper kicked him away, considering him crazy. After a short while he tried to enter the assembly again, and was again kicked away by the gatekeeper. When he tried to enter the assembly for the third time and the gatekeeper began to kick him for the third time, the person who has accepted the seat of the leader of the assembly, Mahā-mahopādhyāya Pāṇḍita Śrī-yukta Ajita Nyāya-ratna Mahāśaya, stopped the gatekeeper and asked the gentleman to enter into the assembly, asking him: "Why do you enter into this assembly, despite the fact that you're being kicked away time and again? Do you have any business here?" When Nyāya-ratna inquired thus, the newcomer openly told him everything - how he was always reading Prema Bhakti Candrikā on the order of Siddha Śrī Bhagavān dāsa Bābā and how he had begun to spend his life in a

completely detached manner as a result. Finally he asked if he had not attained the prema bhakti that Siddha Bābā had told him about? When the leader of the assembly, Nyāya-ratna Mahāśaya, heard this, he offered sāṣṭāṅga daṇḍavats (prostrated obeisances with eight limbs of the body) to him. Standing before him with folded hands he prayed for his grace and declared that this person was blessed with the shower of the pure moonbeams from Prema Bhakti Candrikā (the moonbeams of loving devotion) as a result of reciting Prema Bhakti Candrikā and by the mercy of Siddha Bābā. He announced to all those present that the meeting of the Vibudha-jananī assembly had borne a wonderfully juicy fruit at its very outset. In other words, that ceremony which was held to glorify the process of hearing and chanting the Ārya-śāstras (Vedas) and the teachings of the Mahājanas has now witnessed the exemplary embodiment of the recitation of these great teachings with its own eyes. Thus those who attended the assembly considered themselves blessed and everyone present offered their obeisances to the visitor. Śrīla Bhagavān dāsa Siddha Bābā's disciple, Vṛndāvana Kālidaha Nivāsī Siddha Śrī-yukta Jagadīśa Bābā gave similar instructions to recite and read Prema Bhakti Candrikā and Prārthanā to a faithful person; this is described in his hagiography in Śrīla Haridāsa dāsajī's 'Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana'. Success is guaranteed for those who hear and chant the loving compositions of the Mahājanas whose hearts are absorbed in the flavours of devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāja Gosvāmīpāda has written in his phalaśruti (final benediction to the reciter) of Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta - yebā nāhi bujhe keho, śunite śunite seho, ki adbhuta caitanya carita. kṛṣṇe upajibe prīti, jānibe rasera rīti, śunilei hoibe bodo hita (C.C.) "Even those who cannot understand anything will awaken their dormant love for Kṛṣṇa by continuously hearing these amazing pastimes of Śrī Caitanya. Hearing this is very beneficial, for you will get to know the intricacies of rasa." Therefore it goes without saying that a sādhaka who recites and reads these loving compositions with loving attachment will be blessed with the attainment of prema.

After this the blessed author says: kṛṣṇa nāma rādhā nāma, upāy koro rasadhāma, caraṇe poriyā parānande — "Fall at Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, or surrender exclusively to the most blissful yugala caraṇa. Do bhajana by taking the holy name of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, that are the sole abodes of rasa." The main foundation of worshipping the lotus feet of the Lord is surrendering to them. If a mood of surrender does not

come to the heart of the devotee, bhagavad bhajan will not take place. The more one surrenders, the more one advances in bhajan. Śrīmad Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has written: *asyāścāpūrvatvam tāṁ vinā tadiyatvāsiddhe* (Bhakti Sandarbha, Paragraph 237) — "The wonderful thing about surrender is that without surrender tadiyatva (status of belonging to the Lord) cannot reach perfection." When tadiyatva reaches perfection the sādhaka will always be fearless. The Lord told Śrī Uddhava Mahāśaya — *māṁ ekam eva śaraṇam ātmānam sarva dehinām. yāhi sarvātma-bhāvena mayā syāt hyakutobhayaḥ* (Bhāg. 11.12.15) "O Uddhava! Give up everything and and surrender to Me, the true Self of all embodied souls, and thus become completely fearless!" The surrendered devotee will not only become fearless through his bhajana sādhana, he will also become most happy, since he certainly also becomes free from worries — *tavāsmīti vadan vācā tathaiva manasā vidan. tat sthānam āśritas tanvā modate śaraṇāgataḥ* (Hari Bhakti Vilāsa) "Any surrendered sādhaka who says: "O Lord! I am Yours!" and cherishes such ideas within the mind also, while physically taking shelter of the Lord's playground, experiences the topmost bliss."

