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SIKSA

SIKSA OUTSIDE ISKCON

Srila Prabhupada writes that:

"Krishnadas Kaviraja Goswami gives equal respect to all the preachers of the cult of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, who are compared to the branches of the tree. Iskcon is one of these branches."

(Caitanya-caritamrta Adi-lila 10.7, purport)

"There are many societies and associations of pure devotees, and if someone with just a little faith begins to associate with such societies, his advancement to pure devotional service is rapid."

(Nectar of Devotion: Chapter Nineteen p.41)

SECTARIANISM

Thakura Bhaktivinoda in Krishna Samhita 8.22: Sloka and Purport are by him:

sampradaya-virodho 'yam davanalo vicintyate

“The eleventh obstacle for the Vaishnavas is sectarianism, which takes the shape of the forest fire. Due to sectarianism a person cannot accept anyone outside of his own group as a Vaishnava, and as a result he faces many obstacles in finding a guru and associating with sincere devotees. Therefore extinguishing the forest fire is most important by giving up this mentality.”

Those who fall under the spell of dogmatism, and thereby become sectarian, lack the qualities of generosity and munificence. That is why they ridicule and condemn others who do not worship in the same way as they do. This is a great mistake on their part.”

The door leading to gradual elevation is firmly shut if people on any level of worship are ridiculed or condemned.

READING PREVIOUS ACARYA'S BOOKS:

In London, in 1969, on the appearance day of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke on his life and teachings:

So Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura happens to be an ācārya, one of the ācāryas. And he left behind him many books – Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta, Jaiva-dharma. These are very important books.

They're in Bengali and Sanskrit... So we are trying to present Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's books also in an English translation. Gradually you will get them.”

If you want to preach the gospel of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, then the personalities who established, by writing these books, Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu, Hari-bhakti-vilasa, Vidagdha-madhava, so many books they have written. So we must go through them, must try to understand.

Then we can understand what is the Caitanya-caritamrta, Caitanya-bhagavata, Caitanya-mangala, there are so many. Caitanya-candrodya by Prabodhananda Sarasvati. So many devotees, they have given us so many high literatures, we should consult. Therefore the prayer is, sri-caitanya-mano-'bhistam sthapitam yena bhuta-tale.

Within the past five hundred years, many erudite scholars and ācāryas like Jīva Gosvāmī, Sanātana Gosvāmī, Viśvanātha Cakravartī, Vallabhācārya, and many other distinguished scholars even after the time of Lord Caitanya made elaborate commentaries on the Bhāgavatam. And the serious student would do well to attempt to go through them to better relish the transcendental messages.

False devotees, lacking the conclusion of transcendental knowledge, think that artificially shedding tears will deliver them. Similarly, other false devotees think that studying books of the previous ācāryas is inadvisable, like studying dry empiric philosophies.

But Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, following the previous ācāryas, has inculcated the conclusions of the scriptures in the six theses called the Ṣaṭ-sandarbhās. False devotees who have very little knowledge of such conclusions fail to achieve pure devotion for want of zeal in accepting the favorable directions for devotional service given by self-realized devotees. Such false devotees are like impersonalists, who also consider devotional service no better than ordinary fruitive actions." (Adi 2.117 : purport)

Srila Prabhupada, morning walk, May 13, 1975, Perth, Australia:

Paramahaṁsa: Śrīla Prabhupāda, I remember once I heard a tape where you told us that we should not try to read the books of previous ācāryas.

Prabhupāda: Hmm?

Amogha: That we should not try to read Bhaktivinoda's books or earlier books of other, all ācāryas. So I was just wondering...

Prabhupāda: I never said that.

Amogha: You didn't say that? Oh.

Prabhupāda: How is that?

Amogha: I thought you said that we should not read the previous ācāryas' books.

Prabhupāda: No, you should read.

Amogha: We should.

Prabhupāda: It is misunderstanding.

Paramahaṁsa: I think maybe he was thinking that there was some things about some of the Gauḍīya Matha books.

Prabhupāda: Maybe.

Paramahaṁsa: And sometimes you said that better not to, better to read your books.

Amogha: When the devotees went to India this year, they said that Acyutananda Svāmi very, chastised them that “You should never... If I catch any of you buying Bhaktisiddhanta’s books from Gauḍīya Matha then I will take them away.” Something like this.

Paramahaṁsa: Yeah, that was, the reason was because of, he didn’t want the devotees going to Gauḍīya Matha. But there’s nothing wrong with the idea of studying the previous ācāryas’ books.

Prabhupāda: No. Who said? That is wrong. We are following previous ācāryas. I never said that.

Paramahaṁsa: All of your commentaries are coming from the previous ācāryas.

Prabhupāda: Yes.

Jayadharma: But that wouldn’t mean that we should keep all the previous ācāryas’ books and only read them.

Prabhupāda: That is already there. You first of all assimilate what you have got. You simply pile up books and do not read – what is the use?

Jayadharma: First of all we must read all your books.

Prabhupāda: Yes .

Paramahaṁsa: Practically speaking, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are giving us the essence of all the previous ācāryas’ books in your books.

Prabhupāda: Yes. Yes.

ASSOCIATION OF THE UTTAMA ADHIKARI

For raganuga practice, doesn't one first need the mercy of an uttama adhikari?

Uttama does not necessarily mean uttama in raganuga bhakti. SP and other acaryas have used the term "uttama-adhikari" in several different contexts, just as SP used the terms "self-realized" and "pure devotee" in different contexts. Sometimes they used these terms to mean fully realized devotees at the stages of bhava or prema and sometimes they used them to mean advanced devotees.

Most people are not aware of the definition given in BRS by Rupa Goswami. In the chapter on sādhana-bhakti, in Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu, Rūpa Gosvāmī states:

There are three types of persons qualified for vaidhī-sādhana-bhakti: the uttamā, the madhyamā, and the kaniṣṭhā. BRS, 1.2.16

The uttama-adhikārī is defined as follows: The person who is skillful in scripture and logic, completely firm in his belief, with deep faith, is considered qualified as an uttamā in vaidhī-bhakti. BRS, 1.2.17

From Jīva Gosvāmī's commentary:

Previously, in defining vaidhī-bhakti, it was said that vaidhī-bhakti existed where the actions were inspired by the teachings of scripture. Thus, it may be concluded that the root cause of a person's bhakti is faith in the content of scriptures. Conviction in the contents of the scriptures is called śraddhā or faith. According to the degree of faith in the scriptures, there will be classifications of persons possessing that faith. That is now the topic of discussion for two verses. ... A person who is qualified as above, and has deep faith, is the uttama-adhikārī.

By this definition, an uttama-adhikārī devotee is still practicing vaidhī-sādhana-bhakti, and thus is not yet even self-realized, and certainly not on the platform of bhāva, since sādhana refers to the stage of practice and not perfection. This same verse is quoted in Caitanya-caritāmṛta, along with other verses discussing the three levels of devotees according to faith (CC, 2.22.64-70). Another revealing point to mention is that these three classifications of practitioners do not apply to those who are on the path of rāgānugā-bhakti. No such statements by the ācāryas are to be found.

So we have to determine the meaning according to the contexts of their usage. Regarding association, we should always endeavor to seek out those who are more advanced and simultaneously take advantage of the books left by our realized acaryas, which is also considered advanced association.

PERSONAL ASSOCIATION

For raganuga practice, is it absolutely necessary to have the personal association of a highly advanced raganuga devotee?

While such association is highly desirable and should be sought out, it is not an absolute requirement, at least in a physical sense:

When this greed has appeared in the heart, one becomes enlightened in different ways. Uddhava says in Śrīmad-bhāgavatam, 11.29.6:

“Kṛṣṇa reveals Himself through the ācārya or through the agency of the Supersoul.”

Thus, some devotees attain knowledge about the moods of Kṛṣṇa and His Vraja associates from the mouth of a guru, some from the mouth of a learned rāgānugā devotee, and some, whose hearts have been purified by the practice of devotional service, will have this knowledge directly revealed to them from within their hearts. They advance in great transcendental bliss, just as one sees a lusty man enjoying great pleasure when his desires are fulfilled.

The third type, who receives this knowledge in the heart from the caitya guru is one who has samskaras (impressions in the heart) from having taken proper association in his previous births. He will be able to cultivate greed and achieve gopi-bhava by reading sastra; he will not have to rely on sastric logic to convince him. For such a person, this treatise will be the candrika for discovering the path of raganuga.

Furthermore, from RVC 1.6:

There are two causes for the appearance of greed:

- (1) the mercy of Kṛṣṇa
- (2) the mercy of another anurāgi devotee

There are again two kinds of mercy bestowed by a devotee:

- (1) mercy bestowed by a rāgānugā devotee in a previous life – praktana
- (2) mercy bestowed by a rāgānugā devotee in the present birth – adhunika

The praktana devotee takes shelter of the lotus feet of a rāgānugā 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 (BRS, 1.2.309): “The only causes of the appearance of greed are the mercy of Kṛṣṇa or His devotee. Therefore, some call the path of rāgānugā-bhakti, pusti mārga (the path of mercy).”

“The more one’s mind gets purified by hearing and chanting of My beautiful pastimes, the more one is able to discern the subtle reality of the self, just as the eye is better able to perceive subtle things when it is treated with medicinal ointment.” RVC, 1.8

Srila Prabhupada lecture on The Nectar of Devotion, Vrndavana, October 20, 1972:

But in this life, if we develop Kṛṣṇa consciousness by association of devotees... As Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura has sung, tāṇdera caraṇa-sevi-bhakta-sane vāsa. One's aim of life should be to serve the ācāryas. Ācārya upāsanam.

So our ācārya in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya, the śrī-rūpa sanātana bhaṭṭa-raghunātha, śrī-jīva gopāla-bhaṭṭa dāsa-raghunātha, the Six Gosvāmīns, and if we associate with them... this book, Nectar of Devotion, Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu, if you read regularly, try to understand, this means you are associating with Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī directly. And if you act accordingly, then you are serving their lotus feet."

SEPARATE INSTRUCTION

“There is no need for separate instruction in one's individual rasa.” Correct?

Actually our line says otherwise, and thus our acaryas discuss how one's relationship/rasa with Kṛṣṇa is awakened and what one should do subsequently. Jīva Gosvāmī confirms the qualifications and process for the awakening of one’s rasa in his Bhakti-sandarbha:

For this reason we will now discuss rāgānugā-bhakti, the practice of devotion following in the wake of the moods of natural affection. When a person develops a taste for the aforesaid specific rāga [i.e., any of the four major rasas], even though that rāga itself has not arisen in her or him, the heart becomes like a crystal, shining as it reflects the rays of the moon of that rāga.

By hearing about this rāga from scripture or from one's teacher, one develops a taste for the actions of the rāgatmika associates also, that are expressions of this rāgatmika-bhakti. Then by adhering to the rāga of a particular associate of the Lord, according to one's taste, one executes devotion, which is called rāgānugā. BS, Anuccheda 310

The following verses indicate the role of the guru in helping the disciple determine his rasa:

Mahaprabhura Siksa chp 10

"For practice of both types of bhakti, the bona fide guru is necessary. The guru engages the candidate of vaidhi bhakti according to his inclinations. He teaches what rules to observe and how to eliminate the obstacles. The guru shows the candidate of raganuga bhakti how to cultivate suitable rasa corresponding to the disciple's natural taste.

There are two types of taste of greed: temporary and natural. Sometimes devotees hear about the qualities of Nanda or Subala, derive great bliss and sometimes show similar sentiments, but this bliss and the show of sentiments are short-lived. This is called temporary greed. There is no use in such a show. It is necessary for the guru to carefully examine which rasa -dasya, sakhya, vatsalya or madhura-gives natural greed. Detecting one's natural sentiment, the guru will give teachings according to that mood. If this is not done, then the instructed mood will not be permanent, due to the unsuitability to the disciple. It should be noted that not all seekers will be qualified for madhura rasa. If a guru finds it impossible for him to decide the rasa of the disciple, he will honestly admit his inability to the disciple and direct him to approach a suitable guru. The disciple has no alternative but to take shelter of the lotus feet of the bona fide guru."

SENIORITY IS ON THE BASIS OF RASA

After seeing Sankara, Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu told Damodara, "My affection for you is on the platform of awe and reverence.

"Therefore keep your younger brother Sankara with you because he is connected to Me by pure unalloyed love."

Damodara Pandita replied, "Sankara is my younger brother, but from today he becomes my elder brother because of Your special mercy upon him."CC Madhya 11.146:-148

This is a good example of how "seniority" should be ascertained.

It is not because you have been in the movement for so many more years than someone else are you necessarily "senior" to that person.

It is not because you were initiated or took sannyasa before someone else does that give you necessarily an ascendant on that person.

It is not how many more disciples you have that makes you senior to anybody. It is not how louder you make the whip of vaidhi-bhakti crack that gives you seniority. Real seniority resides in the advancement of rasa.

"prema-bhakti yaha hoite avidya vinasa yate" If we don't have this prema emanating from us, then maybe we should take the humble position of Damodara and keep our so called younger brothers and sisters close.

RADHAKUNDA BABAJIS

Are we to assume that the holiest place in the universe is populated entirely by debauchees and philosophical deviants with no exceptions? Certainly there are deviants everywhere inside and outside of institutions and all holy places. Overly broad generalizations are not appropriate for discerning individuals.

The odd and ironic thing is that many devotees are so concerned with those of other lineages, thinking they have a different or incorrect understanding and thus should be avoided, when the very same situation exists within ISKCON, where devotees are often at odds with one another over various philosophical issues, like the "fall of the jiva", etc.

I've had more confrontational issues with ISKCON devotees over various aspects of raganuga-bhakti than I have with other lineages.

THE SIDDHA-DEHA AND SIDDHA-SVARUPA

THE SADHAKA DEHA AND SIDDHA DEHA, EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL SEVA

What is the difference between the siddha deha and the sadhaka deha?

‘Sadhaka-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 sadhaka-body we should serve following the instructions of the Goswamis such as Sri Rupa and Sanatana.

“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)

STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE SIDDHA DEHA

Madhurya Kadambini shows the progressive identity transformation that takes place internally via the siddha-deha throughout the stages of practice.

There is a sequence in this...

When the materialistic aspect of ahanta and mamatā is extremely deep, one remains fixed in the cycle of birth and death.

When by good fortune, a particle of faith is born (śraddhā) and one thinks of becoming a Vaiṣṇava and serving the Lord, the materialistic aspect becomes slightly spiritualized (gandha) and the jīva becomes qualified for devotional service (bhakti).

At the stage of sādhu saṅga, the spiritualization becomes more condensed and his material attachments are ātyantikī (thorough).

At the stage of unsteady bhajana-kriyā (sādhana-bhakti), the spiritualization of I and mine is specific, localized in one place, whereas the material aspect is still in full force (pūrṇa).

At the stage of niṣṭhā, spiritualization becomes detectable in many places, and the materialistic influence is still prominent (prāyikī).

At the stage of ruci, spiritualization of I and mine becomes dominant, nearing completion (prāyikī) and the materialistic concept of I and mine becomes localized in certain issues.

At the stage of āsakti, the spiritual aspect of I and mine becomes complete (pūrṇa) and the material aspect becomes a trace (gandha).

At the stage of bhāva, the spiritual aspect becomes thorough (ātyantikī) and the material aspect becomes like an empty shadow.

At the stage of prema, the spiritual aspect becomes extremely intense (param-ātyantikī) and the material aspect is completely absent. MK, 8.12

What is the difference between the siddha-deha and the siddha-svarupa?

There are three stages of development of the spiritual identity. As all three are the spiritual identity, the term “siddha deha” is sometimes used interchangeably with the “siddha-svarupa” although that is technically at a later stage:

Siddha-deha (aka: siddha-rūpa)

Function: The desired mentally conceived, spiritually perfect form for identity development in rāgānugā-bhajana meditation. This body and identity is established using the template of ekadāśa-bhāva.

Stages: niṣṭhā, ruci, āsakti

Spiritual Body: svarūpa-siddhi (aka: siddha-svarūpa)

Function: This is the fully realized spiritual form and identity for direct participation in aṣṭakālīya-līlā via meditation in samādhi, while one is still within the physical and subtle bodies. When one attains bhāva, this spiritual form is bestowed directly by Kṛṣṇa exactly according to one’s desires and preferences, previously cultivated while meditating on one’s siddha-deha during rāgānugā-sādhana-bhajana.

Stages: Bhāva, prema (beginning stages only)

Spiritual Body: vastu-siddhi

Function: When we are completely freed from the physical and subtle material bodies, we will take birth from a nitya-siddha Vraja gopī, and in that transcendental body and identity, we will engage directly in Kṛṣṇa’s manifest eternal pastimes (prakaṭa-nitya-līlā) on an earthly planet. After our prema is fully perfected there, we are seamlessly transferred to the unmanifest eternal pastimes (aprakaṭa-nitya-līlā) in that final eternal body.

