

The Royal Road Ahead: Bhava and Prema Bhakti



Bhakti-Rasāmṛta-Sindhu



Part – 18

Stages leading to Prema-Bhakti

Stages leading to Prema-Bhakti

ādaḥ śraddhā tataḥ sadhu
saṅgo 'tha bhajanakriyā |
tato 'narthanivṛttih syāt
tato niṣṭhā rucis tataḥ ||

tathāsaktis tato bhāvas
tataḥ premābhyudañcati |
sādhakānām ayaṁ premṇah
prādurbhāvaḥ bhavet kramah ||

Stages leading to Prema-Bhakti

Satōm kṛpē → mahat sevā → ajñāta svayati → śraddhā

First, there is association with devotees, by which one gains faith (ādan śraddhā). Then, one associates with the devotees (tataḥ sadhu saṅgah) to learn the scriptures, and then practices bhakti (atha bhajanakriyā). The anarthas are then destroyed (tato anarthanivṛttiḥ syāt). Steady bhakti without confusion follows (tato niṣṭhā). Desire for the Lord (ruci) appears (rucis tataḥ). This is followed by spontaneous desire for the Lord (āśakti) (tathā āśaktih). This becomes bhāva (tato bhāvah) and then prema (tataḥ prema abhyudañcati). This is the progression (ayaṁ kramah bhavet) for manifesting prema (premaṅ prādurbhāvah) for those performing sādhana-bhakti (sādhakānām) (BRS)

Stages leading to Prema-Bhakti

- Though there are many steps in the progression of bhakti, the most common sequence is stated in two verses.
- In the beginning (ādaṁ), by hearing the scriptures in association with the devotees, one attains faith (śraddhā).
- Śraddhā means trust or confidence.

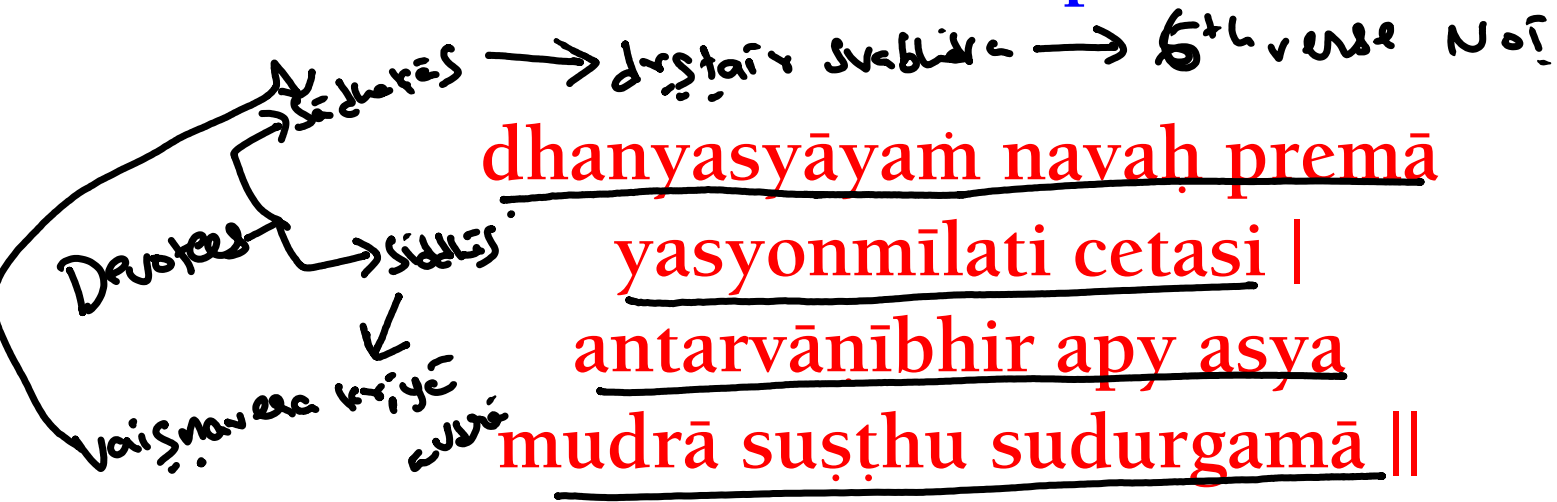
Stages leading to Prema-Bhakti

- Then, after faith appears, again association with devotees takes place (sadhu-saṅga), for learning how to practice bhakti.
- Niṣṭhā means continuous bhakti without confusion.
- Ruci means desire for the Lord, but with direction by the intellect.
- Āsakti means desire, which is natural or spontaneous (without intellectual direction).