Hence Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya says: "By exclusively surrendering to Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's lotus feet and by most blissfully accepting the holy names of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, that are most relishable abode of rasa, as the best means to attain prema, I will take shelter of the greatest items of bhajana." The holy name is the shelter or the abode of all rasas. Although the holy name of the Lord is naturally most sweet and relishable, the tongue which is contaminated by offences cannot taste this, just as the tongue of someone suffering from jaundice experiences the sweet taste of sugar to be bitter. Only by continuously tasting sugar the patient will be cured from his jaundice and ultimately experience the naturally sweet taste of sugar. In the same way the tongue of an offender cannot taste the natural sweetness of the holy name of the Lord on his tongue, but when he continues to serve (chant) the holy name the offenses will cease and he will experience the sweetness of the holy name. Hence Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has written, *ataevānanda rūpatvam asya mahad dhṛdaya sākṣikam yathā śrī vighrahasya* "The holy name of the Lord is like the very form of the Lord and the very embodiment of transcendental bliss, this is proven by the experiences of the great souls." In other words, the demoniac non devotees do not feel happy when they see Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the embodiment of sweetness, rather their hearts will light up in hatred and envy. In the same way, the

holy name, which is the abode of rasa, cannot be relished by the tongue of an offender at all. The devotee experiences : kṛṣṇa nāme ye ānanda sindhu āsvādana; brahmānanda tāra āge khātodaka sama (C.C.) "The bliss of the non-personal brahman is just like a little pool in comparison to the relish that lies in the ocean of bliss of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa." Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya yearns for the nāma bhajan of the sweeter-than-sweet holy name of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. About the sweetness of the holy names of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, Śrīmat Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī has written in his Abhīṣṭa Sūcana stava: rādheti nāma nava sundara sīdhu mugdham; kṛṣṇeti nāma madhurādbhuta gāḍha dugdham; sarva kṣaṇam surabhi rāga himena ramyam; kṛtvā tad eva piba me rasane kṣudhārtte "O my thirsty tongue! Always drink these two substances — The names rādhā, which is captivating like fresh beautiful nectar, and kṛṣṇa, the name which is very sweet like wonderful condensed milk, and make them wonderful by mixing them with the fragrant ice of anurāga (constant passionate attachment)!" Śrīman Mahāprabhu asked Rāma Rāya: upāsyera madhye kon upāsyā pradhāna? ("What is most adorable?") and Rāma Rāya answered: śreṣṭha upāsyā — Yugala rādhā-kṛṣṇa nāma (C.C.) — ("The names of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are most adorable.") Through this tripadī three confidential practices in rāgānugā bhajana are shown — love for Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, attachment to the books written by the Mahājanas who are all deeply realised in the flavours of devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and the nāma saṅkīrtana of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. (60)

manera smaraṇa prāṇa, madhura madhura dhāma,
 Yugala vilāsa smṛti sāra
 sādhyā sādhana ei, iha boi āra nāi,
 ei tattva sarva tattva sāra (61)

"The very life of the mind is smaraṇa, and the sweetest remembrance is the pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. This is the goal and this is the practice and there is nothing more than this. This truth is the essence of all regulative principles."

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda's tīkā: vidhinām kartavyopadeśānām sāraḥ. smartavyaḥ satataṁ viṣṇur vismartavyo na jātūcit; sarva vidhi niṣedha syur etayor eva kiñkarāḥ.

The life force of the mind:

Sudhā kaṇikā vyākhyā— In this tripadī composed by the blessed author the main item of rāgānugā bhakti, namely smaraṇāṅga bhakti, is revealed. First it is said: manera smaraṇa prāṇa. The human mind is the king, or greatest of the senses. Although it is silent it experiences all the objects the senses contact. The senses act according to its orders like slaves. Form, sound, taste, smell and touch — these five sense objects are relished or experienced by our eyes, ears, tongue, nose and skin respectively, and all of them are centered around the mind. If at present we do not see an object which we may have seen in the past, we can say what it is, because its picture is marked in our minds. When we see the flash of lightning we dread the rolling of the thunder, for we remember that this sound is coming along with the lightning. We can tell how delicious the food is that we have enjoyed before, even if we do not savour it now, for we can recollect its relish. When we see a beautiful flower we can say how it smells, for that fragrance was so sweet to us before. The little speechless child places its hand only once into the fire, and never again. Rather when he sees fire he backs away, for he remembers that its touch will burn him and hurt him. Although we use or accept gross matters through our gross senses, we will not experience anything if our minds are not at it. In this way the mind, which is the center of all the senses, may be incorporeal, it is able to give us all kinds of experiences.

