

Śrī Manah-śikṣā

Splendid Instructions to the
Mind

by Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī

Verse-12

Bhajana Darpana

by

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

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In his Śrī Vṛndāvanāstakam in the Stava-mālā, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī beautifully explains the glories of Vṛndāvana:

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mukunda-muralī-rava-śravaṇa-phulla-hṛd-vallarī-
kadambaka-karambita-prati-kadamba-kunjāntarā
kalinda-giri-nandinī-kamala-kandalāndolinā
sugandhir anilena me śaraṇam astu vṛndaṭavi

On hearing (śravaṇa) the sounds of Mukunda's flute (mukunda-muralī-rava), the creeper of the gopīs' hearts blossom (phulla-hṛd-vallarī-kadambaka), and they enter (karambita) each and every kunja within the kadamba forests of Vṛndāvana (prati-kadamba-kunjāntarā). Yamunā, the daughter of Kalinda Mountain, flows here (kalinda-giri-nandinī). Lotus flowers in the Yamunā (kamala-kandala) move around (āndolinā) due to the fragrant winds (sugandhir anilena). May that Vṛndāvana forest (vṛndaṭavī) be my shelter (me śaraṇam astu).

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2

vikunṭha-pura-saṁśrayād vipinato'pi niḥśreyasāt
sahasra-guṇitām śriyaṁ praduhatī rasa-śreyasīm
caturmukha-mukhair api sprhita-tārṇadehodbhavā
jagadgurubhir agrimaiḥ śaraṇam astu vṛndāṭavī

The shelter of Vṛndāvana (vipinato'pi śriyaṁ) supersedes the shelter of the liberation provided in Vaikuṅṭha (vikunṭha-pura-saṁśrayād) by a thousand times (sahasra-guṇitām), for the shelter of Vṛndāvana provides (praduhatī) the ultimate good fortune of the various types of bhakti-rasa such as dāsya, sakhya, vātsalya, and mādhurya (rasa-śreyasīm). The desire to take birth here as an insignificant blade of grass (sprhita-tārṇadeha udbhavā) is expressed even by the excellent four mouths of Lord Brahmā (caturmukha-mukhair api), the spiritual master of the entire world (jagadgurubhir agrimaiḥ). May that Vṛndāvana forest (vṛndāṭavī) be my shelter (me śaraṇam astu).

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3

anārata-vikasvara-vratati-punja-puṣpāvalī-
visāri-vara-saurabhodgama-ramā-camatkāriṇī
amanda-makaranda-bhr̥d-viṭapi-vṛnda-vṛndīkṛta-
dvirepha-kula-vanditā śaraṇam astu vṛndāṭavī

Vṛndāvana's fully (blossoming) (anārata-vikasvara) creeper-filled forest (puṣpāvalī-vratati-punja) spreads about (visāri) an excellent fragrance (vara-saurabha) that amazes even the goddess of fortune (ramā-camatkāriṇī udgama). The forest is full of wonderful groups of nectar-dripping, flower-laden trees (amanda-makaranda-bhr̥d-viṭapi-vṛnda), which cause the hosts of bees to always offer praises to her (dvirepha-kula-vanditā kṛta). May that Vṛndāvana forest (vṛndāṭavī) be my shelter (me śaraṇam astu).

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4

kṣaṇa-dyuti-ghana-śriyo-vraja-navīna-yūnoḥ padaiḥ
suvaglubhir alaṅkṛtā lalita-lakṣma-lakṣmī-bharaiḥ
tayor nakhara-maṇḍalī-śikhara-keli-caryocitair
vṛtā kiśalayāṅkuraiḥ śaraṇam astu vṛndāṭavī

Her blades of grass, (leaves) and (sprouts) (kiśalaya aṅkuraiḥ) are luxuriant, and are decorated (suvaglubhir alaṅkṛtā) with marks from the sports (keli-caryā) of the nail-tips (nakhara-maṇḍalī-śikhara) of the superexcellent feet (śriyah padaiḥ) of the lightning and cloud (kṣaṇa-dyuti-ghana) of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa (vraja-navīna-yūnoḥ). Their feet (padaiḥ) carry (alaṅkṛtā) a host of beautiful marks such as lightning and lotus (lalita-lakṣma-lakṣmī-bharaiḥ). May that Vṛndāvana forest (vṛndāṭavī) be my shelter (me śaraṇam astu).

vrajendra-sakha-nandinī-śubhatarādhikāra-kriyā-
prabhāvaja-sukhotsava-sphurita-jaṅgama-sthāvarā
pralamba-damanānuja-dhvanita-vaṁśikā-kākalī-
rasajna-mṛga-maṇḍalā śaraṇam astu vṛndāṭavī

In Vṛndāvana, the sakhi (śubhatarā) of Rādhikā, the daughter of Nanda's friend (Vṛṣabhānu) (vrajendra-sakha-nandinī), manifest (sphurita) a festival of joy (sukha utsava) for the moving and non-moving living entities (jaṅgama-sthāvarā) by her orders (adhikāra-kriyā-prabhāvaja). Vṛndāvana is replete with hosts of expert rasika animals (rasajna-mṛga-maṇḍalā) who are attracted to the sounds of the flute (dhvanita-vaṁśikā-kākalī) of Kṛṣṇa, the younger brother of Balarāma, Pralamba's enemy (pralamba-damana anuja). May that Vṛndāvana forest (vṛndāṭavī) be my shelter (me śaraṇam astu).

