

## Prema-vilāsa-vivarta—Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s divine play with Śrī Rādhā

Translation of Śrī Radha-Govinda-natha's Bengali commentary on the eighth Chapter of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā*, Text 150 (191 in the BBT edition) by Navadvipa Das

*prabhu kahe – ei haya, āge kaha āra*

*rāya kahe – ihā va-i buddhi-gati nāhi āra*

Mahāprabhu said: “What you have said [regarding the *vilāsa* of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa] is perfectly appropriate. If anything more lies beyond this, please disclose it.”

Rāmānanda Rāya replied: “Beyond this, there is nothing that lies within the scope of my intellectual grasp (*buddhi-gati*).” (CC 2.8.149)<sup>1</sup>

### Commentary

It is due exclusively to the overpowering influence of *prema*—here signifying, the innate disposition (*vāsanā*) to please Śrī Kṛṣṇa in every possible manner—that the root longing (*vāsanā*) for the intuition of *vilāsa* was awakened [in Mahāprabhu], and on the pretext of this awakening of *vilāsa*, the glory (*mahimā*) of *prema* became manifested. On this account, Prabhu wished to hear the glory of the *vilāsa* of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. In the course of describing the glory of *vilāsa*, Rāmānanda Rāya spoke of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s feature as *dhīra-lalita*, “a hero in the aesthetics of amorous seduction.” All of the characteristics of the *dhīra-lalita* feature described by him are indicators of the glory (*māhātmya*) of the *vilāsa* arising from Rādhā’s *prema*.

In examining the question of just how great (*mahān*) is the transcendental entity (*vastu*) known as *vilāsa*, it must first be emphasized that its influence was exerted on none other than He who is omnipresent (*sarvaga*), limitless (*ananta*), omniscient (*vibhu*), the womb of all existence (*sarva-yoni*), the ground of all being (*sarvāśraya*), the Source of all potencies (*sarva-śaktimān*), the propounder of all the Vedas, and He of infinite glory, the end of which is never reached even by the Śrutis themselves, in spite of proclaiming them continuously throughout ceaseless revolutions of the cosmic ages (*yuga-yugānta*). It is in this Śrī Kṛṣṇa-candra Himself, who is the Supremely Independent Reality (*parama-svatantra*), the Supreme Absolute (*parama-brahma*), and the transcendently qualified Personal Absolute in His ownmost original identity (Svayam Bhagavān), that *vilāsa* impelled an irresistible urge (*loluptā*) for *rasa* and compelled Him to come under the control (*vaśyatā*) of His *preyasīs*. Having awakened the most profound state of enthrallment

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<sup>1</sup> The Bengali *payāras* are numbered separately from the Sanskrit *ślokas*. Thus, verse no. 149 would correspond to text no. 191 in editions where the two types of texts are not distinguished.

(*mugdhatva*) in this crown jewel of Omniscience (*sarvajña-śiromaṇi*), *vilāsa* bound Him, although He is the All-pervading Reality (*sarva-vyāpaka tattva*), to remain day and night in the secluded groves of Vṛndāvana out of greed (*lobha*) for the company of His *preyasīs*. Who then can describe the greatness of the transcendental entity (*vastu*) known as *vilāsa* and the magnitude of its majestic power (*śakti-mahīyasī*)?

The glory (*mahimā*) of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's *vilāsa* that was disclosed by Rāmānanda Rāya was of such unfathomable import, yet Prabhu remained unsatiated even by this and wished to hear something more. Effectively, Prabhu said to him: "Rāmānanda, there is no doubt that in your discussion, the extraordinary glory (*asādhāraṇa-mahattva*) of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's *vilāsa* is certainly disclosed. Yet, I wish to know all the truths regarding the glory of *vilāsa* of which you have not yet spoken as well as whatever confidential mystery (*gūḍha rahasya*) there may yet be. Please continue, Rāmānanda."

Hearing this, Rāmānanda Rāya replied: "Prabhu, there is nothing beyond what I have spoken that lies within the scope of my intellectual grasp (*buddhi-gati*)." In reality, there is not even a single topic regarding the existential truth of the aesthetics of transcendental play (*līlā-rasa-tattva*) that is accessible to anyone's intellective capacity (*buddhi-gamyā*). Such topics can be immediately intuited (*anubhava-gamyā*) only by the grace of Bhagavān.

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*ye vā prema-vilāsa-vivarta eka haya*

*tāhā śuni tomāra sukha haya ki nā haya*

**Rāmānanda Rāya then said to Mahāprabhu: "There is, however, one other essential truth, known as *prema-vilāsa-vivarta*. Please hear of it and decide whether or not it meets with Your pleasure." (CC 2.8.150)**

### **Commentary**

Hearing Prabhu's words, Rāmānanda Rāya said: "Prabhu, it is true that the confidential mystery (*gūḍha rahasya*) of the glory of *vilāsa* is beyond the purview of my intellect. Yet by Your grace, I have at once realized the truth that the glory of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's *vilāsa* is the most confidential mystery (*gūḍhatama rahasya*). In the song of my own composition, I will endeavor to provide an indication of this mystery. I will sing this song and thus enable You to hear it. The mystery that is indicated in this song is known as *prema-vilāsa-vivarta*."

We will now comment on Rāmānanda's statement: "Please hear of it and decide whether or not it meets with Your pleasure" (*tāhā śuni tomāra sukha haya ki nā haya*). Rāmānanda said: "Yet, Prabhu, in this

song of my composition, I do not know whether or not I will be able to convey the true significance of this indication, and whether or not I will be able to bring about the disclosure of the most confidential mystery of the glory of *vilāsa*. If I am not able to do so, then You will derive no pleasure by hearing my song. Or, if in my song there is no indication of the mystery You wish to uncover, then also it will not meet with Your pleasure—then Your root longing (*vāsanā*) will not be satiated. Hence, the doubt has arisen in my mind, Prabhu, as to whether or not You will be pleased by hearing my song. Nonetheless, I myself will sing my song and thus enable You to hear it. Please hear it, Prabhu, and see whether or not it contains the transcendental entity (*vastu*, i.e., *vilāsa*) that is the object of Your longing (*abhilāṣita*).”

