

Thakura Bhaktivinoda's Guru Parampara (Part Twelve)

Manasi Seva in Manjari Bhava in the Madhyahna Lila

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Part Twelve is Dedicated to Vrinda and Her Vana devis Who
also Serve in Ananga Manjari's Jutha



Preparing for the Madhu-pāna lila

In Part Eleven we briefly described what manjari bhava seva can be like in the nishanta, pratah and purbahna lilas. So now we will continue to tell how such *manasi seva* can unfold in the madhyahna lila.

In *Govinda lilamrita*, Srila Kaviraja Goswami narrates Radha and Govinda's madhyahna pastimes in twelve chapters, as they are quite extensive and form the cream of the book. Yet readers may sometimes get the feeling that he (in his svarupa as Kasturi Manjari) is leading us by the hand to directly show us these pastimes—as his descriptions are filled with such amazing clarity and accurate detail!

Madhyahna Lila 10:48 A.M. - 3:36 P.M.

As Radha and Ananga Manjari are sitting in their rooms in Javat, both sisters feel intense *utkantha* or restlessness in Krishna's separation. Radha is telling Visakha how Krishna's bodily sweetness totally submerges every pretty girl's high mountain of patience—and Ananga is relating to us how the fragrant aroma and sweet taste of his nectar-lips floods the entire universe!

Then suddenly Tulasi Manjari returns with a big smile to tell Radha about how she met Krishna and arranged for her meeting with him.

And shortly after, Rāsa Manjari enters Ananga Manjari's sakhi assembly with elation to announce, "O priya Ananga! Krishna now eagerly awaits the chance to relish a *yugal milan* with you!"

But just when Radha's restless mind begins to doubt, "Will I really attain Krishna's *sanga madhuri* today?" the river of her desire to meet him sweeps forward in the form of Dhanistha! And her beaming face reveals that Krishna has sent her. Thus she exclaims, "O Radhe! Krishna is anxiously calling you to save him from *Madan Raja's* torture! He is awaiting your arrival while resting upon a flower bed. O Radhe! Krishna is bewildered by love, his heart has melted, and he is fully surrendered unto you. Therefore, O Krishna-priya! Please quickly go and save him!"

Radha's Abhisara

Just then Kundalata arrives to escort Radha for performing Surya puja. So while holding her hand, and twirling a blue lotus in her right hand, Radha departs. Dhanistha and Tulasi lead the way as Radha's sakhis surround her. Following behind, the manjaris carry all of the Surya puja paraphernalia.

While leaving the village Radha observes numerous auspicious omens which make her heart swell with pride and elation. So when entering the forest with the gait of an intoxicated elephant, Radha's *priya sanginis* playfully taunt her with laughter and jest. In whichever direction Radha glances, the forest reminds her of her *priya-kānta* Krishna.

Radha's Prema Vibhranti (madness in prema)

But Radha then sees a dark tamal tree with a golden *yuthi lata* entwined around it —and thinks that Krishna is embracing a *sundari ramani* right before her!

"Ayi Dhanisthe! What is this?" she exclaims. Dhanistha replies, "I can only see the forest."

"O cunning one!" Radhika shrieks. "Are you blind? For can't you see that the 'King of Cheaters' is dancing right before us?"

Then turning to Lalita and the others Radha goes on, "Just see this Deceitful debaucher's pleasure dance with his sweetheart!"

"O Radhe!" Dhanistha replies. "Aren't you the actual dancer for calling us to witness your amazing *anuraga*?"

Turning to the sakhis Dhanistha next says, "Let's all go and tell Krishna about Radha's strange behavior."

Hearing Dhanistha's joking and seeing the sakhis laughing, Radha takes another look and discovers that she has merely seen a golden *yuthi* vine embracing a dark tamal tree, and lowers her head in embarrassment.

Thereafter, Radha arrives at the flower kunja named *Madan-rana-batika*, and approaches the murti of Surya deva. Then she folds her hands and devoutly prays, “Hey Deva! Please bestow your grace so that I can easily attain Sri Govinda’s lotus feet.”

Seeing the murti’s contented face, Radhika surmises that he must be pleased with her. Lalita then requests Tulasi, Dhanistha, and some of Vrinda’s *vana devis* to remain here with the Surya puja paraphernalia.

