

Srila Gurudeva relates to our Srila Prabhupada as a manjari in madhurya-rasa

Part 1: ****Priya-narma-sakhas are in sakhya-rasa, and not in madhurya-rasa****

The Krishna Balaram Mandir preachers say that Srila Prabhupada is neither a manjari nor an "ordinary" cowherd boy. Rather, as priya-narma-sakha, he is in madhurya-rasa, and can serve Srimati Radhika almost as the manjaris serve Her. In Damodara Maharaja's most recent letter he says that Srila Gurudeva never said that Srila Prabhupada was a manjari. Srila Gurudeva spoke of "madhurya-rasa", "gopi-bhava" "maidservant" and so on in connection with Srila Prabhupada. However, he meant that Srila Prabhupada is a priya-narma-sakha with these qualities.

Other devotees (including myself) disagree with this idea. We maintain that Srila Gurudeva was quite straightforward with us, and when he talked about Srila Prabhupada in that way, he meant what he said: Srila Prabhupada is fundamentally in madhurya-rasa as a manjari maidservant of Srimati Radhika.

There are two key questions that can potentially settle these issues.

- (1) Generally speaking, are the priya-narma-sakhas in sakhya-rasa or madhurya-rasa?
- (2) Can priya-narma-sakhas enter into madhurya-rasa to such an extent that terms such as "madhurya-rasa", "gopi-bhava" and "maidservant" can legitimately be applied to them?

As aspiring rupanuga devotees, we start from the basic principles given by Srila Rupa Goswami, Srila Jiva Goswami, Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, our Srila Prabhupada, and our Srila Gurudeva. They have given the basic facts about priya-narma-sakhas and madhurya-rasa, and they have explained what happens when sakhya-rasa and madhurya-rasa combine with each other. We will make our opinions and ideas fit these facts, rather than trying to make these facts fit our opinions and ideas.

Here is an example of BV Damodar Maharaja's going the other way, and trying to make the facts fit his opinion. He quotes the following conversation to prove that Srila Gurudeva definitely said that Srila Prabhupada is a rupanuga priya-narma-sakha of Radhika (rather than of Candravali): "... without Rupa-manjari we cannot serve Radhika. There are also - you know that Subala, Sridama, they are priya-narma-sakha - Ujjvala. They are inclined to Srimati Radhika and they are pleased if Radhika and Krishna meets. But there are some also cowherds, priya-narma-sakha for Candravali. Those who plea- But Prabhupada was very, very much inclined to Srimati Radhika in favor of rupanuga. He was rupanuga."

There are two points here. First, the argument is weak and inconclusive. Secondly, and more strikingly, Srila Gurudeva is not talking about my Guru Maharaja here! When he says "Prabhupada", he is referring to Srila Sarasvati Prabhupada on his Disappearance Day. Only at the end does he briefly refer to my Guru Maharaja as Swamiji and Swami Maharaja-ji (as usual). (The name of the tape recording - as quoted by the Krishna Balaram Mandir party - is "SBSSDIS", clearly referring to Srila Sarasvati Prabhupada's Disappearance.)

If Damodar Maharaja's logic were strong, he would have proved that Srila Sarasvati Prabhupada is a priya-narma-sakha, whereas in fact he is known to be Sri Nayana-mani Manjari. This is a good example of weak arguments and research on Damodara Maharaja's part.

Now let us proceed to our main questions.

Main question 1: Generally speaking, are the priya-narma-sakhas in sakhya-rasa or madhurya-rasa?
**** In Jaiva-dharma, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura states that the priya-narma-sakhas are in sakhya-**

rasa (JD 679, 819): "Among these five – ceta, vita, vidusaka, pitha-mardda and priya-narma-sakha – the cetasa are in dasya-rasa, the pitha-marddas are in vira-rasa, and the rest are in sakhya-rasa. The cetasa are servants (kinkara) and the other four are sakhas."

** In Prarthana Narottama Dasa sings: "O Sridama, Subala and other friends in sakhya-rasa! Be merciful to me now!"

** One attains sakhya-bhava (and not madhurya-rasa) by following Subala (BRS 1.2.306, NOD 16, JD 535, 537).

** Madhurya-rasa is, as one would expect, only for females (JD 530): "The two rasas in which the female bhava is intrinsic are vatsalya with motherly instincts, and sringara-rasa or madhurya-rasa (the mellow of amorous love), and those who are of this nature engage in Krsna's service as females. (JD 532)"

** Vraja madhurya-rasa is exclusively between Krishna and the gopis (JD 610, 641, 669, 706, 752). "The only ones who are situated in the madhura-rasa of Goloka are the vraja-ramanis. (JD 669)"

** There are three kinds of madhurya-rasa: that of Kubja, that of the queens in Dvaraka, and that of the gopis in Vrindavan (JD 770-772). The supposed mahabhava of the priya-narma-sakhas is not mentioned anywhere.

The shastric conclusion is that priya-narma-sakhas, like the other sakhas, are fundamentally in sakhya-rasa.

In response to this, Damodara Maharaja points out that the priya-narma-sakhas are not like the other sakhas. They are closely involved with Krishna's pastimes with the gopis, and they have a very special mood called "sakhi-bhava" (BRSB p.222). However, Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu-bindu explains that "sakhi-bhava" is not "madhurya-rasa", so priya-narma-sakhas are still in sakhya-rasa. "Sakhi-bhava" means: "... In other words they perform confidential services for the preyasi (lovers) of Sri Krishna, they assist Krishna in meeting with the preyasi and they desire to give pleasure to them." (BRSB p.222)

Srila Jiva Goswami explains that the nature of this mood is "the desire to give pleasure to Krsna by helping His girl friends." (BRS 3.4.43) This is not madhurya-rasa at all; madhurya-rasa would mean "the desire to give pleasure to Krsna by being like one of His girl friends." Manjaris are also kamanuga. They desire Radha's moods of giving transcendental amorous pleasure to Krishna, and they are desirable and enjoyable for Krishna, even though they do not desire that relationship with Him.

Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu-bindu explains that the priya-narma-sakhas facilitate the pastimes of Krishna with the gopis by acting as messengers and mediators (BRSB 224). They do not become like gopis themselves. On the contrary, Rupa Goswami states that "those devotees devoted to sakhya-rasa understand that this sakhya-rasa is the best among all rasas." (BRS 3.3.136) Srila Jiva Goswami also points out: "Those in sakhya-rasa are eternally situated in their sakhya forms (male)." (BRS 4.8.26) Note: they are "eternally situated in their sakhya forms".

We have established that priya-narma-sakhas are fundamentally in sakhya-rasa. In Part Two, we will explore the key question: "Can priya-narma-sakhas enter madhurya-rasa when they associate with the gopis? Can they become so much like gopis that they can serve Radha-Krishna like manjaris?" If the answer to this question is "No", then the whole KBM argument collapses. (By the way, the answer is "No".)

