CHAPTER V.

Different types of Bhakti

( Love-devotion and Parā-Bhakti )
CHAPTER V.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF BHAKTI.

( Love Devotion and Para-Bhakti)

As distinguished from the above mentioned nine-fold (नामस्य) or the three-fold (निगुणणमयक्षय) Bhakti which is secondary (गौणी भक्ति), the tenth kind of Bhakti i.e. दर्शन (Love devotion प्रेमाक्षणा भक्ति) or the eleventh kind of Bhakti i.e. अनेकदर्शन or Nirguna or Guṇatīta or Para-Bhakti is the Bhakti par excellence dominated by Love Divine either of Saguna Brahman as seen in the Love Devotion of Radhā or Rukmini for Kṛṣṇa or of the Nirguna Brahman as seen in the case of like Sukadeva. It is in fact love for love's sake without any ulterior motive of profit or gain or reward or recognition or even of Mokṣa. It is the spontaneous (स्वभाविक), uninterrupted (अनब्रक्त) and unmotivated (अहृत) flow of the purified and concentrated heart towards God, whether with form
or without form. It commences after the dedication of the earthly self to God (Atma-Nivedana), for the devotee in order to realise the Divine has to merge his limited being (i.e. the ego) in the Being of the Eternal Infinite. De facto, the limited shell is broken so that the drop glides into the ocean.

With the annihilation of the ego (the limited self), the devotee now rises above the imperatives. The sense of agency (नागृंकलि)

1. एवं श्रमैर्मुद्युलोमुद्धवात्मनिवेदिनाम्।
   मया प्रांजाये भक्तिः कोक्षविध्यश्राविशिष्ट्यते॥
   Bh. 11-19-24.

2. तत्स्वप्नायमुद्यवर्सिष्ठयोद्दहनाम् प्रदिष्टोद्दहनाम्।
   प्रत्येकं य निकृतं य श्रौत्तं सुलभं य च ||
   मामेकंमेव शारणमात्मानं स्वर्येद्धिनाम्।
   याहि सयोद्धिश्राविश भवति द्वारा इत्युक्तो भयः॥
   Bh 11-12-14 and 15
having disappeared with the dissolution of the limited self, rights and duties, do's and don'ts (अधिकार निषेध) have no meaning for the devotee who has dedicated himself to God, for he does only that which pleases God. The centre of his activity and the standard of his morality have changed from the self to God. He is possessed of passion for God. He lives on until all his matured actions (कार्य) are entirely exhausted. His devotion to God is, therefore, a spontaneous affair, as distinguished from conscious effort directed to a definite end. He now drifts from the shore of the material to the depth of the spiritual. He

3. तथेष्वेस्थ मिठलपुरशपरिश्रव्यं अनंतः ।
श्चत्तुद्रक नानासागरं महासुन्दरः ।

Bh. 5-7-12

4. उपशोगेन कार्यक्षे वनपरम ।

Bh. 5-10-14
goes all alone on his pilgrimage into the realm of the spiritual, having torn himself from all the times and trifles of worldly existence. It is the flight of the Alone to the Alone (i.e. God). Having surrendered the ego, he has no private axe to grind; having no self to feed. He is completely dispossessed of desires. He travels alone, light and free and refuses to be burdened again with the varied pleasures of life. He tramples over all pleasures that come by his way. He is not prepared to exchange his spiritual acquisition for anything, not even for the entire kingdom of heaven. He now withdraws himself from everything else to settle himself fully and entirely in God-love. It is an


6. न किम्बिन्तः चार्घेश्वराय भक्तराघुकार्तिनामम् ।
   जान्नेन्द्रविद्या महतं वदस्य क्रिष्णवन सुनवृत्तम् ॥
   13.11-20-34.
undivided direction of his mind to God (i.e. एकाविरात्रि). Like the concentration of the Yogin entering the depth of Samādhi, the devotee's Bhakti acquires spontaneity to be borne out into the midst stream of Infinitude. In terms of the Bhāgavata, the passion (राति) for God then begins to flow uninterruptedly to God (नेत्रारिककी राति). With the dawning of natural passion (नेत्रारिककी राति), the devotee as it were becomes a new man. He leaves aside toying with the world is transfigured into something other than what it was so long because of his spiritual insight. Every single act of his is now penetrated by God and he cries for divine grace. He sings out of

7. या सुन्दरे भगवति लक्ष्योत्सवति पर्याधोऽ/ छक्कासंतर्चे वो भक्त्या सर्गस्य वस्तुस्य तस्यम्/।

Bh. 9-2-11.

8. यशो यत्राञ्च सत्यायतं भर्तृश्च मर्यादायां इत्यकाविधानः।

लध्या लघु जपमिति परंपूर्वः सुखोऽ/ कामयत्वाय काष्ठस्य सकारानम्।।

Bh. 11.14-26.

---
intense pleasure, he breaks into dance at
his spiritual conquest. The divine rapture
over-takes him inspite of himself. It is in
fact the descent of God in man.\textsuperscript{9}

\textbf{9.} गुणेऽर्लमस्त्रयेवमाहात्म्यं तस्म युक्तते |
आयुश्येऽसगमयि सर्वं नैसर्गिकी रूपः ||

कुक्कुटिविनिमोक्षा अजन्तयो नर्मण्नर्तमयः |
कृष्णग्रह्यहृद्योगम न वेस्य अगाधीशम्॥

आहसिनं परयं राज्यं राज्यनं प्रसिद्धं शुच्यः |
नानुजर्थं प्रतापि गोविन्दपरिधिभिषकः ||

केषवदृढः राजति वंकुण्ठचिन्तनाशक्तशुलोधनः |
कृष्णिन्द्रतत्त्विति तस्मिन्नाहुक छट्टायति कृष्णिन्द्रः ||

नवक्षिका कृष्णिन्द्रकण्ठः चित्रश्रोते गृहस्त्वनिस्वभिषिधे
कृष्णिन्द्र तद्वा नानाप्रकारंहृतमयो जोशयस्ते ||

\textit{Bh. 7.4.36 \& 37}

निःस्यम् कर्मणि गुणोऽनुसारस्य स्वायत्ते जीवात्मसिद्धताः |
शयोऽभिसंज्जयते शुरुः दृवे प्रकृत्याज्ञाततिरुत्तमानः ||

शक्ति भृकुट्याः स्या कृष्णिवृहस्पतिः जयं भृकृि जनमानसमयां स्वरूपः |
	extit{马拉:} उच्चस्वरूप वास्ते शुरु श्रेयस्तपे सारां जोश्यायां शवं श्रवणसुलग्जस्यामि

