

MEDITATION AS DEVOTIONAL PRACTICE IN JĪVA GOSVĀMIN'S PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

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In the philosophy of education articulated by Jīva Gosvāmin in the *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha* and *Bhakti Sandarbha*, he emphasises the critical importance of incorporating internal meditative practices alongside external bodily practices in the training of the *sādhaka* in the advanced phases of *rāgānugā-bhakti*. The role of meditation in Jīva's philosophy of education is particularly evident in his discussion of *Vraja-dhāman*, Kṛṣṇa's abode, in the *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha*, in which he maintains that while the earthly *Vraja* can be engaged with the material senses through bodily practices such as pilgrimage, the transcendent *Vraja-dhāman*, *Goloka-Vṛndāvana*, is beyond the material senses (*atīndriya*) and can only be apprehended through direct experience (*anubhava*) attained by means of meditation. Although *Goloka-Vṛndāvana* is not visible to the material eye (*carma-caḅṣus*), it can be 'seen' (root *dr̥ś*) through direct visionary experience (*sākṣāt-kāra* or *sākṣāt-darśana*). Jīva invokes the authority of Vyāsa and the other sages who, while immersed in *samādhi* beyond the material realm of *prakṛti* in the depths of meditation, attained a direct cognition of *Gopāla Kṛṣṇa* in his transcendent *Vraja-dhāman* and then recorded their cognitions in the *śāstras*.¹ He declares the direct experiences of the sages (*vidvad-anubhava*) to be the 'crest-jewel of all *pramāṇas*' in that the records of their experiences preserved in the *śāstras* are authoritative testimonies of valid knowledge for future generations.² He claims, moreover, that these experiences are not the exclusive prerogative of the sages of the past but can be attained 'even today' by advanced practitioners of *rāgānugā-bhakti* who incorporate meditation into their regimen of *sādhana-bhakti* as a form of devotional practice.³

¹ *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha* 106, 115, 116, 153.

² *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha* 115.

³ *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha* 106.

Jīva allots a pivotal role to various meditative practices as a critical component of the Gauḍīya path of *sādhana-bhakti*, and more specifically *rāgānugā-bhakti*, that can serve as means to attain direct experiential realisation of Kṛṣṇa's *vigraha*, absolute body, and his unmanifest *līlā* in the transcendent *Vraja-dhāman*. Jīva declares that 'one should engage in *bhakti-yoga* in the form of meditation (*dhyāna*)',⁴ and he deploys a number of strategies to distinguish the Gauḍīya meditative practices that are integral to *bhakti-yoga* from the meditation techniques advocated by yogic and tantric traditions.

MEDITATION IN RĀGĀNUGĀ-BHAKTI

In the *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha* and *Bhakti Sandarbha* Jīva Gosvāmin discusses a range of meditative practices, which he variously terms *smaraṇa*, contemplative recollection; *dhyāna*, meditation; *bhāvanā* or *cintana*, contemplation; and *mantropāsana*, meditation by means of a *mantra* on a particular *līlā*.

Smaraṇa and dhyāna

Jīva's representations of meditative practices in the *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha* and *Bhakti Sandarbha* build on the formulations of Rūpa Gosvāmin in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛtasindhu*. Rūpa includes *dhyāna*, meditation on the Lord, and *smṛti*, remembering the Lord, among the sixty-four practices of *vaidhī-bhakti* and also allots a significant role to *smaraṇa*, contemplative recollection, in his discussion of the advanced practices of *rāgānugā-bhakti*.⁵ Rūpa defines *dhyāna* as 'skilful contemplation (*cintana*) of the forms (*rūpas*), qualities (*guṇas*), playful activities (*krīḍās*), and service (*sevā*)' of the Lord and then invokes verses from the *Purāṇas* to illustrate each of these forms of meditation.⁶ He defines *smṛti* as 'any form of mental connection (*manasā sambandha*)' with the Lord and includes among his illustrations remembering the Lord, his name (*nāman*), and his abode, *Vraja-dhāman*.⁷ In his discussion of *rāgānugā-bhakti*, Rūpa also provides the basis for the meditative practice of *smaraṇa*, contemplative recollection:

One should dwell (*vāsa*) continually in *Vraja*, absorbed in various stories (*kathā*) about it, remembering (root *smṛ*) Kṛṣṇa and

⁴ *Bhakti Sandarbha* 317. All translations of Sanskrit passages are my own.

⁵ *Bhakti-rasāmṛtasindhu* 1.2.87; 1.2.178–182; 1.2.175–177. Regarding the practice of *smaraṇa*, see 1.2.294–295, quoted below.

⁶ *Bhakti-rasāmṛtasindhu* 1.2.178–182.

⁷ *Bhakti-rasāmṛtasindhu* 1.2.175–177; 1.2.213.

his beloved associates whose devotional mode accords with one's own. One who wishes to realise a particular devotional mode (*bbāva*) should perform devotional service (*sevā*) emulating the residents of Vraja with both the *sādhaka-rūpa* (practitioner's body) and the *siddha-rūpa* (perfected body).⁸

In his commentary Jīva maintains that these verses by Rūpa encapsulate the central method of *rāgānugā-bhakti* and suggests that this method ideally involves dwelling in Vraja with both the physical body (*śarīra*) and the mind (*manas*). Even if the *rāgānugā sādhaka* is not able to live physically in the earthly Vraja, then he or she should dwell mentally in the transcendent Vraja through the regular practice of *smaraṇa*, contemplative recollection. This practice involves emulating an eternal associate of Vraja whose devotional mode accords with the *sādhaka's* own inherent nature (*svarūpa*) with both the *sādhaka-rūpa* and the *siddha-rūpa*. Jīva glosses *sādhaka-rūpa* as the 'body as it is' (*yathāvastittha-deha*) and *siddha-rūpa* as an 'internal meditative body (*antaś-cintita-deha*) that is suitable for one's intended devotional service (*sevā*) to Kṛṣṇa'.⁹ Jīva's understanding of *rāgānugā-bhakti* thus centres on the meditative practice of *smaraṇa*, which entails constructing a meditative body through which the *sādhaka* can dwell mentally in Vraja even when residing outside of the earthly *dhāman*. I will return to Jīva's notion of the meditative body later.

In the *Bhakti Sandarbha* Jīva provides an extended analysis of *smaraṇa* that evokes Rūpa's characterisations of *dhyāna*, *smṛti*, and *smaraṇa*. Jīva defines *smaraṇa* as contemplative recollection of the *nāmans*, names; *rūpas*, forms; *guṇas*, qualities; *parikaras*, eternal associates; *sevā*, service; and *līlās*, playful activities, of Kṛṣṇa.¹⁰ His analysis of *smaraṇa* distinguishes five stages: 1) *smaraṇa*, thinking about Kṛṣṇa in any manner; 2) *dhāraṇā*, withdrawal of the attention from external sense objects and focusing the mind on Kṛṣṇa; 3) *dhyāna*, meditation on the forms (*rūpas*) of Kṛṣṇa and his other aspects; 4) *dhruvānusmṛti*, a more advanced stage of meditation in which consciousness flows towards Kṛṣṇa in an unbroken stream; and 5) *samādhi*, the most advanced stage of meditation in which the *sādhaka* attains a state of complete absorption in which the object of meditation—Kṛṣṇa, *svayaṃ* Bhagavān—shines forth (root *spbur*). In his analysis of the five-stage meditative

⁸ *Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu* 1.2.294–295.

⁹ Jīva Gosvāmin's commentary on *Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu* 1.2.294–295.