This song is cited below in *payāras* 152-156. In the midst of this song, Śrī Rādhā says: “He [Kṛṣṇa] cannot be identified as my lover (*ramaṇa*), nor I as His beloved (*ramaṇī*). The innate longing born from our hearts [*manobhava*, i.e., the *vāsanā* to please each other] has powdered our two minds into a unified substance, such that [all distinction between us has disappeared]” (CC 2.8.153). The most confidential mystery of the glory of *vilāsa* is implicit in this verse. But what exactly is this mystery? In order to uncover this mystery, it will be helpful to first examine the meaning of the term *prema-vilāsa-vivarta*.

The term *prema-vilāsa* means “the divine play (*vilāsa*, i.e., *kheli*) arising from *prema*.” The word *prema* means “the innate disposition (*vāsanā*) to please only the object (*viśaya*) of one’s love, without the faintest trace of desire for personal happiness (*sva-sukha-vāsanā*).” On this basis, *prema-vilāsa* means “the divine play (*vilāsa*) brought into unification (*saṅghaṭita*) by the impelling force (*preraṇā*) of the innate disposition (*vāsanā*) arising from such *prema*.” This is not the *vilāsa* that is incited by the desire for personal happiness. Such self-interested enjoyment is known as *kāma-vilāsa*, which is comparable to the enjoyment of animals. Not only is it devoid of all glory, but it is also a matter of abhorrence. The word *prema* in *prema-vilāsa* refutes any possibility that the reference could be to *kāma-vilāsa*. Syntactically, the term *prema-vilāsa-vivarta* thus means “the *vivarta* of the divine play (*vilāsa*) arising from *prema*.” But what is the meaning of the word *vivarta*? The word *vivarta* is filled with the most profound significance (*viśeṣa-gurutva-pūrṇa*) and imbued with inscrutable mystery (*rahasyamaya*).

In his commentary on this *payāra*, Śrīpāda Viśvanātha Cakravartī has glossed the word *vivarta* as *viparīta*, meaning “inverted” or “reversed.” In his commentary on *Ujjavala-nīlamaṇi*, *Uddīpana-vibhāva-prakaraṇa*, verse 37, Śrīpāda Jīva Gosvāmī has glossed the word *vivarta* as *paripākaḥ*, meaning “fully ripened,” “completely evolved,” or “uniquely transformed” (i.e., *viśeṣeṇa vṛttaḥ*), in his comment on the phrase *bakārer mādhurīṇām nava-vivartah*, “the ever-newly completely evolved state of Bakāri’s [Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s] mellifluousness.” In addition, one common meaning of the word *vivarta* that is known to all is *bhrama*, or “perplexity.”

Consequently, the word *vivarta* is understood to have three meanings—namely, “inverted” (*viparīta*) or “inversion” (*vaiparītya*); “completely evolved” (*paripāka*) or “complete evolution” (*paripakvatā*); and “perplexity” (*bhrama*) or “confusion” (*bhrānti*). In the context of the analysis of the term *prema-vilāsa-vivarta*, these three meanings all have utility (*upayogitā*) and significance (*sārthakatā*). Among these three meanings, the sense of the word *vivarta* as “completely evolved” (*paripāka*) certainly carries the primary (*mukhya*) utility and significance. The meanings of *vivarta* as “inverted” and as “perplexity” carry concomitant (*ānuśāṅgika*) utility and significance. They are external symptoms (*bahir-lakṣaṇas*) or indicators (*sūcakas*) of the primary meaning (*mukhya-artha*) as “completely evolved” (*paripāka*). The meaning as *paripāka* is thus the whole (*aṅgī*) of which *viparīta* and *bhrama* are its component parts (*aṅga*).

If we take the primary sense of the word *vivarta*, the meaning of the term *prema-vilāsa-vivarta* would be “the complete evolution (*paripakvatā*), or in other words, the state of the highest exultation (*carama-utkarṣa-avasthā*), of the divine play (*vilāsa*) arising from *prema*.” In this state of supreme exultation, two symptoms (*lakṣaṇas*) are manifested—namely, “perplexity” (*bhrānti*) and “inversion” (*vaiparītya*). An object (*vastu*) that is imperceptible (*alakṣya*) by the cognitive senses can be recognized by its external symptoms (*bāhira-lakṣaṇas*). The state of the highest exultation (*carama-utkarṣa-avasthā*) of the divine play (*vilāsa*) arising from *prema* is imperceptible by the cognitive senses. Its presence can be inferred only by all those symptoms (*lakṣaṇas*) that are manifested externally. Consequently, Cakravartipāda specifies one of these symptoms as “inverted” (*viparīta*) or “inversion” (*vaiparītya*). An additional symptom is “perplexity” (*bhrānti*), which gives rise to the state of inversion. How this is so will now be examined.

