

Śrī Manah-śikṣā

Splendid Instructions to the
Mind

by Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī

Verse-9

Notes on the Commentary

by

Śrīla Sacinandana Swami

Maharaj

Verse-9 Commentary by Śrīla Sacinandana Swami Maharaja

In this verse, Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī goes deep into his heart and gives us the full picture of Vṛndāvana.

While he's writing this verse, he's sitting in Vṛndāvana, an elderly, very thin figure.

He cannot tolerate the separation from Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, and he wants to give us instruction how to attain success.

Verse-9 Commentary by Śrīla Sacinandana Swami Maharaja

Verse nine is a fantastic guide for meditation.

Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī starts with a wonderful picture.

He calls Kṛṣṇa, vraja-vipina-candram. Candra means the moon.

Imagine the scene.

There is moon-like Kṛṣṇa in the Vṛndāvana forest. Next to him is vraja-vaneśvarīm, Rādhikā.

Verse-9 Commentary by Srīla Sacinandana Swami Maharaja

Imagine the moonlight nights, where the sand of the Yamunā is illuminated by the rays of the moon.

The Vrajavāsīs and sādhakas are like cakora birds, mystical little birds who live from drinking the moon rays.

There are birds who are like those prāna people who live on air alone.

They look at the rays, and they can fly to wherever they like.

Verse-9 Commentary by Śrīla Sacinandana Swami Maharaja

The normal devotees are cakora birds who drink the rays of Kṛṣṇa.

But the servants of Rādhārāṇī prefer it when Rādhā is the queen of the forest next to Kṛṣṇa.

When Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are together, the experience of taste is much higher.

Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī sees himself as the servant of Rādhā, knowing how to relish the highest love in the billowing waves of their loving exchange.

Verse-9 Commentary by Śrīla Sacinandana Swami Maharaja

This is also the vision of our sampradāya.

If we are connected with Rādhā, we are like leaves on the creeper curling around Kṛṣṇa, and whatever Rādhārāṇī experiences, we will also experience.

↓ explanation of ↗

I have heard that in Kolkata, 1930, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura went into a state of ecstasy, saying, “O friend, Rūpa Mañjarī, it is well known that you do not look in the face of any other man than that of your husband, and yet there is a mark on your lips, as if someone has bitten them. This means that you are a servant of Rādhā, and she is with Kṛṣṇa.”

Verse-9 Commentary by Śrīla Sacinandana Swami Maharaja

So whatever happens in their loving rasa we also experience.

If we want something in relation to Kṛṣṇa very much, we have to learn from Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's servants.

If we want mahā prasādam, we first make contact with the servant in order to receive it.

In transcendental logic, then we also go to the best servants, headed by Lalitā. She is the intimate friend of Rādhā.

Verse-9 Commentary by Śrīla Sacinandana Swami Maharaja

She carries a piece of cloth to wipe off the droplets of perspiration from Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

When Lalitā finds someone in Vṛndāvana who has some inclinations towards Rādhā, she will immediately come to that person and arrange a meeting with Rādhārāṇī.

We enter the divine couple's association only by recommendation.

Rādhārāṇī is the life-treasure of Kṛṣṇa, and he is the beloved of Rādhā.

Verse-9 Commentary by Śrīla Sacinandana Swami Maharaja

Rādhā loves Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa loves Rādhā the most.

This is the divine couple, and to reach them we need intermediaries.

First comes Lalitā, and we will find this point in all the Gosvāmīs' literature.

She is so dear to them that she controls them.

Do you have people whom you love?

Verse-9 Commentary by Śrīla Sacinandana Swami Maharaja

If you love them, you trust them.

Whatever they say, you do.

On a Govardhana parikramā, BB Govinda Svāmī was there, and he said,
“Let’s do the parikramā every day without rest.”

Because I love him, I agreed.

That is the nature of love—you give your heart.

Verse-9 Commentary by Śrīla Sacinandana Swami Maharaja

Śrī Lalitā is controlling Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa have surrendered to her.

No one ever says, “No,” to Lalitā, not even the divine couple.

I pray to Lalitā to recommend me to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

Verse-9 Commentary by Srīla Sacinandana Swami Maharaja

The sādḥaka sits in the forest of Vṛndāvana and chants and prays as demonstrated by Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura.

One of the assistants, such as Rūpa Manjarī, will see the sādḥaka, and she will bring that sādḥaka to Lalitā.

Rādhā will see that devotee and will make enquiries about the person.

Rūpa Manjarī will then suggest that the devotee render some service.

Verse-9 Commentary by Śrīla Sacinandana Swami Maharaja

In this way, Lalitā recommends.