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6

amanda-mudirārbudābhyadhika-mādhurī-medura-
vrajendra-suta-vīkṣaṇonnaṭita-nīlakaṇṭhotkarā
dineśa-suhṛd-ātmajākrta-nijābhimānollasal-
latā-khaga-mṛgāṅganā śaraṇam astu vṛndāṭavī

Here in Vṛndāvana, on seeing (vīkṣaṇa) the beautiful complexion (abhyadhika-mādhurī), like a thick dark cloud (amanda-mudira arbuda medura), of Nanda's son (vrajendra-suta), the peacocks shout and dance in ecstatic joy (-nīlakaṇṭha). The many creepers, birds, and animals (latā-khaga-mṛgāṅganā) all joyously and resoundingly proclaim the pride (unnaṭita utkarā) of Rādhā, the daughter of the sun-worshiper Vṛṣabhānu (dineśa-suhṛd-ātmajā). Her pride is, "This forest is mine (krta-nija abhimāna)!" May that Vṛndāvana forest (vṛndāṭavī) be my shelter (me śaraṇam astu).

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7

agaṇya-guṇa-nāgarī-gaṇa-gariṣṭha-gāndharvikā-
manoja-raṇa-cāturī-piśuna-kunja-punjojivalā
jagat-traya-kalā-guror lalita-lāsyavalgat-pada-
prayoga-vidhi-sākṣiṇī śaraṇam astu vṛndāṭavī

The dazzling groves (ujjvalā punja) of the Vṛndāvana forest (piśuna-kunja) testify to the love-battle expertise (manoja-raṇa-cāturī) of Śrī Rādhikā (gāndharvikā), who is the host of unlimited excellent qualities (agaṇya-guṇa-nāgarī-gaṇa-gariṣṭha). This Vṛndāvana forest is witness (sākṣiṇī) to the beautiful dancing of the lotus feet (lalita-lāsyavalgat-pada-prayoga-vidhi) of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the lord of all the creative arts in the three worlds (jagat-traya-kalā-guror). May that Vṛndāvana forest (vṛndāṭavī) be my shelter (me śaraṇam astu).

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8

variṣṭha-haridāsatā-pada-samrddha-govardhanā
madhūdvaha-vadhū-camatkṛti-nivāsa-rāsa-sthalā
agūḍha-gahana-śriyo madhurima-vrajenojjvalā
vrajasya sahajena me śaraṇam astu vṛndāṭavī

Śrī Govardhana (govardhanā), who is awarded (samrddha) the fortune of being the best servant of Śrī Hari (variṣṭha-haridāsatā-pada), resides in the Vṛndāvana forest. This forest is the setting of the rāsa-sthala (nivāsa-rāsa-sthalā), whose narration amazed even Kṛṣṇa's wedded wives (madhu-udvaha-vadhū-camatkṛti). Vṛndāvana is illuminated (vrajasya ujjvalā) by the beauty (madhurima) of the various forests (agūḍha-gahana-śriyo) of Vraja-maṇḍala (vrajena) surrounding it (sahajena). May that Vṛndāvana forest (vṛndāṭavī) be my shelter (me śaraṇam astu).

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idaṁ nikhila-niṣkuṭāvali-variṣṭha-vṛndātavī-
guṇa-smaraṇa-kāri yaḥ paṭhati suṣṭhu padyāṣṭakam
vasan vyasana-mukta-dhīra-niśam atra sad-vāsanah
sa pīta-vasane vaśī ratim avāpya vikrīḍati

These eight verses (padyāṣṭakam) are a meditation (smaraṇa-kāri) on the excellent qualities (nikhila-niṣkuṭāvali-variṣṭha) of Vṛndāvana (vṛndātavī-guṇa), the giver of all joy. One who (yaḥ) is free from vices (vyasana-mukta sad-vāsanah), is self-controlled (dhīrah-niśam), resides in Vṛndāvana (atra vasan), and recites these prayers in a proper mood (suṣṭhu paṭhati), will attain love (ratim avāpya) that can conquer (vaśī) Kṛṣṇa, the wearer of yellow cloth (sah pīta-vasane), and will engage in sporting pastimes with him (vikrīḍati).

Manah-śikṣā-da: Giving instructing
to the mind

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These verses of Manah-śikṣā offer instruction to the mind of those devotees who desire to pursue the spiritual bhajana path.

Varam: Super-excellent

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These verses of Manaḥ-śikṣā are derived from the confidential instructions of Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī and Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī by the grace of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Madhurayā-girā-uccaiḥ: Singing
loudly in a sweet, melodious voice

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One should loudly and clearly sing these verses of Manah-śikṣā
with perfect meter, either together with others or alone, in a sweet
voice overflowing with loving feeling.

Samadhigata: Thoroughly
understanding each and all
meanings

One should recite each of the eleven ślokaś of Manah-śikṣā with a clear understanding of the deeper confidential meanings.

yeṣāṃ sarāga-bhajane vraja-rāja-sūnoḥ
śrī-rūpa-śikṣita-matānugamānurāgaḥ
yatnena te bhajana-darpaṇa-nāma-bhāṣyaṃ
sikṣāda-śloka-sahitaṃ prapaṭhantu bhaktyā

Those who have deep attachment (yeṣāṃ anurāgaḥ) for following (anugama) in the footsteps of the path of opinions taught by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī (śrī-rūpa-śikṣita-mata) regarding the spontaneous loving bhajana (sarāga-bhajane) of the son of Nanda (vraja-rāja-sūnoḥ) should, with great effort and devotion (yatnena bhaktyā), read carefully (prapaṭhantu) this instructive Bhajana-darpaṇa commentary (bhajana-darpaṇa-nāma-bhāṣyaṃ) filled with many instructive verses (sikṣāda-śloka-sahitaṃ).