

THE GOPIBHAV, THE MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL STATE OF A GOPI, AS MANIFESTED IN SWAMI RAJARSHI MUNI'S HYMNS

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Abstract

In theology, an intense emotional expression of love towards the God or the presiding deity (Ishtdev) is called devotion or bhakti. ShrimadBhagavatmentions nine types of devotion or navadha bhakti. Of these the ninth one is self-surrender (atmanivedan) which is to have undivided love for God. In this state the devotee's soul so completely gets drenched in the love of God that even a moment's forgetfulness is highly disturbing. In the state of absolute self-surrender when the devotee incessantly remembers the God, that is the highest state of devotion, the parabhakti. The Gopisof Vrajhad attained this highest state of devotion. The devotion of Gopishas the feeling of the absolute self-surrender. It was their absolute self-surrender to the God. The Gopibhav emerges out of the inner faith of the persevering devotee bhaktiyogiwho has totally identified with the true nature of the Supreme Lord through fervent and unwavering religious practices. Gopibhav is an experiment of love to possess Lord Shyam Sunder.

INTRODUCTION

As the individual soul becomes pure, it attains the stage of *pratyahaaras* mentioned in the *Ashtangyoga*, the Yoga consisting of eight parts. Then the devotion with knowledge becomes manifest in the disciple. After passing the subsequent stages of *dharana* and *dhyaan* comes the stage of *samaadhi* which denotes the union of the God and the devotee. The highest form of devotion (*bhakti*) to Lord Krishna, as manifested in the *Gopibhav*, is the ultimate oneness of the individual soul with the Supreme Lord, the *Brahman*.

In *ShrimadBhagvat* and other devotional literature the description of love of the *VrajGopi* towards Lord Krishna only describes the state of pure devotional love. The *Gopis*, infatuated in love of Krishna, would forget their very existence. Getting absorbed in meditation of God is the "*Gopibhav*". Before attaining the divine *Gopibhav* the devotee has to become a *Rishi-Muni- Yogi*.

(Rajarshi - 2008-98)

Swami Rajarshi Muni is engaged in penance to achieve the divine body through yoga. His hymns flow from the spiritual treasure of his yogic experiences, hence they are full of spiritual experiences. His hymns, which form part of his *naadopasana*, besides expressing various emotions also contain hymns pertaining to *karmyoga*, *gyanyoga* and *bhaktiyoga*.

The Hymns:

Hymn (*bhajan*) is our vibrant spiritual culture. Our saints have made hymns a medium of expressing their experience of Supreme Lord. *Bhajan* is a "yogic process", suggested by our experienced Saints and noble teachers, to be practised in a particular centre of the body. It is known as "*Surat shabd yoga*" through such hymns, the teacher, who has realisation of the Supreme Knowledge, guides the eligible disciple through knowledge expressed in verse. The hymn becomes a medium of the emotional interaction between the God and the devotee. Through this one gets the knowledge of religion, ethics and the welfare of others. At the same time one experiences self satisfaction. The divine attributes of the God are contained in *vedas*, *upanishads*, *puranas* and *smritis* etc but their

study is not accessible to everybody. Therefore, that which collects and presents the preachings of seers and scriptures in a simple and popular language is called *bhajan*.
(Raizada - 2009-7)

Swami Rajarshi Muni:

Swami Rajarshi Muni's original name was Shri Yashwantsingh Jadeja. This great soul descended on 11.02.1931 at 11.00 pm at Porbandar in the house of Shri Devisinghbabu, ADC Porbandar, and Smt. Monghiba.

He had primary education in Sapar, secondary education in Limbdi and higher education in science in Shamaldas College, Bhavnagar. He was a leading player in cricket, tennis, hockey etc. He had great interest in spiritual science. After graduation he obtained M.A. degree in Sociology from Deccan College, Pune. He was appointed Class I officer in Junagadh where he had to give training to government officers. There a trainee Ratilal Suthar, seeing his interest in Yoga, gave him a book to read "*Aasanane Mudra*" by Swami Krupalwanandji. After reading in it the principles of "*Khechari Mudra*" and "*DivyaSharir*" he felt that his search for a *Guru* was over. He met Swami Krupalwanandji and on 10.02.1971 he formally renounced the world, took *deeksha* and assumed the name Rajarshi. Since then he has remained immersed in penance and achieved the *khechari mudra*". Thereafter, Lord Lakulish appeared before and gave him the highest *ShambhaviDeeksha*.

Currently he is engaged in the penance for attaining the divine body, *divyasharir*.

(Jadeja-2015-29,35,40,81)

According to the yogic science a practitioner of yoga (*the yogi*) becomes a poet after meditating on the *Agyachakra* for six months. In the modern era the practitioner of full yoga Swami Rajarshi Muni is a poet of the highest order. His hymns on *karmyoga*, *gyanyoga*, *bhaktiyoga* convince us that they have emanated from yogic experiences. Poetry and music are born out of the inherent self-joy of the yogi. Seer Patanjali has, by comparing devotion to God as mentioned in *yam-niyam* with *samadhi* the last step of the *Ashtangyoga*, proved that *samadhi* showing the oneness of the individual soul and the Supreme Lord is the best form of devotion. This is manifest in Swami Rajarshi Muni's hymns on *gopibhav*.