¹⁰ *Bhakti Sandarbha* 275–279.

practice of *smaraṇa*, Jīva thus appropriates and recasts three terms that are central to the practice of yogic meditation in Patañjali's eight-limbed program of Yoga (*aṣṭāṅga-yoga*)—*dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna*, and *samādhi*—embedding them in a devotional framework focused on realisation of Kṛṣṇa. Moreover, he explicitly distinguishes his understanding of *samādhi* from the yogic ideal of *asamprajñāta-samādhi*: whereas the *yogin* attains an objectless state of absorption in the lowest aspect of the Godhead, Brahman, which is impersonal and formless, the *bhakta* attains a state of absorption in the highest aspect of the Godhead, Bhagavān, who is personal and possessed of a self-luminous absolute body.¹¹

In the case of those *yogins* who take up the path of *bhakti* as adherents of *śānta-rasa* and are focused on experiencing Kṛṣṇa as an object of meditation but do not seek an intimate emotional relationship with him, Jīva maintains that they do not attain the highest form of *samādhi*, but rather they experience the intermediary aspect of the Godhead, Paramātman, in which Kṛṣṇa appears in his four-armed form as Viṣṇu, the inner controller (*antar-yāmin*) within the heart. The highest state of *samādhi* is attained only by advanced practitioners of *rāgānugā-bhakti* who seek to realise a passionate (*rāga*) loving relationship with Kṛṣṇa by cultivating one of the four principal *rasas*, devotional modes, that are embodied by the eternally perfected associates who reside with Kṛṣṇa in the transcendent Vraja-*dhāman*: *dāsyā-rasa*, the mode of service, exemplified by the attendants of Kṛṣṇa; *sakhya-rasa*, the mode of friendship, exemplified by the *gopas*; *vātsalya-rasa*, the mode of parental love, exemplified by Nanda and Yaśodā and other elders; and *mādhurya-rasa*, the mode of erotic love, exemplified by the *gopīs*.

Jīva's comments on the role of meditation in *rāgānugā-bhakti* suggest that the *rāgānugā sādhaka's* experience of *samādhi* surpasses that of the adherent of *śānta-rasa* in three ways. First, the form that manifests in the *rāgānugā sādhaka's* experience of *samādhi* is not Kṛṣṇa's four-armed *antar-yāmin* form as Paramātman but rather his two-armed *gopa-mūrti*, cowherd form, that is the *svayaṃ-rūpa*, essential form, of his absolute body (*vigraha*) as Bhagavān. Second, the *rāgānugā sādhaka's* experience of *samādhi* differs from that of the adherent of *śānta-rasa* not only in terms of the specific form of Kṛṣṇa that manifests but also the locus of that form: the *rāgānugā sādhaka* penetrates beyond the experience of Kṛṣṇa's four-armed form as Viṣṇu seated in the lotus of the heart and awakens to the luminous *gopa-mūrti* of his

¹¹ *Bhakti Sandarbha* 278–279.

absolute body enthroned in the *yoga-pīṭha* of the lotus of Goloka-Vṛndāvana, the transcendent Vraja-*dhāman*.¹² Third, the manifestation of Kṛṣṇa that unfolds in the *samādhi* of the *rāgānugā sādhabaka* includes not only his *vigraha*, absolute body, and his *dhāman*, transcendent abode, but also his *līlā*, and more specifically his *aprakāṣa līlā*, unmanifest *līlā*, in Goloka-Vṛndāvana.¹³

In his discussions of *smaraṇa* and *dhyāna*, Jīva ultimately establishes a hierarchy of religious experience in which, among the various *rūpas*, *dhāmans*, *līlās*, and *parikaras* of Kṛṣṇa that the *rāgānugā sādhabaka* might seek to realise, he singles out a highly particularised experience of *samādhi* as the culmination of meditative practice: the experience of the *gopa-mūrti* of Kṛṣṇa's *vigraha* in his supreme *dhāman*, Goloka-Vṛndāvana, engaged in the Goloka-*līlā* that is characterised by *mādhurya* (sweetness) and *rāga* (passion), with the *gopas* and *gopīs* as his *parikaras*. Jīva asserts that pure *rāgānugā-bhakti* is found only in Goloka-Vṛndāvana and not in any other *dhāman*, and he celebrates the glories of meditation (*dhyāna*) on Kṛṣṇa, *pūrṇa* Bhagavān, as Vrajendranandana, the son of Nanda the lord of Vraja, in the Goloka-*līlā*. Among the various playful activities in the Goloka-*līlā*, he extols in particular meditation on Kṛṣṇa's love-play with the *gopīs* in the *rāsa-līlā*, circle dance, which is the *rahasya-līlā*, the most recondite of *līlās*, and which is surpassed in greatness only by his love-play with Rādhā, the most beloved of the *gopīs*.¹⁴

With respect to the specific types of meditative practice advocated by Jīva, he suggests that the practice of *smaraṇa*, as mentioned earlier, involves contemplative recollection of Kṛṣṇa's *nāmans*, *rūpas*, *parikaras*, and *līlās*.¹⁵ Moreover, as we shall see, the implication of his analysis is that irrespective of which of these elements is adopted as a vehicle in meditation, meditation on Kṛṣṇa in his transcendent *dhāman* is the critical component that gives the *rāgānugā sādhabaka*'s meditative practice a unique character that distinguishes it from other types of meditation techniques advocated by yogic or tantric traditions.

In his discussions of meditation in the *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha* and *Bhakti Sandarbha*, Jīva mentions a number of different techniques that are distinguished primarily by the specific type of meditation device that is used as

¹² A *yoga-pīṭha* is the 'seat of union' where the deity is stationed in the centre of a *maṇḍala* and is used as a focal point in meditation.

¹³ *Bhakti Sandarbha* 279, 286, 330–332.

¹⁴ *Bhakti Sandarbha* 325, 338.

¹⁵ *Bhakti Sandarbha* 275–279.

a vehicle for transcending—whether Kṛṣṇa’s *nāmans*, *rūpas*, *parikaras*, or *līlās*. The *nāmans* that are used as vehicles in meditation are *mantras* that incorporate the name(s) of Kṛṣṇa;¹⁶ the *rūpas* include iconic forms such as Kṛṣṇa’s *gopa-mūrti* as well as aniconic *yantras* that serve as meditation devices; the *parikaras* are the eternal associates of Vraja with whom *sādhakas* seek to identify in meditation; and the *līlās* are the particular playful activities that provide a focal point for different meditation sessions. In the course of elaborating on these various meditation techniques, Jīva refers to devices and practices that are often associated with tantric ritual traditions—including *mantras*, *maṇḍalas*, *yantras*, *bhūta-śuddhi*, *nyāsa*, *mānasa-pūjā*, and *mudrās*—but, as I will discuss in a later section, he seeks to invest these devices and practices with distinctively Gauḍīya valences by reinscribing them as forms of *sādhana-bhakti* aimed at constituting a perfected *devotional body*, as distinct from tantric *sādhana* aimed at constructing a divinised tantric body.

Mantra meditation and maṇḍala visualisation

Jīva advocates *mantra dhyāna*, meditation utilising *mantras* that are ascribed the status of sound-embodiments of Kṛṣṇa, as one of the most efficacious means of realising the supreme Godhead in his transcendent *dhāman*. *Mantra* meditation, as represented by Jīva, is often accompanied by visualisation techniques and bodily practices through which the *sādhaka* engages with the mind, speech, senses, and other faculties various aspects of Kṛṣṇa—his *gopa-mūrti*, aniconic *yantra*, *dhāman*, *parikaras*, and *līlās*—and thereby gradually transforms the *sādhaka-rūpa*, material psychophysical complex, culminating in the realisation of a *siddha-rūpa*, a perfected nonmaterial devotional body that is suffused with the qualities and substance of the absolute body of Bhagavān. For example, Jīva suggests that while meditating with a *mantra* that is a sound-form of Kṛṣṇa, the *sādhaka* should also meditate on the transcendent *dhāman* and conjure a world that engages the entire sensorium through its captivating array of forms, sounds, textures, tastes, and fragrances.¹⁷ While meditating with a *mantra* such as the eighteen-syllable *mantra*, the *sādhaka* should visualise Kṛṣṇa engaging with his *parikaras* in particular *līlās* in Vraja-*dhāman*.¹⁸ As I will discuss later, Jīva also recommends a specific form of *mantra* meditation termed

¹⁶ For a discussion of the relationship between *nāman* and *mantra*, see *Bhakti Sandarbha* 284.

¹⁷ *Bhakti Sandarbha* 295, 286.