\textit{Bh. 7.7.34 \& 35}
Gradually, the excitement subsides, he takes to silence and the steady and dynamic flow of love gradually assumes profundity. Love has now deepened into sublime tranquility from its superficial expressions. Love is now properly assimilated by his constitution. The softening effect of Rati is thus replaced by the solidity of devotional fervour. The devotee now opens his eyes to behold the world in an entirely new perspective as is seen in the case of a Bhāgavatottama (the best of devotees) like Rantideva. One who sees Viṣṇu everywhere is called a Vaiṣṇava or a Bhāgavatottama. The ether and the air, the

10. उन्नतमें सच्चिदानन्दस्वरूपः प्राणायामं निष्ठुलः।
   आर्यूपदृष्टान्तेन तत्र तिलकांची परिलक्षितं॥
   Bh. 7-4-41

11. Translated and Compiled by Atmananda:
   "Words of Śrī Ānandamayī Mā" - P. 5
fire and the water, the earth and the stars, beings and directions, trees, rivers and seas are found to articulate the Divine. God must be the alpha and omega of whatever is done. Naturally the response to this revelation is reverential submission to all forms of God. The prostration of the devotee goes to the underlying unity, the spiritual that binds the particulars into harmony. Tranquility then reigns supreme in his heart. The devotee sees the oneness of all life; and if everything is God, whom can one injure without offending God.

12. अवायमश्री गणिती महात्मा ज ओऽश्री स्वन्धर्मिनि (दिशे दुमावारण)। अशिरस्मुद्गेस्य हरे शरयः प्रक्षण्य धुलोऽप्राम्बवनम्।।

Bh. 11-2-41

13. दुस्तः चुमादृश्य भनलोकनुभृत्या अकलिनिरक्तमुर्गावलङ्कः।।

Bh. 11-2-43
so the devotee is marked at this stage by serenity (उपसर्ग) and nonviolence (अनशो)\(^{14}\).

If all particulars are integrated into the harmony of the spiritual, the devotee who is endowed with the integral vision cannot be left out of it. Hence, inclusion is not to be a part of the larger whole. To know is to be. To know that Brahman embodies all is to be Brahman, as revealed in the Sruti,\(^{15}\) but such Brahman is not the negation of particulars but the indissoluble unity of all the particulars. Once the devotee is endowed with this integral vision, his devotion attains a new dignity. Devotion, with the surrender of his limited self, was so

\[14\text{. स्तवाःमनो न हिंसाति भूलबामेशु किंचन्} \]
\[\text{उठगच्छेदु देह्येन्द्र मक्खोन गतेपुरुषः} \]
\[\text{Bk. 7-10-20.}\]

\[15\text{. अरम्भवद अहमव भवति} \]
\[\text{M. U. 3-2-9.}\]
far selfless but now it is marked by the sense of non-differentiation as well. Unitary and selfless, it is described by the Bhāgavata, as devotion par excellence (Para-Bhakti). Para-Bhakti is said to accompany or follow the highest knowledge. It is supposed to be an eternal state that is self-contained. It is to be Brahman transcending the three Gunas - Sattva, Rajas and Tamas (Nirguna Bhakti). With the attainment of the status of Brahman, his spirit of dedication finds a new significance. At one with the world, he now feels with all poignancy, all worldly afflictions as his own. Yet this new bondage becomes in his hand a new apparatus of emancipation.

16. महामुनि निमित्तनाथ मयि स्वरूपचारी / 
अनेकतर विद्वत्तेन सत्या व प्रवर्तकश्रेष्ठाद्वारम् ||
अहं भक्त्योच्चसिद्ध्वा विगुण्डेयमहुर्तवाहम् ||
अहंतुवक्षचल हिता भक्तिः पुराणमपि ||
Bh. 3-27-11812

म एक भक्तियोगात्रिः अनात्यतिं उच्चाहिः / 
स्वात्त्र निर्गुणं निगुणं महामायोग्यकालं \ ||
Bh. 3-29-14.
because he now yields the power of spirituality. So what might have been the source of infinite sorrow becomes the spring of perennial joy. He not only wails with the world, but also knows the secret of removing tears from it. A - Bhāgavatottama,\(^1\) as the Bhāgavata designates, is dedicated to the removal of troubles from the world. He is a citizen of the world charged with divine mission.\(^2\) Like Rantideva, he would say, "I do not crave for the supreme goal, the high majesty or release from re-birth. I should

---

17. ॥ भगवान्तोत्तमोऽत: पितर्वः हर्षस्वयं भगवतायत्महे ॥
भुस्तिं भगवान्तोत्तमसः भागवतेऽतः ॥

18. ॥ ब्रह्मचारिण्यमात्र: प्रसन्ने हृदयनास्य यो हस्तिस्त: ॥

Bh. 11-2-45 & 11-2-52

Bh. 11-2-29
rather work among men to take upon myself the burden of their sorrow, so that they are relieved of it.\(^{19}\) Like Prahlāda, he would take the vow, "I would not seek release till a single being remains in chains. I will do my very best to remove sorrow from the suffering world.\(^{20}\)

19. न कामः श्रेयः गतिमीलारात् परमेष्टिः स्मृतस्मृतामुक्ति मुनिः सर्वस्य: ||
अति क्षणं ज्ञात्वा लघुहृद्याहानां हः सिद्धो तेषा भवस्वेतुः ||
हृदयं श्रीमानं गायः परिच्छक्षमुः
दीर्घं कलम्: श्रीकविशादसोह: ||
सोऽसे निवर्तः: कुपकुर्या
क्षत्तो निबिष्किरीवाणुक्षापणामे! ||
Bh. 9-21-12 & 13

20. प्रामुणेः बैक्षु मुनयः राजितमुक्तिकामाः
मायेः यारस्ति चिन्तनेः न पराक्षोः! ||
ते तत्रा विहाम कुपशान्ति विमुक्तिएको
नामः त्यदेव शारस्त्रः अमलोकपरः! ||
Bh. 7-9-44.
Wherever goes a Bhagavatottama, he brings welfare. As he is the living embodiment of detachment, knowledge and devotion, he infects  

21. अधिकारि मे बुद्धि विद्या विज्ञानमयमद्वरीन ।
अविलम्बः संशोधः मे नातन्त्रम मे प्रकीकृति॥

Bh. 6-2-32

अन्नेन श्रवणं जनविश्वासं द्रामणे
ईशानशुद्धिभि् विनाशायः।
देशकुलमार्गाधि विनिष्कीर्ति
शीर्षा महत्तमान्मप्रिष्णायः॥ Bh. 1-14-14

अश्रु नरं संशुलयनत्युत्किलिकिंधियः।
स सुव नारदेऽन्तर निथान्यकाम कपले॥

Bh. 3-23-55

सुरबंधे वर्णेहि धर्मसाधकश्च मध्यां प्रभावः।
नान्यानां करणं ओऽके सर्थिशैकरं परम्॥

Bh. M. 1-79.
life and his contact opens up the door to liberation. His company rouses the mind to settling on God. A Bhagavatottama is one who is totally absorbed in God through his body, mind and intellect. And the dust of such a Bhagavatottama (पादमूलीकरण) evokes Krsna-mindedness. In fact, presence of water does not make a place holy, nor does

22. प्रमूलेन्द्र पादमूलीकरणं कवया चितु।
    स छवि खर्शु भूते मोक्षप्राप्तमहाथम॥
    Bh. 3-25-20.