In the fourth *Ullāsa* of *Kāvya-Prakāśa*, in the commentary on the verse *dhanyāsi yā kathayasi*, it is written: “The supreme state (*caramāvasthā*) of amorous play (*kāma-kriḍā*) is the state of complete identity or oneness (*tanmayatā*) with *vilāsa* alone.” The state of the highest exultation of *vilāsa*, or in other words, of complete oneness with *vilāsa* alone, is one in which the lovers have no occupation (*vyāpāra*) whatsoever other than *vilāsa*. Moreover, the hero and heroine (*nāyaka-nāyikā*) are devoid of cognizance (*anusandhāna*) even of their own existence (*asthitva*). When this state arises, the object of the lovers’ remembrance (*smṛti*) and cognizance (*anusandhāna*) is nothing other than *vilāsa*. The one and only object of their attention (*anusandhāna*) is how the systematic unfolding (*pāripāṭya*), or the unique marvel (*vaicitrī*), of *vilāsa* can be brought to consummation—how the bliss (*ānanda*) of *vilāsa* can be further augmented. Moreover, when in the act of attending (*anusandhāna*) exclusively to *vilāsa*, the lovers are bereft even of the awareness (*anubhuti*) of who is doing so—then, under the influence of progressively evolving supreme longing (*carama-utkaṅṭhā*), inversion (*vaiparītya*) of the hero and heroine’s actions becomes possible.

An indication of this inversion is found three verses later in Rādhā’s song: “He [Kṛṣṇa] cannot be identified as my lover (*ramaṇa*), nor I as His beloved (*ramaṇī*). The innate longing born from our hearts [*manobhava*, i.e., the *vāsanā* to please each other] has powdered our two minds into a unified substance, such that [all distinction between us has disappeared].” In glossing the word *vivarta* as *viparīta*, Cakravartipāda might well have had this specific instance of inversion (*vaiparītya*) in mind. The immediate cause of this inversion is the state of perplexity (*bhrānti*)—the state of forgetfulness of themselves (*ātma-vismṛti*) as hero and heroine (*nāyaka-nāyikā*). This state of perplexity (*bhrānti*) is itself the result of complete identity (*tanmayatā*) with *vilāsa* alone. Thus, perfect identification with *vilāsa* alone is that by which the state of the highest exultation of *vilāsa* is recognized. Because this state is imperceptible to the senses, it is understood by the perplexity (*bhrānti*) that arises from it, and by the inversion (*vaiparītya*) of action that arises out of perplexity. In this respect, the three previously mentioned meanings of the word *vivarta* are admitted. The primary meaning is “complete evolution” (*paripakvatā*) or “the state of supreme exultation” (*carama-utkarṣa-avasthā*). “Perplexity” (*bhrānti*) is its consequence, and “inversion” is the result of the latter.

This inversion of action (*vaiparītya*), or inverted play (*viparīta-vihāra*), is, however, only an external symptom (*bāhira-lakṣaṇa*) of the state of the highest exultation of *prema-vilāsa*. Of its own accord, it is not the state of highest exultation. Moreover, this type of inversion is not even the prime symptom (*viśeṣa-lakṣaṇa*) of *prema-vilāsa-vivarta*. This inversion does not indicate the state of the highest exultation of *prema-vilāsa* in all situations. If this inversion occurs through active involvement of the will on the part of the hero and heroine, then it is not an indicator (*paricāyaka*) of the state of the highest exultation of *vilāsa*.

Rather, if this inversion (*vaiparītya*) manifests of its own accord (*svataḥ sphūrta*) unknown to the lovers under the influence of complete self-forgetfulness (*sampūrṇa ātma-vismṛti*), or in other words, out of the perplexity (*bhrama*) that arises from the state of perfect identity or oneness (*tanmayatā*) with *vilāsa* alone, then only inversion (*vaiparītya*) is a true indicator (*paricāyaka*) of *prema-vilāsa-vivarta*, and not otherwise. In the introductory volume of this six volume edition of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (p. 222-237), there is an elaborate essay on the topic of *prema-vilāsa-vivarta*, which may also be consulted. The nature of this inversion (*vaiparītya*) will be described a little further ahead with reference to the statements of *Gopāla-campu*.

In the state of the highest exultation of the divine play (*vilāsa*) arising from *prema*, due to the compelling force of complete identity with *vilāsa* alone, the crown jewel of heroes (*nāyaka-śiromaṇi*), Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and the crown jewel of heroines (*nāyikā-śiromaṇi*), Śrī Rādhā, have only one root longing (*vāsanā*) in their hearts—namely, the longing to expand the bliss of *vilāsa*. At such times, their two minds become as if one. This is the import of Rādhā’s upcoming statement (verse 153): “The innate longing born from our hearts [*manobhava*, i.e., the *vāsanā* to please each other] has powdered our two minds into a unified substance, such that [all distinction between us has disappeared].”

In stating that their two minds had become one, the implication is that they no longer held any awareness (*jñāna*) of the distinction (*bheda*) between them. The state of the highest exultation of *prema-vilāsa* occurs only in the absence of the awareness of this distinction (*bheda-jñāna-rāhitya*), which itself arises out of complete identification (*tanmayatā*) with *vilāsa* alone. Śrīpāda Kavi Karṇapūra has also confirmed the same point in his *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Mahākāvya*: “Having disclosed the state of the highest exultation of *prema* implicit in the exceptionally skilled hero and heroine (*vidagdha-nāgara-nāgarī*) [Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa], Rāmānanda Rāya sang a song that is relished by their love-laden companions (*sarasāli-pītam*)<sup>2</sup> and that brings to light the state of supreme oneness (*paraikyā*) of the two lovers” (*Sarga* 13.45).<sup>3</sup>

The inverted play (*viparīta-vihāra*) that is brought forth by self-forgetfulness (*ātma-vismṛti*)—or in other words, by the absence of the awareness of distinction (*bheda-jñāna-rāhitya*)—which itself arises from complete identification (*tanmayatā*) with *vilāsa* alone, is the true signifier (*paricāyaka*) of the state of the highest exultation of the glory of *vilāsa*. This is also understood from the description found in Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī’s *Gopāla-campu*, in the prior division (*pūrva-campu*), Scene 33, which is entitled, “The Fulfillment of All the Heart’s Longings” (*sarva-manoratha-pūraṇam*). The scene described therein can be summarized as follows.

