

JAI SHRI RADHE

THE REAL MARGA OF
SHRI HIT HARIVANSH MAHAPRABHU

Radha Pradhan Upasana: The Hidden Treasure He Came to Reveal

*(Written with the sole aim of providing the greatest sukha to our own Shri
Hit Harivansh Mahaprabhu)*

An Analytical, Evidential and Devotional Study
*Based on Shri Radha Sudha Nidhi, Shri Hit Chaturasi, Shri Harivansh Ashtakam
and the Complete Biography of Mahaprabhu Ji*

"Shuddh premaikalila nidhirahah..."
She (Shri Radha) is the exclusive source of the sports of undiluted love...
- Shri Radha Sudha Nidhi, verse 127

-Madhuri Sakhi

Preface: A Loving Appeal to All Harivanshi Devotees	4
Part One: Why Did Mahaprabhu Ji Descend?	5
1.1 The Cosmic Occasion: Lalita Ji's Prayer in the Maha-Raas	5
1.2 Born from Shri Radha's Own Command	6
1.3 The Gupta (Hidden) Knowledge He Came to Reveal	6
Part Two: Shri Radha as the Supreme	8
2.1 Radha as the Supreme Deity - Visa-ya of Love	8
2.2 Radha Beyond the Vedas - The Unreachable One	9
2.3 The Unreachable Becomes Accessible - The Mercy of Mahaprabhu Ji	10
Part Three: Harilal Vyas ji	12
Part Four: The Sakhi Bhav - The Vehicle of the Real Upasana	14
4.1 What Is an Upasana Riti?	14
4.2 The Sahachari - Who She Is and What She Lives For	14
4.3 Radha-Pradhan - Lived Structure of Bhav	15
4.4 The Hit Chaturasi - The Sahachari Bhav in Living Practice	16
4.5 Shri Radha's Supremacy in the Upasana - Vishaya and Ashray Reversed	18
4.6 The Nikunja - The Only Place This Upasana Lives	19
4.7 Seva Without Self - The Complete Logic of Sahachari Bhav	21
4.8 The Upasana Riti in Summary	22
Part Five: Radha Naam - The Supreme Practice	24
5.1 Radha Naam in the Radha Sudha Nidhi	24
5.2 The Name 'Radhavallabh Shri Harivansh' - Its Proper Understanding	25
Part Six: 'Hit Tatva' - Later Theological Construction and Its Proper Place	27
6.1 Defining Hit Tatva	27
6.2 Hit Tatva as a Later Development	27
6.3 The Sampradaya-Identity Function of Hit Tatva	28
6.4 Hit Tatva in Proper Perspective	29
6.5 The Danger of Misemphasis	30
PART SEVEN : Hit Upasana vs. Hit Tatva Upasana — A Critical Distinction	31
7.1 The Distinction Explained	31
7.2 Evidence That the Mahaprabhu's Upasana Was Radha-Centric, Not Principle-Centric	31
Part Eight: The Practices Mahaprabhu Ji Established - All for Radha	33
8.1 The Deity - Shri Radhavallabh Ji	33
8.2 Ashtayam Seva - Eight Times a Day for the Divine Couple	33
8.3 Samaj Gayan - Singing the Nikunja Lilas	33
8.4 The Theatric Raas - Witnessing Radha's Lila with Open Eyes	34
Part Nine: Prabodhananda Saraswati's Testimony - An Outside Witness	35
9.1 What Prabodhananda Saw in Mahaprabhu Ji	35
9.2 The Last Verse - The Divine Sakhi Who Took Human Form	36

Part Ten: The Practical Upasana - What Mahaprabhu Ji's Devotee Actually Does	38
10.1 Manasic Seva - Mental Worship in the Nikunja	38
10.2 Radha Naam Japa - The Core Sadhana	38
10.3 Samaj Gayan - Singing the Lilas as Entry into the Nikunja	39
10.4 Nikunja Upasana - The Secret of Vrindavan Nivrit	39
10.5 The Five Pillars of Hit Harivansh's Real Upasana	39
Part Eleven: A Gentle Reflection - For the Harivanshi Heart	41
11.1 The Question in Every Harivanshi's Heart	41
11.2 The Beautiful Paradox	41
11.3 Mahaprabhu Ji's Own Feeling - What Would He Want?	41
11.4 Hit Upasana Is Radha Upasana	42
Conclusion: Returning to the Source	43
Primary Sources and References	45
Primary Scriptural Sources	45
Biographical Sources	45
Scholarly and Commentarial Sources	45
Sampradaya Tradition Sources	45

Preface: A Loving Appeal to All Harivanshi Devotees

This paper is written with the deepest love and the most humble respect for every devotee who walks in the tradition of Shri Hit Harivansh Mahaprabhu. It is not written to criticize anyone, nor to dismiss the beauty of the sampradaya's rich devotional heritage. It is written because of love - love for Mahaprabhu Ji himself, love for his message, and love for every rasika who sincerely wants to serve Shri Priya Ji.