In devotional service we always go through a hierarchy.

First we are bhaktas.

Initially I was forbidden to live in the temple, because I was always singing Rolling Stones songs.

Verse-9 Commentary by Śrīla Sacinandana Swami Maharaja

I was very young.

Then I decided that school was too boring.

I needed a recommendation to stay with the devotees, so I cleaned the temple
toilets.

One devotee who had previously been the saxophone player with Little
Richard, Narendra Dāsa, recommended me to the temple president, saying
that I was a good boy and knew how to clean the toilets.

Verse-9 Commentary by Śrīla Sacinandana Swami Maharaja

Later on I was recommended for initiation.

There are different levels of recommendations.

When we are in vṛndāvana-dhāma we need to behave properly so that Rūpa Manjarī and Lalitā can give us a recommendation!

The next person to remember is Viśākhā, the śikṣā guru who teaches all the arts required.

Verse-9 Commentary by Śrīla Sacinandana Swami Maharaja

Viśākhā is addressed as a śikṣā guru in this verse, as her voice is sweeter than that of a cuckoo in springtime when it eats the new mango.

Viśākhā teaches the devotees how they can sing, and she also knows the art of joking.

Therefore, the devotees take shelter of Lalitā and Viśākhā.

We can take their shelter by reading Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī's Lalitāṣṭakam and Yamunāṣṭakam, a prayer about Viśākhā in her form as the Yamunā.

Verse-9 Commentary by Srīla Sacinandana Swami Maharaja

And finally, we should remember Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Govardhana, day and night.

If we just see them, even in our mind's eye, they will give us love for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, absolutely guaranteed.

It is a very important point from this verse of Manaḥ-śikṣā not to neglect the holy dhāma.



The holy dhāma is special because everywhere Kṛṣṇa has placed his lotus feet.

Verse-9 Commentary by Śrīla Sacinandana Swami Maharaja

On Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet there is rati or love.

His feet are soft, fragrant, and full of the honey of love.

If we just stay in that sacred land, we will also get some love for Kṛṣṇa.



But we need to come again and again because we are so dull and covered with so many desires.

Verse-9 Commentary by Srīla Sacinandana Swami Maharaja

Therefore, repeated treatment is good for us.

Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī wrote that those who bathe in Rādhā-kuṇḍa will find how the creeper of love for Rādhā will grow in their heart.

He explained how Rādhā-kuṇḍa reveals darśana of the divine couple.

One day Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī sat before Rādhā-kuṇḍa and witnessed a wonderful scene.

Verse-9 Commentary by Śrīla Sacinandana Swami Maharaja

Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa were splashing each other with water, and then Kṛṣṇa splashed water right into Rādhārāṇī's eyes.

Everyone chastised Kṛṣṇa, saying it wasn't fair.

Rādhārāṇī fled and hid herself among the golden lotus flowers so that Kṛṣṇa could not see her.

Kṛṣṇa, when diving into the lotus flowers, saw gold everywhere.

Verse-9 Commentary by Śrīla Sacinandana Swami Maharaja

He had so much love in his heart that he thought he saw Rādhā everywhere.

But he could not find her.

Kṛṣṇa looked up and saw a group of bees.

“My Rādhā has breath as sweet as honey,” thought Kṛṣṇa, so he was able to find her from where the bees were.

Verse-9 Commentary by Srīla Sacinandana Swami Maharaja

Then there was a loving exchange.

At the conclusion Rādhā put her arms around Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa swam in Rādhā-kuṇḍa. (This story is based on the Rādhā-kuṇḍa-aṣṭakam of Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī's book Śrī Stavāvalī)

Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī felt ecstasy, which is there for every pilgrim.

The dhāma will reveal Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa to us.

Just by the vision of Girirāja and Rādhā-kuṇḍa, rati will arise.

Verse-9 Commentary by Śrīla Sacinandana Swami Maharaja

(If we are chanting), and (are aware of the pastimes), we might catch a glimpse of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, the perfect picture for meditation.

Kṛṣṇa bhaktas always meditate on the ideal surroundings for service to the Lord.

We meditate on the dhāma, Girirāja, trees, a soothing atmosphere, bees, birds, Yamunājī, Rādhā-kuṇḍa, and on the associates who will then invite Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

Verse-9 Commentary by Śrīla Sacinandana Swami Maharaja

Kṛṣṇa's devotees know that Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa will never leave a heart that has become Vṛndāvana, so we make our hearts Vṛndāvana.

Vṛndāvanacandra and Vṛndāvaneśvarī come together, and the cakora birds are drinking their waves of beauty.

This is also the vision of our sampradāya, the Hare Kṛṣṇas.