Being overcome by the most intense longing to facilitate Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s pleasure, the young women of Vraja remained immersed in divine play (*vilāsa*) with Him—their very life and soul (*prāṇa-vallabha*)—day after day without cessation. It was as though their innate longing for divine play (*vilāsa-vāsanā*) was not pacified even in the least. Rather, day after day it seemed to be exponentially increased. It was as though they, whose thirst remained ever unpacified (*śānti-hīna*), upheld as their life’s vow (*vrata*) the *vilāsa* that has as its one and only import the pleasure of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The indomitability (*uddāmatā*) and progressively increasing ardor (*autkaṅṭhya*) of this innate disposition (*vāsanā*) for *sevā* is found to an all-surpassing extent

<sup>2</sup> In his Hindi translation of this verse, Śrī Haridāsa Śāstrī has rendered the compound *sarasāli-pītam* as *anurāgiṇī sakhī ke dvārā āsvādita*, “relished by their *sakhīs* who are filled with *anurāga*.” The *Gauḍīya-Vaiṣṇava-abhidhāna* also gives as one of its synonyms of the word *sarasa* (or *sarasāli*) the term *anurāga-yukta*, “endowed with *anurāga*.”

<sup>3</sup> *tataḥ sa gītaṁ sarasāli-pītaṁ vidagdhayor nāgarayoḥ parasya premno ’ti-kāṣṭhā-pratipādanena dvayoḥ paraikyam pratipadyavātī*

in Śrī Rādhā alone, because the supreme manifestation of *prema* is present only in her. Rādhā's supreme ardor (*param-autkaṅṭhya*), arising from her innate disposition (*vāsanā*) for *sevā*, gives rise in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's heart (*citta*) to the corresponding supreme ardor (*param-autkaṅṭhya*), arising from His innate disposition (*vāsanā*), to accept *sevā*. And Śrī Kṛṣṇa's innate disposition to accept *sevā* is in reality simply the longing (*autkaṅṭhya*) in Him to extend love or pleasure (*prīti-vidhāna*) to Śrī Rādhā and the Vraja-sundarīs. This is due to the fact that the sole aim of all Kṛṣṇa's *līlās* is to please the hearts of His devotees, as He Himself openly declares in the following statement: "I enact varieties of divine play simply for the delight of My devotees" (*mad-bhaktānām vinodārtham karomi vividhāḥ kriyāḥ, Padma Purāṇa*).

If at the root of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's innate disposition to accept the *sevā* of His devotees there lied concealed the desire for His own happiness (*sva-sukha-vāsanā*), there would be no glory at all in His acceptance of *sevā*. Then for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the acceptance of His devotees' *sevā* could not be of completely splendid glory (*pūrṇa-aijvalye mahīyān*). When, however, Śrī Rādhā's innate disposition (*vāsanā*) to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and His innate disposition to accept Rādhā's service in order to please her, both attain complete indomitability (*pūrṇa-uddāmatā*) and are transformed into supreme longing (*carama-autkaṅṭhya*)—then only their *prema-vilāsa* can be elevated in its glory to highest degree of completion. In this manner, when the hero and heroine are carried along in the flow of the *līlā* under the compelling force of the most highly developed longing (*caramatama-autkaṅṭhya*), their amorous play (*ramaṇa*) is as described by Jīva Gosvāmī in the following passage:

"Every day, the *gopīs* and Kṛṣṇa would mutually proceed to a secluded place, meet together, embrace and kiss each other, play together, delight each other, speak of amorous affairs, order each other with the words, "Dress me nicely," and also dress each other ornamentally. In this manner, they remained continuously immersed in varieties of amorous play (*keli-vilāsa*). Yet in doing so, due to their singularly focused identification (*aikāntikī-tanmayatā*) with *vilāsa* alone, they had no cognizance (*anusandhāna*) whatsoever of "who is acting," "who has acted," and "who can act" (*Gopāla-campu, Pūrva, 33.5*).

In this passage, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's self-forgetfulness (*ātma-vismṛti*), or in other words, their absence of awareness of any distinction between them (*bheda-jñāna-rāhitya*), is indicated. By the word *anyo 'nyam*, or "mutually," it is also understood that in the acts of embracing and kissing, as well as in issuing the order to be clothed by the other, sometimes Kṛṣṇa takes the lead, and at other times Rādhā does so. It is specifically in this reversal of their roles, that the inversion of their play (*vilāsa-vaiparītya*), or *vilāsa-vivarta*, is indicated. "Who indeed is the hero (*ramaṇa*), and who is the heroine (*ramaṇī*)? Who is the beloved (*kānta*), and who is the lover (*kāntā*)?" Under the influence of complete identification (*tanmayatā*) with *vilāsa* alone, this type of awareness of distinction (*bheda-jñāna*) disappears from their minds. This is the essential import of Rādhā's upcoming statement: "He is not the *ramaṇa*, and I am not the *ramaṇī*."

When the hero and heroine are overcome by the very highest peak (*carama-parā-kāṣṭhā*) of *prema*'s unfolding, then, being irresistibly impelled by the innate longing (*vāsanā*) to please each other, they attain the state of inebriation (*pramattatā*) in their play (*keli-vilāsa*). At such times, their minds (*citta*), having attained complete identity (*tād-ātmya*) with the ceaseless longing (*vāsanā*) for *keli-vilāsa*, become as though one without distinction (*abhinnatva*). This is the import of the second line of Rādhā's upcoming statement: "The innate longing born from our hearts [*manobhava*, i.e., the *vāsanā* to please each other] has powdered our two minds into a unified substance, such that [all distinction between us has disappeared]."