Stages: Prema in bhauma-līlā and prakaṭa-līlā

INTERCHANGEABILITY OF TERMS

It has been claimed that Bhaktivinoda introduced the concept of siddha-deha being different from siddha-svarupa, but that is not really true, the conception is there, only the names are different. We see that in the more distant past they used the same words to mean different things more so then more

modern acharyas. What do we see when the word siddha-deha is used 400-500 years ago? We see it used to mean different things: the internal meditation form for raganuga; the body of a sadhaka who is on the highest level; the body of a devotee in nitya lila. Siddha-deha is used to describe all of those, even though they are each different. What Bhaktivinoda and other acharyas have done is give specific names rather than causing confusion by using the same name for different conceptions (different audiences at different times).

The idea of the mentally conceived form for meditation being different from your perfected form is simply given more detailing by later acharyas, but the conception is there in the previous ones, they just using different words to describe it, e.g. the difference between the use of "siddha-rupena" for the imagined or mentally conceived form in the beginning stages of raganuga-sadhana in CC Madhya 22.158 vs. the use of sthaya-bhava in Madhya 23.4 for the permanent perfected form at the more advanced state.

We need to remember we are not talking about actual physical forms, these are self-conceptions, how we see ourselves in our developing relationship with Radha Krishna. In one sense it is always the same form because it is always ourselves, just different versions of ourselves. But because our self-conception changes into different versions as we evolve in our understanding and closeness in our relationship with Radha Krishna, it can be metaphorically spoken of as different types of forms.

THE SIDDHA-DEHA

APPROVED TEACHING OR DEVIATION?

Isn't the cultivation of the siddha deha concept unnecessary? If we just do our service and please our spiritual masters, we will be granted a spiritual body, won't we? Isn't it also a bogus concept, not taught in our lineage?

Actually, the cultivation of the siddha deha is absolutely necessary and taught in our lineage. It accompanies service done with the external body.

BRS (1.2.295) 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."

Living with the sādḥaka-rūpa means in the physical body of the practicing devotee, and the siddha-rūpa means one's own desired mentally conceived spiritual body, that is suitable for direct transcendental service to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Tad-bhāva-lipsunā means being eager to attain the glistening conjugal moods towards Kṛṣṇa, of one's favorite devotees in that mood, like Śrīmatī Rādhārānī and the gopīs. How to serve? With paraphernalia that are collected either mentally (in siddha-rūpa) or physically (in sādḥaka-rūpa).

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 who lived in Vraja, and in the mentally conceived spiritual body one follows in the footsteps of Śrīmatī Rūpa-mañjarī and the other eternal associates of Kṛṣṇa. RVC, 1.11

In Sanātana Gosvāmī's Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta, when Nārada Muni instructs Gopa-kumāra, we learn that meditating on one's siddha-deha during sādhanā also applies to those sādhakas desiring to enter Vaikuṅṭha:

In his internal meditation, the sādhaka serves the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in a particular rasa, with a form, dress, and so on that are suitable for his service. Achieving perfection at the end of his life, he enters Vaikuṅṭha. At that time, his heart is attracted to that previous rasa in which, while he was in the sādhaka stage, he worshiped the Lord, and he accepts an identical dress and form, knowing them to be dear to Śrī Bhagavān. BB, 2.4.145-146

From Sanātana Gosvāmī's commentary:

Whoever comes to Vaikuṅṭha realizes the very same service to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa for which he had developed a taste by the end of his material life, and he realizes that service in full detail, with its dress, form, and so on, for each mood of devotion is dear to the Personality of Godhead and each gives pleasure to the devotee absorbed in it.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja gives his own version of the sevā sādhaka-rūpeṇa siddha-rūpeṇa cātra hi verse from Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu:

bāhya, antara, – ihāra dui ta' sādhanā
'bāhye' sādhaka-dehe kore śravaṇa-kīrtana

Sādhanā-bhakti should be performed both externally and internally. First, one should engage the physical body (sādhaka-deha) and external senses in the processes of devotional service beginning with hearing and chanting (śravaṇa-kīrtana). CC, 2.22.156

'mane' nija-siddha-deha kariyā bhāvana
rātri-dine kore vraje kṛṣṇera sevana

Next, internally, one should engage the mind to think of one's own siddha-deha, and in that spiritual body conceived within the mind, one should day and night perform sevā to Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana. CC, 2.22.157

siddha deha cinta kare tahai sevan
sakhi-bhave paya radha-kṛṣṇera caran

While deep in meditation, the sādhaka performs seva within his siddha deha. By adopting this sakhi bhava he will attain the lotus feet of Sri Sri Radha Kṛṣṇa CC 2.8.229

Dhyanachandra Goswami's Gaura-Govindārcana-smaraṇa-paddhati:

In the same way, the sādhaka shall perform mānasi-sevā to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa during the eight periods of the day. He shall dwell amongst his guru-gana and perform līlā-smaraṇa according to their instructions.

In his mind, in his siddha-deha, he shall visualize himself rendering appropriate services during the various times. In his siddha-deha, he (she) shall always live in Yāvaṭa and Vṛṣabhānu-pura, serving in the home of Śrī Rādhā along side her guru-rūpa-sakhī and the other sakhīs, such as Śrī Lalitā, Viśākhā, and so on.

Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura's, Prema-bhakti-candrikā:

sakhīnām sangini-rūpam ātmānam vasanāmayim
ajna-sevā-param tat-tad-rūpalankara-bhuṣitam

One should meditate on oneself in a form that is a female associate of the sakhīs, engaged in services on their command, decorated by Her (Rādhā) ornaments. PBC, 58

Viśvanātha Cakravartī's commentary:

Sakhīnām – One should think of himself as a female associate of sakhīs such as Śrī Lalitā, Śrī Rūpa-mañjarī and others. In which way? Ājñā-sevāparam – Serving Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava with their consent and according to their orders.

And again, in which way? Tat-tad rūpalankara-bhuṣitam – Decorated with an exquisite form captivating the mind of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and the left-over ornaments of Śrī Rādhikā; in service, ornamented with the left-over flower garlands. Thus, it is said. And again, in which way? Vasanāmayim – Seeing oneself in contemplation in this capacity; and so forth.

SRILA PRABHUPADA ON THE SIDDHA DEHA

How come Srila Prabhupada never mentioned anything about us needing develop the siddha deha?

From Teaching of Lord Chaitanya, page 318:

As stated in the Bhagavad-gītā, a materially contaminated person transmigrates to another material body by material consciousness. At the time of death he thinks materially and is therefore transferred to another material body. Similarly, one who at the time of death is situated in his pure spiritual identity thinks of the spiritual loving service rendered to the Supreme Lord and is transferred to the spiritual kingdom, to enter into the association of Kṛṣṇa.

In other words, the qualification for being transferred to the spiritual kingdom at the time of death is to think, in one's spiritual identity, of Kṛṣṇa and His associates. No one can contemplate the activities of the spiritual kingdom without being situated in his pure, spiritual identity (siddha-deha).

Thus Rāmānanda Rāya said that without attaining one's siddha-deha one can neither become an associate of the damsels of Vraja nor render service directly to the Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, and His eternal consort, Rādhārāṇī. In this regard, Rāmānanda quoted a nice verse from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.47.60):

“Neither the goddess of fortune, Lakṣmī, nor the damsels of the heavenly kingdom can attain the facilities of the damsels of Vrajabhūmi – and what to speak of others?”

THE ROLE OF THE GURU

Caitanya-siksamrita 6.5:

When the devotee has greed for practicing rāgānugā, he should inquire from his guru. The guru, after examining the devotee's taste, will determine his particular type of worship and teach him all about his spiritual body.

(CC Antya 4.194) purport:

This is a quotation from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.29.34). At the time of initiation, a devotee gives up all his material conceptions. Therefore, being in touch with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he is situated on the transcendental platform. Thus having attained knowledge and the spiritual platform, he always engages in the service of the spiritual body of Kṛṣṇa. When one is freed from material connections in this way, his body immediately becomes spiritual, and Kṛṣṇa accepts his service. However, Kṛṣṇa does not accept anything from a person with a material conception of life.

When a devotee no longer has any desire for material sense gratification, in his spiritual identity he engages in the service of the Lord, for his dormant spiritual consciousness awakens.

THE MENTAL CONCEPTION

I have serious problem with how siddha rupa is presented as "mentally conceived". As if we can imagine it, and that is it. How can that be right?

The siddha-deha is mentally conceived because we are still at the stage of practice and not at the perfectional stage of siddha-svarupa, which is the stage of bhava. During the stage of practice, one renders service within the mind thus:

One should think of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa twenty-four hours a day and engage in Their service within one's mind, not externally change one's dress. By adopting the mood of the associates and friends of Rādhārāṇī and following in their footsteps, one can ultimately achieve the perfectional stage of being transferred to Goloka Vṛndāvana, the transcendental abode of Kṛṣṇa. (Teaching of Lord Chaitanya, page 318)

From this it is clear that rendering service within one's mind- manasi-seva and lila-smaranam- is the practice stage of raganuga bhakti. You cannot do the internal meditation with your material identity. That is bogus and not acceptable. You have to have a spiritual identity that goes along with your desired relationship in order to meditate as described and that is the siddha-deha.

There are two essential aspects to such mediation: your desired relationship (rasa) and your spiritual identity (siddha-deha). You cannot engage in serious meditation on vraja-līlā as an anonymous phantom observer with no form or sense of personal identity, and absolutely not as your material identity.

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura explains this in his notes to the ekadāśa-bhāva verse in Harināma-cintāmaṇi:

One whose natural tendency is to cultivate the conjugal rasa should definitely adopt the female form and attitude of a gopī in Vṛndāvana. No living entity can enter the conjugal mood of Vraja in a masculine mood or body. Only when one has adopted the identity as a gopī can he truly worship Kṛṣṇa. This identity is composed of eleven aspects. Thus, only one who has adopted these eleven attitudes can be said to have taken a gopī identity. HC, 15.58

5 PROGRESSIVE STAGES OF REALIZATION

When is the siddha deha is revealed to a sadhaka?

In Jaiva-dharma and Harinama-cintamani, BVT, discusses the five stages of progressive realization of one's eternal identity within one's chosen rasa. They are:

- (1) the stage of hearing – śravaṇa-daśā
- (2) the stage of accepting – varaṇa-daśā
- (3) the stage of remembering – smaraṇa-daśā
- (4) the stage of adoption – āpana-daśā
- (5) the stage of full possession – sampatti-daśā

Thus we see that one first learns about this subtle science, and then, assuming one is qualified, one develops one's ekadasa-bhavas with one's guru as the first stage of crystalizing one's identity. Then one fully accepts that identity and begins the process of gradually increasing remembrance, which leads to apana-dasa or the stage of bhava, where one actually attains one's desired siddha-deha, ie: the stage of svarupa-siddhi. Full possession, sampatti-dasa, does not take place until one takes birth in bhauma-lila.

This is confirmed in HNC:

Hearing the spiritual master delineate this identity in theory is called śravaṇa-daśā, the stage of hearing.

When the disciple eagerly accepts this identification, that is called varaṇa-daśā, the stage of accepting.

When he cultivates this mood and identity by meditating on rasa in all its aspects, then he is situated in smaraṇa-daśā, the stage of remembering.

When he has fully assimilated that identity, which has now been made fully clear, he has reached the state called āpana-daśā or prāpti-daśā, the stage of attainment.

Finally, when he becomes entirely separated from this earthly existence and becomes eternally fixed in his longed-for spiritual form, he has attained sampatti-daśā, the stage of full possession. HC, 15.59-60

Thus it is clear that when one is genuinely qualified to begin raganuga due to the appearance of lobha/greed for the raga of a Vraja associate, one should learn about these five stages from one's guru and begin the internal process of meditating on one's siddha-deha as part of one's sadhana and bhajana. Attaining one's siddha-deha is synonymous with attaining bhava and that is called svarupa-siddhi.

MENTAL CONCEPTION OR IMAGINATION?

How can the siddha-deha be “conceived in the mind” of a practitioner who is not freed from anarthas? The mind is made of material energy and the siddha-deha is supposed to be spiritual and perfect (siddha). How can a conditioned and contaminated material mind conceive of a perfect spiritual body?

This argument is easily dismissed by the following verses in Caitanya-caritāmṛta:

At the time of initiation, when a devotee fully surrenders unto the service of the Lord, Kṛṣṇa accepts him to be as good as Himself. When the devotee’s body is thus transformed into spiritual existence, the devotee, in that transcendental body, renders service to the lotus feet of the Lord. CC, 3.4.192-193

Thus, for one who is truly qualified to engage in rāgānugā-bhakti, the siddha-deha is not a product of material imagination or mental speculation.

Mentally conceived means it is what one desires to attain and it is what Kṛṣṇa will award at the stage of bhava. From Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura’s Prema-bhakti-candrikā:

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 (sādhana) I will attain in my siddha-deha when I reach perfection. This is the means of rāga-bhakti. PBC, 55

The treasure I desire as a practitioner I will get when I attain my spiritual body; it is just a question of being ripe or unripe. The ripe stage is the stage of pure devotion (prema-bhakti), and the unripe stage is the stage of practice (sādhana-bhakti). That is the essential truth about devotional principles. PBC, 56

CONCEPTION OR REVELATION?

“antah cintita siddha deha” does not mean “mentally conceived or imagined siddha deha”. It means “siddha deha which is revealed in the mind”. Therefore, shouldn't one first wait for it to be revealed, which is only possible at bhava?

That is incorrect, the word 'revealed' is not there, antah means within, and cintita means:

thought , considered ; thought of., imagined. ; found out , investigated ; reflecting , considering W. ; thought , reflection , care , trouble intention

The teaching is clear that raganuga sadhana is specifically about seeing yourself internally in your rasa with Radha Krishna in a way that follows the rasa of a parishad in Vraja, i.e. the point is to develop rasa and intimacy in your internal relationship with Krishna gradually.

In the chapter on sadhana-bhakti in BRS, 1.2.295 it states that one performs internal bhajan via the siddha-deha. This is part of sadhana-bhakti, not bhava-bhakti, which is why it is stated in that chapter on sadhana-bhakti. Why would they discuss the siddha-deha in sadhana-bhakti if it was not relevant to sadhana and bhajana? It makes no sense. BVT gives five progressive stages for attaining bhava and

prema as I quoted above, and the first three of those stages are performed during sadhana-bhakti and they involve meditation on one's siddha-deha.

This excerpt from Caitanya-siksamrita makes it absolutely clear that meditation on the siddha deha happens during the stage of practice of raganuga sadhana:

When the devotee has greed for practicing rāgānugā, he should inquire from his guru. The guru, after examining the devotee's taste, will determine his particular type of worship and teach him all about his spiritual body.

According to this revelation, the devotee aspiring for prema should live near the guru in order to obtain all knowledge of the subject, and then, residing in his own place, he should with great effort and eagerness, practice his worship.

Furthermore, this excerpt from Kṛṣṇa Kāvīraja's Krishna Karnamrita, makes it clear that bhava is not a pre-requisite to meditation on the siddha deha:

'On the raganuga-path even a sadhaka bhakta who has no rati yet can think of his own desired siddha deha. When rati arises, then that body will be automatically revealed.'

HANKERED FOR, SO NOT POSSESSED?

In BRS 1.2.295, it is stated "Through the siddha-deha or the deha which is qualified to serve (in the svarasiki-lila) and which is hankered after (abhista) by the raganuga-sadhaka" If siddha deha is already present then why it is hankered after? Doesn't this indicate that during the stage of sadhana bhakti, it is not possible to engage the siddha deha in manasa-seva- as this happens at bhava?

There are five stages of meditation on the siddha rupa, prior to full attainment or possession of it, which happens at bhava. One such stage is remembrance, and from this description of BVT it is clear that such remembrance should be in relation to one's seva in the asta-kaliya lila. It is also clear that this does not happen in bhava:

Simple remembering is the stage where one recalls his spiritual identity and its eleven aspects in relationship to one's service in the circadian pastimes (aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā) of the Divine Couple. At this point, there is still no constancy in one's meditation, as one sometimes remembers, and at other times is distracted. HNC 15.93

The other stages are as follows:

As one progresses, one comes to the stage of self-reminding, dhāraṇa, in which one attempts to gain steadiness in remembering.

When one concentrates on all aspects of the object of meditation, that is called dhyāna or meditation.

When one meditates at every moment, the state is called "constant recollection" or anusmṛti.