Vrinda then arrives and places two blue lotus in Radha’s hands—as they formerly decorated Krishna’s ears their touch and fragrance resemble Krishna’s touch and fragrance. With great difficulty Radhika tries to suppress her horripulation before Vrinda, and asks, “From where are you coming?” She replies, “From Krishna’s lotus feet.” “O where is he?” “In the forest beside Radhakund,” Vrinda answers. “What is he doing there?” “He is learning to dance,” says Vrinda. “Then who is his guru?” “Seeing your beautiful murati in every moving leaf, Krishna madly dances along—as if he were dancing with you!”

Vrinda then advises, “O Radhe! You and your sakhis may bathe at *Manasa Pavan Ghata* beside Shyamkunda. Meanwhile, she and Nandimukhi go to hide in a nearby kunja, as they are very eager to witness Radha Govinda’s *yugal milan*.

Then Radha sees Krishna and becomes wonderstruck! But because she previously mistook a tamal for Krishna, she can’t believe her eyes!

When Krishna sees Radha he similarly becomes bewildered, “Aha! Is this the Laksmi of fresh youth? Maybe she is sweetness personified? Or a reservoir of beautiful bodily luster? Or a river of pleasure? Or a wave of *amrita*? O who is coming to elate all of my senses with such divine wonder?”

Then Radha turns to Visakha and exclaims, “O sakhi! Has my *prana priyatama* arrived? Please don’t tease me, tell the truth. Seeing Radha’s voice faltering and her body shivering with horripulation, Visakha tenderly answers, “O Sumukhi Rai! Here comes the *kasturi tilaka* for your forehead, the marvelous pictures painted on your breasts, and the black mascara for your eyes. He is the crown-jewel for

your head, and your auspicious ray of good fortune. O sakhi, look! Your dearest beloved now stands before you—so quickly take his shelter.”

Thus overtaken by the *suddha prema* awakening from their mutual darshan, Radha and Krishna both become stunned!

But Prema becomes a dancing guru to make Radha and Krishna’s mind and body his students. So as Prema’s dance begins Vrinda, Kundalata, and all of the sakhis become spectators.

Radhika’s sweeping bodily *madhurya* illumines the dancing stage, and Krishna’s eyes dance with her. Seeing Krishna’s captivation Radha pelts him with her sidelong glance to increase his fascination—as the sakhis’ lotus-eyes dance within this spectacle!

Radha’s face is partly covered by her blue *orana* as she peaks at Krishna with awry glances to deliver him excessive pleasure. This pose is called the *vilasa alankara*.

Radha’s shyness causes her neck, waist and knees to bend with an enchanting contour. She then arches her dancing eyebrows that rival Cupid’s bow. As Radha is thrilled by Krishna’s happiness in seeing her, she fondles Lalita’s hand for support. This pose is called the *lalita alankara*.

The superb dance of Radha’s emotions induce Krishna’s mind to flutter—thus his body takes to dancing as he arrives before her to exclaim, “Hey Priye! Your ornaments became misplaced as you hurried to meet me. Come, I’ll redress you properly. Thus Krishna tries to touch Radha. But as Radha lowers her head, as her eyes flicker, she shows the *vibhrama alankara*.

Although eager for Krishna’s *sanga*, Radha resists him, and proudly moves ahead to pick flowers. Thus strolling over to a punnaga tree, Radha raises her arms over her head in an outstretched pose. Thus she teases Krishna, showing her desire to be embraced.

Krishna exclaims, “Hey Radhe! Because your heart craves these flowers, certainly you are a honey-bee. But Aha! I see that you are a *parama sundari ramani* who under the pretext of stealing flowers, steal the mind of handsome men!”

“Hey sundari!” Krishna goes on, “Everyone knows that *Maharaja Kandarpa* owns this forest, and he entrusts me to protect it. But aho! You’re arrogantly taunting the forest ranger by plundering the forest’s beauty with your two golden jugs of youth. So I’ll steal these two golden jugs to teach you a lesson and vanquish your pride!”

As Krishna becomes over-zealous to inaugurate his *Kandarpa jajna* with Radha, he moves forward to place his hands above her pitcher-like breasts—just as *kumbas* (water pots) are covered with mango leaves to invoke auspiciousness when one begins puja.