Although Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa directly participate in such forms of play (*vilāsa*), out of supreme longing (*parama-autkaṅṭhya*), it appears to them as if it all occurred in a dream (*svāpnika*). As a consequence of the all-surpassing ardor of *prema*, Śrī Rādhā perceives even her union with Śrī Kṛṣṇa as separation, separation as union, her home as the forest, the forest as her home, sleep as waking, waking as sleep, cold as heat, heat as cold, and so on. When this type of situation takes hold, an inversion (*vaiparītya*) occurs even in Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's respective intrinsic natures (*svabhāva*) as lover (*kāntā*) and beloved (*kānta*). In other words, the hero's behavior is transferred into the heroine, and the heroine's behavior is transferred into the hero—all of which occurs unknown to them. This is the inversion (*vaiparītya*) of *vilāsa*.

This inversion arises from the intrinsic constitution (*svabhāvika-dharma*) of *prema* that has attained to state of the highest exultation (*caramotkarṣatā*), which is to say that it is born of an ineffable and irresistible longing to extend love or pleasure (*prīti-vidhāna*) to each other. This inversion is but the outward manifestation (*bahir-vikāśa*) of the state of complete identity (*eka-tanmayatā*) with the bliss of *vilāsa*. Just as the perception of separation in union, or union in separation, is the external symptom of supreme longing (*parama-autkaṅṭhya*), so too, this inversion of *vilāsa* is also an external symptom of complete identity with the bliss of *vilāsa* impelled by the state of inebriation (*unmattatā*) arising out of supreme *prema*. By these very symptoms, Rāmānanda Rāya wished to make his intended object known. And his intended object (*uddiṣṭa-vastu*) was not merely the inversion of *vilāsa*, but rather, its cause—namely, the state of complete identity (*eka-tanmayatā*) with the bliss of the *vilāsa* arising from *prema*.

With the intent to bring to light this unprecedented uniqueness (*apūrva-vaiśiṣṭya*) of Śrī Rādhā's *prema*, Mahāprabhu first caused the uniqueness (*vaiśiṣṭya*) of *prema's* object (*viśaya*), Śrī Kṛṣṇa, to be broadcast through the mouth of Rāmānanda Rāya. In this respect, He made known that Kṛṣṇa is the embodiment of the bliss of all *rasas*, the personification of the emperor of all *rasas*—namely, the amorous sentiment (*śṛṅgāra*)—the direct enchanter of Cupid (*sākṣāt-manmatha-manmatha*), the ever newly blossoming transcendental Cupid (*aprākṛta-navīna-madana*), and He who steals the minds of all, even to the very core of their being (*ātma-paryanta*). Next, Mahāprabhu made known the uniqueness (*vaiśiṣṭya*) of *prema's* subject (*āśraya*), Śrī Rādhā. Through the mouth of Rāmānanda Rāya, He disclosed the fact that she is the embodiment of *mahābhāva*, essentially constituted of bliss and consciousness (*ānanda-cinmaya-rasa*), that her body and senses are permeated (*vibhāvita*) with *prema*, that she is a mine of the gems of pure *prema* for Kṛṣṇa, and intrinsically endowed with unexcelled beauty (*saundarya*), mellifluousness (*mādhurya*), supreme fortune (*saubhāgya*), and all other divine qualities.

In this manner, having made evident the all-exceeding preeminence of *prema's* object and subject, Mahāprabhu then felt the uprising of the intent to make known the glory of the *vilāsa* of Śrī Nanda-nandana and Śrī Bhānu-nandinī—the former being the embodiment of the complete charming hero (*akhaṇḍa-rasa-vallabha*), and the latter that of the complete charming heroine (*akhaṇḍa-rasa-vallabhā*). The fortunate Rāmānanda Rāya, being thus impelled by Mahāprabhu's indication, became engaged in describing the glory of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's *vilāsa*. In the course of describing Śrī Kṛṣṇa's feature as *dhīra-lalita*, he made known, by way of indication, that the culmination (*paryavasāna*) of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's above mentioned uniqueness (*vaiśiṣṭya*) is this very *dhīra-lalita* feature. He also made known that by specifying Śrī Kṛṣṇa as *dhīra-lalita*, it is evident that the complete range of qualities appropriate for the supreme exultation of the unique marvel (*vaicitrī*) of their *vilāsa* is gloriously present in Him. After this, Rāmānanda Rāya became silent.

*Vilāsa* is possible only by the involvement of both the hero and heroine (*nāyaka-nāyikā*). Consequently, if the complete range of qualities appropriate for *vilāsa*'s supreme exultation is present only in the hero (*nāyaka*), then the glory of *vilāsa* cannot attain its ultimate completion (*pūrṇatā*). The corresponding range of qualities must also be present in the heroine (*nāyikā*). Yet up to this point, Rāmānanda Rāya did not disclose whether or not all these qualities are present in the heroine Śrī Rādhā, nor did he make evident where lies the culmination (*paryavasāna*) of Her previously mentioned uniqueness (*vaiśiṣṭya*). He made it appear as though whatever he had intended to say was then concluded.