Gopibhav:

Gopi:

- The *richas* of vedas after intense penance reached the heavenly abode of Lord Krishna and saw celestial form as embodiment of joy and also saw *the divine endless raas*. With eagerness to enjoy it again and again they obtained the Lord's permission and took birth as *gopis* during Lord Vishnu's incarnation as Krishna.
- Sixteen thousand sages of Dandakaranya were spell-bound after darshan of Shri Ram and Sitaji. The craving was born in them to enjoy Sitaji-like pleasure of meeting Shri Ram then during the Lord's incarnation as Krishna they were born as *gopis*.
- Gopi is divine, free from the physical bondages.
- In gopi's heart is the nectar of love which satisfies even Lord Krishna.
- Gopi is fully developed divine soul who is capable of reaching the place of the Lord after crossing the seven layers of the universe.

(Dongreji Maharaja 2029-13)

Attaining the Gopibhav:

Only one who has attained the *Gopibhav* can talk about the love of Gopis. As long as there is egoism in the subtle, material or causative body, man cannot attain *Gopibhav*. Truth and untruth always co-exist in the human life. The association with human body, the material world and the worldly pursuits is false while the craving for the eternal life and eternal bliss is associated with truth. The person who renounces the ability to discriminate and all worldly pleasures attains the association with the good and religious persons. The desire of enjoying the worldly pleasures gets killed in a man associated with the pious people, and the longing of love towards the God is born. It is then that the man attains the *Gopibhav*.

(Sharanandji - 284)

The attachment to sensual pleasures is totally non-existent in *Gopibhav*. *Gopibhav* is beyond the perception and tendency of the senses. In *Gopibhav* one has to surrender totally one's mind, intellect, will and ownership to the God and become drenched in His love. Lord Shri Krishna makes Nand happy (*Nand-Nandan*). *Gopi* and *Gopis* are reflected form of His power. The stage of manifestation of the Supreme God is the beginning of *Samadhi*. To reach that stage one has to get drenched in *Gopibhav*. The devotees depending on the yoga of Love are the sages, munis and yogis. Various hymns (*bhajans*) of Swami Rajarshi Muni, engaged in the penance for obtaining the celestial body, contain hymns for Lord Krishna and the *Gopibhav* manifest in these is an humble effort to express highest form of devotion through words.

(Rajarshi - 2008-108)

Gopibhav manifest in hymns (bhajans) of Swami Rajarshi Muni:

The works or exploits of the God (*Shri Hari*) are eternal. The yogis watch these exploits at the height of *samadhi* by the grace of God. By watching these exploits the yogis become successful in the supreme sense. The *Gopibhav* in exploits of Lord Krishna, as watched by Swami Rajarshi Muni in course of his yogic experiences, is manifested in his hymns (*bhajans*).

To what extent the Gopi is passionate towards Krishna is expressed in this hymn:

*“Taarivenunasurbhanihaiyubhaage,
Mane tuj vin Shyamsaaveklulaage...”*
(Rajarshi-2019-75)

These two lines of the hymn express the Gopi’s sorrowful state of mind towards Krishna. The tune of Krishna’s flute cause such indescribable agitations in their hearts that they rush towards the divine tunes of the flute. Now the Gopi feels it extremely difficult to live without Shyam. Now her soul craves for oneness with the *Brahman*. In the absence of the *Brahman* she tosses about with restlessness like fish out of water. Gopi feels the pangs of separation from Krishna. She signals tunes of the flute as if to say

*“Soorvenuna bole chhebhitarmanbol
Dwaarbhidelatarahaiyana kohl
Tane malavanakod mara man maa jaage
Mane tuj vin Shyamsaaveklulaage...”*
(Rajarshi-2019-75)

O Gopi! if the doors of your heart are closed then how would Shyam sit there, so first of all open up the closed doors so that Shri Krishna can enter it. With the key of the surrendered love for Krishna the door at the entrance gate can be unlocked. This lock cannot be opened even with philosophy, that is why Narsinh Mehta says:

*“Premraspaanetu more napichchhdhara
Tatva nu tapanutuchchhlaage”*
(Divetia-2013-46)

The Gopi has a strong desire to meet Krishna. Having turned introvert with the sound of the flute, no thought comes to the mind of the Gopi except the divine form of Krishna. Her concentrated mind only fancies Shri Krishna in the human form. The strong force of the highest form of devotion (*parabhakti*) has put her in the *Dharana* stage of *Ashtangyoga*, and so cannot bear even a moment’s separation from Shyam. Poet Dayaram says the same thing in his hymn of *Gopibhav*.