Although Radha is flushing with eagerness within, her *bama* resisting nature causes her to swoon, block Krishna’s hands, and curse him with faltering, indistinct rebuke! As Radha and Krishna’s hands swiftly meet, their bracelets sweetly tinkle. Then Lalita steps in to stop Krishna, and Kundalata exclaims, “Hey Shyam! It’s time to perform Panca-deva puja.”

Panca deva puja

Seeing Krishna placing his hands on Radha’s breasts, Kundalata says, “Hey Krishna, the *puja kumbas* have been set! But if you want to succeed in *Kandarpa’s jajna* you must first satisfy five devatas, namely Ganesh, Shiva, Candi, Vishnu and Surya.”

Krishna replies, “Hey Kundalata! You can be my puja Acarya. So will you please tell me how these five devatas are to be worshiped?”

To remove the sacrifice’s obstacles you must first worship Ganesh. So just imagine Radhika’s left breast to be the temple of Ganesh. Then place your left hand over it as an offering of red lotus and recite the mantra, *ganesaya tubhyam namah*.

Next, place your right hand over Radha’s right breast which resembles a Shiva linga, and utter the mantra, *namah sivayah*. Then move your hand above Radha’s frowning eyebrows and recite the mantra, *hrim candikayai namah*.”

Kundalata continues, “Although Radha will try to block your hands, you must place one hand on her chin and the other at the base of her ponytail. Then while

uttering the mantra *asmai visnave namah*, you can offer your lotus lips to hers. Hereafter, even if Radha offers resistance you must recite the mantra *suryaya namah* and press your kunda flower teeth and bandhuli flower lips to her reddish lips.”

As Krishna tries to perform the puja Radharani rebukes Kundalata and begins striking Krishna with her lotus flower. Seeing her anger Krishna addresses Lalita and the others, “O sakhis! I’m eager to worship these five devatas to remove the obstacles for our *Kandarpa jajna*. Why is Radha becoming upset?”

Nava Graha puja

Kundalata then steps forward to please Krishna saying, “ O Madhava! It looks like your Panca deva puja was a flop! O well, if you want to succeed in this auspicious jajna, just worship the nine planets—there is no need to follow any other injunction.”

Krishna answers, “O Kandalate! How can I worship the nine planets. Please instruct me.”

[Batsyayan Muni’s *Kāma Sutra* lists nine places on a *sundari ramani’s* body fit for kissing, which are her lips, two eyes, two cheeks, two breasts, forehead and face. When a beautiful girl is kissed in these nine places she experiences *param ananda* and succumbs to the desire for *vilasa*. In Jyotisa sastra the nine planets are the Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, Rahu and Ketu. If these planets align favorably, one’s desires become completely fulfilled. Thus Kundalata jokes with Krishna, “If you kiss Radha in these nine places you will attain *sarva siddhi*.”]

Fearing Krishna, Radha starts to flee! But Krishna catches her and begins kissing her in nine places. As the tussle goes on, Lalita proudly slips in and starts chastising Krishna! Then Radha exclaims, “Your puja Acarya Kundalata has taken you for a fool—yet she is a fool too—for don’t you know that the first duty is to worship the *Dik-palas*. So your puja is filled with blunders.”

Dik Pala Puja (worship of the ten directions)

Krishna inquires, “Hey Kundalata! Please tell me where the *Dik Palas* reside.” Directing her eyes to the surrounding sakhis, Kundalata says, “Hey Madhava! Look, the ten directional devatas have entered the murtis of Lalita and the other sakhis to benedict your *Kandarpa jajna*.”

Now listen, Visakha represents Shiva, Lalita—Indra, Sudevi—Agni, Tungavidya—Yamaraja, Citra—Nairitā, Ranga devi—Varuna, Indulekha—Vayu, Campaklata—Kuvera, Rupa Manjari—Brahma and Ananga Manjari—Ananta.

Kundalata’s bold statements, however, are intolerable for Lalita and the other sakhis, who start rebuking her! Yet meanwhile, Krishna eagerly comes to begin the Dik-Pala puja (by kissing them), and each sakhi flees!

[Actually they enjoy Krishna’s kisses. But if they neglect to show resistance, their fellow sakhis will tease and embarrass them. So this is why they are fleeing.]

How amazing! Although the sakhis upset the puja by escaping, still Krishna attains *param ananda* upon seeing their smiling dry pouting, their faces illumined by amour and their anger-tainted reddish eyes. So here it can be said that in Cupid’s game, love’s challenge is equally thrilling (if not more) than its sweet conclusion.