When one's meditation is perfect and uninterrupted, and one thinks only of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes and nothing else, that state is called samādhi. HC, 15.93

Thus it should be clear that meditating on one's siddha-deha is part of raganuga-sadhana-bhajan and attainment of one's siddha-deha is part of bhava-bhakti. One can certainly hanker for the siddha-deha during sadhana, because one has not attained it yet. We are 'hankering' for our siddha-deha in the sense that we desire that perfectional stage of siddha-svarupa, which is attained at bhava. It is this very hankering during sadhana and bhajana that propels us to the perfectional stage.

Furthermore, as quoted above, in the chapter on sadhana-bhakti in BRS, 1.2.295 states that one performs internal bhajan via the siddha-deha. This is part of sadhana-bhakti, not bhava-bhakti, which is why it is stated in that chapter on sadhana-bhakti. Why would they discuss the siddha-deha in sadhana-bhakti if it was not relevant to sadhana and bhajana?

DIFFERENT LEVELS OF THE SADHAKA

When the sastra refers to meditating on the siddha deha during sadhana, doesn't it mean sadhana at the stage of bhava?

In his commentary to BRS, 1.2.1, which defines 3 types of bhakti, ie: sadhana, bhava and prema, Visvanatha Chakravarti Thakura quotes verse 2.1.276 and explains why someone at the stage of bhava may still be technically called a sadhaka:

“In spite of the fact that bhava or rati has appeared, the obstacles have not completely dissipated. Such persons are therefore classed as sadhakas.”

Therefore, it is irrefutably concluded that the term sadhaka does NOT specifically apply to one at the stage of bhava. The fact that RG used the term sadhaka immediately after beginning the description of raganuga 'sadhana' is unambiguously clear in its intent.

EKADASA BHAVAS

What are the ekadasa bhavas and how should they be incorporated into one's spiritual identity?

These are the eleven aspects of the spiritual identity

- 1) Nama – name;
- (2) Rupa – form (which includes varna, or complexion);
- (3) Vayas – age;
- (4) Vesa – dress;
- (5) Sambandha – relationship between the servant and the served;
- (6) Yutha – the group of a particular yuthesvari (leader of sakhis);
- (7) Ajna – following the orders of the yuthesvari;
- (8) Seva – a particular primary service;
- (9) Parakashtha – aspiration;
- (10) Palyadasi-bhava – the mood of a maintained maidservant;
- (11) Nivasa – residence.

From HC, 15.79-81 Ascertaining obstacles to this bhajana.

Once one has become committed to the eleven aspects of his spiritual identity, he should meditate on them with a determined heart. In the process of remembering, there is one beautiful consideration:

He should meditate constantly on that which is befitting to him. If he meditates on things that are unsuitable, he will never attain perfection, despite practicing for ages and ages.

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's notes:

The aspirant has to engage in one's devotional practice in a way that his spiritual identity, upon which he meditates in the stage of remembering, can be factually assimilated in the stage of attainment. No efforts on the paths of works, philosophical speculation, yoga, or anything else can help one attain this ineffable perfection of worship.

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in his notes in Harināma-cintāmaṇi:

One whose natural tendency is to cultivate the conjugal rasa should definitely adopt the female form and attitude of a gopī in Vṛndāvana. No living entity can enter the conjugal mood of Vraja in a masculine mood or body. Only when one has adopted the identity as a gopī can he truly worship Kṛṣṇa.

This identity is composed of eleven aspects (ekadāśa-bhāvas). Thus, only one who has adopted these eleven attitudes can be said to have taken a gopī identity. [He then lists the ekadāśa-bhāvas] Whatever one's identity in this world, one should internally adopt a spiritual identity in these eleven aspects and worship Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa directly in that form. HC, Notes to 15.58

Further comments on this issue (From Pam Ho)

The important thing to note in regard to manasa seva is to follow in the footsteps, the mood, of the vrajavasis in that mental service. If all you are supposed to do is smaranam, remember lila, and "contemplate" your siddha-deha, how is that following in the footsteps and mood of the vrajavasis? The answer is that you are supposed to do more than just "contemplate" your siddha deha. Following in the mood or footsteps of the vrajavasis means you try to develop their mood. It isn't just that you are supposed to contemplate a siddha-deha like contemplating a picture, you are supposed to contemplate yourself in the mood of that nitya-parikara you desire to be like, that is what the mental service means. To learn their moods and imbibe that within your self-conception in your internal relationship with Krishna.

SIDDHA PRANALI

This is the process of receiving the eleven aspects of one's siddha deha, known as ekadasa bhavas through a suitable diksa initiation involving the same.

SRILA PRABHUPADA ON SIDDHA PRANALI

Srila Prabhupada's comment in NOD makes clear his opinion on this process:

"The so-called siddha-pranali process is followed by the prakṛita-sahajiyā, a pseudosect of so-called Vaishnavas. In the opinion of Rūpa Gosvāmi, such activities are simply disturbances to the standard way of devotional service."

Examining these statements carefully reveals that Śrīla Prabhupāda's harsh attack primarily has to do with these people (specifically males) dressing up as gopīs (external behavior), which we know is not a valid part of rāgānugā-bhakti, and is therefore outside of that which is taught and approved by the ācāryas. Therefore, Śrīla Prabhupāda justly criticized them.

However, Śrīla Prabhupāda's statement above does not describe what siddha-praṇālī is factually, nor does it provide a complete picture or full understanding of siddha-praṇālī as it has been properly implemented in genuine Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava lineages for centuries. After objectively examining the facts, it will be clear that Śrīla Prabhupāda was trying to protect his disciples from exposure to the many deviant sects claiming to be followers of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Here's an excerpt from a conversation between SP and Hrsikesa dasa:

HD: But what about siddha-praṇālī? How to qualify? Who will give?

ACBSP: Guru will give. You just chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.

HD: (I mentioned the story of Chota Krishnadās, who tried to quit his body by jumping into Mānasa-gangā, when he heard that only his Guru, who had already departed, could give him siddha-praṇālī) ...How to receive this eternal information, Gurudev?

ACBSP: Guru will give. There is no material consideration about Guru is here or there. When you reach that level, Guru will give.

BHAKTIVINODE THAKURA AND SIDDHA PRANALI

The truth of the matter is that siddha-praṇālī is most certainly not a bogus practice followed only by prakṛita-sahajiyās – far from it. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, received the full siddha-praṇālī details of his disciplic succession when he was initiated (dīkṣā) by Vipina Vihari (Bipin Bihari) Gosvāmī, and Bhaktivinoda also gave siddha-praṇālī-dīkṣā to his youngest son, Lalitā-parsāda Ṭhākura, as well as many of his other disciples.

Despite that, out of concern for cheating versions, we may choose not to advocate siddha-pranali as such, but it is abundantly and incontrovertibly clear that meditation via one's siddha-deha as defined by the ekadasa-bhavas is part of the process of raganuga-bhakti coming directly from Lord Caitanya. Gopala Guru Gosvami learned these details from his guru, Vakresvara Pandita (Tungavidya), who learned directly from Svarupa Damodara (Lalita), who was Lord Caitanya's most intimate associate and

who also taught Raghunatha dasa Gosvami. These are the facts and BVT has given these details in JD, so they are most certainly part of our Gaudiya lineage.

Bhaktivinode Thakura describes the process as a collaborative one between the guru and the disciple, based on the disciple's naturally appearing inclinations towards a particular relationship with Kṛṣṇa. What is not approved is "rubber-stamping" an unqualified disciple by an unqualified guru. That is the primary issue of contention and not the processes themselves.

It may be noted that none of the previous acaryas emphasized learning about the siddha details of one's lineage, so that aspect was obviously not deemed by them to be essential to one's success, although knowing such things is also not a hindrance.

SRILA BHAKTISIDDHANTA AND SIDDHA PRANALI

There is no tradition or any evidence that Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur received any "ekadas bhav" from anyone. There is no account that he ever received it. This siddha pranali thing ended with him.

The following history will dispel this misconception. Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī was a disciple of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, and thus Śrīla Prabhupāda's Godbrother and friend. He also initiated Prabhupāda into the sannyāsa āśrama. In Śrīla B.V. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja's biography of his guru, Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī, he recounts a discussion between his guru and another disciple regarding Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and siddha-praṇālī:

In those days Śrīla Gurudeva's dear sevaka, Śrīpāda Nārāyaṇa Dāsādhikārī inquired from him privately, "Did your Gurudeva reveal the identity of the siddha-deha of any of his own disciples or not?"

Solemnly, [Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī] replied, "He has certainly done so. Śrīla Prabhupāda (Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī) has given the identity of the siddha-deha and śikṣā in bhajana-praṇālī to some of his qualified disciples; otherwise the Śrī Rūpānugā line would come to an end. He also mercifully gave this praṇālī to me."

Śrī Nārāyaṇa Prabhu again asked, "Will you bestow your mercy and reveal the name of your siddha-deha?"

Śrīla Gurudeva replied, "Not just now; it will be disclosed at the appropriate time."

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī provides additional proof that he understood and accepted this knowledge and these processes. In a letter to a disciple, he wrote:

I have noted your letter dated the 24th. The aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā, about which you have heard from the Vaiṣṇavas in Vṛndāvana, should be highly regarded no doubt. But the way in which these pastimes are conceived of in the contaminated state is totally corrupt.

Some fortunate individuals are capable of knowing these things after chanting for a long time, for

that is the identity of the true self. But it can only be known after one is freed of mental contaminations. With the awakening of this spiritual identity, one automatically has constant cognition of his spiritual form.

Those who say that they can teach or reveal this identity are practicing a kind of deception; it cannot be done. On the other hand, if a devotee receives some inspiration after sincerely chanting for a long time, he should go to the sad-guru or advanced devotees and ask for it to be confirmed and purified by them.

The spiritual identity has eleven aspects (ekadāśa-bhāva). There are many cases of unscrupulous gurus who artificially force-feed these designations on unqualified practitioners, but we cannot call this the mark of spiritual perfection.

Those who have achieved the perfection of being fixed in their spiritual identity (svarūpasiddhi) have attained such a realization through internal revelation, and the spiritual master's only involvement in these matters is to help the further advancement of a disciple. As a practitioner progresses toward spiritual perfection, all these things are revealed naturally within the heart that sincerely seeks service. Prabhupāder Patrāvalī

The conclusion is that there is a wrong method and a right method. The existence of the wrong method does not completely cancel the right method. When one becomes qualified for raganuga after many lifetimes of sadhana, sadhu-sanga and samskaras, one will have an awakening of one's desired relationship with Krsna, and eventually the understanding of which Vraja-vasi one should follow in raganuga-bhakti.

Raganuga-bhakti has external practices and internal practices according to Rupa Gosvami in BRS. The internal practices center around gradually increasing meditation on Krsna lila via one's siddha-deha - one's internally conceived spiritual identity. One's identity is defined via the ekadasa-bhavas. RG and ALL of the acaryas confirm the implementation of one's siddha-deha. That is a FACT that cannot be denied or ignored. You CANNOT meditate on the lila in the context of your material identity. Thus, the siddha-deha is essential to one's practice in raganuga.

The knowledge of the ekadasa-bhavas comes directly from Svarupa Damodara Gosvami via Gopala Guru Gosvami. They are also part of our lineage and FULLY approved by Lord Caitanya. So there is nothing bogus about all of this - they are FACTS. And this is 100% confirmed by BVT in JD and HNC. Neither SBSST nor SP stopped or altered these facts. They just kept them under wraps, knowing that Krsna would guide qualified devotees.

SVARUPA-SIDDHI

DEFINITION

The mature stage of meditation on one's spiritual form, where it is actually attained, as opposed to meditated upon, hankered for, thought of, or mentally conceived:

PBC 55

“With attachment, I will always serve the feet of Sri Yugala, remaining attached to them forever. Whatever I think of during sadhana I will attain in siddha-deha; such is the means on the path of raga.”

THE STAGE OF APPROPRIATION

When one's meditation on one's identity becomes fixed in samādhi, then the stage of full appropriation of that identity comes about. HC, 15.94

The practitioner's state of being at that time.

At that time, identification with one's spiritual form entirely overcomes the influence of the material body. After achieving this state, one is at every moment present in that form in Vraja, where he sees the Vṛndāvana forests through that form that he has made his own. HC, 15.95-96

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's notes:

In the stage of appropriation, one's sense of identity with the external material body is abandoned and one's identification with the spiritual identity and form takes over.

At this stage, one resides constantly in Vraja in one's original spiritual form. As one is now engaged in serving Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in that identity, one experiences the dawning of a great pleasure. As such, one remains absorbed in visions of Vṛndāvana Dhāma, one feels completely fixed in the spiritual identity and has visions of the Divine Couple's transcendental pastimes as if they had become manifest.

At the time of appropriation, one attains identity perfection; with the disintegration of the subtle body, [one attains] concrete perfection. In the appropriation stage, the fortunate soul attains identity perfection; when the subtle body disintegrates, concrete perfection and full possession. HC, 15.97

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's notes:

By worshiping the Holy Name in this way, the devotee inevitably meets Lord Kṛṣṇa face to face. Then, when his gross body suddenly dies by the Lord's will, the subtle material body is also destroyed. In other words, with the death of the gross body made of five elements, the subtle material body of mind, intelligence and false ego also falls away. At this point, the soul's pure spiritual form is manifested without any coverings and one can serve the Divine Couple in the spiritual world. Identity perfection is svarupa-siddhi, concrete perfection is vastu-siddhi, full possession is sampatti-daśā.

Having attained perfection through practice, they are the same as the eternally perfect gopīs, in that both serve Lord Kṛṣṇa night and day. HC, 15.98

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's notes:

At this point, those perfected through practice (sādhana-siddhas) and the eternally perfect (nitya-siddha) devotees all reside together in the same spiritual abode.

RATI

Sometimes we hear of raty-abhasa and bhavabhasa. How are they different?

Rati is often used interchangeably with bhava, ie: they are more or less synonymous. So Raty-abhasa or bhavabhasa are the same. However, rati is also used frequently to mean the specific type of love, eg: samartha-rati is the gopis' type of rati.

CAUSE OF DIFFERENT RATI

These five types of rati [i.e., the rati or bhāva associated with each of the five rasas] progressively become more blissful by increasing tastes. The particular taste arises in a devotee according to his previous experiences. BRS, 2.5.38

Jīva Gosvāmī's Commentary:

But what determines who takes up which type of rati? Is it decided by having no impressions of a particular rati from previous lives, by having an impression of one type of rati from previous lives, or by having impressions of many types of rati?

In the first option – absence of impressions – rati cannot occur at all, because no taste could arise. In the case of persons having impressions of many types of rati, a particular rati could not manifest prominently because conflicting tastes would result in the improper manifestation of rasa (rasābhāsa). Therefore, impressions of only one type carried from previous lives produce the specific taste.

Though not being in a position to perceive the depth of that rasa, one can confirm its identity by comparing scriptural descriptions of rasas with one's own inclinations, and by inference through seeing how rasas, different from one's own rasa, either nourish or fail to nourish the total ingredients.

Viśvanātha Cakravartī's commentary:

Among the various tastes such as sweet, sour and bitter, a particular person has a particular liking because of previous impressions. Because of impressions from a past life of a particular rasa, such as dāsyā, in this life also, the person has that taste alone and not others, by the mercy of a great devotee with a similar taste. This is the case for the two types of dāsyā and the other three higher rasas.

RASA

SRILA PRABHUPADA ON RASA

SB, 7.10.40 Srila Prabhupada's Purport:

In Caitanya-caritāmṛta, in connection with Lord Caitanya's instructions to Sanātana Gosvāmī, it is explained that a devotee should externally execute his routine devotional service in a regular way but should always inwardly think of the particular [rasa] in which he is attracted to the service of the Lord. This constant thought of the Lord makes the devotee eligible to return home, back to Godhead.

As stated in Bhagavad-gītā (4.9), tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma naiti mām eti: after giving up his body, a devotee does not again receive a material body, but goes back to Godhead and receives a spiritual body resembling those of the Lord's eternal associates whose activities he followed.

However the devotee likes to serve the Lord, he may constantly think of the Lord's associates — the cowherd boys, the gopīs, the Lord's father and mother, His servants and the trees, land, animals, plants and water in the Lord's abode. Because of constantly thinking of these features, one acquires a transcendental position.

RASA AND PREMA- ACQUIRED OR INHERENT?

In Relation to Prema:

nitya-siddha kṛṣṇa-prema 'sādhya' kabhu naya
śravaṇādi-śuddha-citte karaye udaya

"Pure love for Kṛṣṇa is eternally established 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, this love naturally awakens.