Part – 19

It is difficult to
understand a person
in Prema-Bhakti

It is difficult to understand a person in Prema-Bhakti



This ever fresh prema (navah premā) arises in the heart of a person who is very fortunate (dhanyasyāyam cetasi unmīlati). That person's behavior (yasya mudrā) is very difficult to comprehend (susthu sudurgamā) even for those knowledgeable of scriptures (antarvānībhir apy).
(BRS)

It is difficult to understand a person in Prema-Bhakti

bhāvonmatto hareh kiñcin
na veda sukham ātmanah |
dukham ceti maheśāni
paramānanda āplutaḥ ||

O goddess Pārvatī (**maheśāni**), the person who is mad with love of the Lord (**hareḥ bhāva unmattah**) being absorbed in the highest bliss (**paramānanda āplutaḥ**), does not know at all (**na kiñcid veda**) his own happiness or distress (**ātmanah sukham ca dukham**).
(Nārada-pañcarātra)

It is difficult to understand a person in Prema-Bhakti

- This verse shows the difficulty in understanding a person with prema. (Even he cannot understand what is happening.)
- Here is the meaning.
- Those learned in scriptures define the goals of life as the destruction of suffering and attainment of happiness.

It is difficult to understand a person in Prema-Bhakti

- They try to understand if the prema-bhaktas have achieved these two goals of life by looking at their external appearance.
- But these prema-bhaktas internally experience happiness and distress only from achieving or not achieving the Lord. (Thus, others cannot understand the prema-bhakta's behavior.)

It is difficult to understand a person in Prema-Bhakti

- Thus it is said:

nātyantikam vigaṇayanty api te prasādam
kimv anyad arpita-bhayaṃ bhruva unnayais te
ye 'ṅga tvad-aṅghri-śaraṇā bhavataḥ kathāyāḥ
kīrtanya-tīrtha-yaśasaḥ kuśalā rasa-jñāḥ

Persons who have realized you do not regard attainment of impersonal liberation as your mercy (**nātyantikam na prasādam vigaṇayanty**), what to speak of (**kim u**) attaining a material position like Indra (**anyad**) which is subject to fear caused by the Lord raising his eyebrow (**arpita-bhayaṃ bhruva unnayais te**). O Lord (**aṅga**)! Those devotees, surrendered to your lotus feet (**ye tvad-aṅghri-śaraṇā**), are expert knowers of rasa (**kuśalā rasa-jñāḥ**) derived from narrations about your fame (**bhavataḥ kathāyāḥ yaśasaḥ**), which should be chanted (**kīrtanya**) and which purify everyone like a tīrtha (**tīrtha**).

It is difficult to understand a person in Prema-Bhakti

kāmaṁ bhavaḥ sva-vṛjinair nirayeṣu naḥ stāc
ceto 'livad yadi nu te padayo rameta
vācaś ca nas tulasivad yadi te 'nghri-śobhāḥ
pūryeta te guṇa-gaṇair yadi karṇa-randhraḥ ||

Let us remain in hellish existence (**kāmaṁ bhavaḥ nirayeṣu naḥ stāt**) because of sinful actions (**sva-vṛjinair**), if our minds can achieve prema at your lotus feet (**ceto yadi nu te padayo rameta**) like bees which are not injured by the thorns as they taste the honey (**alivad**), if our words can remain glorious at your lotus feet like tulasī leaves (**vācaś ca nas tulasivad yadi te aṅghri-śobhāḥ**), and if our ear holes can remain filled with hearing your qualities (**pūryeta te guṇa-gaṇair yadi karṇa-randhraḥ**).

Part – 20

Higher stages of
Prema are not
discussed here

Higher stages of Prema are not discussed here

Sādhyā bhakti

bhāva

prema

māna

rāga
ahvāga

Mahe bhāva

premṇa eva vilāsatvād
vairalyāt sādhaḥkeṣv api |
atra snehādayo bheda
vivicya na hi śamsitāḥ ||

Sneha and other advanced stages (snehādayo) are the manifestations of prema (premṇa eva vilāsatvād), but because they are rare (vairalyāt), even in those who have practiced bhakti (sādhaḥkeṣv api), the distinctions will not be described here (atra bhedaḥ na hi vivicya śamsitāḥ). (BRS)

Śrī Caitanya-Śikṣāmṛta

Nectarean Teachings of Lord Śrī
Caitanya

by Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda
Thākura

Chapter – 6

Prema Bhakti

Part-2

Stages in the Development of Prema

It is necessary to know the stages of development from practice to the final achievement of human life.

The gradual development has nine stages: faith, association, devotional action, purification, steadiness, taste, attachment, bhava and prema.

A life without morality is animal life.

Life that merely increases sense happiness by progress in material science and mechanics through intellectual power is demonic.

All is temporary and insignificant.

Although moral people follow rules for controlling body and mind, because it is devoid of thoughts of future life and devotion to God, their life is worthless and unfulfilling for the soul.



In moral life with theism, there are thoughts of after life and worship of God, but those activities are impure, minor and unsatisfying.