23. निर्माणोक्त्संदूः नित्यं भगवल्लमेवः
    भगवतस्मात्मानं मक्तिसंवति सर्वकाँ॥
    Bh. 1-2-18.

24. त्रिमाल ते शृंगेरेण ॥ २४ ॥ महते श्रीमति हृदया
    ॥ श्री ॥ ॥ ततो शुचीरस्वानु करत दशमूली॥
    य. २
earth or stone constitute God-head. They are useful as far as they go, but a Bhāgavatottama's impact on life is immediate. The physical sun dispels physical darkness, but a Bhāgavatottama removes the mental gloom. It may be questioned

25. नाभागामाणि लीलालिनि न देया मुच्छितगामयः ।
लेपुपन्तभूसुकलेन दर्शनादेव मालसि: ॥
भागिनय वृष्णी न च जन्मालरकाम ।
न भजेति च ध्यानानादेव वाशिनामः ॥

26. भक्तरक्षम्राणांम भगवते विभाषयस्तु ।
शीतं भर्गेत्तम्भोपति मधूनु संस्कारंकथा ॥

Bh. 10-84-11, 12 & 13.
Bh. 11-26-3
where the secret spring of his power lies. A Bhagavatottama is so sanctifying because he is a God-filled soul. It is no wonder then that his sight is auspicious and gives pleasure to the mind. His mere association kindles the mind of others into detachment, devotion and knowledge. In fact, God love would be found to be the central virtue in which are focussed all other virtues.

27. मार्ध्यमेतं पशुहरितं: गृहं वाक्ल अविनाशी जागरणणां।
हरे स्मरे श्वेतं देववन्यानि ते विचारते स्व भिषमैरी।

Bh. 9.9-6.

28. तेजस्वीवेदियोर्नाश्च ननान्येन नाम विद्वृत्तमेतै।
हरिः तद्भवसंपुर्णं श्रृंगारमुलात्रौ लोकस्त्विरियों: वितिषारंभवन।

Bh. 5.12-16

29. Dr. Rämde :- "Article on - God-Love ".
is a counterpart of God. Indeed, God is as indispensable to him as he is to God.³⁰
A Bhagavatottama lives in God, as God lives in him. 31

According to the Bhagavata, Reality is the grand synthesis of both the immanent and

31. अहूं शक्ति पराङ्गी जा उखलत ज्ञान ब्रह्मः ||
आशुमिः आशुमिः भुक्ति भक्ति जनानां प्रियः ||
सत्यमात्रांनारायणे महर्षी: सार्वभुद्धिमा||
नियं ब्रह्मविद्वत्कुमारूर्वम् परमः ||

हित्या भाष्य भ्रान्तिः भाष्य भ्रान्तिः सत्यं भ्रान्तिः सत्येऽपि ||

Bh. 9-4-63 to 68.
transcendent (like the Puruṣottama of the Gītā) and so the opposition between the two aspects need not be absolute. In fact, the transcendent is the highest fulfilment of the immanent. Transcendence is other than exclusionism. The mind of the Bhāgavatottama is divested of Rajas and Tamas and therefore, his integral vision sees God here, there and everywhere. His love of the world is in fact the love of God, because God is immanent in the world. In course of time, finitude with all its infinite-simal details recedes to pale insignificance. He sees Brahman everywhere. It is possible, therefore, to realise the crest of devotion (Parā-Bhakti) here and now. Just as fragmentary life on earth is sustained by integral pleasure. According to the Bhāgavata, the consummation of pleasure is Bhagavān, to be achieved by supreme love (Parā-Bhakti). In brief, Parā-Bhakti or

32. तेजेष्वत्माश्च व्यापि श्रीभद्रिमदेष्ट्रकम्पुनम्।
भविष्यति परां भगवति सदाध्यायने पुरुषोदये॥

Bh 12-10-6
devotion par excellence is the stage when the devotee and his Bhagavan coalesce into the Single Reality. It is the highest fulfilment of Life Divine, the Summum bonum, the destination of all spiritual aspirations.

As distinguished from Parā-Bhakti, discussed above, the Love Devotion is in fact "the supreme love for God," as revealed in the love of the Gopis for Lord Kṛṣṇa. It depends upon nothing else. A mind totally turned towards God in love, demanding nothing, not even liberation, is a mind filled with devotion. Thoughts constantly flowing in love towards the supreme is devotion. Nobody else, nothing else; no one else — this attitude of the heart is love. This state is called exclusive love (Ananya Prem), and this total love is devotion. God love (ईश्वर द्वारा आलोचना)
should be distinguished from ordinary love i.e.
human love (सुन्दर मिलान). In the ordinary lower
love the lover expects a return while God love
is the exclusive love for God demanding nothing
but God. All things must die, but love alone
eludes mortality. Love warms the heart with
unspeakable solace, even more when it is given
than when it is received. Moreover, God-love
is above all sectarianism; for the concept of
God includes both the manifest and the unmanifest,
the immanent and the transcendent i.e. God with
form and without form. Love is a relation that
first relates the lover to the beloved. There­
after, it becomes a bond that fastens them into
a permanent intimacy. Love is a link that connects,
a force that attracts, a fascination that seizes

34. Will Durant: "The Pleasures of Philosophy"
Chapter VII (The Spiritual Development)
Page 114.
and a clasp that grasps. Therefore, when one establishes oneself in the relationship of devotion with the divine, one steps up into a realm of his own, having his own enchantments and personal experiences.