From beginningless time the human mind has been turned away from God and has become so polluted by thinking of mundane objects that it constantly billows on high and low waves of thoughts of small and large sense enjoyments, just as high and low waves billow on the ocean. Our intelligence cannot accept all thoughts, only particular thoughts are captured by the intelligence. What to speak of the waking state, even in a state of slumber the waves of sensual impressions billow on and this state we thus call svapna or dream. Only when the state of deep sleep enters the waves of thoughts stop. The practising devotee performs all his plays with this mind, for when the mind is not concentrated bhajana may proceed in a mechanical way for a long time, but the fruit of bhajana, namely prema will not be yielded. Through the practice of bhajana, which is attained by the grace of the Lord and His devotees, the mind, which is muddled by thoughts of sensual desires, is purified and gives up its experiences of sensual thoughts that are unrelated to Kṛṣṇa.

Constant remembrance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is called pure or transcendental devotion by the Bhāgavata.

mad guṇa śruti mātreṇa mayi sarva guhāśaye;
manogatir avichinnā yathā gaṅgāmbhaso'mbudhau
lakṣaṇāṁ bhakti yogasya nirguṇasya hyudāhṛtam
ahaitukyavavahitā yā bhaktih puruṣottame (Bhāg.3.29.11-12)

Śrī Kapiladeva told His own mother Devahūtī— "O mother! The uninterrupted flow of the mind-stream towards Me, who is reclining in the cave of everyone's heart, like that of the waters of the Gaṅgā towards the ocean, at the mere mention of My attributes, combined with causeless and ceaseless love for Me, the Supreme Person, is cited as the distinguishing characteristic of transcendental bhakti yoga."

Hence Śrīla Thākura Mahāśaya says: "Remembrance of God is called the life force the practising devotee's mind." The mind which does not remember God is lifeless like a corpse without its five life-airs. Just as a lifeless corpse serves as free meal for the jackals and dogs, similarly the mind which is devoid of remembering God is constantly bitten by its enemies like lust and greed. Just as the jackals and dogs flee fearfully from a living body, similarly the enemies like lust flee far away from the mind which is alive and vibrant through remembrance of Hari.

Therefore each devotee should take shelter of the item of recollection to be rescued from the enemies like lust and to attain the relish of rasa in the ecstasy of bhajana. Any mental connection with the Lord is called smaraṇa. Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has mentioned five successive stages of the item of recollection — smaraṇa, dhāraṇā, dhyāna, dhruvānusmṛti and samādhi. Slight remembrance of the Lord's form, attributes and pastimes is called smaraṇa, withdrawing the mind from all other sensual thoughts and keeping it generally on the Lord's pastimes etc. is called dhāraṇā, detailed thinking of the Lord's form etc. is called dhyāna, remembering the Lord's form, attributes and pastimes continuously like a stream of nectar is called dhruvānusmṛti and perception in sheer meditation is called samādhi. This samādhi is not the same undistinguished samādhi as is achieved through the practices of jñāna, yoga etc. Here smaraṇa has become very deep and causes a perception of the Lord's pastimes etc. as if they are vividly experienced.