¹⁸ See, for example, *Bhakti Sandarbha* 312.

mantropāsānā, which entails meditating by means of a *mantra* on a particular *līlā* at a particular place (*sthāna*) in the *dhāman*.¹⁹

Among the *mantras* that are recommended for use as vehicles in meditation, Jīva extols in particular the efficacy of the eighteen-syllable *mantra*—*klīm kṛṣṇāya govindāya gopījana-vallabhāya svāhā*—which he celebrates as the *mahā-mantra* that is the ‘king of *mantras*’ and that embodies Kṛṣṇa’s *svarūpa*, essential form.²⁰ Jīva discusses the eighteen-syllable *mantra* in the *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha* and the *Digdarśanīṭikā*, in his commentaries on the *Brahma Saṃhitā*’s representation of Goloka-Vṛndavana as a thousand-petalled lotus-*maṇḍala*. The *Brahma Saṃhitā* (5.2–5.5) portrays Goloka as a thousand-petalled lotus that is encompassed by a quadrangle called Śvetadvīpa. The text identifies Kṛṣṇa’s *dhāman* with the pericarp (*karṇikāra*), or seed-vessel, of the lotus, which it depicts as a hexagonal *yantra* with six points. In his commentaries on the *Brahma Saṃhitā*’s portrayal of the lotus-*maṇḍala*, Jīva locates the six parts (*padas*) of the eighteen-syllable *mantra* in the six corners of the hexagonal *yantra* that is the pericarp of the lotus: 1) *kṛṣṇāya*, 2) *govindāya*, 3) *gopījana*, 4) *vallabhāya*, 5) *svā*, 6) *hā*. He asserts, moreover, that the *varṇa*-sounds of the *mantra* are nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa’s *svarūpa*.²¹

In order to provide canonical authority to ground his claim regarding the special status of the eighteen-syllable *mantra*, Jīva invokes the *Gopālatāpanī Upaniṣad*, which provides an extended exposition of the eighteen-syllable *mantra* as the quintessential sound-embodiment of Kṛṣṇa, in which it divides the *mantra* into five parts (*pañca-pada*) rather than six: 1) *klīm kṛṣṇāya*, 2) *govindāya*, 3) *gopījana*, 4) *vallabhāya*, 5) *svāhā*.²² ‘Just as the wind enters into the world and assumes five forms in each body [as the five breaths], in the same way Kṛṣṇa, although one, manifests as sound (*śabda*) in five parts (*pañca-pada*) for the welfare of the world.’²³ According to another verse from the *Gopālatāpanī Upaniṣad* that is repeatedly invoked by Jīva, this fivefold (*pañca-pada*) *mantra* comprising eighteen syllables is the sonic

¹⁹ *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha* 153.

²⁰ *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha* 106; *Digdarśanīṭikā* on *Brahma Saṃhitā* 5.3; *Bhakti Sandarbha* 285.

²¹ *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha* 106; *Digdarśanīṭikā* on *Brahma Saṃhitā* 5.3. For an analysis of Jīva Gosvāmin’s commentaries on the *Brahma Saṃhitā*’s (5.2–5.5) representation of Goloka-Vṛndavana as a thousand-petalled lotus-*maṇḍala*, see Holdrege (2014), chapter 5.

²² *Gopālatāpanī Upaniṣad* 1.12.

²³ *Digdarśanīṭikā* on *Brahma Saṃhitā* 5.3, citing *Gopālatāpanī Upaniṣad* 1.16. See also *Haribhaktivilāsa* 1.159–192, which provides an extended glorification of the eighteen-syllable *mantra* as the foremost of *mantras* that is primarily drawn from the *Gopālatāpanī Upaniṣad*’s exposition of the *mantra*, citing 1.2–8, 1.14–16, 1.19–24, 1.26–27.

counterpart of the fivefold (*pañca-pada*) *vigraha* of Kṛṣṇa that consists of *sat-cit-ānanda*, being, consciousness, and bliss: 'I, along with the Maruts, constantly seek to please with a most excellent hymn of praise the one and only Govinda, whose fivefold (*pañca-pada*) *vigraha* consists of *sat-cit-ānanda* and who is seated beneath a *devadāru* tree in Vṛndāvana.'²⁴ Jīva also invokes another verse from the *Gopālatāpanī Upaniṣad* that describes how Brahmā the creator meditated (root *dhyā*) with the eighteen-syllable *mantra*, after which Kṛṣṇa appeared (root *bhū* + *āvīr*) before his eyes (*purastāt*) in the garb of a *gopa* (*gopa-veśa*).²⁵ In the same way, Jīva suggests, those who mentally repeat (root *jap*) this *mantra* that is the sound correlate of Kṛṣṇa's *vigraha* will 'see' (root *drś*) the absolute body of Gopāla Kṛṣṇa in the form and garb of a cowherd (*gopa-veśa-dhara*), attaining a direct visionary experience of Bhagavān comparable to the cognitions attained by Brahmā the creator and Vyāsa, the acclaimed *ṛṣi* of *ṛṣis*.²⁶

Although he does not explicitly discuss its role in meditation, the implication of Jīva's analysis of the lotus-*maṇḍala* with the hexagonal *yantra* in its centre is that it is used together with the eighteen-syllable *mantra* inscribed on the *yantra* as a meditation device that involves activating both the auditory and visual modes of perception, culminating in a synaesthetic experience in *samādhi* of the unmanifest structures of Kṛṣṇa's *dhāman* that transcends the material senses (*prākṛtendriyas*) and engages the nonmaterial senses (*apṛākṛtendriyas*). Although Jīva leaves out of his analysis the specific instructions for this particular meditation, I would suggest, based on his discussions elsewhere, that the meditation involves mentally vocalising the divine names contained in the *mantra* in sequence while simultaneously visualising the corresponding parts of the *maṇḍala* in sequence. As the mental vocalisation of the *mantra* progresses—from '*kṛṣṇāya*' to '*govindāya*' to '*gopījana-vallabhāya*'—the visualisation of the *maṇḍala* progresses concurrently, from the encompassing quadrangle of Śvetadvīpa, where Kṛṣṇa manifests as the *ādi catur-vyūhas*—Vāsudeva, Saṃkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha—to the lotus of Goloka, where he manifests as Govinda, the keeper of cows, to the pericarp at the heart of the lotus, where he manifests as Gopījanavallabha, the beloved of the *gopīs*, enthroned on the *yoga-pīṭha*. As the *sādhaka's* attention moves inward through the auditory channel by

²⁴ Jīva Gosvāmin cites *Gopālatāpanī Upaniṣad* 1.34 five times in *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha* 93, 99, 106, 153.

²⁵ *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha* 93, citing *Gopālatāpanī Upaniṣad* 1.26.

²⁶ *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha* 93. See also *Bhakti Sandarbha* 312.

mentally vocalising the eighteen-syllable *mantra* that is the sonic form of Kṛṣṇa, the attention simultaneously moves inward through the visual channel and arrives at the centre of the lotus-*maṇḍala* where the *sādhaka* visualises Kṛṣṇa's aniconic form as the hexagonal *yantra* on which the *varṇas* of the eighteen-syllable *mantra* are visibly inscribed in letters. Finally, the *sādhaka* transcends the material senses altogether and awakens in *samādhi* to the luminous, reverberating *gopa* form of the *vigraha* pulsating with nonmaterial light and sound in the *yoga-pīṭha* of the transcendent Vraja-*dhāman*. This synaesthetic experience not only engages the nonmaterial senses of seeing and hearing, it also engages the nonmaterial senses of taste and touch as the *sādhaka* savours the sweet, exhilarating flow of *rasa*, ambrosial nectar, in the *dhāman*. Relishing this synaesthetic experience in the depths of *samādhi*, the *sādhaka* surrenders at the feet of the supreme Godhead: 'svābhā', 'I offer myself to you.'