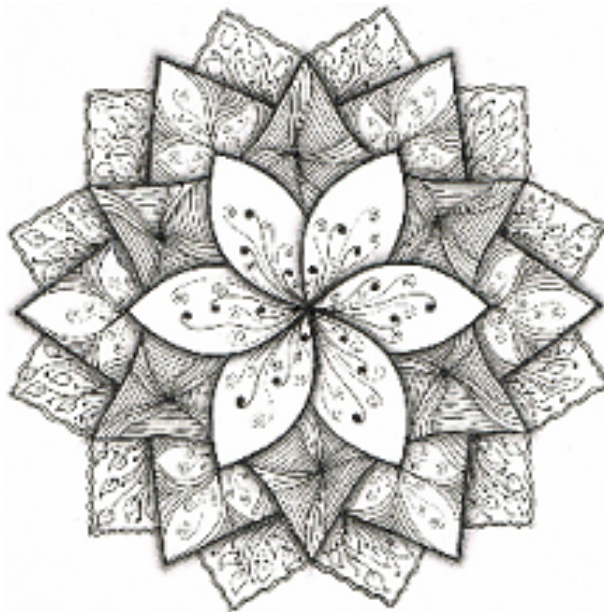
Rasa Analysis

In *Govinda lilamrita*’s present narration, we have just begun to hear about how Radha rebuffs Krishna with her strong resisting tendency, or *bāma bhava*. And in many more pages to come we will continue to hear how she, in so many taunting ways, refutes Krishna’s desire to enjoy *prema keli* with her.

On the other hand, however, we should mention that our other *yuthesvari*, Ananga Manjari, doesn’t give Krishna such a hard time. And in the Dik Pala puja we can remember that Ananga Manjari was the last sakhi whom Krishna approached. But what happened then? Unlike the other sakhis who all sided with Radha’s *bāmā bhava* to chase Krishna away, Ananga behaved differently. In other words, she gave Krishna an assuring wink hinting that she was ready to receive

him. Then as she looked over to her didi Radha, she spoke with her eyes saying, “Ja! Ja! Go, go and satisfy my *Rasika nāgara*—for this will make me supremely happy!”

So let’s now follow after Ananga Manjari (in other *lila prakasa*) to see what her *prema seva* to Krishna can be like.



As Ratna Manjari hints that it’s time to begin our coveted *seva*, my *guru-rupa sakhi*, I, and many others trail behind her as she makes a beeline for Anangambuja Kunja. The celestial beauty of Radhakund is intoxicating—as the divine fragrance of its blooming lotus flowers is escorted by the cooling breeze. But when coming to the crystal bridge which leads to Ananga’s kunja, our hearts swell with elation as we fathom that a very spectacular *lila* is about to begin.

Stepping onto Ananga’s beautiful island we see that Vrinda and her *vana devis* are busy decorating the entire area with a profuse supply of fragrant flowers.

Vrinda’s leading *sakhi* Kaushalya then comes to greet Ratna Manjari, for she wishes to show us what is going on. And first she points to the sixteen-petal padma mandira contoured from bright rubies which looks like a huge red lotus flower floating over the Kund. Encircling the padma mandira (over the water)

there are many statues of swans, cranes, lotus flowers and other objects carved from gems.

Peeking inside the mandira, we see countless *vana devis* hanging very extensive mallika garlands from the moonstone ceiling, wrapping malati and yuthi garlands around the emerald pillars, and covering the crystal floor with a layer of pink lotus petals. In the center Vrinda is personally directing many others who are preparing the huge flower singhasana.

Kaushalya next leads Ratna Manjari to show us the amazing Rāsa mandala which can rotate in a circle, the *hindolin vedi*, and the *madhupana mandap* that is surrounded by madhavi latas. The branches of these creepers twist and turn upwards to provide shade—and hoards of bumblebees make their intoxicating droning sound as they collect the flower’s pollen.

Kaushalya next shows us (one after another) the *vilasa kunjās* which surround the island—and there must be thousands of them. In each kunja the *vana devis* are preparing an enchanting flower bed—as everything will be needed for the upcoming lila. But we wonder, who could ever imagine that this place which appears so small, could be so expansive?