The essence of this practice of smaraṇa is the pastimes of the Divine

Pair, hence it is said — *yugala vilāsa smṛti sāra*. There are four kinds of *smaraṇa*— remembering the Lord's names, remembering His form, remembering His attributes and remembering His pastimes with His associates. Of them, remembering the pastimes is the greatest, for recollection of the Lord's pastimes includes the remembrance of His names, forms and attributes. Then again, of recollecting any kind of pastime of the Lord the recollection of the pastimes of *Vrajendra-nandana*, the embodiment of sweetness, is the best, for His pastimes are the sweetest. Then again of all His different pastimes, like His childhood or early youth-pastimes, the greatest pastimes of *Kṛṣṇa* to remember are His romantic adolescent pastimes with *Śrī Rādhārāṇī*. Therefore the pastimes of the Divine Pair are the essence of all meditations, and that includes *Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa*'s meetings with Their girlfriends, picking flowers, stealing *Kṛṣṇa*'s flute, play in the forest, drinking honey-wine, intimate pastimes, watersports, dice game and the *Rāsa* pastimes. In the *Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya* a manual can be seen of recollection of the eight fold daily pastimes of *Śrī Gaurāṅga* along with *Śrī-Rādhā-Mādhava* or *svārasikī līlā* and *mantramayī* or *yogapīṭha milana līlā*, which is the greatest item of *smaraṇāṅga* bhajana. However, the practitioner who is fixed in such meditations should constantly beware that during his recollections the relish of the sweetness of the pastimes, forms and attributes of *Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava* and Their girlfriends should be taken to heart as *madhura madhura dhāma* — the ever-so-sweet abode. The root target of his practice must be the attainment of the sweetness of his chosen deity. If the practitioner, especially in *rāga bhakti*, which has sacred greed at its roots, simply practises *smaraṇa* in different regulated ways without relishing any of the sweetness of *Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava*'s forms and attributes, then how can that be really considered *rāga bhakti*? On the other hand, if the relish of sweet forms etc. is attained, then *līlā smaraṇa* is considered accomplished, even if the succession of memorable events is incomplete. In the second part of his '*Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Jīvana*', *Śrīla Haridās dāsī* has written about the life of Siddha *Śrīla Kṛṣṇa dāsa Bābājī*, the resident of Govardhana — "Those who learned the science of bhajana from Siddha Bābā would assemble with him every night and Siddha Bābā would hear how each person was doing bhajana and correct mistakes. One day a Vaiṣṇava saint was there who did not say anything but only wept. To encourage and console him Siddha Bābā asked him why he was weeping, and the Vaiṣṇava replied:

"Today I could not do any bhajana! In the morning I was putting an ornament on Prāṇeśvarī's right hand, but I became so absorbed in the beauty of Her hand that I could not withdraw my mind from that image the rest of the day!" To encourage him Siddha Bābā declared: "Your bhajana is accomplished!"

In some editions of this book we see the reading manera smaraṇa prāṇa, madhura madhura nāma. This means that since the life force of the mind is smaraṇa, the mind must take shelter of the ever-so-sweet holy name of the Lord, for the item of smaraṇa depends on a pure consciousness, as Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has written: smaranāṁ tu śuddhāntah karaṇa tāmapekṣate (Bhakti Sandarbha—276) The impure mind which is polluted by sensual cravings can not concentrate itself, and can therefore not accomplish the bhajana-item of smaraṇa. However, nāma kīrtana does not depend on a pure consciousness; even an impure consciousness does not obstruct the practice of nāma kīrtana. When the heart is cleansed by nāma saṅkīrtana the bhajana-item of smaraṇa is nicely accomplished.

One may ask here, then if that is so let us do nāma saṅkīrtana until the consciousness is purified, but what is the use still of nama kīrtana when the mind is concentrated and smaraṇa is conducted with a pure heart? In this regard Śrīmat Sanātana Gosvāmīpāda has explained in Śrī Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmr̥ta that through nāma saṅkīrtana the relish of smaraṇa is nourished and through smaraṇa or meditation the relish of the holy name is also nourished. Since they nourish each other there can be no question of doing only the item of smaraṇa without practising nāma kīrtana. Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has written: śuddhāntah karaṇaś cet nāma kīrtanāparityāgena smaranāṁ kuryāt (Bhakti Sandarbha—275) "The practitioner performs nāma saṅkīrtan along with smaraṇa with a pure consciousness."

After this the blessed author says: sādhya sādhana ei, ihā boi ār nāi, ei tattva sarva vidhi sāra— To take shelter of a means or practice to attain a certain goal is called sādhana and the goal that is to be attained through that practice is called sādhya. In the schools of jñāna and yoga the means and the goal are different things, but in bhakti the means equals the goal. This is the great difference between bhakti sādhana and yoga or jñāna sādhanā. sādhana bhakti, bhāva bhakti and prema bhakti are different sequential, yet integral stages of each other. What is unripe during sādhana is ripe in the stage of siddhi. Therefore those who are able to

become absorbed in *līlā smaraṇa* during their *sādhana* will be blessed with the direct attainment of the service they meditated on at the achievement of siddhi. Therefore it is not different from the goal of practice — *ihā boi āra nāi*. This is the essence of all the instructions the scriptures give the living beings on their duties — *ei tattva sarva vidhi sāra*. In *Śrī Padma Purāṇa* it is said: *smartavyaḥ satataṁ viṣṇur vismartavyo na jātūcit; sarva vidhi niṣedha syur etayor eva kiñkarah* "Always remember Lord Viṣṇu and never forget Him — all the scriptural injunctions and prohibitions are subservient to this one rule and this one prohibition." Hence it is said: Just as a person who is robbed from all his belongings by a robber loudly weeps, a devotee should loudly weep for each moment which is lost not thinking of *Śrī Hari*." *ekasminn apyatikrānte muhūrte dhyāna varjito dasyubhir mūṣitenaiva yuktam ākranditum bhr̄sam* (*Garuḍa Purāṇa*) (61)