Jīva explicitly connects *mantra* meditation with visualisation of a cosmographic *maṇḍala* in another context in the *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha* in which he invokes a passage from the *Svāyambhuva Āgama* that recommends meditation (*dhyāna*) utilising a fourteen-syllable *mantra* while meditating (root *dhyā* or root *smṛ*) sequentially on the various realms of a hierarchical cosmography.²⁷ While meditating on the *mantra*, the *sādhaka* is instructed to meditate in sequential order on a series of realms, which are arranged like the concentric rings of a *maṇḍala* centred around Kṛṣṇa, who is seated on his throne in Vṛndāvana. The process of visualisation moves from the outermost ring of the cosmographic *maṇḍala*, the material realm of *prakṛti*, through a series of nonmaterial realms that are hierarchically arranged according to increasing degrees of transcendence. After meditating on the *guṇas* of *prakṛti*, the *sādhaka* meditates on the waters of Virajā, which separate the material realm from the nonmaterial realms. He or she then meditates sequentially on the various nonmaterial realms, from lowest to highest: from the realm of Brahman, the abode of liberated sages, to the domain of Paravyoman, the abode of the eternal gods (*devas*), to the realms of the four *vyūhas*, Aniruddha, Pradyumna, Saṃkarṣaṇa, and Vāsudeva. The final phase of the meditation involves a lavish visualisation of the domain of Vṛndāvana in its transcendent splendour: resplendent with wish-fulfilling

²⁷ The *Svāyambhuva Āgama*'s cosmography evokes aspects of the cosmography elaborated in the *Uttara Khaṇḍa* of the *Padma Purāṇa*, which is adapted by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja in his representations of Gauḍīya cosmography in the *Caitanya Caritāmṛta*. For a brief overview of this cosmography, see Holdrege (2014), chapter 1.

gems; nourished by the ambrosial waters of the Yamunā; abounding in trees, vines, perpetually blooming flowers, and nectarean fruits; and filled with the sounds of singing birds and intoxicated bees. The meditation culminates in a visualisation of the youthful (*kīśora*) divine body of Kṛṣṇa seated on a throne in the midst of a gem-laden pavilion (*maṇḍapa*) in Vṛndāvana, immersed in the blissful ocean of *rasa* that flows from his *līlā*.²⁸

Mantropāsanā

In the *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha* Jīva recommends a specific form of meditation termed *mantropāsanā*, which involves meditating on a particular *līlā* in a particular place (*sthāna*) in *Vraja-dhāman* by means of a *mantra*. He introduces this meditation technique as part of his discussion of the two aspects of the unmanifest *līlā*: *mantropāsanā-mayī līlā*, which is a specific *līlā* that is mentally constructed by means of meditation utilising *mantras*; and *svārasikī līlā*, the continuous stream of *līlā* that is spontaneously relished as the natural flow of *rasa*.²⁹ Jīva defines *mantropāsanā-mayī līlā* more specifically as a particular *līlā* that is constructed by meditation (*dhyāna*) utilising a particular *mantra* and whose distinctive identity is delimited by the particular place (*sthāna*) associated with that *līlā*. He cites examples of *mantras* from a number of authoritative *śāstras* that can be used in the practice of *mantropāsanā*. Verses from the *Gopālatāpanī Upaniṣad* are considered particularly efficacious *mantras* because the Gauḍīyas invest this post-Vedic Vaiṣṇava *Upaniṣad* with the transcendent authority of *śruti* as the record of that which was ‘heard’ (root *śru*) and ‘seen’ (root *drś*) by the ancient ṛṣis through direct experience of Gopāla Kṛṣṇa in his transcendent *dhāman*. Jīva cites the following passage from the *Gopālatāpanī Upaniṣad* in which Brahmā the creator responds to a question by the primordial sages about the nature of Kṛṣṇa’s form (*rūpa*) and recommends meditation on a series of *ślokas* that describe the *gopa* form of Kṛṣṇa engaged in a specific *līlā* in which he rests with his *gopa* and *gopī* companions beneath a wish-fulfilling tree near the Yamunā River in *Vraja-dhāman*:

The golden one [Brahmā], said: [Kṛṣṇa’s form] is in the garb of a cowherd (*gopa-veśa*), is the colour of a rain-cloud, is youthful, and is resting under a wish-fulfilling tree. Here are the *ślokas* [for meditation]: The Lord’s eyes are like lotuses, his colour

²⁸ *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha* 106, citing an unidentified passage from the *Svāyambhuva Āgama*.

²⁹ *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha* 153.

is that of a rain-cloud, and his garments are dazzling like lightning. He has two arms (*dvi-bhuja*), his hands are positioned in the *jñāna-mudrā* (knowledge gesture), and he wears a garland of forest flowers. He is surrounded by *gopas*, *gopīs*, and cows, is adorned with divine ornaments, and rests beneath a wish-fulfilling tree in the centre of a jewelled lotus. He is fanned by breezes that mingle with the waves of the Kālindī [Yamunā]. Anyone who contemplates (root *cint*) Kṛṣṇa in his heart (*cetas*) in this way will be liberated (*mukta*) from the cycle of birth and death.³⁰

Although Jīva does not explicitly describe the specific method through which *ślokas* such as these are utilised as *mantras* in meditation, he does indicate that during the practice of *mantrapāsanā* the *sādhaka* engages the particular *līlā* that is the focus of the meditation through ‘hearing’ (root *śru*), implying that the *sādhaka* mentally vocalises the *mantra* that describes the *līlā* while visualising the discursive content of the *mantra*. Thus, for example, as the *sādhaka* mentally vocalises the *ślokas* from the *Gopālatāpanī Upaniṣad* quoted above, he or she visualises the particularities of Kṛṣṇa’s *gopa* form engaging in this particular ‘resting’ (*śayana*) *līlā* with the *gopas*, *gopīs*, and cows in a particular locale in *Vraja-dhāman*: under a wish-fulfilling tree on a jewelled lotus near the Yamunā River.

Through regular practice of *mantrapāsanā* involving visualisation of a series of discrete *līlā* tableaux, the *sādhaka* penetrates more and more deeply into the unmanifest structures of the *līlā* in the transcendent *dhāman* and becomes increasingly immersed in the flow of *rasa*. In the advanced phases of *rāgānugā-bhakti*, the *sādhaka* awakens to the constantly flowing dynamism of the *svārasikī līlā* in which the constructed world of *līlā* tableaux gives way to a spontaneous stream of *rasa*-filled *līlā*. According to Jīva, the *svārasikī* aspect of the unmanifest *līlā*, in which the *sādhaka* relishes through direct experience a continuous stream of *līlā* flowing with *rasa*, is like the Gaṅgā River, whereas the *mantrapāsanā-mayī* aspect of the *līlā*, in which the *sādhaka* mentally constructs one *līlā* after another, is like a series of pools (*bradas*) arising from that river. Moreover, Jīva suggests that when the practice of *mantrapāsanā* finds fruition in the unbroken flow of the *svārasikī līlā*, then the process of ‘hearing’ (root *śru*) gives way to true ‘seeing’ (root *drś*) in which Kṛṣṇa himself directly appears before the *sādhaka* in the depths of *samādhi*.

³⁰ Kṛṣṇa *Sandarbhā* 153, citing *Gopālatāpanī Upaniṣad* 1.8–11.

‘O Lord, who are greatly praised, you become seated in the lotus of the heart absorbed in *bbāva-yoga*. Your devotees’ path to you is by hearing and seeing. In whatever form they contemplate (root *bbū + vi*) you in meditation (*dhī*), in that form (*vapus*) you manifest out of your graciousness.’ In accordance with this statement [from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*], when the *mantropāsānā-mayītva* finds fruition in *svārasikī*, then even today he [Kṛṣṇa] at times manifests (root *sphur*) as if immediately in the hearts of *sādhakas*.³¹

Realising the siddha-rūpa

In the culminating stage of realisation in *rāgānuṅgā-bhakti*, as represented by Jīva, the *sādhaka* goes beyond the role of a passive witness enjoying the continual play and display of Kṛṣṇa’s unmanifest *līlā* and enters into the *līlā* as an active participant and established resident of *Vraja-dhāman*. This final stage of realisation is accomplished through the attainment of a *siddha-rūpa*, a perfected devotional body. Jīva’s analysis suggests that just as the unmanifest *līlā* has two aspects—the discrete *līlā* tableaux that are mentally constructed through *mantropāsānā*, and the continuous stream of *svārasikī līlā* that is a spontaneous expression of Kṛṣṇa’s blissful nature—the *siddha-rūpa* also has two aspects: the meditative body that is mentally constructed through meditation;³² and the eternal, nonmaterial body that is an *aṁśa*, portion, of the self-luminous effulgence (*jyotir*) of Kṛṣṇa.³³ With respect to the first aspect, as mentioned earlier, the *rāgānuṅgā sādhaka* constructs in meditation the *siddha-rūpa* as an ‘internal meditative body (*antaś-cintita-deha*) that is suitable for one’s intended devotional service (*sevā*) to Kṛṣṇa’.³⁴ Under the guidance of the *guru*, the *sādhaka* visualises a meditative body that best expresses the *rasa*, or devotional mode, that accords with his or her unique essential nature, *svarūpa*, and eternal body, *siddha-rūpa*. The process of visualisation involves identifying with those *parikaras*, eternal associates of Kṛṣṇa in the transcendent *Vraja-dhāman*, who embody this particular flavour of *prema-rasa*—whether the attendants of Kṛṣṇa, who embody *dāsyā-rasa*; the *gopas*, who embody *sakhya-rasa*; Nanda and Yaśodā, who embody

³¹ *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha* 153, which includes a citation from *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* 3.9.11.