Then at last, Kaushalya brings us to Ananga Manjari’s *vilasa kunja* and departs to perform her prescribed seva. But as we see that Kamal, Vilasa and Juthi Manjari are decorating this *keli mandira*, Ratna places us under their care as she goes to see what Ananga is doing. Lata then gives us the task of refreshing the bathing pool which rests beside Ananga’s flower bed.

Meanwhile, as Ananga Manjari swiftly left Radha’s sakhi assembly, Krishna has been trying to catch up with her. But when he comes up close she gives him the slip. Seeing the fun, her asta sakhis—Subada, Rasada, Rambha, Keli, Kandalika, Nandā, Jayanti and Tulasi—each take their turn to serenade Krishna with *Kandarpa sangita*. These sakhis are all supremely beautiful and they have captivating voices. So as they sing about their *yuthesvari* Ananga’s *rupa madhuri* Krishna becomes spellbound as he floats in ecstasy! But sometimes Ananga Manjari appears from their midst to sing about Krishna’s *rupa madhuri*.

In this way, everyone proceeds along and reaches Ananga's breathtaking kunja. Yet when entering the fully decorated padma mandira, the place appears to be deserted—for no one is in sight! Thus Ananga contemplates, "O where are my sakhis, and what are they doing?"

Then Ratna and Rāsa Manjari suddenly appear to lovingly seat the Divine couple upon the gorgeously decorated singhasana—and what a surprise: thousands of sakhis and *vana devis* come scurrying in to shower Ananga and Krishna with handful after handful of flower petals—as more petals fall over their heads from a gigantic net resting above the raja singhasana! O what a downpour of bliss!

Every sakhi holds a divine instrument, and when they play together it creates a divine orchestra. And every sakhi harmoniously sings with the others to create a celestial symphony. Hence the concert's wonderful vibration causes everyone's eyes to pour tears—as they look to Ananga and Krishna with glances saturated with love.

Seated behind the singhasana, the manjaris hear Krishna's confession, "O Ananga! You are my *preyasi siromani* Radha's younger sister. So as I love Radha, I equally love you."

"O how can that be true?" Ananga replies, "for don't we all know that only Radha can steal your heart?"

"But I see you as non-different from her," Krishna replies. "So sometimes even more than my love for her, my love for you can awaken."

Blushing with a soft smile, Ananga answers, "O you must be flattering me, for no one can compare with didi."

Then Krishna goes on, "But haven't I come to you after leaving her, so what does this mean?"

Seeing the sakhis' singing nearing a crescendo, Ananga doesn't reply. Rather, she leaps into the centerstage like a streak of lightning to begin dancing an amazing solo!

Aho! The entire assembly goes wild—as Krishna watches her with unblinking eyes! Although Ananga’s sakhis and dasis are all renowned as topnotch singers and dancers, Ananga now steals the show. For her *maha prema cintamani* bodily splendor awakens to display the most fascinating dancing poses that anyone could imagine!

Krishna cannot remain seated—for he leaps into the limelight to dance beside her. Then looking to Krishna, Ananga boldly recites this *prabandha*:

tho dika dram dram — kiriti kiriti kiriti dram!
jhonku jhom jhanku jhom — are jhom!
guru guru dram, guru dram, guru dram!
to dekha dho dho — kiriti kiriti dram!
drimi dram, drimi dram — are dram!

As Ananga dances out the bolos of her *prabandha* (while stirringly reciting them aloud) the tinkling of her waistbells, bracelets and armlets produce an enchanting resonance. Yet the amazing tinkling sound of her golden ankle bells creates newer and newer *ragas* and *raginis*. Then as her *bhuvan mohini* captivating body speedily moves in so many elegant twists, turns and poses—on the last beat she suddenly pelts Krishna with a stunning eye glance that completely grafts his heart!

As Krishna is about to recite his *prabandha*, however, Ananga swiftly dances away to disappear within the crowd of her dancing sakhis. So Krishna instinctively dances behind in his mad search for her.