In Relation to Rasa, the arguments for acquired, countered by arguments for inherent:

Acquired: In Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura's Jaiva Dharma we can see the two sadhakas Brajanatha and Vijay Kumar are given different conceptions; one in sakhya rasa, the other madhurya rasa. Their Gurudeva is able to give both because being himself siddha in madhurya rasa, it also includes sakhya rasa.

Inherent: One's predisposition to a particular rasa is part of one's svarupa and svabhava. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura makes no mention whatsoever in that section of Jaiva Dharma that the guru, Gopala Guru Gosvami, "gave" these devotees their rasa. Instead he advised them to examine their own svabhava:

Vrajanatha: Which type of rāgānugā-bhakti do we have the adhikāra (qualification) to adopt?

Bābājī: My son, you should scrutinize your own svabhāva (the true nature of a thing which forms an essential part of its composition), and then you will see the corresponding type of devotion for which you are qualified. A particular ruci (taste) will awaken according to your inherent svabhāva, and you should pursue the rasa that is indicated by that ruci. In order to cultivate that rasa, you should follow one of Kṛṣṇa's eternal associates who is perfect in it.

To determine rasa, it is only necessary to examine your own ruci. If your ruci is towards the path of rāga, then you should act according to that ruci; and as long as an inclination has not awakened for the path of rāga, you should simply execute the principles of vaidhī-bhakti with firm faith.

Vijaya: Prabhu, I have been studying Śrīmad-bhāgavatam for a long time, and I listen to kṛṣṇa-līlā whenever and wherever I find the opportunity. Whenever I deliberate on kṛṣṇalīlā, a strong bhāva arises within my heart to serve the Divine Couple as Lalitā-devī does.

Bābājī: You need not say any more. You are a mañjarī (young maidservant) of Lalitā-devī.

...When Vrajanatha saw Vijaya Kumara's spiritual wealth, he folded his hands and humbly said, "My master, whenever I meditate on Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, a desire arises in my heart to serve Him by following in the footsteps of Subala."

Bābājī: Which service do you like?

Vrajanatha: When the calves wander far off to graze, I would very much like to bring them back in the company of Subala. When Kṛṣṇa sits in a place to play upon His flute, I will take the permission of Subala to let the cows drink water, and then I will bring them to Bhai (Brother) Kṛṣṇa. This is my heart's desire.

Bābājī: I give you the benediction that you will attain Kṛṣṇa's service as a follower of Subala. You are eligible to cultivate the sentiment of friendship (sakhya-rasa). JD, Chapter 21, Pages 514-515

Acquired: The statement 'In order to cultivate that rasa, you should follow one of Krishna's eternal associates who is perfect in it.' does not only refer to our manasa siddha-deha seva; It can also mean to seek association of one who is already situated in that rasa and has their raga-nuga sadhaka form here in the present. Our Guru-varga are rupa-nugas. They can give all rasas because they are all within Radharani's bhava and they are tadatmic with that.

Inherent: Once one has awakened/realized their desired relationship it is highly recommended to associate with other devotees following the same rasa. That nourishes one's position and mood. But we don't get the seed from them - we get the nourishing waters.

In regard to us being Rupanugas some people think this term means we are all following Rupa Goswami as manjaris because in Krsna lila, Rupa Goswami is Rupa-manjari. It is clear from the above passage from Jaiva Dharma , everyone has their own inherent relationship with Krsna - it is not given by one's guru. It is awakened through bhakti and mercy.

Therefore, being Rupanugas means we are following the specific path of sadhana-bhakti as presented primarily by Rupa Goswami in his books such as BRS, UN, etc. There are many different Vaisnava

lineages not from Lord Caitanya but we, being His followers, are following His path as outlined primarily by Rupa Gosvami, and therefore, we are known as Rupanugas.

Nowhere in any of the books of the previous acaryas does it state otherwise, ie: that we are following RG as manjaris, or that rasa is given by anyone else. It is “awakened” because it is our svarupa.

Acquired: Sri Chaitanya came to distribute manjari bhava, which means it is acquired- through His mercy

Inherent: There is an important tattva that everyone must understand, and that is that each jiva's relationship with Krsna is eternal and is already there in a seed like state, ie: lying in potential so to speak. It must be awakened by the mercy of a devotee who plants the bhakti-lata-bija in the heart. Then, by engaging in sadhana-bhakti in the association of sincere devotees one makes progress on that path towards realizing/awakening their eternal relationship with Krsna.

Some devotees, however, believe that each jiva is somewhat of a blank slate and that by association alone they acquire an inclination towards a particular rasa/relationship. Some even say that the guru plants the seed of their (ie: the guru) relationship in the heart and thus, the disciple gets the same rasa as their guru.

My research of the books mentioned above did not lead to that conclusion. I have a section in chapter 5 about how one's rasa is revealed and I have give ample references that clearly indicate that each jiva is an individual sentient person with a unique subset of Krsna's personal qualities, which is where we obtain our person-hood in the first place.

Our unique personalities and character imbued at the root level of our svarupa and svabhava predispose us to a particular type of relationship with Krsna. When the seed of bhakti is planted and we progress to the stage of bhava, then the hladini-sakti descends and we begin to develop the specific type of prema that is appropriate for our type of relationship. This happens when our sthaya-bhava, ie: our predominant emotional mood is established at that point.

Therefore it is not entirely correct to say that Lord Caitanya came to "distribute" gopi-bhava or manjari-bhava. He came to open the door to madhurya-rasa by revealing its intricacies through His acaryas, especially Rupa Gosvami, which was unprecedented. And what is unique about Him in this regard is that the door He opened was entrance into Radha's group of sakhis, versus a more broad-based entrance into madhurya into various other groups of gopis.

I also did not find any evidence of a "progression of rasas". Given what I have stated above, that would make no sense. There are no discussions of one progressing gradually through the four main rasas. You are what you are and that is an eternal condition. The acaryas repeatedly state that when one has progressed sufficiently after many lifetimes of practice, and has received the mercy of their guru(s) and Krsna, one will be spontaneously attracted to a particular type of relationship with Krsna in a very natural way.

IS RASA GURU REVEALED?

One's rasa must be revealed by one's guru. This is the only way to determine it.

Srimad Bhagavatam 11.29.6: 'Krishna reveals Himself through the acarya or through the agency of the caitya guru.'

Thus some devotee attains knowledge about the moods of Krishna and His Vraja associates from the mouth of a guru, some from the mouth of a learned raganuga devotee, and some, whose hearts have been purified by the practise of bhakti, will have this knowledge directly revealed to them from within their hearts."

RASA IN MANJARI BHAVA

One can only enter into the glistening conjugal mood of Ujjvala-rasa through manjari bhava. This is the specific purpose and benediction of Mahaprabhu's appearance.

Lord Caitanya came to open the door to Vraja-lila in general and specifically madhurya-rasa, which includes being either a nitya-sakhi manjari or a priya-sakhi. This is confirmed in UN:

Having loyalty to the group leaders and their sakhīs, according to their own desires, the three types who follow the parama-preṣṭha-sakhīs with equal affection for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa become priya-sakhīs with a similar type of affection.

The three types who follow the prāṇa-sakhīs (principal mañjarīs) with more affection for Rādhā become situated eternally as nitya-sakhīs (mañjarīs) with more affection for Rādhā. UN, 8.137, commentary

SRILA PRABHUPADA'S RASA

Regarding Srila Prabhupada's's rasa (not his identity - we know nothing about his identity only his rasa/relationship), here are some anecdotes (not hearsay) directly from our sibling disciples who were present and witnessed these events. The first one is related by Malati dasi who was personally present:

In early 1968, Harṣarānī Devī Dāsī wrote a short, insightful poem in glorification of Śrīla Prabhupāda. In this poem, she referred to Śrīla Prabhupāda as a "cowboy."

While we (the little handful of fledgling devotees in San Francisco at the time) thought it was a bit childish, Śrīla Prabhupāda requested that it be printed in the next BTG (which were mimeographed and stapled together at the time).

You can find this poem on the VedaBase. Sitting with Śrīla Prabhupāda, we shyly asked him, "Are you a cowboy (keep in mind, we didn't know the word "gopa" at the time)?" To which, he simply answered in a matter of fact tone, "Yes." We never doubted or double guessed this information. We didn't even know that it was not appropriate to make such an inquiry.

Another anecdote comes from my Godsister, Govinda Dasi. I am paraphrasing her story. Govinda Dasi gave Śrīla Prabhupāda a sweater (or shirt) that had embroidery with a western cowboy motif. When Śrīla Prabhupāda put it on, Govinda Dasi said, "Śrīla Prabhupāda, you look like a cowboy!" to which Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, "I AM a cowboy!"

Another incident involves a drawing Govinda Dasi did for use in the BTG and Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. It depicted a scene where Kṛṣṇa and the cowherd boys were returning from the forests to the village with all of the cows at the end of the day. Govinda Dasi informed Śrīla Prabhupāda that

one of the cowherd boys she drew represented him. When this was pointed out to Śrīla Prabhupāda he did not object or say anything contrary. She wrote to me:

Both [stories] are true, but Prabhupada was in India when I sent the drawing. The drawing was later colored in and is used as backdrops for altars in Vṛndāvana and else where, and also in BTG. It is Kṛṣṇa returning with thousands of cows. It was common knowledge amongst the devotees that Srila Prabhupada often referred to himself as a cowherd boy, and even acted the part at the time. The ācārya persona was his public image, and also a very real facet of his diamond like personality, of course. But the cowherd boy identity was closer to his heart.

So there is no debate on this issue because Srila Prabhupada said it himself directly several times, and there are a few other instances when he says that Gauḍīya gurus are not all mañjarīs, and they can be in sakhya-rasa as well. Add to this his poem from the Jaladuta, which is clearly sakhya-rasa and the facts are clear.

Were our Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada in sakhya rasa he would not have the adhikara to give a higher rasa. Is this correct?

We have already explained how rasa is inherent, and not given. As far as higher rasa is concerned, the priya-narma-sakhā cowherd boys are Kṛṣṇa's most intimate friends, and they also directly assist in arranging these very intimate affairs. There is nothing they don't know or understand about these highly confidential matters. From Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi:

The priya-narma-sakhā knows the most intimate pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, covets the desire for Kṛṣṇa meeting the gopīs, and is the best among all the dear friends of Kṛṣṇa. In Gokula, Subala and Arjuna are priya-narma-sakhās. UN, 2.13

Jīva Gosvāmī's commentary:

The priya-narma-sakhās have the desire that Kṛṣṇa and the gopīs meet each other. That is the meaning of their sakhī-bhāva. By this, their masculine sentiments are covered. The rati of the narma-vayasyas (priya-narma-sakhās) extends to anurāga, but among them, Subala's rati extends to bhāva (mahā-bhāva). UN, 14.233

This is in addition to the fact that rasa is inherent not "given" as explained in the beginning of this section.

Yet another important side issue associated with this topic is that many devotees assume that all Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava ācāryas or gurus must be mañjarīs. This is, in part, connected to the Rūpānugā misunderstanding just mentioned. Most devotees try to substantiate this idea by referring to the Śrī Guruvaṣṭakam prayers by Viśvanātha Cakravartī, wherein verse six states, nikuñja yuno rati keli siddhyai, which describes the spiritual master as being, "expert at assisting the gopīs in making tasteful arrangements for the perfection (siddhyai) of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa's conjugal loving affairs (rati-keli) within the groves (nikuñja) of Vṛndāvana."

Śrīla Prabhupāda was asked this same question, and in a letter to his disciple Jayapataka Svāmi, He replied:

“The prayers offered by Viśvanātha Cakravartī to his spiritual master have a special significance.

His spiritual master was one of the assistant gopīs (mañjarīs), so the prayer was offered like that. On the whole, the spiritual master is an agent of Krishna. But either he is assistant to the gopīs or assistant to the cowherd boys.”

It’s hard to interpret this statement as anything other than an indication of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s inclinations towards sakhya-rasa. If he was a mañjarī, why would he bother to mention about being an assistant to the cowherd boys? None of the other ācāryas have mentioned anything like that in this context.

THE POSITION OF THE PRIYA NARMA SAKHA:

The priya-narma-sakhā knows the most intimate pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, covets the desire for Kṛṣṇa meeting the gopīs, and is the best among all the dear friends of Kṛṣṇa. In Gokula, Subala and Arjuna are priya-narma-sakhās. UN, 2.13

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There are also other quotes in UN describing some of Subala sakha's activities and how he is part of these intimate arrangements, but not directly involved with the sakhis per se, eg: he fans Radha and Kṛṣṇa while they are in Their private kunjā, but from outside via a mechanical arrangement. That sort of thing. Their experiences are more vicarious than direct.

DASYA AND SAKHYA RASA IN VAIDHI AND RAGANUGA

Does dasya and sakhya referred to in the nine processes of devotional service indicates service in those rasas?

The dasya mentioned in the verse by Prahlada Maharaja in Srimad Bhagavatam relates to one being dasa anudasa. It applies to our external mood of being servants of the parampara. It does not mean that rasa with Kṛṣṇa.

The same applies to sakhyam in that verse. It is not sakhya-rasa. It means thinking of Kṛṣṇa in your heart as your friend versus thinking of Him as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In other words, it's meant to help us transition from an aisvarya (awe and reverence related to His divinity) concept of God to a more personal and intimate mood of relating to Him while we traverse the path of bhakti.

How is "thinking of Kṛṣṇa in your heart as your friend " any different from sakhya-rasa.?

"The eighth anga of bhakti is serving as a friend (sakhyam), which includes the mood of kinship towards Kṛṣṇa with the endeavors for His well being. There are two kinds of sakhyam: friendship

in vaidhi-bhakti and friendship in raganuga-bhakti, but Sri Prahlada's sloka refers to vaidhanga-sakhyam; for example, the feeling of sakhyam while serving the Deity is vaidha-sakhyam."

...Because rāgānugā is independent of any injunctions, the dāsya and sakhya of rāgānugā are different from the dāsya and sakhya of vaidhī. BS, Anuccheda 310

AISVARYA RASA

Are Dwaraka and Mathura pure aisvarya rasa, like Vaikuntha?

In Brahma Samhita we learn that the center of the transcendental realm is Goloka. But within Goloka there is the very center which is Gokula - just like in the bhauma-lila, but no demons of course. Gokula is pure madhura, ie: sweetness, with no aisvarya. Surrounding Gokula in four quadrants is Goloka, where there is a bit of aisvarya present in the dealings and the predominating expansions are the first four Visnus, Vasudeva, Sankarsana, Aniruddha, and Pradhyumna. The pastimes there have no earthly counterpart - they are aprakata/unmanifest (BS, 5)

In Sanatan Goswami's Brhad-bhagavatamrta, we learn that Dvaraka and Mathura are above Vaikuntha and they are a mixture of madhura and aisvarya - not pure aisvarya. So those devotees are aware of Krsna's divinity but it doesn't predominate. Still, it doesn't facilitate the same level of intimacy seen in Gokula. Unlike the earthly pastimes, Krsna remains eternally in all 3 places simultaneously. He never leaves Gokula for extended periods so there is no separation like there is in Bhauma-lila.

Krsna has unlimited expansions specifically to manifest the unlimited facets of His personality and qualities. Each unique form is identical with the original form of Krsna, but those expansions do not exhibit the full extent of Krsna's qualities - only those which that particular form are intended to. Rama is non-different from Krsna, but He never manifests Vraja Krsna's specific features and we cannot say that Rama is the Lord of the gopis. That would be rasabhasa.

When the gopis went to Kuruksetra for the eclipse, they saw Dvaraka Krsna but they were not attracted to Him in the same way as Vraja Krsna, because He wasn't exhibiting the same unique features He did as a cowherd boy in Vraja.

Therefore, we can't use the "non-different" argument to justify that Dvaraka Krsna and Vraja Krsna are exactly the same. They are the same person but They are not exhibiting the same set of qualities nor the same types of pastimes. We can't mix these various forms together like that because it's rasabhasa.

The whole key to attaining one's desired goals in terms of a specific eternal relationship with Krsna is to gradually bring our contemplations and desires to an ever increasing intense level of focus. The more you want it the sooner you'll get it - ye yatha mam prapadyante...

In lieu of that understanding we should gradually refine our sadhana and bhajana to facilitate that in every way possible and avoid that which does not contribute to it.

IS DISCUSSING RASA INTELLECTUALIZING AN EMOTIONAL AFFAIR?

Jīva Gosvāmī describes rasa in his Bhakti-sandarbha. Notice the references to "the moods of natural

affection" and "according to one's taste". Those phrases clearly indicate that one's feelings and emotions are an integral part of this awakening. It is not purely intellectual:

For this reason we will now discuss rāgānugā-bhakti, the practice of devotion following in the wake of the moods of natural affection. When a person develops a taste for the aforesaid specific rāga (i.e., for any of the four primary rasas), even though that rāga itself has not arisen in her or him, the heart becomes like a crystal, shining as it reflects the rays of the moon of that rāga.