³² See, for example, Jīva Gosvāmin’s commentary on *Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu* 1.2.295; *Bhakti Sandarbha* 312, 286.

³³ See, for example, *Prīti Sandarbha* 10.

³⁴ Jīva Gosvāmin’s commentary on *Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu* 1.2.295.

vātsalya-rasa; or the *gopīs*, who embody *mādhurya-rasa*.³⁵ The *sādhaka* then visualises his or her meditative body in a series of *līlā* tableaux and through the agency of this body envisions directly engaging with Kṛṣṇa and his eternal associates in *Vraja-dhāman*: ‘I am personally (*sākṣāt*) a particular resident of *Vraja*, [...] I am personally (*sākṣāt*) attending *Vrajendranandana*, the son of *Nanda* the lord of *Vraja*.’³⁶ Jīva’s analysis suggests that regular meditation involving visualisation of the mentally constructed *siddha-rūpa* serves to catalyse an awakening in which the *sādhaka* remembers (*smaraṇa*) his or her eternal *siddha-rūpa* and reclaims his or her distinctive role as an eternal protagonist in Kṛṣṇa’s unmanifest *līlā* in the transcendent *Vraja-dhāman*.

The meditative practices of *smaraṇa* and *dhyāna* delineated by Jīva provided the basis for the complex techniques of *līlā-smaraṇa* visualisation that were developed by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja and later Gauḍīya authorities as a means to realise the *siddha-rūpa*.³⁷

REALISING VRAJA-DHĀMAN: THE GAUḌĪYA RE-VISIONING OF PĀÑCARĀTRA

I would suggest that the critical component that distinguishes the Gauḍīya methods of meditation recommended by Jīva Gosvāmin from other types of meditation techniques advocated by yogic or tantric traditions is meditation on Kṛṣṇa in his transcendent *dhāman*. This distinctive emphasis is particularly evident in Jīva’s discussion of *arcana*, ritual worship, in the *Bhakti Sandarbha*, in which he connects meditation on Kṛṣṇa in his transcendent *Vraja-dhāman*, *Goloka-Vṛndāvana*, with a cluster of tantric ritual practices derived from Pāñcarātra traditions. He frames his discussion by invoking two key verses from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* that discuss the relationship between Vedic and tantric traditions: *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* 11.27.7, which suggests that there are three systems of worshipping Kṛṣṇa—Vedic, tantric, and mixed—and *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* 11.3.47, which asserts that the most expeditious means of severing the knot of bondage is to worship Kṛṣṇa through a mixed system that utilises Vedic rituals along with tantric rituals. Following the lead of the *Bhāgavata*, Jīva suggests that the most effective system of worship

³⁵ *Bhakti Sandarbha* 312, 286.

³⁶ *Bhakti Sandarbha* 312.

³⁷ For a brief overview of these techniques, see Holdrege (2014), chapter 2. For an analysis of the role of these *līlā-smaraṇa* techniques in Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja’s *Govindalīlāmṛta* and other Gauḍīya works, see Haberman (1988), pp. 123–133.

is the mixed form that is based on the scriptural injunctions (*vidhis*) of the brahmanical canon of *śruti* and *smṛti* texts—in particular, the *Vedas*, *Dharmaśāstras*, and *Purāṇas*—together with the tantric ritual procedures of the *Āgamas*, and more specifically the *Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās*.³⁸ Jīva subsequently provides a significant re-visioning of Pāñcarātra ritual procedures for daily worship of the deity, including *bbūta-śuddhi*, *nyāsa*, and *mānasa-pūjā*, in which he strips away many of the tantric elements and reframes the procedures as part of a distinctively Gauḍīya *sādhana-bhakti* centred on Kṛṣṇa in his transcendent *Vraja-dhāman*, *Goloka-Vṛndāvana*.³⁹ Before examining Jīva's reimagining of these procedures, I would like to consider, first, the specific practices that constitute this ritual regimen in Pāñcarātra traditions and, second, the ways in which this regimen is reconfigured in the *Hari-bhaktivilāsa*, the authoritative Gauḍīya ritual compendium that is generally ascribed to Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmin and that stipulates the regulations for the sixty-four practices of *vaidhī-bhakti*.⁴⁰

The Pāñcarātra ritual regimen

The *Jayākhyā Saṃhitā*, one of the 'three gems' of the Pāñcarātra canon, provides one of the earliest and most extensive accounts in Hindu tantric literature of the initiated *sādhaka's* daily ritual regimen for transforming the *bhautika-śarīra*, material body, into a *divya-deha*, a divinised tantric body that is qualified to offer worship to the supreme Godhead, who is referred to as Nārāyaṇa or Viṣṇu.⁴¹ The daily ritual regimen, as represented in the *Jayākhyā Saṃhitā*, includes four principal components: *bbūta-śuddhi*, *nyāsa*, *mānasa-yāga* or *antar-yāga*, and *bāhya-yāga*.⁴²

Bhūta-śuddhi, purification of the bodily elements, involves an intricate process of visualisation in which the *sādhaka* envisions the dissolution of the material body and its reconstitution as a purified and divinised body.

³⁸ *Bhakti Sandarbha* 284.

³⁹ *Bhakti Sandarbha* 286.

⁴⁰ For a discussion of issues pertaining to the authorship of the *Hari-bhaktivilāsa*, see De (1961), pp. 136–143.

⁴¹ For an overview of the contents of the *Jayākhyā Saṃhitā*, see Smith (1975–1980), vol. 1, pp. 113–130. The *terminus ad quem* for the text's composition is the tenth century, since it is quoted by Utpaladeva (ca. 925–975 CE), an exponent of Kashmir Śaiva traditions. Smith (1975–1980), vol. 1, p. 113; Flood (2006), p. 101.

⁴² My discussion of this fourfold ritual regimen is indebted to Flood's analysis (2006, pp. 106–119) of the *Jayākhyā Saṃhitā's* representations of the ritual. For translations of chapter 10 of the *Jayākhyā Saṃhitā* pertaining to *bbūta-śuddhi* and chapter 11 pertaining to *nyāsa*, see Flood (2000) and Flood (2006), pp. 188–191. See also Gupta (1992) and Flood (1992).

The *sādhaka*, while engaging in *prāṇāyāma*, visualises drawing into the body with a series of inward breaths each of the five gross elements (*bbūtas*) in sequential order—earth, water, fire, air, and space—and dissolving each in turn into its corresponding subtle element (*tanmātra*)—smell, taste, form, touch, and sound—after which the subtle element is expelled with an outward breath. The *sādhaka* then envisions burning up the material body in fire, immersing the ashes in the ocean of milk, and reconstituting a pure luminous body that is identified with Nārāyaṇa.

The next stage in the process of divinising the body is accomplished through *nyāsa*, imposition of *mantras*, in which the *sādhaka* ritually establishes deities in various parts of the body by mentally repeating the *mantra* associated with each deity and touching the designated body part. Having established the deities associated with Nārāyaṇa—for example, his four principal *śaktis*, his *avatāras* Nṛsiṃha and Varāha, and the four *vyūhas*—throughout the body, the *sādhaka* completes the process of divinisation by ritually placing the seven-syllable *mantra* of Nārāyaṇa on all parts of the body, from head to toe, and visualising himself as fully divinised and identified with Nārāyaṇa: ‘I am Lord Viṣṇu, I am Nārāyaṇa.’

The *sādhaka* then proceeds to perform *mānasa-yāga* or *antar-yāga*, internalised mental worship, which involves an elaborate process of visualisation that culminates in establishing Nārāyaṇa on a lotus-borne throne in the heart and making offerings to him mentally. The final phase in the ritual regimen is *bāhya-yāga*, external worship of the deity, in which the *sādhaka* constructs a *maṇḍala* and, after installing Nārāyaṇa’s presence in the *maṇḍala* along with his retinue, makes offerings to him externally in the form of flowers, incense, food, and so on.