Assuredly, Rāmānanda Rāya did previously speak of one characteristic of Śrī Rādhā's uniqueness (*vaiśiṣṭya*), when he said: "Even amidst hundreds of millions of *gopīs*, the fire of Kṛṣṇa's longing (*kāma-rūpa-agnī*) [to relish the *prema* of His lover (*kāntā-prema-āsvādāna-vāsanā*)] could not be extinguished. By this alone, the quality of Śrī Rādhikā's *prema* can easily be inferred" (CC 2.8.88).<sup>4</sup> Hearing this, "Prabhu replied, that for which I have come to your place is precisely this knowledge in which is contained all the essential truths concerning the transcendental entity (*vastu*) known as *rasa*" (CC 2.8.89).<sup>5</sup> Yet Prabhu's longing was not satisfied even in this, as expressed in His next statement: "I wish to hear something more beyond this" (CC 2.8.90).<sup>6</sup>

Thereafter, Rāmānanda Rāya spoke openly of Śrī Rādhā's uniqueness (*vaiśiṣṭya*) along with that of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He also made evident where lies the culmination (*paryavasāna*) of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *vaiśiṣṭya*. Yet, without having said anything regarding the culmination point (*paryavasāna*) of Śrī Rādhā's *vaiśiṣṭya*, he appeared as if having adopted a vow of silence. If Rāmānanda were to have said: "I have already spoken of Śrī Rādhā's unprecedented uniqueness (*apūrva-vaiśiṣṭya*) in my earlier statement [CC 2.8.88 cited above]. What more remains to be said beyond this?" To this, Prabhu replied: "There yet remains something more to be said." Rāmānanda's statement [CC 2.8.88] can be interpreted to mean: "That which cannot be found in hundreds of millions of *gopīs* is present in Śrī Rādhā." By this statement, he gave an indication of Śrī Rādhā's all-exceeding *prema*. Yet, he did not fully disclose to what ultimate state of being (*avasthā*) Śrī Rādhā's all-exceeding *prema* can lead her, or what supreme exultation (*paramotkarṣa*) it can impart to her.

Just as there is a necessity (*prayojana*) for the hero (*nāyaka*) to manifest His *dhīra-lalita* feature in order for the glory of *vilāsa* to reach its highest peak (*parā-kāṣṭhā*), so too there is a necessity for the heroine (*nāyikā*) to manifest her feature of *svādhīna-bhartṛkā*, or "the heroine who keeps the hero constantly under her control (*svāyattāsanna-dayitā bhavet svādhīna-bhartṛkā*, *Ujjavala-nīlamaṇi* 5.91). The *svādhīna-bhartṛkā* heroine can intrepidly order her lover: "Draw a beautiful musk picture on my breasts and a sandalwood sketch on my cheeks. Place this girdle around my waist, decorate my braid with a flower garland, and adorn my arms with bracelets and my feet with anklets" (*Ujjavala-nīlamaṇi* 5.93). In the statements of *Gopāla-campu*, an account can be found of Rādhā's condition (*avasthā*) when her *svādhīna-bhartṛkā* feature reaches its highest peak of intensity out of the completely evolved state (*paripāka*) of her *prema*.

Up to this point, however, Rāmānanda Rāya said nothing in particular regarding the question, "in what extremity does Śrī Rādhā's *svādhīna-bhartṛkā* feature culminate under the astonishing influence of her

<sup>4</sup> *śata-koṭi gopīte nahe kāma-nirvāpaṇa  
ihāte-i anumāni śrī radhikāra guṇa*

<sup>5</sup> *prabhu kahe – ye lāgi āilāma tomā-sthāne  
se-i saba-rasa-vastu-tattva haila jñāne*

<sup>6</sup> *āge āra kichu śunibāra mana haya*



*mādanākhyā-mahābhāva?*” At the very beginning of the indication of this ineffable uniqueness (*vaiśiṣṭya*), having arrived at the doorstep of an unprecedented storehouse of mystery (*apūrva-rahasya-bhāṇḍāra*), Rāmānanda suddenly came to a halt. It is understandable that it must have been a quandary for Rāmānanda to know whether or not it was Prabhu’s intention to proceed further beyond this point. After all, the matter at hand was supremely confidential (*parama-rahasyamaya*). In the *Gītā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa specified His final instruction to Arjuna as “the foremost of all secrets” (*sarva-guhyatamaṁ vacaḥ*). Yet *prema-vilāsa-vivarta* is many, many times more confidential than the latter. For this reason, Rāmānanda Rāya was hesitant to disclose it. When, on perceiving his reluctance, Prabhu said: “This is excellent, but please do go on,” then only did Rāmānanda disclose this secret.

Such being the case, Rāmānanda Rāya spoke openly of *prema-vilāsa-vivarta*—Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s divine play (*vilāsa*) with Śrī Rādhā. Śrī Rādhā is the essential embodiment (*svarūpa*) of *mahābhāva*. The foremost manifestation of *mahābhāva* is called *mādanākhyā-mahābhāva*, which is present only in Śrī Rādhā. The supreme manifestation of the uniqueness (*vaiśiṣṭya*) of *mahābhāva* is found exclusively in the state of *mādana*. Where the supreme manifestation of *prema* is present—there only the unsurpassed marvel (*vaicitrī*) of *prema-vilāsa* is manifested, there only is found the foremost manifestation of the glory of *vilāsa*. Prabhu’s final question to Rāmānanda Rāya was regarding the glory of *vilāsa*. Rāmānanda’s reply attained completion in his song, beginning with Rādhā’s words: “At first, my irrepressible, ever-expanding love (*rāga*)<sup>7</sup> arose of its own accord in the mere twinkling of an eye. Expanding day after day, its end was never reached” (CC 2.8.152).<sup>8</sup>

After hearing this song, Prabhu did not ask any further questions regarding the glory of *vilāsa*. Rather he declared: “This indeed is the limit of the ultimate object of attainment. By your grace, I have come to know of this beyond all doubt” (CC 2.8.157).<sup>9</sup> In this moment, Prabhu’s yearning to discover the essential truth regarding the ultimate object to be realized (*sādhya-vastu-tattva*) attained complete fulfillment. Additionally, His longing (*vāsanā*) to know the glory of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa’s *vilāsa* was also completely fulfilled. From this, it can be understood that the glory of *vilāsa* attains its supreme manifestation only in *prema-vilāsa-vivarta*. Consequently, the foremost manifestation of *prema*, and the foremost manifestation of the uniqueness (*vaiśiṣṭya*) of *mahā-bhāva*—or in other words, the supreme manifestation of *mādanākhyā-mahābhāva*—is also the supreme manifestation of the glory of Rādhā’s *prema*.