In our ordinary human life, we identify ourselves with the ever-changing instruments of experiences and we live nothing but a life of change in the midst of this ever-changing world. The equipment of experiences (viz. body, mind and intellect) and the objects, emotions and thoughts that constitute the fields of experiences are both finite and in their constant flux the individuality in us (viz. the perceiver, the feeler and thinker) as the experience of this change is itself constantly changing. These disturbances constitute the real pain of mortality, the source of all sorrows and agony in life. In God-love or utter devotion when an individual lifts all his identification from the realm of change into the contemplation of the changeless, immutable Lord, the constant agitations cease,
and therefore, all sense of mortality too vanishes. This constant experience of the changeless infinitude and the consequent equi-poise lived by a true devotee is the stage of immortality. This is why Narada says that the supreme love for the Lord called Devotion Divine is of the nature of immortality. 35

In Supreme Love, the devotee forgets his self entirely. He has only thoughts of God. The devotee wants God and God alone. There is no selfish expectation here. Devotion is the seed, Faith is the root. Service of saints is the shower. Communion with the Lord is the fruit. Bhakti is the greatest power on this earth. It gushes from one's pure heart. It redeems and saves. It purifies the heart. Bhakti grows gradually just as we grow a flower or a tree

35. अनमूलवच्चुप्या या |

N B. S. 3
in a garden. We should cultivate Bhakti in the
garden of our heart gradually. 36

Man is constantly seeking his share of peace and happiness, and since he does not know the real source of this, he seeks them in the midst of the sense-objects; but when he, in his devotion, comes to turn his entire attention towards the Higher and the Nobler and when he in his Supreme devotion comes to turn completely towards the self, he experiences the infinite or infinitude as intimately as he experienced before the world and its changes. To love the

All-perfect is happiness. Bhagavan Himself says in the Bhagavata "the mind that constantly contemplates upon the sense-objects irresistably comes to reveal in their finite joys and the mind that learns to remember Me constantly comes to dissolve into Me and revel in Me".

Through the divinely passionate love for the Lord, when the devotee turns his entire devotion towards the supreme, he comes to live no more in the realm of the finite changes but comes to experience the Immortal Nature of the Infinite Bliss, the Lord. This reminds us of the Upanisadic declarations.


38. निधिणाः ह्यामालकिनः निधिणाः ह्यामालकिनः | नामन्तरालकिनः मर्यादाय प्रविष्टामस्य ||
   Bh. 11-14-27
that "the knower of the Brahman becomes Brahman". Here the knowing is the state of fully awakening to the divine nature of pure consciousness, the Ātman (the Parā-Bhakti described above).

The essential difference between the Parā-Bhakti and Premalakṣaṇa-Bhakti lies in the or or or attitude and the consequent goal of the devotee. In Parā-Bhakti (transcendental Love-devotion), the devotee like Sukadeva believes in the oneness of all life and hence aims at merger in the Eternal Infinite (Brahman) whereas in Premalakṣaṇa-Bhakti (Love-devotion i.e. conjugal or married love like that of Rukmini or passionate or romantic love like that of Radha and other Gopīs) the devotee believes himself or herself to be distinct from the Lord, the Saguna-Brahman (God with form) and consequently

39. अन्तर्गत तोंक अधात्मिक आत्माः

M U. 3-2-9.
aims at the everlasting union with God. Both the aspects of love viz. conjugal and romantic (i.e. as between a lover and the beloved) find a place in the Bhāgavata. The former has been given expression at Dwārka through Kṛṣṇa and his wives, while the latter finds scope for play at Vṛndāvana. It will be evident from the above that the devotee of the Pārā-Bhakti type aims at identity with the God-head whereas the devotee of the Premalaksanā type aims at union with God, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The great Purāṇas describe that the eight mighty powers (अग्नि-गृह) wait upon a true devotee. But to a true devotee of the Lord all the powers and gains are of no value at all. He rejects them as insignificant, for he has given away his heart to God. Thereafter he claims nothing other than

God — neither the status of Brahman nor the throne of Indra nor the emperorship, nor the kingdom, nor the eight Siddhis (सिद्धि) — nay not even Moksha does he come to demand. Love is its own fulfilment. A devotee after having gained this subtle wealth of Supreme Devotion discovers an infinite satisfaction in itself, by itself, for itself. He lacks thereafter nothing. Rich in his love, he steadily lives on, and experiences no change. No more is he conscious of the usual slavery of existence. He comes to gain and live immortality here among us, even while apparently living the worldly life of daily joys and sorrows. Since his mind is constantly resting at His feet in devotion, he lives the Infinitude which is the nature of the Lord. There is an exhilarating

41. न स माक्षुण्ड न या पारम्परियः न सार्वभौमः न रसात्मिकम् न पारम्परियः न योगिकाः पुनः या शमश्यते यथा विराहन्य कार्ये ||

Bh. 6.11.25
satisfaction in the subjective bosom of a true devotee. Even though he may be living in utter starvation and penury, misery and sorrow as Sudāma did, he lives inwardly fully rich and happy. When an individual gains the Supreme joy of full devotion to the Lord, he has no more any desires for the things of this world. How can there be any attraction for the foul-smelling ditch-water of sensuality to one who is swimming in the ocean of Hari-Bhakti? A true God-lover has only one desire - be he in heaven or hell, his only demand is that his love for his Lord must ever increase. He cares for nothing but God. Moreover, he never grieves at the loss of anything, for grief is the feeling that comes in the human mind, when the already acquired objects of his attachment perish or decay. Since to a true devotee, there is no attachment for anything of the world around, and his entire attachment is only for the imperishable truth i.e. God in the midst of
the ever-dying, ever-perishing world of being and objects, a true lover's heart knows no grief.\footnote{42} Moreover, a true devotee in his supreme love for God recognises everything as the play of the Lord of his heart. He, therefore, knows no hatred and slights none. In his vision everything is sacred and divine and therefore he hates none.\footnote{43} Generally, things that are conducive to our nature gather around us, we come to feel an expansion of joy within our bosom. The heart of a true lover is ever-dwelling in the thoughts of his beloved and so a true devotee discovers no situation in life wherein he can particularly discover a great delight because of a certain set of things or circumstances.

\footnote{42} न किंचिद्वेषङ्गलि न शोऽश्चति | \vspace{1cm} \textit{N. B. S. 5.}

\footnote{43} न श्रेष्ठिति | \vspace{1cm} \textit{N. B. S. 5.}
around him. Even when the situations are bad, the devotee is in supreme ecstasy because his heart is constantly dwelling in His presence. A true devotee is always full of the drunken joy of His presence within and around him at all times, therefore, he lives a full-life-sans interest, sans-enthusiasm.