The Haribhaktivilāsa: reconfiguring the Pāñcarātra ritual structure

This fourfold ritual regimen—*bhūta-śuddhi*, *nyāsa*, *mānasa-yāga*, and *bāhya-yāga*—is discussed in the fifth chapter (*vilāsa*) of the *Haribhaktivilāsa*, which delineates the Gauḍīya procedures for daily morning worship of Bhagavān that it claims are ‘for the most part in accordance with the injunctions (*vidhis*) of the *Āgamas*’⁴³—although, as we shall see, the text re-orientes the Viṣṇu-oriented worship of the Vaiṣṇava *Āgamas* by identifying Bhagavān, the supreme Godhead who is the object of worship, with Kṛṣṇa rather than Viṣṇu.

⁴³ *Haribhaktivilāsa* 5.3.

The *Haribhaktivilāsa* includes a brief description of *bbūta-śuddhi*, the procedure through which the *sādhaka* attains a purified body and becomes worthy of offering worship to Kṛṣṇa.⁴⁴ The text invokes the following passage from the *Trailokyasammohana Tantra*, which describes *bbūta-śuddhi* as a process of visualisation involving the subtle physiology of the *cakras* in which the *sādhaka* visualises drying up the body and consuming it in fire, after which he or she envisions purifying the ashes of the incinerated corpse with *amṛta*, the nectar of immortality, thereby transforming the material body into a divinised body.

The sage should purify his sinful body (*deha*) with the air in the navel, and he should burn up the body (*kalevara*) with the fire in the heart. He should contemplate (root *cint*) the full moon, pure and filled with the nectar of immortality (*amṛta*), resting on the great thousand-petalled lotus situated in the forehead. The sage should purify the remaining ashes with the flowing streams [of *amṛta*] from that [moon] and with these [*mantras*] made of *varṇa*-sounds. In this way he should cause the body (*vapus*) composed of the five gross elements (*pañca-bhūtātma*) to become divine.⁴⁵

After a brief discussion of *prāṇāyāma*, the *Haribhaktivilāsa* provides an extended exposition of *nyāsa*.⁴⁶ Among the various forms of *nyāsa* that are described in the text, of particular interest for our purpose is the Keśavādi-*nyāsa*, as it is this *nyāsa* that is explicitly mentioned by Jīva in the *Bhakti Sandarbha*, as we shall see. The Keśavādi-*nyāsa* involves ritually placing on the various parts of the body the *varṇa*-sounds of Sanskrit together with the names of the fifty-one *mūrtis* of Bhagavān, beginning with Keśava, and the names of his fifty-one *śaktis*, beginning with Kīrti. The fifty-one *mūrtis* include, in addition to Kṛṣṇa, the four *vyūhas*, the twelve *mūrtis* who are the presiding deities of the twelve months,⁴⁷ *avatāras* such as Varāha and

⁴⁴ See *Haribhaktivilāsa* 5.63–73.

⁴⁵ *Haribhaktivilāsa* 5.69–71, citing an unidentified passage from the *Trailokyasammohana Tantra*.

⁴⁶ See *Haribhaktivilāsa* 5.88–165.

⁴⁷ The twelve *mūrtis* that are the presiding deities of the months are Keśava, Nārāyaṇa, Mādhava, Govinda, Viṣṇu, Madhusūdāna, Trivikrama, Vāmana, Śrīdhara, Hṛṣīkeśa, Padmānābha, and Dāmodara. These twelve *mūrtis* are classified as *vaibhava-vilāsas* in Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja's taxonomy of Kṛṣṇa's divine forms. For an analysis of this taxonomy, see Holdrege (2014), chapter 1.

Nṛsiṃha, and a variety of other manifestations of Bhagavān. The fifty-one *śaktis* include Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī, Durgā, Kālī, Umā, and a variety of other female powers, although it is interesting to note that Rādhā is not explicitly mentioned in the list.⁴⁸ The section on Keśavādi-*nyāsa* concludes with the assertion that the *sādhaka* who performs this *nyāsa* attains an imperishable body (*dehinah acyutatva*) comparable to that of Acyuta, the supreme Godhead himself.⁴⁹ The discussion of *nyāsas* culminates in two *nyāsas* that serve as a means of suffusing the *sādhaka*'s entire psychophysical complex with Kṛṣṇa's presence embodied in the pulsating sounds of his *mūla-mantra*, the eighteen-syllable *mantra*: *akṣara-nyāsa*, which involves ritually placing each of the eighteen syllables of the *mantra* on all parts of the body; and *pada-nyāsa*, which involves placing the five parts (*padas*) of the eighteen-syllable *mantra* throughout the entire body.⁵⁰

The *Haribhaktivilāsa* reconfigures the ritual structure of the Pāñcarātra regimen of daily worship by interjecting an extended account of meditation (*dhyāna*) on Kṛṣṇa in his transcendent *dhāman* immediately prior to its discussion of *mānasa-yāga*. The account consists primarily of a lengthy passage from the *Kramadīpikā* followed by a passage from the *Gautamīya Tantra*.⁵¹ In contrast to earlier verses in which the *Haribhaktivilāsa* recommends meditation (*dhyāna*) on Bhagavān in his four-armed form as Viṣṇu, bearer of the discus, conch, club, and lotus, seated in the lotus of the heart,⁵² the *Kramadīpikā* passage recommends meditating (root *smṛ* or root *cint*) on Bhagavān's two-armed form as Gopāla Kṛṣṇa, bearer of the flute, seated on an eight-petalled lotus on his *yoga-pīṭha* in Vṛndāvana. The meditation involves a progressive series of visualisations that serve as a means of mentally constructing the domains of a *maṇḍala*: Kṛṣṇa's transcendent abode in Vṛndāvana, his divine body stationed in the centre of Vṛndāvana, his intimate associates who surround him in the inner circle, and his divine retinue in the outer circles of the *maṇḍala*. The meditation begins with an elaborate visualisation of Vṛndāvana in which the *sādhaka* engages the transcendent

⁴⁸ This lack of mention of Rādhā in the list of *śaktis* resonates with De's observation that 'the Rādhā-cult does not figure as prominently as it should' in the *Haribhaktivilāsa* in that the text does not mention Rādhā in its accounts of meditation on Kṛṣṇa and does not include images of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in its regulations for the construction of images, although it does discuss images of Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa and of Rukmiṇī and Kṛṣṇa (De, 1961, p. 139).

⁴⁹ *Haribhaktivilāsa* 5.97–116.

⁵⁰ *Haribhaktivilāsa* 5.158–164.

⁵¹ *Haribhaktivilāsa* 5.168–217.

⁵² See *Haribhaktivilāsa* 5.77; 5.99.

forms, sounds, fragrances, textures, and tastes of this paradisiacal realm. The meditation then shifts to the centre of the *maṇḍala* where Kṛṣṇa is enthroned on his *yoga-pīṭha*, and the *sādhaka* embarks on a second visualisation that explores in lavish detail every part of Kṛṣṇa's magnificent divine body (*deba*), from the crest of peacock feathers on the top of his head to the auspicious marks on the soles of his lotus-feet. In the next phase of the meditation, the *sādhaka's* vision expands outward from the centre of the *maṇḍala* and visualises in turn the cows, *gopas*, and *gopīs* who encircle Kṛṣṇa. In the final phase of the meditation, the process of visualisation moves beyond the inner circle of Kṛṣṇa's intimate companions in Vṛndāvana to the various gods, sages, *yogins*, and celestial beings who form the divine retinue in the outer circles of the *maṇḍala* outside of Vṛndāvana.⁵³

By reconfiguring the Pāñcarātra ritual structure to include an extended meditation on Kṛṣṇa in his *dhāman*, the *Haribhaktivilāsa* appears to suggest that this meditation is an essential prerequisite for the *mānasa-yāga*, or *mānasa-pūjā*, that immediately follows. The *sādhaka* constructs in meditation a *maṇḍala* with Kṛṣṇa enthroned on his *yoga-pīṭha* in the centre of Vṛndāvana surrounded by his eternal associates and divine retinue, and this mentally constructed *maṇḍala* then provides the basis for the mental offerings of the *mānasa-pūjā*. 'After meditating (root *dhyā*) on Bhagavān in this way and after invoking him, one should effortlessly perform *pūjā* to him mentally (*mānasa*) with all *upacāras* (offerings).'⁵⁴ The text then delineates the procedure for establishing Kṛṣṇa's seat (*pīṭha*) within the *sādhaka's* own body (*sva-deba*), after which the *sādhaka* is instructed to perform an *antaḥ-pūjā*, internalised *pūjā*, in which he or she mentally offers to Bhagavān seated within the heart the sixteen *upacāras* that form part of the standard *pūjā* repertoire, including cloth, sandalwood paste, flowers, incense, a ghee lamp, and food offerings.⁵⁵

The *Haribhaktivilāsa* concludes its discussion of the ritual regimen of daily morning worship of Bhagavān with extensive regulations concerning the performance of the *bāhya-yāga*, which it terms *bahih-pūjā* and reframes

⁵³ *Haribhaktivilāsa* 5.168–203, citing *Kramadīpikā* 3.1–36. See also *Haribhaktivilāsa* 5.204–216, which cites a parallel passage from the *Gautamīya Tantra* that recommends a more abbreviated meditation (*dhyāna*) on Kṛṣṇa in which the *sādhaka* visualises in some detail the divine body of Gopāla Kṛṣṇa, after which he or she briefly envisions the inner circle of *gopīs*, *gopas*, and cows that surround Kṛṣṇa and then concludes the meditation by envisioning the outer circles of gods, sages, and celestial beings.