How the raganugya bhakta **GRADUALLY** advances through the stages of anartha nivritti, nishtha, ruci, and asakti, upto the stage of prema and the direct attainment of his beloved deity

atha raganuga bhakti majjanasyanartha nivritti nishtha-rucyasadkyantaram prema-bhumikarudhasya sakshat svabhishta-prapti-prakarah pradarsyate. yathojjvala nilamanau "tad bhava baddha raga ye janas te sadhane ratah. tad yogyam anuragaugham prapyotkanthanusaratah. ta ekaso'thava dvitrah kale kale vraje'bhavan" iti. anuragaugham raganuga bhajanautkanthyam natvanuraga sthayinam sadhaka-dehe'nuragotpattyasambhavat. vraje'bhavann iti avatara samaye nitya priyadya yatha avirbhavanti tathaiva gopika-garbhe sadhana-siddha api avirbhavanti. tatas ca nitya-siddhadi gopinam maha-bhava-vatinam sanga mahimna darsana sravana kirtanadibhih sneha mana pranaya raganuraga maha-bhava api tatra gopika-dehe utpadyante. purva janmani sadhaka-dehe tesham utpattyasambhavat. ataeva vraje krishna preyasinam asadharanani lakshanani. yad uktam - "gopinam paramananda asid govinda darsane. kshanam yuga-satam iva yasam yena vina bhaved" iti. "trutir yugayate tvam apasyatam" ityadi ca. kshanasya yuga satayamanatvam maha-bhava lakshanam.

Now it will be described how the raganugya bhakta gradually advances through the stages of anartha nivritti (cessation of bad habits), nishtha (fixation), ruci (taste), and asakti (attachment to the beloved deity) upto the stage of prema (love of God) and the direct attainment of his beloved deity. In the Ujjvala Nilamani it is said that 'those who are specially attracted to the ecstasy of the Vrajavasis and thus perform raganuga bhajana will attain that abundance of eagerness that is fit for performing raganuga bhajana and will take birth in Vraja in groups of one, two or three in their own time, according to their eagerness.' Here the word anuragaughā means 'that eagerness that makes one qualified for doing raganuga bhajana'. The anuraga mentioned here does not refer to the sthayi bhava (permanent mood) of that name, because the sthayi bhava named anuraga cannot be attained within a material body. The words 'having taken birth in Vraja' means the sadhana siddhas take birth from the womb of a gopika, just as Krishna's eternally beloved gopis appear with Him when He descends to earth (prakata lila). After that, gradually sneha, mana, pranaya, raga, anuraga and mahabhava will become manifest in the gopika-body of that sadhaka on the strength of

associating with the gopis that are endowed with maha-bhava and by hearing and chanting and seeing the greatness of Krishna's eternally liberated gopis. These feelings could not possibly have arisen in the material body of the sadhaka, in his previous birth. In this way the extraordinary characteristics of Sri Krishna's beloveds in Vraja has been shown. In Srimad Bhagavata it is said that the gopis attained the pinnacle of transcendental bliss by seeing Govinda. Without Him, they experienced a moment to last like a hundred ages. Their statement (in Srimad Bhagavata 10.31.15) 'Without seeing You, we consider a second to last like an age' is a symptom of mahabhava.

Kripa-kanika Vyakhyā by Srila Ananta das Babaji:

Now it is described how the raganuga-sadhaka attains the personal service of his beloved deity in His lila-kingdom, after attaining the perfection of prema. Two kinds of sadhana have been described of the raganugya devotees - the external practice of hearing and chanting in the sadhaka-body and the desired mental service in the self-conceived siddha body. When the sadhaka's obstacles, such as anarthas (different kinds of mischief) are removed by the continued practice of bhajana, he gradually becomes fixed up, gets (lasting) taste for bhajana and becomes genuinely attached to the Lord. Then, when rati and prema are attained the practice in the sadhaka deha is completed. In other words, when all the stages of the stream of sadhana - faith, surrender, taking shelter of the lotus feet of Sri Guru, serving Sri Guru and Vaishnava, hearing, chanting, remembering, meditating, becoming free from mischief, becoming fixed up, acquiring taste, becoming attached to the Lord and rati - have been fulfilled - then one reaches the culmination named prema. It is described in the book named Sri Ujjvala Nilamani how, after attaining this prema, all these raganugya sadhakas that do bhajana in the madhura rasa with the feelings of sakhis or manjaris, will attain the personal service of the Lord in the kingdom of lila:

tad bhava baddha raga ye janas te sadhane ratah
tad yogyam anuragaugham prapyotkanthanusaratah
ta eko'thava dvi-trah kale kale vraje'bhavan