To a true devotee, all objects of happiness other than God are unimportant and extremely insignificant. He cares not for them. Things may come and things may go; joys may visit him or sorrows be deep in his heart, but he ever

44. न रमले | N. B. S. 5

45. न उत्तमाही भक्ति | N. B. S. 5.

यो न हृद्यति न क्षेत्रिः न शेष्यति न कान्तिः
शुभाशुभापरिपरिमोहिनि भक्तिमाणे यमेनिः

सुभाषित 12, 17
lives in the maddening joy of Hari-Bhakti. His mind never goes anywhere. It has no place to go. Whenever it goes, he has no other experience other than the beloved of his own heart. The Gopīs are devotees of this type. They once said to Uddhava, "Our minds never remain even for a moment with us — how can they go then to our neighbours or others?" Once a lover, the Lord fascinates him so much that in the language of the Bhaktas, the Lord is the thief of the hearts (Citta-Cor). In the great glory of the Lord, the love-heart of the devotees melts to become one with Him. Thereafter, there can never be any anxiety over anything; or even a distant chance for the remembrance of the sense-objects and their enjoyments. It is hence that

46. पुनः पुनः कृष्णस्वरूपिन नन्दास्य पुत्राम् 
श्री विनाशस्तेच्याय अधिष्ठितं पशु नयं रामाय 
गर्भाय श्रीकृष्णस्य दान तस्य कल्याणं अवगदाय 
माधवोऽजाद्यामस्तान्त्यामति कथेः लोकस्मात्मानहेऽऽ

Bh 10-47-508 B
the immortal devotees, the Gopis of Vraja, the true lovers of Lord Krsna openly confess — "when we cannot shift our minds even for a moment from our beloved Krsna, how can we strive for getting any worldly objects, or weep over things that we have failed to procure? Our minds know nothing other than Krsna". The mind of the Gopi-like devotee comes to be so jealously occupied by the Lord that there is no accommodation in it thereafter for anything else. Hence, the Gopis are regarded as the ideal devotees of Bhagavan Sri Krsna; the love of the Gopis was the very ideal of love which wants nothing which cares not even for heaven, the love that does not care for anything in this world or the world to come.

47. 

47. तेष तहस्कानुसः रत्नदलीपकियत्वोधरास्वरविमुक्त ।
लत्वेषा यानेऽग्निश्चत्वस्य जस्तान्माधुर्यस्मास्ते अरारतिः ॥

Bh 10.30.43
He who has gained this all consuming Devotion (Premalakṣaṇa-Bhakti) becomes "mad" with his own Love-Divine. He cannot behave as all others do in the world; and due to his incapacity to conform to the usual mode and attitude of the worldly people, the members of the society brand him as mad. He sings the glory of the Lord always; he cries in ecstatic joy; he laughs in his own floods of inner joy. He smiles and weeps, dances and rolls in ecstasy ever-living in a private world of bliss — all his own. Others around him have no entry into his private world of endless joy and suffocating peace. His palace of fulfilment is built on the cop most peaks of satisfaction — no one can scale them and visit him there, where he lives in divine luxury.

48. यहाँ गद्दा द्रव्यां वा श्वस्य विशिष्टेऽवलंचितं हृदयबीर्धिः \नविनकथितं \निर्षनं उजाति नृत्यं तत् लक्ष्मिनरकते भुवनं पुनर्पुनि।

Bhāṣya: 11-14 - 2.4
Srimad Bhagavata describes the mind of such a great devotee: "Hearing again and again from other Bhaktas, the stories of the Lord's incarnations and his exploits (Līlā), the devotee's mind becomes overwhelmed with love and devotion for Him; and he, with no sense of shame or reserve bursts out chanting and singing His glorious names and his mind becomes merged with the Lord-of-his-Love. Overpowered by the rising tides of his surging love, the devotee weeps and laughs, sings and dances like a mad man. Thus, having sung and danced, wept and laughed, he, in his own inner crisis of mounting Love, becomes silent and quiet - both within and without. The


devotee at this stage becomes unconsciously lifted into the state of deepest meditation, when the Divine form of the Lord alone has the exclusive chance to be in his heart. During such moments of utter meditation without the help of any other Sādhanā, a true Bhakta comes to plunge deeper and deeper into his own inner quietude to reach ultimately the realm of the self, the Ātman. Thus, he comes to "revel in the self". 51 This is in brief a general picture of Divine Devotion (or Prema-lakṣanā Bhakti).

As the Love Devotion is of the nature of renunciation, there is no element of desire in that Love Divine. Love is its own fulfilment. 52 A true devotee cares not even for his own

---

51. अत्मात्मायां भवनि | न.ब.स. 6.

52. यत् कामसम्भात् | न.ब.स. 7.
liberation. His only desire is for the Love of his heart's Beloved, the Lord. Love is a reward in itself. To love the Lord for the fulfilment of a desire is not true love; it is a desire-promoted devotion (Kamanā Bhakti). Such -- commercialism in religion cannot bring about any sense of fulfilment to the seeker's bosom. A true devotee never comes to demand anything from the Lord except more and more Love for Him, and that this Love should ever remain steady and grow in its dimension. In short, desire departs from the heart in which Devotion has entered. To live in Love is to live desireless. The very essence of Devotion lies in the spirit of renunciation of all other infatuations and seekings. To a lover, there is nothing more sacred than the beloved; all his urges and demands in life are to acquire, possess and enjoy his beloved. The individuality in such a devotee, who has turned totally towards the Lord, comes to turn away more and more from the usual anxieties and efforts in earning, procuring, enjoying and saving the material
objects of the world, emotions and thoughts. He renounces them all, in the name of the Lord, who alone is the one coveted possession for him to seek. A lover can express his love only in the language of his ready sacrifices. Everywhere we find that all lovers are always ready to make sacrifices, each for the sake of the other. In fact, the spirit of happy renunciation is the very heart of love. When devotion to the Lord increases, all secular (Loka) and ritualistic (Veda) preoccupations (Vyāpāra) leave the devotee to function in any field. The individual must have his heart thrilled by a desire to gain his end in that particular field. When one's mind has become drowned in the fullness of Bliss of Hari Bhakti, how can such a lover entertain any desire other than

53. निरोधरतु लोकेभद्वपार-णासः | N.B S.R.
maintaining the Love-play with the Lord of Love in his own heart? His mind comes to dwell constantly upon his Lord. The entire mind of the devotee throbs with the single thought of the Lord of the Universe (Lord of the Universe).