The soul cannot remain bound to that stage of existence.

The life of the impersonalist is very repulsive and misdirected. Devotional life is the only life.

|| 6.45 ||

prayatnād yatamānas tu
yogī saṁśuddha-kilbiṣaḥ
aneka-janma-saṁsiddhas
tato yāti parām gatim

That yogī (yogī), more than in previous life striving with full effort (prayatnād yatamānas tu), becoming purified of his faults (saṁśuddha-kilbiṣaḥ), and reaching full perfection after many births (aneka-janma-saṁsiddhas), finally attains the supreme goal (tato yāti parām gatim).

|| 6.46 ||

tapasvibhyo 'dhiko yogī
jñānibhyo 'pi mato 'dhikaḥ
karmibhyaś cādhiko yogī
tasmād yogī bhavārjuna

According to Me (**mataḥ**), the yogī is better than the tapasvī (**tapasvibhyo adhikah yogī**), better than the jñānī (**jñānibhyo api adhikah**), and better than the karma yogī (**karmibhyaś cādhiko yogī**). Therefore, be a yogī, Arjuna (**tasmād yogī bhavārjuna**).

|| 6.47 ||

yoginām api sarveṣām
mad-gatenāntar-ātmanā
śraddhāvān bhajate yo mām
sa me yuktatamo mataḥ

But I consider (**me mataḥ**) he who worships Me with faith (**yah śraddhāvān mām bhajate**), with mind attached to Me (**mad-gatena antar-ātmanā**), to be greater than all types of yogīs (**yoginām api sarveṣām yukta tamah**).

|| 9.29 ||

samo 'haṁ sarva-bhūteṣu
na me dveṣyo 'sti na priyaḥ
ye bhajanti tu mām bhaktyā
mayi te teṣu cāpy aham

Q's related
concern for
devotees

as S/S
moral theorists
&
athletes

I am equal to all living beings (**samo 'haṁ sarva-bhūteṣu**). I do not hate anyone nor do I favor anyone (**na me dveṣyo 'sti na priyaḥ**). To whatever extent a person worships Me with devotion (**ye bhajanti tu mām bhaktyā**), I am attached to them in a similar way (**mayi te teṣu cāpy aham**).

॥ 9.30 ॥

api cet su-durācāro
bhajate mām ananya-bhāk
sādhur eva sa mantavyah
samyag vyavasito hi sah

SPECIAL PROTECTION
& affection for
The devotee
↓
is comparable to a
metal shield.

Even if (**api cet**) the most sinful person (**su-durācāro**) worships Me (**bhajate mām**) with no other desire than to please Me (**ananya-bhāk**), I consider that person to be My devotee (**sādhur eva sa mantavyah**), as he has fixed himself completely in Me (**samyag vyavasito hi sah**).

|| 9.31 ||

kṣipraṁ bhavati dharmātmā
śāśvac-chāntim nigacchati
kaunteya pratijānīhi
na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati

Very quickly he becomes a righteous person (**kṣipraṁ bhavati dharmātmā**), and becomes completely devoid of contamination (**śāśvat-śāntim nigacchati**). O son of Kuntī (**kaunteya**), you declare (**pratijānīhi**) that My devotee never perishes (**na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati**).

|| 9.32 ||

mām hi pārtha vyapāśritya
ye 'pi syuḥ pāpa-yonayaḥ
striyo vaiśyas tatha śūdrās
te 'pi yānti parām gatim

Even those born in sinful situations (**ye pāpa-yonayaḥ syuḥ api**), such as women, vaiśyas and śūdras, and even the outcastes (**striyo vaiśyās tathā śūdrāḥ**), if they surrender to Me (**mām hi vyapāśritya**), attain Me, the supreme goal (**te api yānti parām gatim**).

|| 9.33 ||

kiṁ punar brāhmaṇāḥ puṇyā
bhaktā rājarṣayas tathā
anityam asukhaṁ lokam
imaṁ prāpya bhajasva mām

What then to speak of (**kiṁ punar**) devotees (**bhaktā**) who are pure brāhmaṇas (**brāhmaṇāḥ puṇyā**) or kings (**rājarṣayah**)? Therefore, having come into this impermanent world of distress (**imaṁ anityam asukhaṁ lokam prāpya**), worship Me (**bhajasva mām**).