Verse-9 Commentary by Śrīla Sacinandana Swami Maharaja

Once there was a minister from Bharatpura who was performing a daṇḍavat-parikramā around Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

One disciple praised him to Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

Bhaktisiddhānta made the point that the minister worshiped Rādhārāṇī because she is dear to Kṛṣṇa, but we worship Kṛṣṇa because he is dear to Rādhārāṇī. (from Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava by Bhakti Vikāṣa Mahārāja)

Verse-9 Commentary by Śrīla Sacinandana Swami Maharaja

This is how to think of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī prays in Vilāpa-kusumāṣjali 102: “O Varoru (Rādhā), I somehow spend my time here aspiring after oceans of nectar. But if you are not merciful to me then of what use are Kṛṣṇa, living in Vraja, and even life itself?”

Verse-9 Commentary by Srīla Sacinandana Swami Maharaja

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in Kṛṣṇa Book, chapter 21: “Persons who are constantly engaged in the transcendental meditation of seeing Kṛṣṇa, internally and externally, by thinking of him playing the flute and entering the Vṛndāvana forest, have really attained the perfection of samādhi.”

Samādhi (trance) means absorption of all the activities of the senses on a particular object, and the gopīs indicate that the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa are the perfection of all meditation and samādhi.

It is also confirmed in the Bhagavad-gītā that anyone who is always absorbed in the thought of Kṛṣṇa is the topmost of all yogīs.”

Here are the perfect meditator yogīs, the birds of Vṛndāvana:

prāyo batāmba vihaḡā munayo vane 'smin
kṛṣṇekṣitaṁ tad-uditaṁ kala-veṇu-gītam
āruhya ye druma-bhujān rucira-pravālān
śṛṇvanti mīlita-drśo vigatānya-vācaḥ

O mother (amba), in this forest (asmin vane) all the birds (prāyo ye vihaḡā) have arisen (āruhya) onto the beautiful branches of the trees (rucira-pravālān druma-bhujān) to see Kṛṣṇa (kṛṣṇekṣitaṁ). With closed eyes (mīlita-drśo) they are simply listening in silence (śṛṇvanti) to the sweet vibrations of his flute (kala-veṇu-gītam), and they are not attracted by any other sound (vigata anya-vācaḥ). Surely these birds are on the same level as great sages (munayo bata). (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.21.14)

Verse-9 Commentary by Śrīla Sacinandana Swami Maharaja

There are cakora birds, the unusual birds living on the moonlight.

Also we find the cakravāka birds, the round ducks who fly together in the day but must spend the night separately.

There are also cātaka birds, who drink only water falling from the clouds.

Then we will find the swans of Vṛndāvana and the khanjana birds, who move restlessly.

Verse-9 Commentary by Srīla Sacinandana Swami Maharaja

Then there are cuckoos and the papihan birds, who call “pi kahan?”
which means, “Where is my beloved?”

The gopīs call these birds great saints.

The birds sit silently and listen to the flutes.

We could say they are ordinary birds, but Pūrṇamāsi says they first
take āsana, then do dhyāna, and then have darśana, so they must be
yogīs.

Verse-9 Commentary by Śrīla Sacinandana Swami Maharaja

When Kṛṣṇa sees such appreciative birds, he puts his flute aside for a moment.

But the spiritually conscious veṇu then plays out of its own initiative to please the birds.

Kṛṣṇa lifts the flute, blowing special rāgas without his breath, and looks at it with amazement.

Kṛṣṇa is so much inspired by this scene that his heart opens and he plays inconceivably beautiful music.

Verse-9 Commentary by Śrīla Sacinandana Swami Maharaja

The bird yogīs then see the vision of Śyāmasundara in their hearts,
and then, as Kṛṣṇa continues playing his flute, they start singing
their kīrtana: “O Kṛṣṇa! O Kṛṣṇa! O Kṛṣṇa!”

This is a perfect meditation under the guidance of the authoritative
Manah-śikṣā.

It is a perfect picture of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa with their associates, Lalitā
and Viśākhā, in Vṛndāvana, with Govardhana Hill and Rādhā-
kunda.

Verse-9

Notes on the Commentary

by

Urmila Devi Dasi

Verse-9 Notes on the Commentary by HG Urmila Devi Dasi

Bhaktivinoda shows us a practical way to follow Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī's instruction to meditate.

For each person and place listed in verse nine of Manah-śikṣā as an object of meditation, Bhaktivinoda gives us prayers and śāstric ślokas full of detail.

We can regularly recite these ślokas or other similar ones.