(Sri Haripriya Pra.- 49 and 50)

"Those who are especially attracted to the feelings of the gopis and are thus engaged in raganuga bhajana, attain the abundance of anuraga that is proper for raganuga, and according to their eagerness, take birth in Vraja at different times as Vraja-gopis alone or in groups of two or three." In the above verse the word anuragaugham means the eagerness that is proper for raganuga, not the sthayi bhava named anuraga, because only stages up to prema can appear in the sadhaka body. The stages above prema, from sneha up to mahabhava, that are required to attain personal service in the mood of the gopis, can only appear in a transcendental gopi-body, for a sadhaka body is unable to tolerate the coolness of meeting with Sri Krishna or the heat of separation from Him. The words 'vraje'bhavan', meaning "taking birth in Vraja", must be understood to mean that the sadhana siddhas appear in the womb of a gopika in the same way as the eternally beloved Vraja-vadhus of Sri Krishna appear during the manifest pastimes. After that, on the strength of the association of nitya-priyas like Sri Radha and Lalita they gradually attain sneha, mana, pranaya, raga, anuraga and mahabhava through seeing, hearing and glorifying Sri Krishna and His associates. Without this mahabhava the personal devotional service of Sri Krishna in a gopi body cannot be attained. The example of this is given by Sri Sukadeva in the Srimad Bhagavata, when he described how the gopis went on their way to dance the Rasa with Krishna after they heard Sri Krishna playing His flute, but some gopis were locked into their inner chambers because they were sages from the Dandaka-forest in their previous birth who were unable to get the association of the nitya siddha gopis, although they had taken birth in Vraja as gopis. Since they were thus unable to attain mahabhava and could also not get the aid of Yogamaya, the gopis who were locked into their houses by their relatives felt such great pangs of separation from Sri Krishna that on the strength of their meditations on Him they were quickly able to attain this stage of mahabhava, that is usually only attained through a gradual process, and thus became blessed by attaining the Rasa-dance. Thus the blessed author says that in the sadhaka body of the previous birth it is not possible to awaken the stages from sneha up to mahabhava. Therefore the extraordinary characteristics of the Sri Gopikas in Vraja are described in Srimad Bhagavata:

gopinam paramananda asid govinda darsane
kshanam yuga-satam iva yasam yena vinabhavat (10.19.16)

"The gopis, that experience a single moment without Sri Krishna to be like a hundred ages, attained the topmost bliss when they saw Govinda." Then again in the Sri Gopi Gita we can find the Sri Gopikas speaking the following words to Sri Krishna:

atati yad bhavan ahni kananam trutir yugayate tvam apasyatam
kutila kuntalam sri mukham ca te jada udkshatam pakshmakrid drisam
(10.31.15)

"When You go out into the forest in the daytime to tend Your cows we consider even a split second that we don't see You to be like an age, and then when You return home in the evening we consider the Creator, who made our eyelids blink, so that our eyes cannot gaze constantly at Your face, that is decorated with curly locks, to be dull and arasi." This experience of a moment like a hundred ages is a characteristic of mahabhava. Srimat Rupa Gosvami writes in his definition of rudha mahabhava -

nimeshasahatasanna janata hrid vilodanam
kalpa kshanatvam khinnatvam tat saukhye'py arti sankaya
mohadya bhave'pyatmadi sarva vismaranam sada
kshanasya kalpatetyadya yatra yoga viyogayoh

(Ujjvala Nilamani Sthayibhava Prak. - 161. 162)

"In the stage of rudha mahabhava, either during union or during separation, the gopis show the following physical expressions of permanent emotions (anubhavas): they cannot tolerate a moment of separation, their hearts are disturbed by approaching people, they consider an age (when they are together with Krishna) to be like a moment, they suffer when they are anxious about Krishna's happiness, even if He is happy, they forget all about themselves even when they are free from delusion and they consider a moment to be like an age (when they are separated from Krishna)."