⁵⁴ *Haribhaktivilāsa* 5.218.

⁵⁵ *Haribhaktivilāsa* 5.218–248.

as external worship that is focused not on Bhagavān's aniconic form as a *maṇḍala* or *yantra* but rather on his embodiment in an iconic image, *mūrti* or *arcā*, or in the aniconic *śalagrāma* stone.⁵⁶

Jīva Gosvāmin's re-visioning: from tantric sādhana to sādhana-bhakti

I would like to turn now to an analysis of Jīva's re-visioning of the Pāñcarātra ritual regimen for daily worship of the deity in the *Bhakti Sandarbha*, which appears to be based on the *Haribhaktivilāsa's* formulation of this regimen. Although he does not explicitly cite the *Haribhaktivilāsa*, in his discussion of the procedures for ritual worship (*arcana*) he cites passages from the *Āgamas* that are also cited in the *Haribhaktivilāsa*.⁵⁷ He was clearly familiar with the work, which he includes in the list of Sanātana Gosvāmin's works that he provides at the end of the *Laḡbhuvaiṣṇavatoṣaṇī*, his abridged edition of Sanātana's commentary on the tenth book of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*.⁵⁸ In any case, Jīva's comments concerning the Pāñcarātra ritual regimen address a version of the regimen that is comparable to the one delineated in the *Haribhaktivilāsa*—although, as we shall see, he reimagines the ritual procedures for daily worship in ways that significantly alter their overall purpose. I would argue that Jīva's reformulations of the three components of daily ritual worship that precede the *bahiḥ-pūjā*, external worship of the deity—*bhūta-śuddhi*, *nyāsa*, and *mānasa-pūjā*—are primarily aimed at re-orienting the entire worship regime from a Pāñcarātra form of tantric *sādhana* focused on the construction of a divinised tantric body that is identified with the deity to a Gauḍīya form of *sādhana-bhakti* focused on the fashioning of a perfected *devotional body* that is ontologically distinct from—while at the same time in eternal relationship with—the divine body of Bhagavān in *Vraja-dhāman*. In this context Jīva's re-visioning goes further than that of the *Haribhaktivilāsa*.

⁵⁶ The *Haribhaktivilāsa's* discussion of the *bahiḥ-pūjā*, which is the principal focus of daily morning worship of the deity, encompasses the remainder of chapter 5 (5.249–480) and chapters 6–8.

⁵⁷ For example, in the opening section of his discussion of *arcana* in *Bhakti Sandarbha* 283, in which he emphasises the importance of undergoing formal initiation, *dikṣā*, before engaging in *arcana*, Jīva Gosvāmin cites a passage from 'the *Āgama*' that is also cited in *Haribhaktivilāsa* 2.9–10, where the source is identified as the *Viṣṇurabasya*. In his discussion of *mānasa-pūjā* in *Bhakti Sandarbha* 286, he cites an unidentified verse, 'One should meditate (root *smṛ*) on him in beautiful Vṛndāvana', that is also cited in *Haribhaktivilāsa* 3.110, where the source is identified as the *Mṛtyuñjaya Tantra*.

⁵⁸ De (1961), p. 141.

At the outset Jīva provides a devotional framework for his discussion by stating that his concern will be to present the procedures that ‘pure *bhaktas*’ are to follow in daily worship: ‘I will now explain, to the best of my ability, *bhūta-śuddhi* and other practices pertaining to pure *bhaktas*.’⁵⁹ He recasts the entire purpose of *bhūta-śuddhi*, purification of the material body, by explicitly asserting that the true *bhakta* does not seek to divinise the body by identifying it with the body of Kṛṣṇa, for such a practice would be tantamount to *ahaṅgrahopāsanā*, worship of oneself as identical with the Lord. In contrast to the *Haribhaktivilāsa*, he eschews the language of divinisation and any mention of the subtle physiology and reframes *bhūta-śuddhi* as a distinctively Gauḍīya practice in which the *bhakta* contemplates (*bhāvanā*) the body not in the form of Kṛṣṇa himself but rather in the form of an eternal associate, *parikara* or *pārṣada*, who resides with Kṛṣṇa in his transcendent *Vraja-dhāman* and who embodies a particular *rasa*, devotional mode. In this way the practice of *bhūta-śuddhi* serves as a method through which an advanced practitioner of *rāgānugā-bhakti* can realise the particular *rasa* that accords with his or her *svarūpa*, unique inherent nature.

Those whose sole goal is devotional service (*sevā*) to him [the Lord] should perform *bhūta-śuddhi* up to the point of contemplation (*bhāvanā*) of one’s body (*deha*) as that of his eternal associate (*pārṣada*), which leads to the realisation of the mode of devotional service to Bhagavān that accords with one’s inherent inclination. [...] Thus wherever it is enjoined that one should think of oneself in the form (*rūpa*) of one’s own beloved deity, one should instead contemplate oneself assuming the form of an eternal associate because pure *bhaktas* abhor worship of oneself as identical with the Lord (*ahaṅgrahopāsanā*). In the latter case one’s identity [with an eternal associate] is in an analogous sense only, since the bodies of the eternal associates are composed of *viśuddha-sattva*, pure luminous being, which is an aspect of the Lord’s *cit-śakti*.⁶⁰

In his reformulation of the practice of *bhūta-śuddhi*, Jīva is thus careful to emphasise that the *bhakta*’s body does not in actuality become identified with the body of an eternal associate, for the eternal associates are *nitya-siddhas*,

⁵⁹ *Bhakti Sandarbha* 286.

⁶⁰ *Bhakti Sandarbha* 286.

eternally perfected beings, whose bodies are composed of *śuddha-sattva*, pure luminous being, whereas ordinary *bhaktas* are *sādhakas*, practitioners of *sādhana-bhakti*, whose bodies are composed of *prakṛti*, matter, and who have not yet realised their *siddha-rūpas*, perfected nonmaterial bodies. For example, if the *bhakta's* inherent nature is that of a *gopī*, then he or she will visualise the body in the form of a *gopī* and will seek to identify with the devotional mode—but not the actual bodies—of the *nitya-siddha gopīs* who reside perpetually with Kṛṣṇa in *Vraja-dhāman* and who are paradigmatic exemplars of *mādhurya-rasa*.⁶¹ Jīva suggests that this process of identifying with the devotional mode of an eternal associate in *Vraja-dhāman* serves as a means of purifying the *bhakta's* material body through gradually imbibing the pure nature of the *nitya-siddha*.⁶²

With respect to *nyāsa*, Jīva explicitly mentions the *Keśavādi-nyāsa*, which, as discussed earlier, is one of the key *nyāsas* described in the *Haribhaktivilāsa* and involves ritually establishing the fifty-one *mūrtis* of Bhagavān together with his fifty-one *śaktis* in various parts of the body. Jīva's brief discussion reaffirms the basic procedure of mentally repeating the *mantra* associated with each deity (*mūrti* or *śakti*) and touching the designated body part. However, in contrast to the *Haribhaktivilāsa*, which considers the entire body to have been purified through *bbūta-śuddhi* and therefore does not object to establishing the deity in all parts of the *bhakta's* body, including body parts such as the feet or anus that are deemed impure in the brahmanical hierarchy of purity,⁶³ Jīva insists that it is inappropriate for the *bhakta* to visualise the deity becoming established in the 'lowest parts of the body'.