॥ 4.24.29 ॥

sva-dharma-niṣṭhaḥ śata-janmabhiḥ pumān
virīñcatām eti tataḥ param hi mām
avyākṛtam bhāgavato 'tha vaiṣṇavam
padam yathāham vibudhāḥ kalātyaye

A person fixed in dharma (**sva-dharma-niṣṭhaḥ pumān**) attains the post of Brahmā (**virīñcatām eti**) after a hundred births (**śata-janmabhiḥ**), and by more pious acts than that a person attains me, Śiva (**tataḥ param hi mām**). But the devotee (**bhāgavataḥ**) attains the abode of Vaikuṅṭha (**vaiṣṇavam padam**) beyond the material world (**avyākṛtam**) after leaving the body (**kalātyaye**). Similarly I in another form reside there (**yathā aham**), and the devatās who are qualified go there (**vibudhāḥ**) after destroying their subtle bodies (**kalātyaye**).

|| 11.14.20 ||

na sādhayati mām yogo
na sāṅkhyam dharmā uddhava
na svādhyāyas tapas tyāgo
yathā bhaktir mamorjitā

O Uddhava! I am attained by unmixed bhakti. I cannot be attained by mystic yoga, Sāṅkhya philosophy, dharmā, Vedic study, austerity or renunciation.

The Supreme Lord is all-pervading, the creator of all, and controller of all, and therefore it is most beneficial to have attachment to Him.

Whatever else we think is beneficial is dependent on this attachment.

Reṣāyge
↑
Vaidhi bhakti
↑
māyā bhakti
↑
māyā bhakti
↑
i bhakti bhakti

Our independent efforts or attempts at gaining knowledge are very insignificant and limited—they cannot satisfy the Lord.

Selfless devotion to the Lord is necessary for the soul, for the soul is the eternal servant of the Lord.

→ inability to realize its potential

Association with matter is the degradation of the soul, which has arisen because of the soul's incompetence--disrespect for the Lord.

→ Turned his face away from → using apte tasya.

The soul itself is the maker of this bondage.

The Lord is the secondary cause because the Lord assists the soul after that point, by supply^{ing} a material world.

That world is not false; although real it is not eternal.

The world serves as a prison for punishing the incompetent souls, but the Lord is kind.

To deliver the soul from the suffering it experiences, the Lord constantly accompanies the soul, trying to take the soul out of its miserable condition.

The Lord is anxious to see the soul make personal efforts to qualify himself, so that He can bestow the sweet nectar of His eternal pastimes.

↓ ✂
If the Lord desired, He could deliver everyone, but, as His inconceivable pastime, He desires and wills that the soul strives for devotion.

The father can give the undeserving son all his wealth, but he derives more pleasure from making the son qualified before he gives him the wealth.

Such an act is a reflection of the Lord's affection.

"To be the servant of the Lord is most beneficial for the soul."

Such conviction is called sraddha or faith

When there appears firm faith in the Lord and acknowledgement of the individual's insignificant position, such statements as mentioned above flow from the mouth of the faithful person.

In analyzing faith, it will be apparent that all other types of faith discussed before are included within resolute faith in the Lord.

P-D ~~stāhā~~ → (Morality) + (Aristocracy) + (Pure ^{anubhā} Kṛpā).

Caitanya Mahaprabhu has called this faith the seed of the creeper of bhakti.

Examining the lives of devotees, it will be found that some have developed faith by studying the scriptures impartially.

→ faith is acquired → it is not inherent in the soul.

Many have developed faith by association with devotees and hearing their teachings.

Others have developed faith in bhakti after performing duties according to varnasrama and developing a repulsion to taking material results.

Others have developed faith through disgust for speculative knowledge.

Others have developed faith suddenly.

Generic way of receiving
the seed of bhakti
↓
But bhakti devī is independent
& not bound by rules.

There is no specific rule for the development of faith, for faith, the seed of the creeper of bhakti, is above the rules.

Therefore it was said that faith develops in the fortunate soul.

Others have developed faith in bhakti after performing duties according to varnasrama and developing a repulsion to taking material results.

Others have developed faith through disgust for speculative knowledge.

Others have developed faith suddenly.

There is no specific rule for the development of faith, for faith, the seed of the creeper of bhakti, is above the rules.

Therefore it was said that faith develops in the fortunate soul.



The end of action according to varnasrama duties (karma) and the appearance of faith are simultaneous.

|| 11.20.9 ||

~~tāvat karmāṇi kurvīta~~

na nirvidyeta yāvatā

~~mat-kathā-śravaṇādaḥ va~~

śraddhā yāvan na jāyate

As long as one does not become detached from daily and periodic duties (**na nirvidyeta yāvatā**) or has not awakened his faith (**śraddhā yāvan na jāyate**) in hearing topics about me (**mat-kathā-śravaṇādaḥ vā**), one must perform one's prescribed duties of varṇāśrama (**tāvat karmāṇi kurvīta**).

When faith arises, the devotees become filled with anxiety.

By habit they are controlled by sinful tendencies.

Struggle
Self-struggle

Suit → ↓
↓ why suit
But they have developed
a value system → ✓/✗

Thinking of how to dissipate the evil, they take shelter of the feet of the devotees.

Such a people begin to search out devotees free from desires, and by Krsna's mercy they attain their association.

This is the first sign of development of prema.