A Divine Lover's mind can never wander to any other object of fascination. Everything reminds him of nothing but the All-pervading Narayana. To such a true and ardent devotee, rituals (Vedic or Puranic) are of no significance. They are of no avail to him. When once the world-ward flow of the mind has completely ended, to such a devotee performance of rituals, be the Vedic or Samārta, becomes totally impossible. Every moment of his existence, in every thought of his heart, he is constantly at His feet. To divine lover who is thus living in unbroken memory of Lord of-his-heart, even without any ritualism, his very existence is a constant oblation of Love at the Altar of the Lord. This kind of all-consuming sweet Love for the Lord is nowhere so completely exemplified as in the love of the Gopīs for the Blue-Boy of Brindāvana. The Gopīs say to Lord Kṛṣṇa "Oh darling, our
hearts, happily attached to our homes, have
been stolen away by you; our hands, ever engaged
in domestic work have become as though paralysed
and our feet refuse to take even a single step
to anywhere else but to you. How shall we return
home and, even if we return, what else shall we
do there? 54

Single-hearted, complete identification
with the Lord of-the-heart, and consequently to
have nothing but an attitude of utter indifference
to everything else that snatches away the mind
from the sense of oneness-with-the-Lord is truly
the nature of a Gopi-like devotee. As devotion
for the Lord increases in a Divine Lover, his
activities in the world outside and his attach­
ments to the things and beings of the world

54. चित्रण सुखबन भग्नापहि छुट्टु
भिवयतस्य सयुति गृहस्वरूपः।
पादमन्मच्च-पलिततः पावायुः
स्मानः कर्मसंज्ञाये कर्ममायः किं यथा।।

[Bh. 10-29-34]
drop off by themselves from him. His attention and his entire life come to exist only to play and serve around the Lord of his heart. When the mind is exclusively single-pointed in the contemplation of the Lord, that mind seeks no shelter in any other object of the world when a true devotee in his great devotion finds his heart entirely occupied by the Lord of His devotion, he finds therein no accommodation to entertain anything else. He comes to depend upon none but the Lord of his heart. A sincere devotee sees the whole universe as the very form of his beloved. The Gopis saw the Lord everywhere, even in the chirping of the birds in Brindavana, they heard the birds chanting of His glories. To be thus in Him with all one's mind, so that even the sense-organs cannot land upon anything without bringing the association.

55. ॥ ॥ ॥
of the Lord to one's experience is called - "Whole heartedness". Such a mind in this state sees in the Lord all things; and in all things they see but the "play" of the Lord. To have this experience of "the all-in-all" is ananyatat, the whole-heartedness. A heart thus ablaze with God-Love even while experiencing the world of objects - emotions - thoughts through the vehicles of one's own body, mind, intellect, can never be away from the joyous Love-Divine. To such a devotee His Lord is never far away. The eternal hide-and-seek which He plays with His devotees in their love-hearts is the world of experience that they live, in all their day-to-day life.

To a Gopi-like lover who has intense whole-hearted devotion to the Lord, total rejection

56. लोकसनाचला अनीरोधिपुडाचावला अं ||

56. तथिमनन्यन्कला अद्विरोधिपुडाचावला अं ||

उच्छल्लाप्रभाणा समागमनायमला अं ||

उच्छल्लाप्रभाणा समागमनायमला अं ||

\( n\) \& S. 9

\( n\) \& S. 10.
of all activities hostile to this all-consuming Love is not only easy but is quite natural. It becomes almost impossible for such a devotee to undertake any activity which is detrimental to his Love Divine. Even if such an act was prescribed by the Vedas or by the secular laws of the country, he will not obey them if it is contrary to his Premā-Bhakti. A true devotee rejects them all even if they are prescribed and insisted upon by the Vedas and the Purāṇas. To the unregenerate the scriptures are the authority. The injunctions of the Vedas are only external, and do not bind us when we reach the highest condition, where we act naturally in accordance with the law of spirit. Such acts of a devotee cannot be classified as disobedience, because there is no such intention in his heart. Thus, Prahlāda rejected the strict command of his father.

57. Dr. Rādhākrṣṇa :— " The Theism of the Bhagavad Gītā " — P. 75.
Hiranyakasipu, Vibhīṣaṇa discarded his brother Rāvana and Bharata slighted his mother. The Gopīs of Brindāvana ignored the vigorous objections of their husbands. And yet, none of them has been accused in the world for any of their such Bhakti-prompted trespasses. In fact, they had grown to be, in their very disobedience and rejection, light-houses guiding generations of man to a life of greater grandeur and nobler sacrifices at the Altar of their real devotion.

According to the Gītā and the Bhāgavata, to act without ego and ego-centric desires, in a spirit of dedication unto the Lord of one’s own heart is the royal road to develop devotion. By so acting, we are in fact rejecting all activities prompted by selfishness and selfish desires. Till the love for the Lord grows a pitch of whole-heartedness when it comes to take hold of us completely, such dedicated activities must be undertaken and pursued...
sincerely. Thereby the devotee escapes doing even unconsciously acts which are hostile to the birth and development of Love Divine in his heart. As a rule, after choosing to live a dedicated life of total devotion unto the Lord, the devotee should not give up the rules of conduct laid down and the practices of devotion prescribed in the scriptures.\footnote{58} The exceptions pointed out above are according to Narada only for those who in their supreme devotion have become temporarily mad with their God-love. Just as in the secular world disobedience to the laws of a country in a state of temporary mental imbalance is legally overlooked and largely forgiven, so only during such rare occasions when a devotee has become divinely "mad" in his whole-hearted ecstasy of devotion. In such a fully blossomed devotee self-conscious acts wither away all by their own accord. This

\footnote{58. भरण सुखमयामरोधर्यं शास्त्रार्थिनम् / \textit{N. B. S. 12}}
is a stage wherein the devotee is so fully merged in the Higher and the Divine consciousness that he is no longer aware of either of his body or his bodily acts. So long as a devotee is in the State of ecstasy, and, therefore, in a condition of blissful self-forgetfulness, he need not, and cannot strive to follow the strict injunctions of the Śāstras. Whatever such a devotee in that state of his God-madness does, becomes the very foundation of all Śāstras. The great scriptures can only copy such a Bhakta's behaviour and hold it up for other seekers as the ideal to follow.

But as long as the devotee is fully conscious of his physical body and entirely aware of its conditions, he must obey faithfully the strict injunctions of the Śāstras; or else there is the fear of a fall from the spiritual path.  

59. There is always a continuous

59. उक्तमध्ये पालित-मात्रायुक्तम्।

न ० ५. १३।
pull upon the devotee to bring him down into
his old habit of living, a life of sense
enjoyments prompted by his ego and ego-centric
desires as is seen in the case of Gopīs'
egoism and the consequent disappearance of
Lord Kṛṣṇa for some time. To live in obedience
to the dictates of the Śastraṣ in a mode of
life wherein the devotee becomes completely
insured against all such chances of a relapse
of his old mental disease, and the consequent
false evaluations of life.