The essay on *prema-vilāsa-vivarta* provided in the introductory volume of this series can be consulted for a detailed discussion regarding *prema-vilāsa*. Therein it is shown that the highest exultation of the glory of *vilāsa* occurs only in the supreme manifestation of *mādanākhyā-mahābhāva*. In the same essay, it is also pointed out that the absence of awareness of distinction (*bheda-rāhitya*) spoken of earlier is not that

<sup>7</sup> In his commentary on this verse, Rādhā-Govinda-nātha points out that the *rāga* referred to here is *mañjiṣṭhā-rāga*, which arises from the exultation of *prema*. In *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* 14.139, *mañjiṣṭhā-rāga* is defined as “that *rāga* which is irrepressible (*ahārya*), independently arising (*ananya-sāpekṣa*), and ever-expanding by its own splendor (*kāntyā vardhate sadā*). These symptoms are indicated in Rādhā’s words. In particular, Rādhā-Govinda-nātha points out that the words *nayana-bhaṅga bhela*, “in the mere twinkling of an eye,” indicate that *mañjiṣṭhā-rāga* is spontaneously or immediately arising (*druta-sañjāta*), as in the case of *kusumbha-rāga*, the symptoms of which are included and transcended by *mañjiṣṭhā-rāga* (see also *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* 14.136).

<sup>8</sup> *pahilahi rāga nayana-bhaṅga bhela  
anudina bāḍhala – avadhi nā gela*

<sup>9</sup> *sādhya-vastu avadhi e-i haya  
tomāra prasāde ihā jānila nīscaya*

of the *sādhakas* who adhere to the path of *jñāna* with the intent to realize their conscious identity with nondual (*nirbheda*) Brahman.

Previously it was discussed that in the completely evolved state (*paripakāvasthā*) of *prema-vilāsa*, under the influence of perfect identity (*tanmayatā*) with *vilāsa* alone, there is an uprising of perplexity (*bhrama*)—meaning self-forgetfulness (*ātma-vismṛti*), or the absence of awareness of distinction (*bheda-jñāna-rāhitya*)—and inversion (*vaiparītya*). It was also pointed out that *bheda-jñāna-rāhitya* (or perplexity, *bhrama*) and inversion (*vaiparītya*) are both external symptoms (*bahir-lakṣaṇas*) of the completely evolved state (*paripakvatā*) of *prema-vilāsa*. Additionally, it was demonstrated that among these two, inversion (*vaiparītya*) is not the prime characteristic of *prema-vilāsa*. On the other hand, the absence of awareness of distinction (*bheda-jñāna-rāhitya*) is the prime characteristic (*viśeṣa-lakṣaṇa*) of the completely evolved state (*paripakvatā*) of *prema-vilāsa*.

In Kavi Karṇapūra’s previously cited verse, he has referred to this *bheda-jñāna-rāhitya* as “the state of supreme oneness” (*paraikya*), signifying, the state of absolute oneness (*sarvato-bhāve ekatā*), or the unity of essential being (*eka-rūpatā*), of the minds of Śrī Rādhā and Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Under the influence of *prema*, the minds of the two lovers are liquefied and melded together to become one, attaining the state in which the delusion of the distinction between them is cast aside (*nirdhūta-bheda-bhramam*), as described in the upcoming verse [*śloka* 2.8.43 or text 2.8.199 in the continuous series], cited from *Ujjavala-nīlamanī*:

[In a forest grove on Govardhana Hill, while Śrī Rādhā and Śrī Kṛṣṇa were immersed in tasting each other’s sweetness (*mādhurya*), their bodies became decorated by the inflamed symptoms of the pure emotions that possessed their hearts, impelled by the transformations of divine love (*uddīpta-sāttvika-bhāvas*). Seeing this, Vṛnda was elated by the delightfulness of their supreme love (*mahābhāva*) and spoke the following words to Śrī Kṛṣṇa:] O King of elephants who sports in the bowers of Govardhana Hill! That highly skilled artist, “Amorous love” (*śṛṅgāra*), has slowly melted the shellac of the hearts of both You and Rādhā with the heat of Your perspiration, thus liquifying them into a unified substance bereft of the delusion of any distinction between You (*nirdhūta-bheda-bhramam*). Into this melding of Your hearts, he himself is blending a profusion of the bright red vermillion (*hiṅgula*) of Your newly intensified love (*nava-rāga*) in order to paint an extraordinary picture on the interior walls of the palace of this universe. (*Ujjavala-nīlamanī* 14.155)<sup>10</sup>

In this verse it is said that Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa’s minds become one, just as two pieces of shellac merge together under intense heat. This very condition is the state of supreme oneness (*paraikya*) of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa; this indeed is the absence of awareness of any distinction between them (*bheda-jñāna-rāhitya*). By stating that there was no distinction (*bheda*) between their two minds (*mana*), it is already implied that there was also no distinction in their awareness (*jñāna*). Assuredly, their separate existence (*pr̥thak-astitva*) is real because it is eternal. Yet in this state, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa have no awareness of each other’s separate existence. Moreover, they have no awareness (*jñāna*), or direct experience (*anubhuti*), even of their own existence.