By hearing about this rāga from scripture or from one's teacher, one develops a taste for the actions of the rāgātmikā associates also, that are expressions of this rāgātmikā-bhakti. Then by adhering to the rāga of a particular associate of the Lord, according to one's taste, one executes devotion, which is called rāgānugā. BS, Anuccheda 310

ELIGIBILITY FOR BHAKTI

BRAHMA BHUTA PLATFORM AS PREREQUISITE FOR BHAKTI

Shouldn't one first be self-realised, on the platform of brahma bhuta, before advancing on the path of bhakti? In the gita, this platform is described because it is a necessary one to go through, isn't it/

In the Srimad Bhagavatam, it is stated :

akamah sarva-kamo va
moksha-kama udara-dhih
tivrena bhakti-yogena
yajeta purusham param

A person who has broader intelligence, whether he be full of all material desire, without any material desire, or desiring liberation, must by all means worship the supreme whole, the Personality of Godhead.

Brahman realization is not our goal. Liberation from the bodily platform is desirable for a devotee only because it helps in remembering Lord Krsna without interruption. There are many seekers who think that Brahman realization is the goal of meditation and yoga but it is not. A devotee is not interested in merging into the eternal Brahman because he is too busy enjoying the pleasure of rasa with Lord Krsna. This higher understanding of conscious development is rarely understood. In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krsna says that after many, many lifetimes of practicing jnana yoga, maybe one fortunate soul may come to bhakti.

In Krsna Coconsciousness, the liberation from bodily desires gradually comes as the taste for devotional service increases. When the glass is filling with milk, then other lesser liquids are forced out. Actually, in Krsna Consciousness, we see that desires are transformed. They are never extinguished. Just as when we place an iron rod in the fire, it becomes hot, hotter, hottest, so when desire is increased for Krsna, it makes us pure, purer, and purest.

There is no need to try for liberation separately from Krsna because there is a chance we will become enamored by liberation. Our process is to always remember Krsna and never forget Him, as per Rupa Goswamiipada.

In regard to the brahma bhuta verses in Bg, their presence does not prove it is a prerequisite to bhakti. Bg covers a broad base of spiritual knowledge as a foundational platform for beginning spiritual life. Lord Caitanya appeared in Kali Yuga to teach us the very specific process of sadhana-bhakti, ie: vaidhi, and more specifically, raganuga-bhakti. To do this, He personally instructed His followers, especially Rupa Goswami, who then codified His instructions with full references to SB and even BG, and delineated the actual recommended process that aspiring Vaisnavas should follow in this age.

This was done in Rupa Goswami's Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu, where we learn that there are 8 stages of progress in bhakti, ie: sraddha, sadhu-sanga, bhajana-kriya, anartha-nivritti, nistha, ruci, asakti, bhava and finally, prema. This is the systematic process that ALL Gaudiya Vaisnavas follow to attain the perfection of prema, ie: love of Krsna in the context of a specific personal relationship - dasya, sakhya, vatsalya or madhurya.

There is no other process or step by step method mentioned or recommended - that is it. And nowhere is brahman realization mentioned, nor the brahma-bhuta platform, because they do not factor into this system.

Visvanatha Chakravarti Thakura in Madhurya Kadambini, 8.12, also affirms that there is no brahman realization as part of this process:

Ahankara (false ego) is of two types:

- (1) consciousness of I – ahanta
- (2) consciousness of mine – mamatā

By jñāna these two are destroyed and liberation is attained. By directing these two towards the body (I am this body), a house (this is my house), and so on, bondage results.

I am a follower of the Lord. I am the servant of the Lord. The Lord with His associates, an ocean of sweetness with His form, qualities and pastimes, is to be served by me. If one thinks in this way, identifying oneself as the Lord's servant and making the Lord along with His associates the object of one's possession, it is called prema. Prema is in this way distinct from both bondage and liberation, and is properly called the crown jewel of all human goals.

There is a sequence in this...

When the materialistic aspect of ahanta and mamatā is extremely deep, one remains fixed in the cycle of birth and death.

When by good fortune, a particle of faith is born (śraddhā) and one thinks of becoming a Vaiṣṇava and serving the Lord, the materialistic aspect becomes slightly spiritualized (gandha) and the jīva becomes qualified for devotional service (bhakti).

At the stage of sādhu saṅga, the spiritualization becomes more condensed and his material attachments are ātyantikī (thorough).

At the stage of unsteady bhajana-kriyā (sādhana-bhakti), the spiritualization of I and mine is specific, localized in one place, whereas the material aspect is still in full force (pūrṇa).

At the stage of niṣṭhā, spiritualization becomes detectable in many places, and the materialistic influence is still prominent (prāyikī).

At the stage of ruci, spiritualization of I and mine becomes dominant, nearing completion (prāyikī) and the materialistic concept of I and mine becomes localized in certain issues.

At the stage of āsakti, the spiritual aspect of I and mine becomes complete (pūrṇa) and the material aspect becomes a trace (gandha).

At the stage of bhāva, the spiritual aspect becomes thorough (ātyantikī) and the material aspect becomes like an empty shadow.

At the stage of prema, the spiritual aspect becomes extremely intense (param-ātyantikī) and the material aspect is completely absent. MK, 8.12

Furthermore, bhakti is not dependent on the performer being on the platform of brahma-bhuta, because its nature is that it is completely “independent”, “causeless” and “uninterrupted by obstacles”

Sripad Vishvanatha Cakravartipad in his Madhury Kadambini:

tasya bhagavata iva tad rupaya bhakter api svaprakasatasiddhyartham eva hetutvanapekshata.
tathahi 'yato bhaktir adhokshaje ahaitukyapratihata' ityadau hetum vinaivavirbhavatiti tatrarthah.
tathaiva 'yadicchaya mat kathadau' 'mad bhaktim ca yadicchaya' 'yadicchayaivopacita'
ityadavapi yadicchayetyasya svacchandenetyarthah. yadiccha svairitetyabhidhanat

TRANSLATION: The self-manifesting eternal energy of the Lord, bhakti, being nondifferent from the Lord, is not dependent on any other cause. Srimad-Bhagavata (1.2.6) describes the independent appearance of bhakti, “Devotional service to Lord Adhokshaja, who is beyond the senses of all human beings, is the best of all religions because such devotion is causeless and uninterrupted by obstacles.” Similarly, the words of the Lord, “by chance if one attains faith in hearing My glories,” “by chance if one attains bhakti,” “by chance if bhakti manifests” refer to the Lord’s independent will. The word yadiccha means independent will. The dictionary also mentions yadiccha as spontaneous or self-will.

Furthermore, the following verses explain how brahma bhuta realization is not required for bhakti unless one is performing bhakti with the aim of sayuja mukti:

If you are not able to free your mind from all material disturbances and cannot absorb it completely in Brahman, then perform all your activities as an offering to me, without enjoying the fruits. SB, 11.11.22

Visvanatha Chakravarti Thakura's commentary:

The antaḥkaraṇa becomes purified by niṣkāma-karma offered to me. With a pure antaḥkaraṇa one can practice jñāna with a mixture of bhakti: one can concentrate with fixed mind on Brahman. With the destruction of vidyā, one attains bhakti, which surpasses vidyā.

brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā na śocati na kāṅkṣatisamaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu mad-bhaktiṁ labhate
parām

Having attained the state of Brahman, being a pure soul, he does not lament at the loss of what he has attained nor does he desire what he has not attained, and looks upon all beings as equal. He then manifests pure bhakti. BG 18.54

By that bhakti, one then meditates on me with a mind free of contamination. By the pure knowledge arising from that bhakti one then attains sāyujya-mukti. This is the sequence. If someone cannot ascend to the fourth stage of concentrating on Brahman with fixed mind, inferring impurity in the antaḥkaraṇa, one should again perform niṣkāma-karma offered to me for purification. He speaks to Uddhava. One should offer all karmas—daily, periodic and those for renounced persons—to me.

Then the next verse and part of the commentary:

A person with natural faith should constantly hear topics about me, should sing and remember my topics which purify the world, and enact my exploits and birth. He should perform dharma, kāma and artha as service to me. Having taken shelter of me, he will attain permanent bhakti to me, whose form is permanent. SB, 11.11.23-24

From Visvanatha Chakravarti Thakura's commentary:

Having described jñāna-yoga in four and half verses, Kṛṣṇa now describes bhakti-yoga until SB 11.12.15. The ending on śraddhāluḥ indicates a natural faith. This excludes mixture of jñāna or karma. Placing this word at the beginning indicates that such natural faith is the qualification for bhakti. It will be said:

If by unexpected association with devotees one develops faith in my topics, such a person, being neither very disgusted with nor attached to material life, he is qualified for bhakti and will achieve perfection. SB 11.20.8

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.

THE ROLE OF JNANA IN BHAKTI

Is jnana a prerequisite for bhakti?

Only bhakti is required for bhakti:

"One can understand the Supreme Personality as He is only by devotional service. And when one is in full consciousness of the Supreme Lord by such devotion, he can enter into the kingdom of God."

It is also said that even a vedic scholar cannot understand a devotee who has ecstatic love. The Mahabharata also stipulates that

"Dry arguments are inconclusive...Simply by studying the Vedas, which are variegated, one cannot come to the right path by which religious principles are understood. The solid truth of religious principles is hidden in the heart of an unadulterated, self-realized person..."

From MK, First Shower:

It is seen that the accomplishment of results on the paths of jnana, karma and yoga etc are completely dependent on bhakti, whereas the accomplishment of the result of the practice of bhakti, which is prema, is never dependent on jnana, karma or yoga. Rather it is understood that the purity of bhakti is destroyed by the touch of these elements.

"The necessity of internal purity for practice of jnana yoga is well known. Jnana yoga is moreover dependent on karma yoga for one may enter jnana yoga only with a heart purified of material desires."

On the other hand, one on the path of bhakti, though afflicted by lust, has the qualification to begin the practice, and just by the practice of bhakti, lust and other impurities are destroyed.

Is jnana therefore irrelevant?

It is important to have a solid foundation in the sastra that underlies the process of raganuga, just to make sure that we are very clear on how the process works, what are the qualifications, what are the transformations we will be experiencing along the way, etc, etc.

We want to carefully avoid speculation and concoction, so it behooves everyone to at least study what the acaryas have given us so we are at least fully "aware" of the scope of their instructions.

THE ROLE OF VAIRAGYA IN BHAKTI

If a person has a taste for worshipping the Lord, even if he has strong material attractions, those attractions will be for the most part destroyed during sādhanā without resorting to vairāgya. BRS, 1.2.254

Jīva Gosvāmī's Commentary:

Previously, vairāgya was condemned at the beginning of bhakti because it causes the heart to become hard. However, if vairāgya is forbidden, the person practicing bhakti will be filled with material desires, and having such desires is against the scriptures, for it is said:

The person absorbed in material enjoyment is far from being absorbed in Kṛṣṇa. How can a person going east catch an object moving to the west? Viṣṇu Purāṇa

To answer this dilemma, the author (Rūpa Gosvāmī) supplies this verse. Having a taste for bhakti will destroy the attachment to material objects. Thus, the hardness of heart caused by practice of vairāgya will not take place, and still detachment will manifest. At the stage of ruci or taste for bhakti, material attraction will be destroyed for the most part. The meaning is that it will be completely destroyed with the maturation of bhakti.

ELIGIBILITY FOR RAGANUGA:

DEFINITION

For this reason we will now discuss rāgānugā-bhakti, the practice of devotion following in the wake of the moods of natural affection. When a person develops a taste for the aforesaid specific rāga [i.e., any of the four major rasas], even though that rāga itself has not arisen in her or him, the heart becomes like a crystal, shining as it reflects the rays of the moon of that rāga.

By hearing about this rāga from scripture or from one's teacher, one develops a taste for the actions of the rāgatmika associates also, that are expressions of this rāgatmika-bhakti. Then by adhering to the rāga of a particular associate of the Lord, according to one's taste, one executes devotion, which is called rāgānugā. BS, Anuccheda 310

QUALIFICATION- LOBHA

Rūpa Gosvāmī explains the qualification for rāgānugā-bhakti in Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu:

The qualification for rāgānugā-bhakti is as follows:

That person who is greedy for attaining a bhāva similar to that of the inhabitants of Vraja – who are fixed solely in rāgatmikā-bhakti – is qualified for rāgānugā-bhakti. BRS, 1.2.291

The appearance of that greed (lobha) is indicated when the intelligence does not depend on rules of scripture and logic, after realizing to some degree the sweetness of their (the inhabitants of Vraja) love through the process of hearing from the scriptures. BRS, 1.2.292

Jīva Gosvāmī's commentary:

When a person realizes to some degree the sweetness of the love and activities of the inhabitants of Vraja through hearing from the scriptures, such as the Bhāgavatam, which describe these siddha devotees, his intelligence may develop disregard for the injunctions of scripture and logic, though logic is certainly employed.

Viśvanātha Cakravartī's commentary:

One can infer that greed has arisen in the person from recognizing this symptom. Nevertheless, it is not possible to say that the condition described is the real essence of that greed, because that greed does not always include disregard for scriptural injunctions and logic as a necessary component.

Viśvanātha Cakravartī elaborates on this verse after quoting it in Rāga-vartma-candrikā:

"Sri Rupa Goswami has personally given the following definition of lobha: When the heart yearns for the sweetness of the moods of Krishna and His eternal associates in Vraja, and one is not prompted by scriptural injunctions or logical arguments, then that is the definition of sacred

greed. If one thinks “let such greed arise in me also”, after hearing about moods such as the transcendental conjugal mood toward Krishna of His associates the gopis in Vraja, then one need not wait for suitable sanctions from the revealed scriptures or logical arguments.

If such impetuses are there, then it cannot be justly called lobha. This greed never arises in anyone on such basis, nor does the candidate ever consider whether he is qualified for the path of raganuga bhakti or not. Rather, simply after hearing about the subject matter, or seeing it, that greed will arise in him

. RVC, 1.5

“The vraja-vasis’ sentiments for Krishna are the most exalted and the most exceptional example of ragatmika-bhakti. Such sentiments cannot be seen anywhere other than Vraja. The fortunate soul who develops the greed to attain sentiments for Krishna such as those displayed by the vraja-vasis has the adhikari or is the rightful candidate for raganuga-bhakti. Despite having heard about the sweetness of such sentiments, one cannot enter into them until one becomes ‘greedy’ for them. The sole cause of the qualification for the practice of raganuga-bhakti is this spiritual greed, not careful study of the scriptures and the skilful use of logic.” Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu 1.2.291-292

Vrajanatha: Who has the adhikāra (qualification) for rāgamayi bhakti?

Bābāji: Vaidhī-śraddhā bestows the adhikāra for vaidhī-bhakti, and similarly, lobhamayi śraddhā (faith imbued with greed for Kṛṣṇa’s vraja-līlā) bestows the adhikāra for rāgamayi bhakti. The bhāva of the vraja-vāsīs towards Kṛṣṇa is the supreme example of rāgātmikā-bhakti. One who has the great fortune to have greed (lobha) to obtain the same bhāva as the vraja-vāsīs have towards Kṛṣṇa has the adhikāra for rāgānugā-bhakti.

Vrajanatha: What are the symptoms of such lobha?

Bābāji: When one hears about the intensely sweet bhāvas of the vraja-vāsīs, one’s intelligence begins to consider how one may enter into those dealings. That desire is the symptom that lobha has awakened.

A person who has the adhikāra for vaidhī-bhakti tests everything on the platform of intelligence, knowledge of śāstra, and reasoning; and when he hears kṛṣṇa-kathā, he only accepts it if these three support it.

However, there is no such consideration in rāga-mārga, for intelligence, knowledge of śāstra, and reasoning are not desired on this path. All that is needed is the greed for the sentiments of the vraja-vāsīs: “What are the sweet bhāvas of the vraja-vāsīs towards Kṛṣṇa? Is it possible for me to obtain such bhāvas? How can this be obtained?”

This intense yearning is the symptom of greed, and one who does not have it does not have the adhikāra for rāgānugā-bhakti. This you should understand. JD, Chapter 21

lobhe vraja-vāsira bhāve kare anugati
śāstra-yukti nāhi māne — rāgānugāra prakṛti

Having a strong desire for the relationships of the vraja-vasis, one never thinks in terms of scriptural reasoning - that is the nature of raganuga.

tat-tad-bhāvādi-mādhurye
śrute dhīr yaḍ apekṣate
nātra śāstram na yuktim ca
tal lobhotpatti-lakṣaṇam

When one hears about the sweet relationships (of the devotees of Vraja) — ones intelligence no longer depends on scriptures or arguments, that is the characteristic of the rise of covetousness (for those bhavas).CC, Madhya 22.155-156

SRILA PRABHUPADA ON LOBHA

If this is so important, then why Srila Prabhupada didn't write about it?