He who ignores the injunctions of the
Śastraṣ and follows the urges of the desire
can neither attain perfection nor happiness
nor the supreme state. ¹⁶ By merely posing to
be "mad" with Love Divine and then to disobey
the instructions of right conduct, as laid down
in the Śastraṣ, will ultimately end only in a

60. ॐ: शास्त्राते हिमुष्टकः चतुर्वेदीं कामकारणाः।
ङ्के शिष्यमथायणोति न सुरवम् न परं महिमः ॥

Gītā. 16-23.
profitable self-deception. In the end, such a false devotee falls from his own grace and poise, peace and sense of fulfilment which true devotion always brings into the heart of a sincere seeker. Narada therefore, insists that so long as there is the consciousness of the world experienced by the seeker, he should implicitly follow the strict codes of life as laid down by the ancient teachers. To leave them is to allow the lower and animal passions in the devotee to over-whelm him in sudden fits of sensuality. The animal nature, to an extent inherent in the heart of man finds a conducive climate to flourish, when the seeker lives disobeying the healthy injunctions of the Śāstras. These can in the end, push him down into the lower levels of existence to suffer therein the destinies of those states. The instructions so carefully enumerated by the great seers of old are the only barricade that can save a sincere devotee from all such tragic pitfalls on the path of his Divine Love progress. Therefore,
so long as we are conscious of the outer world of objects and the equipments of experiences, let us implicitly follow the moral codes and spiritual exercises as laid down by the ever loving Ātis for the guidance of the Śādhaks.

Sage Narada says that the worldly duties in the various social contacts are to be performed only to that extent so long as the consciousness of the external world continues with us, but activities such as eating etc. will continue as long as the body exists with us. 61 In fact these (food, sleeping etc.) are merely the पृरद्व of the body, for the devotee's body has taken its birth to enjoy or to suffer these residual Karma from the past (महाकाल). When this Prārabdha (प्रारंभ) ends, his body too shall fall off, when all his functions shall naturally

61. अग्रं प्रारंभम् राधेकृष्ण देव निश्चयं कस्या नामेनादि
       असारतां सत्सागरायं विश्वेषते | न 8.5.14
The true devotee never strives or struggles for food etc. Yet the Lord in his infinite mercy arranges everything for a truly dedicated and whole-hearted devotee. Such a real devotee is not in least perturbed by hardships and disappointments, but he understands it to be the lack of Prārabdha (प्रारंभिक) of his body as revealed in the भक्तिवैदिक of the Bhāgavata. In brief, a true Bhakta comes to live in a private plane of his own from wherein he observes his own body as though it is an object far removed from his self.

Love is essentially something so very much of a subjective experience that it refuses to be fully and efficiently handled by language. Words fail to define it, and yet the main features of God-love, recognised everywhere, have been discussed above in brief.

62. एवं तन्मात्र भौलिकः पुरुषः परिपरिपुरुषः परिपरिविद्विम्।
भोजनकालमिवेनाम् बिभक्तवर्गविभक्तमः प्रचुरस्य।

[Bh 11.2.3-4]
Kalāpī says in one of his best gazals,
"He, whose body is covered with the dust of
'love' and the tabloid of heart branded with
'love' shall vigorously destroy thousands of
strongholds by blowing one breath." Immense
is the force of love - it works wonders and
miracles, never dreamt of in man's imagination.
In the eye of the Lord, Love rules supreme for
God is ALL Love. The Lord is, therefore, the

63. ॥ ते आिप्रण दोई अति आई विहर जो ते तीएः
चतुर जरि भुंह भुंस आई आई विहर जो ते तीएः
होलो: 'अंग्रेजः, अंग्रेजः' गद्य २६३.

64. "अंग्रेजः अंग्रेजः" गद्य ३१.
रितारात अनेकेक हे दण्डः

65. उभेदस्य रचित: शीलल घनयुज्मेऽः
सर्वायामः भूतायुज्मेऽः समीरः
माधु: सुर्योऽर्जुनादिपरमार्गः
एकाः भाषाय: प्रेमश्च (एकाः कृत्यम्)
ग.ः।१७-१६
lover of whole-hearted devotion which is Love in essence, as shown above. He does not bother about other qualities or qualifications.

66. अभिष्रवययः अभिष्रवययः अभिष्रवययः अभिष्रवययः

शेषादिगुणो मे भक्तेषु स्वाधीनतत्प्रणयी भव॥

ञायुः मे पूर्णकामस्या नयं नवानिन्दितः प्रियम्।

ति: श्रावः अश्रयं अर्जनस्य अहंसः परमेश्वरिः भवते॥

सङ्गम मुक्तोधिपि अश्रयोधिपि भक्तेन सन्तहुर-शुक्लः।

अनविलासिनः निगोठिनः तावथाः शुक्लः वशीकृतः॥

तत्कालबन्धुज्जल सतेऽहे माति मा कुसुमे रतिम्।

प्रक्स्तप्रभाविता अस्मि इत्यते नाहृनोर्तवाद्याः सुहतोः।

अनलविधर्मात्र युतार्थात्मकाः अभिन्नतिः विधाति मे॥

भक्तस्य संसारायां नामाभिः महाभक्ति शक्तिते मयं दय॥

H.B.S.

भक्ताधिकारैः सरस्वते भक्तस्वार्थम् भक्ताधिकारिनाः॥

विशेषादिकालिकाः महाभक्ति पुनःस्वर्णि स्वागावः॥

Bh 10-86-59.
as is seen in the cases of Vyādha, Dhruva, Gajendra, Vidura, Ugrasena, Kubjā, Sudāma and others. What were the good practices of Vyādha? What was the age of Dhruva? What was the learning of Gajendra? What was the caste of Vidura? What was the prowess of Ugrasena? What was the beauty of Kubjā? and what was the wealth of Sudāma?  