At this point, it may be questioned that if the state of supreme oneness (*paraikya-avasthā*) is the prime characteristic of *prema-vilāsa-vivarta*, then why is it that in the final verse of Rāmānanda Rāya’s song,

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<sup>10</sup> *rādhāyā bhavataś ca citta-jatunī svedair vilāpya kramāt  
yuñjann adri-nikuñja-kuñjara-pate nirdhūta-bheda-bhramam  
citrāya svayam anvarañjayad iha brahmāṇḍa-harmyodare  
bhūyobhir nava-rāga-hiṅgula-bharaiḥ śṛṅgāra-kāruḥ kṛtī*

Rādhā speaks of their separation (*virāga*, or *viraha*), in the words: “Now, He [Śrī Kṛṣṇa] must have withdrawn His love (*virāga*, i.e., *anurāga-sūnya*<sup>11</sup>) [otherwise, if His *anurāga* for me was as before, He could never have gone off to Mathurā without returning]. You are my messenger (*dūtī*) [whom I must now send to Him]. So tell me, does this manner of behavior befit the love (*prema*) of a cultured man (*supuruṣa*) [meaning, that of the foremost charming hero (*uttama vidagdha-nāgara*)]?” (CC 2.8.156).<sup>12</sup>

Additionally, it must also be asked how the awareness of separation (*viraha*) can be present at all in the state of supreme oneness (*paraikya-avasthā*). These two questions are answered as follows. First of all, it is most likely the case that the first part of Rāmānanda’s song, in which is found the words, “He is not the *ramaṇa*, nor I the *ramaṇī*,” is an indicator of the state of supreme oneness (*paraikya*) or of *prema-vilāsa-vivarta*. On the other hand, the final part of his song is understood to be an indicator of separation (*viraha*). In the state of separation, Rādhā speaks with anguish of their previous state of supreme oneness (*paraikya*) arisen from complete identification (*tanmayatā*) with *vilāsa* alone. By speaking of the unequalled and unsurpassed bliss that was relished in the state of union, the fiercely intense insufferability of the agony of separation is made evident.

The same conclusion can be inferred from the following passage of Kavi Karṇapūra’s *Caitanya-Candrodaya-nāṭaka* (7.16-17): “Śrī Rādhā said to Śrī Kṛṣṇa—‘When You were in Vraja, and we enjoyed the state of union, there was no awareness that I was Your lover (*kāntā*) and You my beloved (*kānta*). At that time, the mental modification (*mano-vṛtti*) [that is the source of the awareness of distinction (*bheda-jñāna-mūla*)] had dissolved. Even our conception of “You” and “I” was completely removed. But now, the recognition has dawned that You are my master (*bhartā*), and I am Your mistress (*bhāryā*). In spite of this, however, my life still somehow quivers in this body. What else could be more astonishing than this?’”

The first three sentences of this translated passage speak of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa’s state of supreme oneness (*paraikya*). This segment discloses the import of the *nā so ramaṇa* verse (CC 2.8.153) from Rāmānanda’s song. The remaining part of the passage speaks of the state of separation (*viraha*) in remembrance of their earlier time together. This entire statement from Kavi Karṇapūra’s *nāṭaka* is the Sanskrit translation of Rāmānanda Rāya’s Bengali song.

A second possibility is to interpret Rāmānanda Rāya’s entire song as illuminating the topic of *prema-vilāsa-vivarta*. In that case, we may refer to a statement from *Gopāla-campu* (*Pūrva*, 33.13) in which one of the symptoms of the state of inversion (*vaiparītya*) is the perception of separation (*asaṁyoga*) while in the state of union (*saṁyoga*). An illustration of this is given in the final verse of Rāmānanda Rāya’s song (CC 2.8.156). This is not real separation (*vāstava viraha* or *asaṁyoga*) but merely the mistaken perception (*bhrānti*) of separation. The feeling of separation is also present in the state of union that pertains to *mādanākhyā-mahābhāva*.

Among these two resolutions (*samadhāna*) of the above question, however, the first is understood as intended by Kavi Karṇapūra as well, as evidenced in the above cited verses (*Caitanya-Candrodaya-nāṭaka* 7.16-17). Then, in regard to Prabhu’s lovingly covering Rāmānanda Rāya’s mouth with His hand (described in CC 2.8.151), Kavi Karṇapūra writes as follows: “Unconditional love (*nirupādhi-prema*) does not tolerate

<sup>11</sup> This and the following bracketed inserts are drawn from Rādhā-Govinda-nātha’s commentary on this verse.

<sup>12</sup> *aba so-i virāga, tuṅhu bheli dūtī*  
*supurukha-prema ki aichana rīti*

any limiting condition (*upādhi*). Consequently, when Prabhu heard of the unconditional love (*anupādhi-prema*) of the twofold Supreme Reality (*bhagavatoḥ*), Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Rādhā, He recognized this indeed as the supreme object of human attainment (*puruṣārthī-kṛtam*). He thus covered Rāmānanda Rāya’s mouth to prevent him from disclosing its mystery” (*Caitanya-Candrodaya-nāṭaka* 7.17).

The meaning of this statement is explored further in the commentary on the next *payāra* (CC 2.8.151). From this statement of Kavi Karṇapūra’s *nāṭaka*, it can be understood that the first part of Rāmānanda Rāya’s song is indicative of the state of supreme oneness (*paraikya*), which is bereft of all limiting conditions (*nirupādhika*) and hence the supreme object of human attainment (*parama-puruṣārtha*). On the other hand, the second part of the song is indicative of the awareness of the distinction between the two lovers (*bheda-jñāna*), which involves a limiting condition (*sopādhika*) and is thus bereft of the immediate perception of their supreme oneness (*paraikya-jñāna-hīna*). The commentary on CC 2.8.151 can be consulted for further discussion of this point.

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