This is the teaching of all great devotees, especially Lord Caitanya. In other words, one should learn how to cry for the Lord. One should learn this small technique, and he should be very eager and actually cry to become engaged in some particular type of service.

This is called laulyam, and such tears are the price for the highest perfection. If one develops this laulyam, or excessive eagerness for meeting and serving the Lord in a particular way, that is the price to enter into the kingdom of God. Otherwise, there is no material calculation for the value of the ticket by which one can enter the kingdom of God. The only price for such entrance is this laulyam lalasaṁyā, or desire and great eagerness. NOD, p 75.

IS FREEDOM FROM DESIRES/ANARTHAS REQUIRED?

Shouldn't one first one must become free from desires?

One of the core attributes of jivas that they inherited from Kṛṣṇa is that they are full of desires. Desires focused on the bodily platform keep us entangled and insure the creation of a new physical body. Similarly, desires focused on our relationship with Kṛṣṇa and the associated lilas are the driving force that propels us toward that goal, and which bring about the manifestation of our eternal identity and spiritual body.

There is no possibility of ever being "free from all desires". We can become free from all "material" desires, but only when we are filled with spiritual desires, specifically related to our desired relationship with Kṛṣṇa.

Shouldn't one first become free at least of all unwanted desires- anarthas?

Those are called practitioners (sadhaka) who have developed rati for Krishna and are qualified to see Krishna directly, but who have not completely extinguished the anarthas. BRS 2.1.276

Actually, anarthas may be present all the way up to and including bhava:

“In spite of the fact that bhava or rati has appeared (utpanna-ratayah), the obstacles have not completely dissipated. Such persons are therefore classed as sadhakas. “Not having extinguished all obstacles (samyak-nairvighnyam anupagatah)” means that there still remains a trace of some serious aparadha, because the effects of aparadha are very strong and long-lasting. In this condition, with even a trace of aparadha that generates suffering, sadhya-bhakti cannot appear.” VCT commentary to BRS 2.1.276

ELIGIBILITY FROM POINT OF DIKSA

Śrī Viśvanātha continues his discussion on lobha in Rāga-vartma-candrikā, 1.6 confirming that one may enter the path of rāgānugā-bhakti even from the beginning stage of accepting a guru:

Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself describes in Śrīmad-bhāgavatam, 11.14.26, how the devotee on the path of greed advances and becomes more purified 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:

DOES MERCY MEAN PHYSICAL PRESENCE?

One first needs the mercy of a raganuga devotee.

There are two causes for the appearance of greed:

- (1) the mercy of Kṛṣṇa
- (2) the mercy of another anurāgi devotee

There are again two kinds of mercy bestowed by a devotee:

- (1) mercy bestowed by a rāgānugā devotee in a previous life – praktana
- (2) mercy bestowed by a rāgānugā devotee in the present birth – adhunika

FAST-TRACKING ELIGIBILITY

Is there anything that can facilitate the arousal of such greed?

If one does not have lobha then one should first understand its importance and relevance and then one should beg for it on a regular basis. If your goal is to enter Kṛṣṇa's Vraja pastimes then you need to understand this knowledge. That is the reason this knowledge should be understood correctly. Here is what Ramananda Raya told Lord Caitanya:

Pure devotional service in Kṛṣṇa consciousness (kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa-bhāvitā) cannot be had even by pious activity in hundreds and thousands of lives. It can be attained only by paying one price – that is, intense greed (lālyam) to obtain it. If it is available somewhere, one must purchase it without delay. CC, 2.8.70

When lobha manifests, will Kṛṣṇa direct his devotee toward all the information needed?

That is absolutely correct. Raganuga is the path of mercy so if the mercy comes in the form of lobha, more is on the way. It stands to reason that the gift of lobha will not likely be bestowed on one who is not going to act upon it with full sincerity and determination. Viśvanātha Cakravartī explains the incredible potency of lobha in Rāga-vartma-candrikā:

In Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi it is said that, “those who are especially attracted to the mood of the vraja-vāsīs and thus, perform rāgānugā-bhakti, will attain that abundance of eagerness that is needed for performing rāgānugā-bhajana and will take birth in Vraja in groups of one, two or three at the same time.” Here the word anurāgaugha means “that eagerness that makes one qualified for doing rāgānugā-bhajana”. RVC, 2.7

THE IMPORTANCE OF LILA

Thus being “attracted to the mood of the vraja-vasis” is a prerequisite for the eagerness (lobha) necessary to pursue the goal. Of course, such attraction is aroused by lila srvanam, kirtanam and smaranam:

“Do not neglect the practice of lila-smarana, hold it as the essence of the body and the mind.”
“The very life of the mind is smarana, the abode of all sweetness, and the essence of smarana is the vilasa of Radha-Krishna. That is the sadhya (perfection), that is the sadhana (method of practice), and there is nothing apart from this. This truth is the essence of all principles of devotion.” (Prema Bhakti Candrika 14, 61)

“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.” (SB 11.14.26)

In the association of pure devotees, discussion of the pastimes and activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is very pleasing and satisfying to the ear and the heart. By cultivating such knowledge one gradually becomes advanced on the path of liberation, and thereafter he is freed, and his attraction becomes fixed. Then real devotion and devotional service begin.
SB 3.25.25

Just as anointing the eyes with salve gives them the power to see even subtle objects, similarly, when the jīva’s heart is cleansed by the śravaṇa and kīrtana of My supremely purifying līlā-kathā, he gains the ability to realize extremely subtle tattva, namely, the truth about My svarūpa (nature) and My līlās. SB, 11.14.26

When the eyes are treated with ointment, they can see much more clearly. In just the same way, a jīva can realize the transcendental nature of the manifest kṛṣṇa-līlā to the extent that he is purified by contact with the transcendental reality through śravaṇa, kīrtana and smaraṇa of kṛṣṇa-līlā-kathā. JD, Chapter 40, Pages 862-863

The independent activities of the Lord however, are for the benefit of the devotee. To show mercy to the devotees the Lord performs such pastimes. A person who has taken a human body, on hearing these pastimes, becomes completely dedicated to the Lord. The pastimes have a power like that of jewels, mantras or herbs so that they produce complete dedication to the Lord. They do not create sinful effects.

...Thus, just from hearing constantly and becoming addicted to any topics of Kṛṣṇa, one attains perfection, and if one hears topics of the rāsa-līlā one attains even higher perfection. One should always hear and become addicted to the five chapters on rāsa-līlā. UN, 3.27, commentary

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

However, in the beginning of raganuga, lila smaranam may not be possible:

True, 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 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 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 manishibhih.”

Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu, 1.295 commentary by Srila Vishwanath Chakravarti

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.

GUIDANCE

After attaining such greed, what should one do?

When the devotee has greed for practicing rāgānugā, he should inquire from his guru. The guru, after examining the devotee's taste, will determine his particular type of worship and teach him all about his spiritual body.

According to this revelation, the devotee aspiring for prema should live near the guru in order to obtain all knowledge of the subject, and then, residing in his own place, he should with great effort and eagerness, practice his worship. (Caitanya-siksamrita)

"For practice of both types of bhakti, the bona fide guru is necessary. The guru engages the

candidate of vaidhi bhakti according to his inclinations. He teaches what rules to observe and how to eliminate the obstacles. The guru shows the candidate of raganuga bhakti how to cultivate suitable rasa corresponding to the disciple's natural taste.

There are two types of taste of greed: temporary and natural. Sometimes devotees hear about the qualities of Nanda or Subala, derive great bliss and sometimes show similar sentiments, but this bliss and the show of sentiments are short-lived. This is called temporary greed. There is no use in such a show. It is necessary for the guru to carefully examine which rasa -dasya, sakhya, vatsalya or madhura-gives natural greed. Detecting ones natural sentiment, the guru will give teachings according to that mood. If this is not done, then the instructed mood will not be permanent, due to the unsuitability to the disciple. It should be noted that not all seekers will be qualified for madhura rasa. If a guru finds it impossible for him to decide the rasa of the disciple, he will honestly admit his inability to the disciple and direct him to approach a suitable guru. The disciple has no alternative but to take shelter of the lotus feet of the bona fide guru." Mahaprabhura Siksa chp 10

CAUSES OF LOBHA

What causes the appearance of such spiritual greed?

There are two causes for the appearance of greed:

- (1) the mercy of Kṛṣṇa
- (2) the mercy of another anurāgi devotee

There are again two kinds of mercy bestowed by a devotee:

- (1) mercy bestowed by a rāgānugā devotee in a previous life – praktana
- (2) mercy bestowed by a rāgānugā devotee in the present birth – adhunika

The praktana devotee takes shelter of the lotus feet of a rāgānugā 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 (BRS, 1.2.309): “The only causes of the appearance of greed are the mercy of Kṛṣṇa or His devotee. Therefore, some call the path of rāgānugā-bhakti, pusti mārga (the path of mercy).” RVC, 1.6

Śrī Viśvanātha continues his discussion on lobha in Rāga-vartma-candrikā, confirming that one may enter the path of rāgānugā-bhakti even from the beginning stage of accepting a guru:

Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself describes in Śrīmad-bhāgavatam, 11.14.26, how the devotee on the path of greed advances and becomes more purified 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 more one is able to discern the subtle reality of the self, just as the eye is better able to perceive subtle things when it is treated with medicinal ointment.” RVC, 1.8

RAGANUGA

DEFINITION

"Persons desiring to follow in the footsteps of such eternal devotees of the Lord as the Vrsnis and the Vrindavana denizens are called raganuga devotees, which means that they are trying to attain to the perfection of those devotees. These raganuga devotees don't follow the regulative principles of devotional service very strictly, but by spontaneous nature they become attracted to some of the eternal devotees such as Nanda or Yasoda, and they try to follow in their footsteps spontaneously. There is a gradual development of the ambition to become like a particular devotee, and this activity is called raganuga."

Remembering the Vrindavana form of Krsna and His dear associates who have inclinations for service similar to one's own, absorbing oneself in hearing topics related to them, one should always live in Vraja. BRS, 1.2.294

“We should take the shelter and surrender unto the Brijwasi-devotee who is dear to Sri Krishna, and craving to get the same bhava as that devotee, we should constantly perform seva in our sadhaka-swarup (externally) and in our siddha-swarup (mentally).”
(Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu, 1.295)

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. ‘Preshtha’ (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.

QUALIFICATIONS

Is bhava bhakti a prerequisite for being eligible to follow any ragatmika parikar?

This excerpt from Bhakti-sandarbhā makes it clear that following the ragatmika parikar happens in the stage of practice, not perfection, which is bhava:

For this reason we will now discuss rāgānugā-bhakti, the practice of devotion following in the wake of the moods of natural affection. When a person develops a taste for the aforesaid specific rāga (i.e., for any of the four primary rasas), even though that rāga itself has not arisen in her or him, the heart becomes like a crystal, shining as it reflects the rays of the moon of that rāga.

By hearing about this rāga from scripture or from one's teacher, one develops a taste for the actions of the rāgātmikā associates also, that are expressions of this rāgātmikā-bhakti. Then by adhering to the rāga of a particular associate of the Lord, according to one's taste, one executes devotion, which is called rāgānugā. BS, Anuccheda 310

From Jaiva Dharma:

Vrajanātha: What is the process of rāgānugā-bhakti?

Bābājī: The sādḥaka who has developed greed towards the beautiful service mood (sevā) of a particular vraja-vāsī always remembers and meditates on his sevā to that personality. He is absorbed in the mutual pastimes of his beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa with that vraja-vāsī, and he constantly resides in Vraja, either physically or within the mind, having greed to obtain his or her bhāva.

He follows that vraja-vāsī's example, and always renders sevā in two ways: Externally, he serves as a practicing sādḥaka, and internally he renders sevā with the bhāvas of his siddha-deha. This is the process of rāgānugā-bhakti.

“Greed to obtain that bhava” means that bhava has not yet arisen, and one follows the ragatmika parikar in order to attain it.

RAGANUGA AND RAGATMIKA BHAKTI

In the sadhana stage, aren't we following raganuga sadhana bhakti displayed by a ragatmika parikar (such as Rupa Goswami), rather than following a ragatmika bhakti (such as Rupa Manjari).

The answer is given by Babaji in Jaiva Dharma:

Bābājī: The sādḥaka who has developed greed towards the beautiful service mood (sevā) of a particular vraja-vāsī always remembers and meditates on his sevā to that personality.

Rupa Manjari is such a vraja-vasi directly displaying ragatmika bhakti. Externally, however, one serves personalities such as Rupa Goswami. This happens simultaneously:

‘Sadhaka-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 sadhaka-body we should serve following the instructions of the Goswamis such as Sri Rupa and Sanatana. (BRS 1.2.295, commentary by Visvanatha Chakravarti Thakura)

This signifies that in siddha-swarup we should perform seva mentally under the guidance of Sri Radha, Lalita, Vishakha, and Sri Rupa-manjari, while in sadhaka body we should do seva under the subjugation of the Brijwasis such as Sri Rupa and Sanatana. 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.”

Alternative translation

One should follow after the dear devotees of Kṛṣṇa such as Rādhā, Lalitā, Viśākhā, Śrī Rūpa-mañjarī and those following after them – persons such as Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs. Accordingly, one should perform mental service (mānasi-sevā) in one's siddha-rūpa, following after the examples of Śrī Rādhā, Lalitā, Viśākhā, Śrī Rūpa-mañjarī and others.

In one's physical body, one should perform services using one's body, following after persons such as Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs situated in Vraja.

Because of following after the rāgātmikās, those practicing rāgānugā-bhakti practice bhakti with no limitations. BRS, 1.2.293 From Jīva Gosvāmī's commentary:

EXTERNAL BAD BEHAVIOR/SIN

If some apparent fault is seen in a person who has developed real bhāva, one should not be hostile to him, because he has accomplished the goal in all respects. BRS, 1.3.59

From Jīva Gosvāmī's Commentary:

There may be some external bad conduct, but one should not be hostile to him, because by having bhāva the person cannot be contaminated by those external actions. Thus, it is said:

Whether one is pure or contaminated, and regardless of one's external situation, simply by remembering the lotus-eyed Personality of Godhead, one can cleanse one's internal and external existence. Garuda Purāṇa

This person cannot be criticized, because he has accomplished the goal – he has attained bhāva.

Thus, it is said in the Narasiṃha Purāṇa: A person who is dedicated completely to the Lord may show externally, serious contamination (but internally he is pure). The full moon, though marked by the figure of a rabbit, is never overcome by darkness. BRS, 1.3.60

Jīva Gosvāmī's Commentary:

A person may show serious contamination. This means that it is seen externally that he performs forbidden activities. However, he shines with internal bhakti, which cannot be defeated by anyone (he is incomparable). A particular case, the moon, is introduced to support the general principle. This is called arthantara-nyāsa. In the Hari-vaṁśa, it is said:

The dark spot on the moon is called a rabbit. Though there is a fault in the beauty of the moon, that fault is only superficial.

THE SANKIRTAN MOVEMENT AND RAGANUGA

We are a sankirtan movement for saving souls lost in maya. Isn't raganuga is for the bhajanandis?

Actually raganuga-bhakti is specifically what Lord Caitanya, the initiator of the sankirtan movement, came to teach us through His representatives like the Six Gosvamis, etc.

The Lord's desire to appear was born from two reasons: the Lord wanted to taste the sweet essence of the mellows of love of God, and He wanted to propagate devotional service in the world on the

platform of spontaneous attraction (raga-marga-bhakti). Thus He is known as supremely jubilant and as the most merciful of all. CC, 1.4.16

[Lord Kṛṣṇa thought:] “All the universe is filled with the conception of My majesty, but love weakened by that sense of majesty does not satisfy Me. CC, 1.4.17

“If one regards Me as the Supreme Lord and himself as a subordinate, I do not become subservient to his love, nor can it control Me. CC, 1.4.18

“In whatever transcendental mellow (rasa) My devotee worships Me, I reciprocate with him. That is My natural behavior. CC, 1.4.19

““In whatever way My devotees surrender unto Me, I reward them accordingly. Everyone follows My path in all respects, O son of Pṛthā.’ CC, 1.4.20

“Then, by hearing about the pure love of the residents of Vraja, devotees will worship Me on the path of spontaneous love (raga-marga), abandoning all rituals of religiosity and fruitive activity.” CC, 1.4.33

SRI CHAITANYA'S TEACHING OF RAGA MARG

If raganuga-bhakti is specifically what Lord Caitanya came to teach, then why did he instruct Sanatana Goswami to write Hari Bhakti Vilasa?