With respect to the *Keśavādi-nyāsa* and other *nyāsas*, whenever the *nyāsa* is focused on the lowest parts of the body (*adham-āṅga*), one should meditate (root *dhyā*) on the specific *mūrti*, mentally repeat (root *jap*) the corresponding *mantra*, and then simply touch that particular part of the body. However, one should not meditate (root *dhyā*) on the deity of the *mantra* becoming established in that part of the body because that would not be appropriate for *bhaktas*.⁶⁴

⁶¹ *Bhakti Sandarbha* 286, 312.

⁶² *Bhakti Sandarbha* 106.

⁶³ See *Haribhaktivilāsa* 5.164.

⁶⁴ *Bhakti Sandarbha* 286.

Like the *Haribhaktivilāsa*, Jīva connects *mānasa-pūjā* with meditation on Kṛṣṇa in his transcendent *dhāman*. As discussed earlier, the *Haribhaktivilāsa* suggests that meditation (*dhyāna*) on Kṛṣṇa in his *dhāman* is a prerequisite to *mānasa-pūjā*, in which the *sādhaka* makes mental offerings to Kṛṣṇa seated within the heart. However, Jīva goes further than the *Haribhaktivilāsa* in asserting, first, that the meditation (*dhyāna*) of true *bhaktas* should focus on Kṛṣṇa in the lotus of his transcendent *dhāman* Goloka-Vṛndāvana, not in the lotus of the heart, and, second, that *mānasa-pūjā* should also involve contemplation of Kṛṣṇa *exclusively in his dhāman*, implying that the process of mentally offering *upacāras* to him should be envisioned as taking place in *Vraja-dhāman* rather than in the heart.

Whereas the meditation of the *yogins* is on [the Lord] stationed in the lotus of the heart, the principal meditation (*mukhya dhyāna*) [for *bhaktas*] is on Bhagavān stationed in his *dhāman*, in accordance with the declaration [in the *Mṛtyuñjaya Tantra*] that ‘One should meditate (root *smṛ*) on him in beautiful Vṛndāvana’. Thus *mānasa-pūjā* involves contemplation (root *cint*) of him exclusively (*eva*) in his *dhāman*. In the case of meditation (*dhyāna*) on the *kāma-gāyatrī mantra*, which makes reference to [the Lord] in the orb of the sun, this meditation also involves contemplation (root *cint*) of him exclusively (*eva*) in his *dhāman*. Thus it is declared [in the *Brahma Saṃhitā*], ‘He who is the Self of all resides exclusively (*eva*) in Goloka’—with an emphasis on the particle *eva*, ‘exclusively’.⁶⁵

Jīva further emphasises that even when the *bhakta* is residing in other places outside of the earthly Vṛndāvana, he or she should manifest the *dhāman* in meditation (*dhyāna*) and contemplate (root *cint*) Bhagavān residing there. This *mānasa-pūjā* should also include meditation on Kṛṣṇa engaged with his eternal associates (*parikaras*) in various *līlā* activities in his *dhāman*. Moreover, Jīva maintains that the ultimate fruit of this meditation is not a mental fabrication (*kalpanā-maya*) of an imaginary world but an actual cognition in *samādhi* of ‘reality as it is’ (*yathārtha*) in which the *bhakta* attains a direct visionary experience of the unmanifest *līlā* that unfolds

⁶⁵ *Bhakti Sandarbha* 286, which includes citations from an unidentified verse from the *Mṛtyuñjaya Tantra* and from *Brahma Saṃhitā* 5.37. As mentioned earlier in n. 57, the verse from the *Mṛtyuñjaya Tantra* is also cited in *Haribhaktivilāsa* 3.110.

eternally in the transcendent Vraja-*dhāman*, Goloka-Vṛndāvana, beyond the material realm.⁶⁶

Jīva suggests that during *mānasa-pūjā* or *antaḥ-pūjā*, internalised mental worship, the divine body and the *bhakta's* body interpenetrate one another, with Kṛṣṇa entering into the limbs of the *bhakta* and the *bhakta's* body becoming immersed in the effulgence of the divine body. However, he emphasises that it is important for the *bhakta* to maintain awareness of the distinction between the divine body and the human body in order to avoid the abhorrent practice of *abaṅgrahopāsanā*, worship of oneself as identical with the Lord. For example, when worshipping Kṛṣṇa's flute as part of the *mānasa-pūjā*, the *bhakta* is instructed to contemplate the flute in Kṛṣṇa's mouth, not in his or her own mouth. Even when displaying the bodily gesture called the *veṇu-mudrā* (flute gesture), which involves making the gesture of holding Kṛṣṇa's flute to the mouth, the *bhakta* is cautioned to always maintain an awareness of the flute in relation to the body of Bhagavān in order to avoid lapsing into *abaṅgrahopāsanā*.

With respect to the worship of ornaments such as the flute that form part of the *antaḥ-pūjā* involving external *upacāras*, [the *bhakta*], whose limbs are immersed (*vilīna*) in the effulgence (*jyotir*) of the Lord's body and into whose limbs the Lord has entered (root *viś* + *ni*), should contemplate it [the flute] in the Lord's mouth and not in his own mouth. The display of *mudrās* involving the Lord's ornaments such as the flute—for example, holding the flute to one's own mouth—should be done only for the purpose of showing him the various articles that are dear to him. However, one should not contemplate these articles as placed on one's own limbs for the reason previously given [*abaṅgrahopāsanā*].⁶⁷

In his re-visioning of *bhūta-śuddhi*, *nyāsa*, and *mānasa-pūjā* as parts of *sādhana-bhakti*, Jīva presents these internalised practices as components of a process of psychophysical transformation that is based on a model of embodiment that diverges in significant ways from the Pāñcarātra model. The Pāñcarātra model of embodiment articulated in the *Jayākhyā Saṃhitā*,

⁶⁶ *Bhakti Sandarbha* 286.

⁶⁷ *Bhakti Sandarbha* 286. The *veṇu-mudrā* is mentioned in *Haribhaktivilāsa* 5.166 as one of five *mudrās* that should be displayed during daily morning worship of Bhagavān.

like other tantric discourses, gives priority to the *human body* as the locus of divine embodiment and represents the process of transformation as a three-stage process: 1) in the first stage, *bhūta-śuddhi*, the *sādhaka* visualises the dissolution of the material body and the reconstitution of a pure luminous body that is identified with the divine body of Nārāyaṇa; 2) in the second stage, *nyāsa*, the *sādhaka* further divinises the body by installing divine powers throughout the psychophysiology and visualising the body as fully identified with Nārāyaṇa; 3) in the third stage, *mānasa-yāga*, the *sādhaka* establishes the divine body of Nārāyaṇa in the heart of the divinised human body, which provides the locus for the series of mental offerings. The Gauḍīya discourse of embodiment articulated by Jīva, in contrast, gives priority to the *transcendent dhāman* as the locus of divine embodiment and recasts the three-stage process of transformation within a devotional framework: 1) in the first stage, *bhūta-śuddhi*, the *bhakta* purifies the material body by contemplating the body in the form of an eternal associate of Kṛṣṇa in his transcendent *dhāman*, *Vraja-dhāman*, thereby investing the body with the pure nature of the eternal associate; 2) in the second stage, *nyāsa*, the *bhakta* further purifies the body by establishing forms of Kṛṣṇa in various parts of the body and thereby investing the psychophysiology with the qualities of the divine body; 3) in the third stage, *mānasa-pūjā*, the *bhakta* meditates on Kṛṣṇa in his transcendent *dhāman* and immerses the body in the pure effulgence (*jyotir*) of the absolute body of Bhagavān in *Vraja-dhāman*, thereby bringing the process of purification to fruition.

The ultimate goal, as formulated by Jīva, is not to attain a *divya-deha*, a divinised body that is identified with Kṛṣṇa, but rather to realise a *siddha-deha* or *siddha-rūpa*, a perfected nonmaterial body that is *like* Bhagavān (*bhagavat-tulyatva*), in that it is an *aṁśa* of the divine effulgence (*jyotir*) and partakes of the qualities and substance of the absolute body, but that always retains its distinct identity as a *devotional body* eternally engaged in a relationship of inconceivable difference-in-nondifference, *acintya-bhedābheda*, with Bhagavān in the transcendent *Vraja-dhāman*.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ *Prīti Sandarbha* 10.

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