Back at Ananga’s *vilasa kunja*, we have just completed decorating her flower bed, after securing everything that will be needed for her *prema keli lila* with Shyamsundar. But just then Kamal exclaims, “O look! Our *priya yuthesvari* is coming, and Ratna Manjari is leading the way. When taking a look, we notice that Ananga Manjari appears a bit tired after displaying her exhilarating dancing performance, and her body is covered in perspiration. So Kamal and Vilasa Manjari lie her to rest upon the *keli sajja* (flower bed). Then taking a soft moist cloth I remove her perspiration droplets that appear like a row of pearls. And Yuthi and Guna Manjari begin massaging her lotus feat.

After a moment, however, we see that Vrinda is coming, and she is leading Krishna by the hand. Thus we quickly exit from the *keli mandira* to hide outside in our strategic positions.

When Krishna arrives at the door, he sees Ananga Manjari lying alone, and she appears to be asleep. So he tiptoes up close to view her incredible *anga madhuri*. As we peak through the lattice windows, we can perceive that Krishna is deeply moved. For even in Vraja mandala he very rarely gets a chance to see such bodily splendor as this. Thus in his appreciation for Ananga's beauty, tears of ecstasy form in his eyes which now roll down his glossy cheeks.

[Although the bhaktas may strive for many births for the chance to achieve Sri Bhagavan's darshan, here we can note how he deems himself quite fortunate to relish his bhakta's darshan.]

While Ananga Manjari pretends to be asleep, she become thoughtful, "When Krishna was endeavoring so hard to achieve my *didi's* favor, she only went on resisting him, and seeing his frustration broke my heart. So when it was my turn to receive him (during the Dik-pala puja) I wanted to encourage him. And after *didi* gave her wink of approval this wonderful lila began. So what can I do to make Krishna and *didi* both happy?

When opening her eyes, Ananga sees Krishna admiring her beauty as tears stream from his eyes. Thus his bhakti invokes her tears as well. So in a mood of great appreciation for Radha's mercy, Ananga feelingly outstretches her arms to Krishna and says, "I am yours!"

But Krishna is swept off his feet as he contemplates, "O never has Ananga Manjari been so compassionate to me—for she isn't displaying the least bit of resistance!"

Thus when Krishna lifts Ananga into his arms they both realize that it is Radha's *apara karuna* (endless mercy) which brings us together. And hence, his and her tears burst forth with even greater intensity!

In looking through the *keli mandira's* lattice windows then we see a wonder taking place: Krishna is offering limitless *pranamas* to Ananga Manjari (seeing her as

non-different from Radha), and she, in turn, is offering countless *pranamas* to him. And as they frantically begin kissing, Krishna feelingly admits, “You are my very life, and the meaning of my existence!”

Knowing what to do then, Ananga topples Krishna and boldly climbs over his chest. For when it comes to *samprayoga* or the most intimate pastimes, she can even excel her *didī*, as Radha excels in the *līla vilāsa*. (This will be explained in the upcoming rasa analysis.)

Thus with her overpowering *rati* stamina Ananga defeats Krishna today in his *Kāṇḍarpa keli jāna*—but by losing the match, he becomes even more happy!

The manjaris peaking through the *nikunja mandira*’s window feel proud of their *yuthesvari*’s victory—as their love for her goes on increasing. But, in turn, Ananga Manjari sends Krishna to them. And thus all of the *vilāsa kunjas* that we saw the *vāna devīs* decorating become the site to further fulfill our *Rasika curamāni* Krishna’s desire to make his *Kāṇḍarpa jāna* a grand success.

Rasa Analysis

At the end of the *Ujjvala nīlāmāni*, the opinion of the rasa sastra panditas is stated, that the thrill of *līla vilāsa* excels the pleasure of *samprayoga*. Now what does this mean?

When the consort or *nayika* leads Krishna on and on with her display of charming resistance (*līla vilāsa*), he can experience even more pleasure from this than from direct union with her in *samprayoga*.

Now this can be a matter of controversy, because in Visvanath Cakravartī’s commentary he mentions that Rupa Goswami’s personal opinion is that the *samprayoga ānanda* is greater. So which of the two is actually best?

When we say that Radha excels in *līla vilāsa*, whereas Ananga Manjari excels in *samprayoga*, however, they can both be right. For as Radha feels that she is giving Krishna more pleasure by cleverly resisting him, and making herself a great challenge for Krishna to attain, on the other hand, Ananga Manjari considers that

since Krishna is the *Srngara rasa raja*, naturally he will be more inclined for relishing *samprayoga*.

So in this matter each devotee can decide which mood best fits their own personal taste.