Lord Chaitanya did that to spread a wider net that would include everyone, just like Kṛṣṇa did in BG: "If you can't do this, then do that, etc" He also did it to somewhat appease those devotees who were more rule based. He did not instruct it as an equal path.

Rupa Goswami who was instructed to put Sri Mahaprabhu's teachings in written form, is known as the rasa acarya- rasa is of course only tasted in the higher levels of raganuga:

“If Srila Rupa Goswami had not appeared in Kali-yuga, who would have opened the great storehouse of Vraja-prema and distributed its contents freely? Just as a swan separates milk from water, who else could have separated the rasas to taste them? Abandoning everything, he performed bhajana in Vrindavan and wrote his rasika literatures. He lived like a bee taking the nectar of lotuses. Who could have understood the nectar he was collecting? Who could have understood Krishna’s pastimes in Mathura and Vrindavan? How could we have known the sweet vraja-lilas and the love between Radha and Madhava (another name of Sri Krishna, meaning the husband or beloved of the supreme goddess of fortune)? By the mercy of his lotus feet, all can sing about and attain such divine bliss. The surrendered Madhava Das is always praying to embrace Sri Rupa’s glories.”

(Yadi kali rūpa śārīra na dharata, by Madhava Das)

SRILA PRABHUPADA ON THE NEED FOR RAGANUGA

Prabhupada: "So prākṛta stage is pratyakṣa knowledge, direct perception, and knowledge received from paramparā. Pratyakṣa, parokṣa, then aparokṣa, self-realization, then adhokṣaja, aprākṛta. So

Kṛṣṇa consciousness is aprākṛta knowledge. It is the topmost platform of knowing Kṛṣṇa, aprākṛta knowledge. So, so long we are up to the adhokṣaja knowledge, that is regulative principles. We have to follow the regulative principles strictly. And aprākṛta knowledge is for the paramahaṁsa. There is... That is called rāga-bhakti. In these stages, pratyakṣa, parokṣa, they are called vidhi-bhakti. But without vidhi-bhakti, you cannot reach to the platform of rāga-bhakti, although that is our aim. Rāgānugā, rāga-bhakti is executed following the footprints of the devotees in Vṛndāvana. That is called rāga-bhakti. Kṛṣṇa's personal associates. Not to become directly Kṛṣṇa's personal associate, but following the footprints of Kṛṣṇa's eternal associates, we can come to the stage of rāga-bhakti. That is called parā-bhakti. That parā-bhakti is required." Prabhupada Lecture on SB 3.26.35-36 -- Bombay, January 12, 1975

RAGA THE ONLY ENTRANCE INTO VRAJA

In CC, Madhya Lila, in the last part of 22, Lord Chaitanya instructs Sanatana Goswami on the details of raganuga and the superiority of that path, being the only entrance into Vraja. The same can be found in the following verses.

vaidhi-raganuga-marga-bhedena 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-bhaktye 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-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.”

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.”

This makes it very clear that Lord Chaitanya did come to teach raganuga.

EXTERNAL SYMPTOMS OF RAGANUGA

Shouldn't spontaneous attachment be quite noticeable in individual? Like a hungry man, spontaneously drawn towards food. If that pull is not present, then how can one claim to have spontaneous attraction? Would it not be simply imagined?”

The spontaneity of raganuga-bhakti takes place primary within - not necessarily externally. One continues with the angas that are common to vaidhi-bhakti but internally he/she is at a different stage because he/she has realized that they want to serve Krsna in a particular relationship. So they "begin the practice" of raganuga-bhakti.

Raganuga involves sadhana and bhajana and there are stages of progress therein. You don't just jump immediately to prema.

Those who are not yet qualified as such cannot understand the position of those who are, and thus, they wrongly speculate that such devotees are "imagining" that they are qualified. That's par for the course. You cannot tell who is qualified for raganuga simply by examining their external behavior.

It is not appropriate for those who are qualified for raganuga to be open or brag about it and thus they typically limit their discussions to the principles and concepts of raganuga-bhakti.

From Caitanya-siksamrita, chapter 4, Raganuga-bhakti:

That person who becomes greedy to attain the emotional state in which the ragatmika devotees serve Krsna is qualified for raganuga bhakti. Raganuga bhakti includes all the same angas as vaidhi bhakti, but the devotee of raganuga bhakti performs those activities with a spontaneous mood rather than by rule.

The conditioned soul living in the world must necessarily carry out physical, mental and social activities to maintain his body. Those rules mentioned in the discussion of vaidhi bhakti, which serve to keep the devotee on the path of devotion and prevent him from becoming materially contaminated, must also be followed by the practitioners of raganuga bhakti.

The practice of raganuga is internal, so what external rules should the person follow? If the person does not accept all the necessary rules of vaidhi bhakti which serve to make him fit for practicing internally, he will finish his life untimely or revert to material life, and reduce his propensity for raga.

If the manner of cultivating devotion is not accepted in full, internal practice cannot be maintained or grow. Though interest in raganuga may grow, the angas of bhakti, such as hearing and chanting should not be given up.

Just as in vaidhi bhakti the rules of naitika dharma mature and change shape, so also in raganuga bhakti the rules of vaidhi bhakti change slightly in emotional content and display some independent qualities.

In some circumstances the rules change slightly, and in other cases, they transform entirely. This will be apparent from observing the conduct of the devotee. These changes do not arise from scripture, but according to the taste of the individual, and thus examples are hard to give. Examples can only be given for vaidhi bhakti.

Examples of favorable use of the physical body during raganuga sadhana are evident in these verses from BRS:

Following after the inhabitants of Vraja, one should perform service in one's physical body (sādhaka-rūpa) and in one's siddha body (siddha-rūpa), with a desire for a particular bhāva [of a Vraja associate - vraja-lokānusārataḥ]. BRS, 1.2.295

From Jīva Gosvāmī's commentary:

Sādhaka-rūpa refers to the physical body of the practitioner. Siddha-rūpa refers to the body which is suitable for one's desired service, and which has been developed by internal meditation. (siddha-rūpeṇa antas-cintitabhiṣṭa-tat-sevopayogi-dehena) One serves with a desire for the particular bhāva or rati of an associate of Kṛṣṇa situated in Vraja.

From Viśvanātha Cakravartī's commentary:

One performs service with the sādhaka-rūpa – the present body – and with the siddha-rūpa – the body which is suitable for serving Vraja Kṛṣṇa in the particular type of rati or bhāva one desires, and which appears through inner contemplation, with a desire for a particular rati directed to one's beloved Kṛṣṇa situated in Vṛndāvana.

One should follow after the dear devotees of Kṛṣṇa such as Rādhā, Lalitā, Viśākhā, Śrī Rūpamañjarī and those following after them – persons such as Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs. Accordingly, one should perform mental service (mānasi-sevā) in one's siddha-rūpa, following after the examples of Śrī Rādhā, Lalitā, Viśākhā, Śrī Rūpa-mañjarī and others. In one's physical body, one should perform services using one's body, following after persons such as Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs situated in Vraja.

Viśvanātha Cakravartī provides additional clarification of this verse in Rāga-vartma-candrikā, and he repeats virtually the same explanation in his Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu-bindhu:

Living with the sādhaka-rūpa means in the physical body of the practicing devotee, and the siddha-rūpa means one's own desired mentally conceived spiritual body, that is suitable for direct transcendental service to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Tad-bhāva-lipsunā means being eager to attain the glistening conjugal moods towards Kṛṣṇa, of one's favorite devotees in that mood, like Śrīmatī Rādhārānī and the gopīs. How to serve? With paraphernalia that are collected either mentally (in siddha-rūpa) or physically (in sādhaka-rūpa).

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 who lived in Vraja, and in the mentally conceived spiritual body one follows in the footsteps of Śrīmatī Rūpa-mañjarī and the other eternal associates of Kṛṣṇa. RVC, 1.11

NO SEPARATE EFFORT NEEDED FOR RAGANUGA

"We do not have to make a separate "effort" to evoke sentiments which will sprout naturally on their own in the heart, by the mercy of Sri Guru & Sri Gauranga, when the time is ripe." Is such a belief correct?

This is another big misconception held by many devotees, ie: that we shouldn't make any 'separate effort' to advance towards being qualified for raganuga, ie: to desire the mood of a Vraja-vasi. No such passive attitude is espoused by our acaryas in this regard - quite the opposite.

Desire is not passive - it is highly proactive - and it is the price we must pay to attain the qualification for entering the practice of raganuga-bhakti. Passivity is counter productive and indicates a lack of understanding of this important principle.

SRILA PRABHUPADA ON DELIBERATE EFFORT

From a lecture by Srila Prabhupada on Caitanya-caritamṛta, 2.20.106, 7.12.1976:

"Laulyam, to advance in spiritual consciousness or Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the value is only strong eagerness, laulyam, that "I must finish this business in this life, to understand Kṛṣṇa." There are many sastric references. Buddhi-yogam dadami tam yena mam upayanti te. Simply we should be very seriously eager. Then very soon, acirad eva sidhyaty abhīpsitah, immediately... If not immediately... We should patiently. Simply we should be very, very eager. Tatra laulyam ekam mulyam. Laulyam means very greediness or... We can say, "How I shall approach Kṛṣṇa?" This greediness required, not greediness for sense gratification. Then we shall be implicated more and more.

The greediness... Greediness is very good. Kamam kṛṣṇa-karmarpane. Strong desire, that is called lust. So, but this strong desire... Just like gopis. The gopis, they were village girls. They had no understanding of what is God, what is Kṛṣṇa. But they became very much lusty for Kṛṣṇa, and Caitanya Mahāprabhu recommended that ramya kacid upasana vrajavadhūbir ya kalpita:

"There is no better type of worship than what was conceived by the gopis." Their strong desire, "How we shall get Kṛṣṇa?" that was their day and night thought. That's all. Somebody is thinking in some way... The central point was Kṛṣṇa. I have already explained that, that Kṛṣṇa was going to the pasturing ground, and the gopis at home, they were thinking that "Kṛṣṇa's foot is so soft and so delicate," and that "We dare not to take His feet on our breast, but He is now walking in the fields, pasturing ground, naked without any... And the stones pricking. How much He is feeling pain."

Thinking this, they became fainted. This is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. So therefore Caitanya Mahāprabhu recommended ramya kacid upasana. These gopis, they were not supposed to be educated. Village girls -- who is giving them education? They are not Ph.D.'s. But still, strong

desire for Kṛṣṇa. And that is called *yesam nirbandhini matih*. Nirbandhini, strong desire. It doesn't require any other price to become advanced in..., simply to become very strongly eager, *laulyam*. Then life is successful."

Absolute confirmation about the essential importance of *lobha* and *laulyam* comes from Rāmānanda Rāya, who made this emphatic statement to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu about greed, when he began his discussions about *rāgānuga-bhakti* in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*:

Pure devotional service in Kṛṣṇa consciousness (*kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa-bhāvita*) cannot be had even by pious activity in hundreds and thousands of lives. It can be attained only by paying one price – that is, intense greed (*laulyam*) to obtain it. If it is available somewhere, one must purchase it without delay. CC, 2.8.70

Does that sound anything remotely like "no separate endeavor is required"?

From *Nectar of Devotion*, page 75, Srila Prabhupada once again confirms the necessity of being proactive in no uncertain terms:

In the same *Narada-pancaratra*, there is another expression of submission, wherein the devotee says, "My dear Lord, O lotus-eyed one, when will that day come when on the bank of the Yamuna I shall become just like a madman and continue to chant Your holy name while incessant tears flow from my eyes?"

This is another perfectional stage. Lord Caitanya also desired that "a moment will appear unto me as twelve years of time, and the whole world will appear to me as vacant on account of not seeing You, my dear Lord." One should feelingly pray *and become eager to render his particular type of service to the Lord.*

This is the teaching of all great devotees, especially Lord Caitanya. In other words, one should learn how to cry for the Lord. One should learn this small technique, and *he should be very eager and actually cry to become engaged in some particular type of service.*

This is called *laulyam*, and such tears are the price for the highest perfection. If one develops this *laulyam*, or excessive eagerness for meeting and serving the Lord in a particular way, that is the price to enter into the kingdom of God. Otherwise, there is no material calculation for the value of the ticket by which one can enter the kingdom of God. *The only price for such entrance is this *laulyam lalasa* mayi, or desire and great eagerness.*

BHAKTIVINODE THAKURA ON SEPARATE EFFORT

Caitanya-sikṣamṛta, 3.1, Bhaktivinoda Thakur directly indicates that one must be proactive - not passive - to make advancement:

On the path of gradual development, care must be taken to to become steadily elevated to a higher level, no matter what the present level. By good fortune, the tendency of the soul is to elevate itself gradually, but there are certainly obstacles along the path, and so the soul may fail to reach the ultimate goal. Those who desire to reach a higher standard must always be conscious of this fact.

In progressing from one level of life to the next, two things should be considered. The aspirant should be firmly fixed in one position to take a firm step to the next higher level. Then in order to advance successfully to the higher level, when one foot gives up the previous place, that foot must firmly fix itself in the higher level before the other foot can follow on to that new level. Simultaneously, the aspirant must give up attachment to the lower level, becoming firmly established on the higher level. By moving too quickly, the aspirant will fall. By moving too slowly the results will come slowly

...Some people lament that they have not attained devotion to Krsna but at the same time they do not make any real attempt to raise themselves to the level of Krsna bhakti. They remain bound to one of the levels and do not attempt to progress to the practices of the next higher level- this is known as niyamagraha. If people stop at one stage, how can they expect to progress to the top?

Thus, many devotees on the level of vaidhi-bhakti make no attempt to progress to bhava bhakti, but then lament they have not attained bhava. Again many people remain attached to the rules of varnasrama and are indifferent to bhava and prema. This bondage to one level is an obstacle to their advancement.

ONLY SANKIRTAN AND BOOK DISTRIBUTION

Didn't Srila Prabhupada say that book distribution and sankirtan is all that is needed?

Actually he said that reading, discussing and applying the instructions in his books, such as the excerpt from NOD quoted above, was the process of strengthening us:

... you must encourage the students to read our books throughout the day as much as possible, and give them all good advice how to understand the books, and inspire them to study the things from every point of view.

In this way, by constantly engaging our tongues in the service of the Lord, either by discussing His philosophy or by chanting Hare Krishna, the truth is that Krishna Himself will reveal Himself to us and we shall understand how to do everything properly.

Now we have got so many students and so many temples but I am fearful that if we expand too much in this way that we shall become weakened and gradually the whole thing will become lost. Just like milk. We may thin it more and more with water for cheating the customer, but in the end it will cease to be any longer milk.

Better to boil the milk now very vigorously and make it thick and sweet. That is the best process. So let us concentrate on training our devotees very thoroughly in the knowledge of Krishna consciousness from our books, from tapes, by discussing always, and in so many ways instruct them in the right propositions.

letter to Hamsaduta, Los Angeles, 22 June, 1972:

LOVE – FORCED OR NATURAL

Doesn't love come naturally, not by force or coercion?

The above does not indicate or imply forcing love/prema. The fact is that during the stage of practice, ie: sadhana, we have no prema. Prema is the prayojana - the goal. What we do have is desire, which is an inherent characteristic of a jiva. Desire has entrapped us in this material world and that very same desire will propel us out of our entanglement, as described repeatedly above.

Such desires are not expressed in the form of making 'demands' of Krsna, rather, they are expressions of our eagerness and determination to have a personal loving relationship with Him, and that is approved by all of the acaryas and expressed clearly by the quotes I posted above from SP.

"This is the teaching of all great devotees, especially Lord Caitanya. In other words, one should learn how to cry for the Lord. One should learn this small technique, and *he should be very eager and actually cry to become engaged in some particular type of service.*"

Doesn't "Learning how to cry" sounds a little imitative?

The idea of crying for a relationship with Krsna indicates a very intense desire for that relationship, and such intense desires will eventually invoke tears in a sincere devotee aspirant. That is the main point.

So many devotees have a strange concern that others will become pretenders and fake such things, but where are they? I've never encountered one yet. Taking things cheaply means to think you can avoid the instructions of SP and the acaryas and circumvent raganuga and die with anarthas and magically wake up in Vraja in your eternal identity.

