

The *Vidhi* and *Rāga* Dynamic

(2)

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has personally given the following definition of *lobhā* (sacred greed). “When the heart yearns for the sweetness of the moods of Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa of His associates the *gopīs* in Vraja, then one need not wait for suitable sanctions from the revealed scriptures or logical arguments. If such impetuses as these are there, then it cannot be justly called greed. This greed never arises in anyone on such premises, nor does the candidate ever consider whether he is qualified for the path of *rāgānuga-bhakti* or not. Rather, simply after hearing about the subject matter, or seeing it, that spontaneous greed will arise in him.

There are two causes for the appearance of greed: The mercy of the Lord or the mercy of another *anūrāgī* devotee. There are again two kinds of mercy bestowed by a devotee: *prāktana* and *ādhunika*. *Prāktana* means mercy bestowed by a *rāgānuga* in a previous life, and *ādhunika* is mercy bestowed in the present birth. The *prāktana* devotee in this life takes shelter of the lotus feet of a *rāgānuga guru* after the greed has arisen in him, and the *ādhunika* will get that greed only after having surrendered to the feet of such a guru. It is said (in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*): “The only causes of the appearance of greed is the mercy of Kṛṣṇa or His devotee. Therefore some call the path of *rāgānuga-bhakti puṣṭi-mārga* (the path of mercy).”

Now, when both the above-mentioned kinds of devotees become inquisitive about how to attain the mood of Kṛṣṇa’s eternal associates in Vraja, then we see that they are again dependent on information from the revealed scriptures and logical arguments. The way can only be shown through the rules set forth by the scriptures and their resultant logical arguments. There is no other way. Just like when one is greedy for cow’s milk, one must ask someone who knows how to get that milk, and one is dependent on that person’s instructions. That person will say: “You should buy a cow”, and will also instruct one how to transport the cow, how to feed it grass and how to milk it. One does not attain the required knowledge just like that, without being instructed. (Ref: ŚB 8.6.12)

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which is the essence of all the *Upaniṣads*, Lord Kapila speaks the following words (3.25.38): “To the devotees I am the beloved, the very Self, the son, the friend, the spiritual master, the well-wisher, Fate, or the chosen Deity.” Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī’s *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, which describes the devotion propounded by *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, provides the following three verses: “The devotee should remember Kṛṣṇa and an eternally liberated devotee of his own choice. He should

always live in Vraja and be attached to topics concerning Kṛṣṇa and his favourite devotee.” (Brs. 1.2.294) “Both in his material and in his internally conceived spiritual body he should follow in the footsteps of the people of Vraja, always desiring their moods and activities.” (Brs. 1.2.295) “The practitioner of *rāgānuga-bhakti* should also perform all the limbs of *vaidhī-bhakti*, such as hearing and chanting, as far as they are favourable. This is what the learned say.” (Brs. 1.2.296) These three verses explain the position of the *kāmānuga* devotee (those serving in a conjugal mood).

First of all, by the words “remembering Kṛṣṇa” (Brs. 1.2.294), it is indicated that remembrance (*smaraṇam*) is the main item of *rāgānuga-bhakti*. *Rāga* is a special feature of the mind.¹

The beloved is the Lord of Vṛndāvana, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who enjoys pastimes suitable to His own mood. By “His people” is meant His beloved eternal associates in Vraja, and particularly that transcendental personality that the practising devotee is attracted to — Vṛndāvanēśvarī Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Lalitā, Viśākhā, Rūpa Mañjarī etc. Although they are Kṛṣṇa’s favourites, they are also more dear to those devotees who desire to enter into an effulgent conjugal relationship with Kṛṣṇa.

If one cannot live in Vraja physically one must at least internally do so. But the next verse (Brs. 1.2.295) clearly explains how one must live in Vraja physically. Living with the *sādhaka-rūpa* means in the physical body of the practising devotee, and the *siddha-rūpa* means one’s own perfected spiritual body that is suitable for direct transcendental service to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

How to serve? With paraphernalia that are collected either internally (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 that lived in Vraja, and in the internally perceived spiritual body one follows in the footsteps of Śrīmatī Rūpa Mañjarī and the other eternal associates of Kṛṣṇa. The people of Vraja should be followed. Candrakānti, the sages of the Daṇḍaka forest, whose story is told in the *Bṛhad-vāmana Purāṇa*, as well as the *śrutis*, have all attained their spiritual relationship with Kṛṣṇa. One should act like them. In this way the first two verses described *smaraṇam* and living in Vraja and the third verse (Brs. 1.2.296) describes practises such as hearing about Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes. All other limbs of devotional practise are attained through the practise of hearing and chanting. Without hearing

¹ Previously it was discussed that *smaraṇam* is the chief item of *rāgānuga-bhakti*, but even this is dependent on *kīrtana*. In the present Age of Kali everyone can enter into *bhajana* through the means of *kīrtana*. All the scriptures proclaim that *kīrtana* is the very best limb of *bhakti*. (op. cit. Prathama Prakāśaḥ, Verse 14)

and chanting one's following in the footsteps of the people of Vraja will remain fruitless.

Actually, when one follows *vidhi-mārga*, prompted by greed, that is called *rāgānuga-bhakti*, and when one follows *vidhi-mārga* and is prompted by the orders from the revealed scriptures, that is called *vidhi-bhakti*. When one worships Kṛṣṇa without following the rules given by the scriptures, then as the *Nārada Pañcarātra* proves, it is considered to be simply a cause of disturbance.

— Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's *Rāga-vartma-candrikā*