Although anyone at any stage of bhakti can learn and feelingly sing prayers such as the ones in Bhaktivinoda's commentary, verse nine has special significance for devotees whose realization corresponds to this point in this instruction manual (paddhati).

Verse-9 Notes on the Commentary by HG Urmila Devi Dasi

Rāgānuga-bhakti means to emulate the mood and service of particular devotees who exemplify one's desires.



In order to do so, one must deeply mediate on those devotees to gain an understanding of their inner and outer disposition and actions.

In verse eight, the perfected soul, by the grace of Giridhārī, the lifter of Govardhana Hill, was given to the service of Gāndharvā.

Now that jīva needs to complete the apprenticeship and perfect the service.

Verse-9 Notes on the Commentary by HG Urmila Devi Dasi

Because the orientation of this paddhati is towards assistant gopīs in Rādhā's group, the jīva is here instructed to meditate on the chief personalities and places for that orientation.

Others can use verse nine as a general template for their personal situation.

As there is unlimited individual variety in the spiritual world, each jīva has a unique relationship with Kṛṣṇa.

Therefore, even within the main five groups of relationship, there is still infinite diversity.

Verse-9 Notes on the Commentary by HG Urmila Devi Dasi

For example, some devotees in a parental mood will meditate on Rohiṇī more than Yaśodā, and some may be followers mostly of Mukara; or on Upananda rather than Nanda.

Some in fraternal moods will meditate on Balarāma more than on Kṛṣṇa, or be particularly attached to cowherd boys such as Maṇḍalībhadrā rather than Subala or Ujjvala.

In the amorous mood, some of Rādhā's sakhīs will particularly meditate on Citrā or Tuṅgavidyā rather than Lalitā.

Verse-9 Notes on the Commentary by HG Urmila Devi Dasi

Some persons in the amorous mood may not even be in Rādhā's group, but may be followers of other group leaders, such as Śyāmala, Bhadrā, Palī, and so on.

As Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura writes in his commentary to Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhuḥ 1.2.295, "By the word vraja-loka, one should understand persons situated in Vraja—Rādhā, Candrāvalī, and others. Following after them, one should perform service using one's physical body also."

Some within Candrāvalī's group, for example, may follow Cārucandra, and some may be more a follower of Śaibyā.

Verse-9 Notes on the Commentary by HG Urmila Devi Dasi

There are also jīvas in the amorous mood who are Balarāma's gopīs, who serve him and Pūrṇānandā, whom Śrīla Prabhupāda refers to in a Caitanya-caritāmṛta puport (Ādi-līlā 10.53) as “the foremost of Lord Balarāma's very dear girlfriends.”

In conclusion, each devotee on the rāga-mārga meditates on a suitable form of the Personality of Godhead with his associates who are in a similar mood to oneself, along with their specific places of pastimes.

Certainly, everyone regardless of mood meditates to some extent on Rādhā, Kṛṣṇa, Lalitā, Viśākhā, Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Govardhana.

Verse-9 Notes on the Commentary by HG Urmila Devi Dasi

At the same time, those who are, for example, in the mood of friendship, will probably meditate mostly on Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, Subāla, and Ujjvala and their pastime places, rather than the list given in Manaḥ-śikṣā verse nine.

Also, some jīvas have plural, simultaneous identities as Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī explains in his commentary to Brahma-saṁhita 5.5:

“The pure devotees following the devotees of Vraja and those following the pure devotees of Navadvīpa are located in the realm of Kṛṣṇa and Gaura respectively. The identical devotees of Vraja and Navadvīpa simultaneously attain to the pleasures of service in the realm of Kṛṣṇa and Gaura.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda describes one jīva who has three simultaneous identities in his purport to Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Adi-līlā 15.30:

Vanamālī Ghaṭaka, a resident of Navadvīpa and a brāhmaṇa by caste, arranged the marriage of the Lord [Caitanya] to Lakṣmīdevī.

He was formerly Viśvāmitra, who negotiated the marriage of Lord Rāmacandra, and later he was the brāhmaṇa who negotiated the marriage of Lord Kṛṣṇa with Rukmiṇī.

That same brāhmaṇa acted as the marriage-maker of the Lord in caitanya-līlā.

Verse-9 Notes on the Commentary by HG Urmila Devi Dasi

We may note that Govardhana Hill, very prominent throughout Manah-śikṣā, is a pastime place for all the residents of Vṛndāvana, in every mood.

Every resident of Vraja, including both the forest and village animals, love Kṛṣṇa in his Giridhārī mood.

Govardhana serves all the varieties of devotees, fulfilling all their desires.

At Govardhana everyone meets to celebrate festivals and to seek shelter.