VAIDHI BHAKTI

THREE STAGES OF VAIDHI SADHANA

There are three types of persons qualified for vaidhī-sādhana-bhakti: the uttamā, the madhyamā, and the kaniṣṭhā. BRS, 1.2.16

The uttama-adhikārī is defined as follows: The person who is skillful in scripture and logic, completely firm in his belief, with deep faith, is considered qualified as an uttamā in vaidhī-bhakti. BRS, 1.2.17

From Jīva Gosvāmī's commentary:

Previously, in defining vaidhī-bhakti, it was said that vaidhī-bhakti existed where the actions were inspired by the teachings of scripture. Thus, it may be concluded that the root cause of a person's bhakti is faith in the content of scriptures. Conviction in the contents of the scriptures is called śraddhā or faith. According to the degree of faith in the scriptures, there will be classifications of persons possessing that faith. That is now the topic of discussion for two verses. ... A person who is qualified as above, and has deep faith, is the uttama-adhikārī.

"During the stage of raganuga bhakti, however, the soul becomes no longer dependent on the use of logic and reason- they are left behind as one advances in loving attachment. Yet in vaidhi bhakti, dependence on logic and reason is present all the way up to bhava."

VAIDHI'S RELEVANCE IN RAGANUGA

When one follows vidhi marga prompted by sacred greed, that is called raganuga bhakti, and when one follows vidhi marga and is prompted by scriptural injunctions, that is called vidhi bhakti. When one worships Krishna without following the rules set out by the srutis, smritis and Puranas, then that is considered a social disturbance. RVC

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. BRS (1.2.296)

BRS, 1.2.293

From Jīva Gosvāmī's commentary:

Because of following after the rāgātmikās, those practicing rāgānugā-bhakti practice bhakti with no limitations. That means that there is no specific rule concerning the time at which they will give up dependence on the rules of scripture. Is there a limit to how long those practicing vaidhī-bhakti should depend on the rules? This verse answers. Bhāva here means rati or the stage of bhāva-bhakti after sādhana-bhakti.

From Viśvanātha Cakravartī's commentary:

In performing sādhana-bhakti, the vaidhī-bhakti practitioner will depend on scriptural injunctions and favorable use of logic until the appearance of rati (bhāva). After the appearance of rati, he no longer depends on these things.

However, as soon as the greed manifests in a person (for attaining a bhāva similar to that of the vraja-vāsīs), and he develops an inclination for rāga-bhakti, the practitioner of rāgānugā-bhakti does not depend any longer on scriptural rules and logic. Thus, it is greatly superior.

However, wherever that greed has appeared, it is understood that the person must have studied the scriptures in order to attain that greed. It is also necessary to study the scriptures in order to understand the proper sādhana for rāgānugā-bhakti.

Viśvanātha Cakravartī elaborates on this in Rāga-vartma-candrikā:

All other limbs of devotional practice are attained through the practice of hearing and chanting. Without hearing and chanting one's following in the footsteps of the people of Vraja will remain fruitless. This was said by the learned sages after elaborate consideration. One should only practice those limbs that are favorable to one's own devotional mood and not those that are opposed to it. RVC, 1.11

VAIDHI CONTRARY TO RAGANUGA

What are those items in vaidhi bhakti that could be contrary to the mood of raganuga?

These verses from Raga-Vartma-Chandrika mentions various practices that are to be rejected by the raganuga sadhaka:

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.

All other limbs of devotional practice are attained through the practice of hearing and chanting. Without hearing and chanting one's following in the footsteps of the people of Vraja will remain fruitless. This was said by the learned sages after elaborate consideration. One should only practice those limbs that are favorable to one's own devotional mood and not those that are opposed to it. RVC, 1.11

Worshipping oneself as the Supreme Lord, using mudras (making ritualistic signs with the hands) or nyasa, meditating on Krishna's pastimes in Dvaraka, worshipping Krishna's Queens in Dvaraka are practices not to be done by a raganuga sadhaka, although they may be described in the Vedic scriptures.

VAIDHI COMPARED TO RAGANUGA

In his Bhakti-sandarbha 312, Jīva Gosvāmī compares vaidhī and rāgānugā after explaining that rāgānugā does not depend on scriptural injunctions. Here are some highlights:

Srimad-Bhagavatam (2.1.7) says –’

prāyeṇa munayo rājan
nivr̥ttā vidhi-ṣedhataḥ
nairguṇya-sthā ramante sma
guṇānukathane hareḥ

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

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 the verse above.

... Therefore, vaidhī-bhakti is weak because it depends on scriptural injunctions, whereas rāgānugā is very powerful being propelled independently. Therefore, when rāgānugā appears, it is marked by an absence of taste for anything unrelated to bhakti.

... Because rāgānugā is independent of any injunctions, the dāsya and sakhya of rāgānugā are different from the dāsya and sakhya of vaidhī.

... Therefore, in rāgānugā, the system prescribed for vaidhī-bhakti is not strictly followed, but only the methodology that relates to the rāgātmikā associates of the Lord. BS, Anuccheda 310

... So, because it is specifically the adoption of rāgānugā worship that quickly leads to this absorption in Him, Kṛṣṇa has not spoken about vaidhī worship in regard to Himself in the eleventh canto of Śrīmad-bhāgavatam, rather, the discussion of vaidhī there relates only to His four-armed feature. BS, Anuccheda 325

O King, having taken to the path [of devotion], a person is never deviated. Even if he were to run along the path with eyes closed, he would neither slip nor fall. SB, 11.2.35

By this principle it is understood that the path consisting of rules and regulations has been created

in order to facilitate proper entry upon the path of perfection by initiating some form of practice, as well as to lead the mind gradually to the point of absorption in devotion.

...The rules and regulations are not created for one who is naturally drawn to devotion, because by taste alone, such a person will be absorbed in the specific manner of ragatmika devotion, which captivates the Lord. BS, Anuccheda 312

THE PATH OF MERCY

Furthermore, the path of raganuga, beginning with the awakening of sacred greed, is described as the path of mercy, as compared to vaidhi, which is the path of rules and regulations.

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.”

Further casual comments on this issue:

The real gist of raganuga practice is to come to bhava-bhakti however Krishna arranges for you to get there, from there your life is taken over directly by Radha Krishna in a personal one to one manner. The raganuga sadhana to get there is not so strict or black and white. We must understand that one of the basic qualities of raganuga is that it is not reliant on rules and regulations. We are told by the past acharyas that we shouldn't judge raganuga bhaktas if they seem to not be following the rules or acting different than what you expect, they are led in a personal way and are not to be judged by vaidhi standards. The officious rule laden approach is not what raganuga is about. The path of raganuga is only rule laden for those with a strong mix of vaidhi still left in them. That disappears with knowledge and experience.

The raganuga path is also called the pushti-marg, the path of grace, because that is really what it's about. It's about being given entrance into raga, you cannot push your way in by following rules. You must be qualified, then Krishna will open up the door for you to enter his association. It's the opposite of vaidhi or the rules and regulations mentality. It's all about internal development rather than external action of any type, that can make the sadhaka not care so much for instructions meant for those on a lower level:

Madhya 22.155
lobhe vraja-vāsīra bhāve kare anugati
śāstra-yukti nāhi māne — rāgānugāra prakṛti

Having a strong desire for the relationships of the vraja-vasis, one never thinks in terms of scriptural reasoning - that is the nature of raganuga.

Madhya 22.155

tat-tad-bhāvādi-mādhurye
śrute dhīr yad apeksate
nātra śāstram na yuktim ca
tal lobhotpatti-lakṣaṇam

When one hears about the sweet relationships (of the devotees of Vraja) — ones intelligence no longer depends on scriptures or arguments, that is the characteristic of the rise of covetousness (for those bhavas).

SASTRIC GUIDANCE STILL NEEDED

Although on the path of raganuga, “ones intelligence no longer depends on scriptures or arguments” one will still require guidance from sastra:

When both kinds of devotees, the one yearning for ancient lobha, the other for modern lobha, hear how to acquire the devotional mellows possessed by Kṛṣṇa's eternal associates, or nitya parikara, they seek guidance from the proper scriptures. This is because the authorized method for attaining bhava is delineated in scriptural injunctions and purports; no other sources for receiving this information are indicated anywhere.

The following analogy illustrates this point: A person becomes greedy for milk and its products, but first he must want to know how to procure milk. He then has to seek advice from a trustworthy person conversant with the subject who will tell him how to purchase a cow and how to take care of her properly. In other words, knowledge on a subject cannot be simply invented-proper guidance is necessary. RVC

This shows 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.

“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)

TWO PATHS, TWO DIFFERENT DESTINATIONS

vaidhi-raganuga-marga-bhedena parikirtitah |
dvidvidhah 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-bhaktye parshada-dehe vaikunthete yaya || (cc 2.24.87)

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

CC Ādi 3.15: "Everywhere in the world people worship Me according to scriptural injunctions. But simply by following such regulative principles one cannot attain the loving sentiments of the devotees in Vrajabhūmi.

CC Ādi 3.16: "Knowing My opulences, the whole world looks upon Me with awe and veneration. But devotion made feeble by such reverence does not attract Me.

CC Ādi 3.17: "By performing such regulated devotional service in awe and veneration, one may go to Vaikuṅṭha and attain the four kinds of liberation.

CC Ādi 3.18: "These liberations are sārṣṭi [achieving opulences equal to those of the Lord], sārūpya [having a form the same as the Lord's], sāmīpya [living as a personal associate of the Lord] and sālokyā [living on a Vaikuṅṭha planet].

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.”

VAIDHI LEADING TO RAGANUGA

Does vaidhi bhakti lead to raganuga?

Near the end of the chapter on Prema-bhakti in Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu, Rūpa Gosvāmī explains the different goals achieved by practitioners of vaidhī-bhakti and rāgānugā-bhakti, implying that vaidhī-bhakti does not always lead to rāgānugā-bhakti:

Those who have practiced vaidhī-bhakti attain prema with knowledge of the Lord’s powers. Those who have practiced rāgānugā-bhakti usually attain prema with knowledge of the Lord’s sweetness. BRS, 1.4.14

Jīva Gosvāmī’s commentary:

Generally, from rāgānugā-sādhana, one will attain kevala-prema (Vraja prema). However, the practitioner of rāgānugā, who also practices some portion of vaidhī-sādhana, does not receive kevala-prema. That is the meaning of the word, “generally.

If one initially has the mindset for vaidhī-bhakti and by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa or a rasika Vaiṣṇava obtains lobha for associating with Kṛṣṇa in His vraja-līlā, following after one of His associates, then one becomes qualified for rāgānugā-bhakti. Otherwise, if one remains on the path of vaidhī-bhakti, one must follow the rules and regulations until attaining bhāva. Rūpa Gosvāmī and his commentators explain this with indisputable clarity:

Those qualified for vaidhī-bhakti are dependent on the rules of scripture and favorable use of logic until the appearance of bhāva-bhakti. BRS, 1.2.293

TWO TYPES OF BHAVA

In Mādhurya-kadambinī, Viśvanātha Cakravartī explains the two types of bhāva that arise depending on the type of sādhana-bhakti you have been practicing:

This stage of bhāva is of two types:

- (1) bhāva arising from rāgānugā-bhakti
- (2) bhāva arising from vaidhī-bhakti

Bhāva arising from rāgānugā-bhakti, being excessive in quality and quantity, is very thick or intense. *It* is characterized by an absence of awe and reverence, with a predominance of the feeling that the Lord is on an equal or lower level.

The second type, arising from vaidhī-bhakti, being somewhat lesser in quality and quantity than the first, with a type of affection for the Lord mixed with perception of the Lord as the all-mighty God, is not so thick.

Those two types of bhāva are tasted in two different ways in the two types of hearts possessed of two types of spiritual desires in two types of devotees. As there are different degrees of thickness in the juices of mango, jack fruit, sugar cane or grapes, there are different degrees of sweetness of bhāva. MK, 7.4

ARE THE PATHS REALLY SEPARATE?

Aren't you maybe attempting to artificially separate vaidhi and raganuga? Are those two really in timed sequence, one after another, like before was vaidhi, and after 40 years or whatever it is time for raganuga?

(Because from Srila Prabhupada it seems that both are established from beginning, at least to some degree. Srila Prabhupada's books and lectures are obviously not just vaidhi rules and regulations. There is so much about internal mood of devotee.)

Vaidhi and raganuga are two separate paths, as explained above. In Gaudiya Vaisnavism the idea is that in the beginning vaidhi is necessary because one does not (typically) have a realization of their desired relationship with Krsna, nor do they have the spontaneous attraction that goes with that realization. So neophytes must practice vaidhi to make progress and purification from anarthas.

Yes, Srila Prabhupada interspersed these two paths in his books and talks but appropriately, he stressed

following the rules and regulations because he was talking to a very specific audience - his very neophyte disciples. So he was giving timely guidance according to time and circumstances.

VAIDHI SUPPORTING RAGANUGA

Can vaidhi facilitate entrance into the path of raganuga?

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.

Jīva Gosvāmī explains in Bhakti-sandarbha:

O King, having taken to the path [of devotion], a person is never deviated. Even if he were to run along the path with eyes closed, he would neither slip nor fall. SB, 11.2.35

By this principle it is understood that the path consisting of rules and regulations has been created in order to facilitate proper entry upon the path of perfection by initiating some form of practice, as well as to lead the mind gradually to the point of absorption in devotion.

...The rules and regulations are not created for one who is naturally drawn to devotion, because by taste alone, such a person will be absorbed in the specific manner of rāgātmikā devotion, which captivates the Lord. BS, Anuccheda 312

The following verse from CC indicates that the path of dependence on the instruction in sastra (vaidhi bhakti) supports the devotee until he develops eligibility to enter the path of raganuga.

"When one hears about the sweet relationships of the devotees of Vrndavana — he becomes inclined in that way, and his intelligence becomes attracted. Indeed, he begins to covet that particular type of devotion. When such covetousness is awakened, one's intelligence no longer depends on the instruction of sastra, revealed scripture, logic or argument."
CC Madhya 22.155-157

It has already been described that raganuga is the path of mercy. Here we have established that vaidhi, while a completely different path, can provide a starting point in the practice of bhakti until one becomes eligible for raganuga. Thus one engaged in vaidhi-bhakti can transition to raganuga by the association and mercy of a raganuga devotee.

There is another aspect to such transition. From the commentary of Visvanatha Chakravarti Thakura on BRS 1.2.295:

True, 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 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 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 manishibhih.”

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.

SRUTI SMRITI PURANADI

If raganuga is not dependent on scriptural injunctions, could that not create a disturbance in society as per the sruti smriti puranadi verse?

Jīva Gosvāmī discusses this concern in Bhakti-sandarbha. Here are some highlights from his discussion, after first quoting this specific verse. It’s a long discussion, so for brevity, I have extracted some key points without altering the overall intent and substance of his presentation:

...Taking [the above verse and another similar verse] into consideration, how can one attain perfection through rāgānugā-bhakti, which is independent of any injunction? This is answered as follows. Because the Lord’s names, virtues and other characteristics are naturally endowed with their own potencies, bhakti – unlike dharma – is not dependent on injunctions.

...The impelling ordinances of scripture are specifically intended for those who are not inclined naturally, and the order in which such procedures are meant to be carried out is also prescribed for them. Such people experience a great deal of confusion and mental agitation, and because of the absence of taste, they do not understand the nature of rāgātmikā-bhakti.

...The rules and regulations are not created for one who is naturally drawn to devotion, because by taste alone such a person will be absorbed in the specific manner of rāgātmikā devotion, which captivates the Lord.

...Because natural taste in devotion is extremely rare, if one considers themselves fixed in exclusive devotion yet is without even reverence for scriptural injunctions, their so-called fixity in devotion is merely a pretense. Hence, the criticism of exclusive devotion that does not adhere to the injunctions of scripture, as in the śruti-smṛti purāṇa verse cited earlier, is directed towards those who have not developed a taste for devotion. Such criticism is inappropriate for a devotee who has acquired taste, as referred to in the verse quoted above (SB, 10.6.36)

...Consequently, it is the disrespect of scripture that is criticized here, not the ignorance of scripture, because ignorance of scripture has not been considered detrimental, as implied in SB, 11.2.35, quoted above. BS, Anuccheda 312

EARLY SYMPTOMS OF RAGANUGA

What would be an early appearance of raganuga indicating entrance on the path?

“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.” (Bhakti-sandarbha 310-312)

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 mellows of ragatmika-bhakti. In the initial stages of the practice of raganuga-sadhana, one’s practice must be mixed with vaidhi-bhakti.

“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.”

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.

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.”
RVC 1.8

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.

AP[ENDIX

MK: Subha or auspiciousness consists of disinterest in material affairs, interest in the Supreme Lord, friendliness to the Lord, mercy, forgiveness, truth, simplicity, equanimity, fortitude, gravity, respect, humility and being kind to everyone.