If the heart longs for God, embodiment does not matter. That is why Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "I abide not in the heaven nor in the

---

67. "माण्डित्यांचाच मुक्तेऽक्षणत्स वयो विषयां गजेन्द्रस्य काँ मुक्तेऽक्षण। किमु नाम सुभद्राक्ष्य किं तलु मुक्तेऽक्षणात्मम्।\n| कारणाय नातदेवस्य गणित्यां गक्षनेत्॥\n| कोणस्ते भक्तया लुक्कविति न च गुणेऽविधितियां मा।\n| प्रद. 8.\n| भगवान् धनाधिकरणस्तवत्यं दृश्यते बन्धुः।\n| भारतमायं नि महात्म परमेशु वृत्ता॥\n| भक्तमा तु लोकभगवान् गरुर्यं भागवत॥\n| B 7-9-9.\n
hearts of Yogis; I dwell and dance and rejoice where My devotees sing My glories." It should, however, be noted that even as the horizon remains...
at a level with our eyes, however high we may climb, the nature of God cannot be higher than the levels of our consciousness. Love-devotion (Premalaksanā Bhakti) like that of the Gopīs to Lord Kṛṣṇa, described in the tenth Skaṇḍha of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa is held to be the ideal Bhakti or Bhakti par excellence, far superior to the nine-fold Bhakti which is described in the Bhāgavata to suit the different temperaments of the devotees. The nine-fold devotion (Navadhā- Bhakti) consisting of Sravaṇa, Kirtana, Smarana, Pāda-Sevana, Arcana, Vandana, Dāsya, Sakhyā and Ātma-Nivedana is only a means to the end of Love-devotion (Premalaksanā or Parā-Bhakti). It is regarded as the Maryādā-Mārga by Śri Vallabhācārya for union with God; whereas the Gopi like love-devotion to God is considered by him the Puṣṭi-Mārga or Anugraha-Mārga leading to the summum bonum of human life. The chief objective before the Bhāgavatākara seems to be the propagation of Love-devotion (Premalaksanā-Bhakti)
or Para-Bhakti (transcendental Love-devotion).
The Bhagavata begins with Para-Bhakti as revealed in its very opening verse. This is why the Bhagavata is called the Paramahamsyā Sahhitā for it gives the description of the lives of the Paramahamsas or Parabhaktas like Sukadeva. It culminates and ends in the Gopi-like love-devotion (Premalakṣaṇa Bhakti) vividly revealed in the Rāsa-Līlā and the opening verse of the Bhagavata. In between the two (Premalakṣaṇa and Para-Bhakti) there is the description of the nine-fold devotion (Navadhā-Bhakti) which serves as a means to the achievement of devotion par excellence (Para-Bhakti) or Love devotion of the Gopi type (Premalakṣaṇa Bhakti). Para-Bhakti or Premalakṣaṇa Bhakti is in fact "Love for Love's sake" without any kind of ulterior motive of any kind of material happiness or even liberation. It asks for no return whatsoever except

69.  

Bh. 1-1-1
God. That is why Divine Love rules supreme in the Rasalila, for it is extra-ordinary and beyond the body-idea and worldly wisdom, as it culminates in entire self-surrender to God.

The Bhagavata through Rasalila preaches the Royal Road of God’s grace (Puštimārga-Anugrahamārga) for the spiritual welfare of Gopi-like resourceless (ष्टपंथु ्त ) devotees who are quite ignorant and unable to practise penance or sacrificial rituals and who have nothing to offer to God but their little selves. The Gopi-like Bhakti is also termed as Śrṅgāra-Bhakti or Premalaksana-Bhakti or Puṣṭi-Bhakti according to Sri Vallabhācārya and it is called Madhura-Bhakti according to the Caitanya-Bhakti cult of Bengal in later Vaisnavism. Love was the one bond which united Gopas and Gopīs to Lord Kṛṣṇa. They merged themselves entirely in Lord Kṛṣṇa. The Vedas did not exist for them. They did not tread the path of Karman. Love-bound they give themselves entirely up to Lord Kṛṣṇa,
and they did not ask the reason why they did not stop to cast a glance at the world they left. They have known Kṛṣṇa as the Puruṣa of the heart. The Gopīs thus cast off the Jīva-bhāva and were united for ever with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The Gopīs were fully aware of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's supermanhood. In the Gopi-Gītā, they tearfully broke out in clear cut terms "thou art not the son of a Gopi, thou art the inmost seer and self of all beings." It is hence that they wished to be "one" with Him, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa was "one" with them as they were with Him. Śrī Vallabhācārya in his "सन्धिनिजनामाशः" says that Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself is Parabrahman; and He played different roles with different individuals in this universe. His forms are different, but in reality He is one. There is no difference between that Kṛṣṇa.

70. न इत्युत्तोक्ति कामद्वेषा नन्दनै।
अर्जितो बुद्धिनां विराघाति द्विते।
पिष्टकं स्त्रियाः श्रीवर्गुप्तमे शरसु उदेश्यान्त्वात्मा अद्वित्याः कलेः॥

Bh. 10-31-4.
who played in the lap of mother Yasodā and the one who played with Gopas, Gopis and the universe at large. The Rasalīla is, therefore, the most sacred, most sublime and most soul-enchanting act of Sri Kṛṣṇa. It is meant to serve as a guide for the initiated Bhaktas, and not for the world at large.

The true spirit of Rasalīla of Lord Kṛṣṇa with the Gopis is often ignored and misunderstood by the Critics, especially by the Westerners, who do not recognise or realise the supermanhood or the divinity of Lord Kṛṣṇa and the extra-ordinary non-erotic nature of Gopis' attachment to Lord Kṛṣṇa. The learned scholars like Śrī Nilakantha, Dr. Bhagwatumār Goswāmī, Prof. G.H. Bhatt and many others have in different ways confirmed the view that the Rasalīla is pure beyond comparison and divine.

71. परं कुडं तु कृष्णो दृष्टि
   सिद्धान्तामुक्तायत्ती
   जागीर परं तत्त्वं धरोहरः लेखिताम्।
in the superlative degree. It may also be compared with highest sufistic experience wherein God is the Beloved and the devotee is the Lover. As the God with form or without form is one and the same, as viewed from the different angles of vision, so the difference between Parā-Bhakti and Premalakṣaṇa-Bhakti as described above is a distinction without a difference, as is seen in the case of ice and water. In the language of the Yoga discipline, the Premalakṣaṇa Bhakti may be said to be निर्यक्तक्षण-श्रृव्य-समाधि and the Parā-Bhakti may be said to be the ज्ञान-श्रव्य-समाधि. Love and wisdom (Bhakti and Jñāna) are the two aspects of one and the same God, as heat and light are of the sun. Both merge in one - Ātmanubhava. 72
To sum up, it will be evident from the above that we have described here in brief outline the main characteristics of Parā-Bhakti and Premalakṣaṇa-Bhakti and the pitfalls to be guarded against in the path of Love-Divine. We shall now describe in brief outline the essence of the Bhāgavata, as revealed in the Rasalīlā.