

# The Journey from *Vaidhī* to *Rāgānugā Bhakti* —The Awakening of the Heart of the Soul—

*tat-tad-bhāvādi-mādhurye  
śrute dhīr yad apekṣate  
nātra śāstraṁ na yuktiṁ ca  
tal lobhotpatti-lakṣaṇam*

When an advanced, realized devotee hears about the affairs of the devotees of Vṛndāvana — in the mellows of *śānta*, *dāsyā*, *sakhyā*, *vātsalyā* and *mādhuryā*—he becomes inclined in one of these ways, 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 instructions of *śāstra* [revealed scripture] or on logic and argument.

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

If one follows in the footsteps of the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana out of such transcendental covetousness, he does not care for the injunctions or reasonings of *śāstra*. That is the way of spontaneous love.

*Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura* says that a devotee is **attracted by the service** of the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana — namely the cowherd men, Mahārāja Nanda, mother Yaśodā, Rādhārāṇī, the gopīs and the cows and calves. An advanced devotee is **attracted by the service rendered** by an eternal servitor of the Lord. This attraction is called spontaneous attraction. Technically it is called svarūpa-upalabdhi.

**This stage is not achieved in the beginning.** In the beginning one has to render service strictly according to the regulative principles set forth by the revealed scriptures and the spiritual master. **By continuously rendering service through the process of vaidhī bhakti, one's natural inclination is gradually awakened.** That is called spontaneous attraction, or rāgānugā bhakti.

An advanced devotee situated on the platform of spontaneity is already very expert in śāstric instruction, logic and argument. When he comes to the point of eternal love for Kṛṣṇa, no one can deviate him from that position, neither by argument nor by śāstric evidence. An advanced devotee has realized his eternal relationship with the Lord, and consequently he does not accept the logic and arguments of others.

Such an advanced devotee has nothing to do with the sahaṅgiyās, who manufacture their own way and commit sins by indulging in illicit sex, intoxication and gambling, if not meat-eating. Sometimes the sahaṅgiyās imitate advanced devotees and live in their own whimsical way, avoiding the principles set down in the revealed scriptures.

***Unless one follows the six Gosvāmīs — Śrī Rūpa, Sanātana, Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa, Śrī Jīva, Gopāla Bhaṭṭa and Raghunātha dāsa — one cannot be a bona fide spontaneous lover of Kṛṣṇa. In this connection, Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura says, rūpa-raghunātha-pade haibe ākuti kabe hāma bujhaba se yugala pirīti. The sahajiyās' understanding of the love affairs between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa is not bona fide because they do not follow the principles laid down by the six Gosvāmīs. Their illicit connection and their imitation of the dress of Rūpa Gosvāmī, as well as their avoidance of the prescribed methods of revealed scriptures, will lead them to the lowest regions of hell. These imitative sahajiyās are cheated and unfortunate. They are not equal to advanced devotees (paramahāṁsas). Debauchees and paramahāṁsas are not on the same level.***

— CC Madhya 22.155 (BRS 1.2.292), 22.153+p

*virājantīm abhivyaktām  
vraja-vāsi-janādiṣu  
rāgātmikām anusṛtā  
yā sā rāgānugocyate*

Devotional service in spontaneous love is vividly expressed and manifested by the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana. Devotional service that accords with their devotional service is called *rāgānugā bhakti*, or devotional service following in the wake of spontaneous loving service.

— CC Madhya 22.154 (Brs 1.2.270)