*“Hun sunatabhoolisahuchaturi re lol
Malavathaichhunatiaaturi re lol”*
(Dayaram-2036-39)

The desire to meet a human being is called sensual pleasure, but the desire to meet the Supreme God, Shri Krishna, is called love. After hearing the flute of Krishna, the Gopi is convinced that the Supreme Lord calls us. The God wishes that the individual soul, *Jiva*, should come to me. This *Jiva*, the individual soul, is my eternal portion. So hearing the sound of the flute, the Gopi would leave everybody - the husband-son etc and rush to meet the Supreme Spirit. Gopi wants to make Krishna happy. So *Gopibhav* is the highest form of *bhakti*.

Expressing the internal state of Gopi’s mind, the poet says:

*“Khanpaanchhodi ne hunvalakhunchhunShyam
Nathi mara nayano ne pal no arum
Maarutanaduntaaripaaseraheva manage
Mane tuj vin.....”*
(Rajarshi-2019-75)

To Gopi eating-drinking without Shyam appears insignificant for every moment her eyes are looking for Shyam only that is why her eyes do not get even a moment’s rest. Gopi yearns to be with the human form of Krishna. So her body has no rest. The Gopi’s bewilderment without Shyam has increased due to her boundless love (for Krishna).

The Gopi’s state in separation has been described in *Naradbhaktisutra*:

*“Naradastutadarpatakhilacharatatadvismarane
Paramoyakulateti|| 11 ||”*
(Joshi-2017-21)

According to the divine sage Narada. to dedicate all actions to the God and becoming frustrated or upset even a moment's forgetfulness is the highest devotion. It is a devotion of absolute surrender like that of the gopis of Vraj. Naradji says that the constant recitation of Lord Krishna's name is the highest devotion (*bhakti*). Even for the Gopi, who has accepted the total surrender, a moment's forgetfulness increases bewilderment. She feels perfection only by achieving oneness with the form of Shyam. The Gopi says further

*"Have tarathikemkari door rahevay?
Maarohaiyuvaytenasahevay
Maarudiladubandhayu prem keraghaage
Mane tuj vin Shyamsaaveklulaage....."*
(Rajarshi-2019-75)

Gopi no other support than the love for Krishna, she has totally surrendered to Krishna. Her heart is now tied with Krishna with the thread of love.

In *Shrimad Bhagavat* Gopissay, "Hey! Shyam Sunder, is there a woman in all three worlds or elsewhere who, after hearing sweet sound and duly regulated various rise and fall of notes of your flute, would not love you without caring for the honour of the family or public censure.
(Bhatt-10-40-285)

*"The author of Naradbhaktisutrasays
AnyashrayanamTyagonanhata || 10 ||"*
(Joshi-2017-11)

To renounce support of all others except the Lord Shri Krishna is *ananyata*, Gopi's devotion of love is absolutely singleminded for Krishna. About devotees who totally surrender to the God, Lord Krishna says in *BhagavadGita*:

*"Sarvadharmaparityajyamamekamsharanamvraj |
Ahamtvamsarvpaapwbhyomokshayishyami maa shuch || 66 ||"*
(Ramsukhdas-1216)

Leave all religions and actions and come under my sole protection, I shall free you from all sins-ignorance and manifest you my real form to you, so do not grieve. It is certain that subtle form of Krishna has been firmly installed in the heart of Gopi due to constant recitation. So in a state of indecision or delusion the Gopi thinks that Shyam is with her and still how He is separate and distant from me? She says:

*"Tu paaschhekealagotenasamajay
Hun jaaguchhunkeonghuchhuntenapamay
Kevi Rajarshi antarmaanvenuvaage
Mane tuj vin Shyamsaaveklulaage..."*
(Rajarshi-2019-75)

In the subtle proximity of Krishna, Gopi is unable to make out whether she is asleep or awake.

She perpetually feels the flute being played in her heart. Gopika, experiencing all this, she longs to merge in the divine form of Shyam, and feels lonely in the state of separation.

CONCLUSION:

When the love for God is born then all tendencies of a man become dependent on Him. Then the devotee, choked with emotion, says "I do not want knowledge. I do not want peace. I do not want salvation. I do not want residence with another person also. I only want to obtain You. Only You are my life, and You are the life of the entire universe. Come and live in my heart." This state of mind is called love. Pursuit of the path of knowledge requires total renunciation (*vairagya*). Path of devotion (*bhaktimarg*) demands total/absolute love. The Supreme God manifests His original form to the one who loves Him absolutely and single-mindedly. The devotion of Gopis is the highest form of devotion (*parabhakti*). *Gopis* are the sages (*rishirupa*), preceptors of highest form of devotion, learned priests and teachers - yogis who know the *Brahma*, the Supreme God. Singing or listening to the hymns of *Gopibhav* increases the highest quality of goodness or purity (*satvaguna*). As the hymns of *Gopibhav* describe exploits of the God, they are helpful in meditating in the best possible way. Such hymns (*bhajans*) help in igniting the spiritual progress of the modern human beings because they are expressions of the experience of the saint poets arising from their self-realisation.

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