There is a question that sits quietly in the heart of many thoughtful devotees: When Harivansh Mahaprabhu Ji descended to this earth, what was his primary goal? What did he actually teach? And is what we practice today fully aligned with what he came to give?

The answer, when you go directly to his own words - to the Radha Sudha Nidhi, the Hit Chaturasi, the Sphut Vani, and the testimony of great saints like Prabodhananda Saraswati - is breathtakingly clear. Mahaprabhu Ji came for one thing above everything else: to reveal the hidden, gupt, supreme upasana of Shri Radha Rani. Radha Pradhan. Radha alone as the highest goal, the highest deity, the guru, the beloved, and the very life of existence.

This paper places that original vision at the center, with evidence. May Shri Radha Rani bless every reader to feel the nectar of Mahaprabhu Ji's true intent.

Part One: Why Did Mahaprabhu Ji Descend?

Before we talk about any theological position or sampradaya tradition, we must go back to the very beginning - to the question of why Shri Hit Harivansh Mahaprabhu appeared in this world. This is not a speculative matter. Both the internal evidence of his writings and the testimony of realized saints who knew him directly give us a clear, consistent, and magnificent answer.

1.1 The Cosmic Occasion: Lalita Ji's Prayer in the Maha-Raas

The most authoritative narration of Mahaprabhu Ji's divine purpose comes from Goswami Shri Hit Rooplal Ji, a great rasika saint of the Radhavallabh lineage, who saw this vision in his siddha-deha:

The nectar of Shri Shyama Shyam's eternal and blissful pastimes is continuously showering. At one point, Shri Shyama Ji's principal companion, Shri Lalita Ji, thought: 'How can this divine sweet nectar be made accessible to humanity on this earthly realm?' Considering this, Shri Lalita Ji looked towards Shri Swamini Ji with prayerful glances in the middle of Maha-Raas. Shri Shyama Ji looked at Shri Shyamsundar with a sweet-hearted look, and He understood the agony of Shri Shyama Ji's heart. He gave His flute to Shri Radha Ji. Pyari Ji gave the flute to Lalita Ji and said: 'O Lalita, you and this flute together should illuminate our eternal pastimes.' That flute of Shri Radha Ji appeared in the form of Shri Hit Harivansh Mahaprabhu in Braj Mandal...

- Goswami Shri Hit Rooplal Ji

Let us pause here and feel the weight of this. The divine flute of Shri Krishna - the very instrument that enchants all creation - was first given by Shri Krishna to Shri Radha Herself. It is Her property. And it was Shri Radha who then handed it to Lalita Ji with a specific mission. The mission was not to teach philosophy. The mission was not to establish a sampradaya competing with others. The mission was singular: to reveal the eternal nikunja pastimes of Shri Shyama Shyam to the world, as witnessed and served by the sakhis - with Radha Rani at the very center.

This is the cosmic origin of Mahaprabhu Ji. He is the flute of Shri Krishna, but he comes bearing the commission of Shri Radha. He comes as Her instrument, in Her name, for

Her glory. And therefore, every teaching he gave, every word he wrote, every practice he established - all of it flows from and returns to Shri Radha Rani.

1.2 Born from Shri Radha's Own Command

The biography confirms that this divine appointment was not merely symbolic. Shri Radha Rani personally appeared to Mahaprabhu Ji throughout his life with direct instructions:

When he was at Devavan, Shri Radha appeared in a dream and told him: 'There is a wonderful red leaf on the highest branch of the Peepal tree in front of your house. It contains the nij Mantra. Take it and reveal its essence to the rasika devotees.' This was not the mantra of any human guru. This was the mantra given by Shri Radha Herself - making Her the one true Guru of Shri Harivansh Ji.

*Tinako Piy Naam Sahit Mantr Diyau Shri Radhe. Sat-Chit-Anand Roop Nigam
Agam Saadhe.*

- Shri Hit Rooplal Ji

The tradition is therefore clear: the guru of Shri Hit Harivansh is Shri Radha Rani. The mantra he received is from Shri Radha. The mission he came for is from Shri Radha. The upasana he revealed is the upasana of Shri Radha. This is the foundation of his real marga - and everything else must be understood in this light.

1.3 The Gupta (Hidden) Knowledge He Came to Reveal

The Vedas themselves acknowledge that they cannot reach Shri Radha. The greatest sages, ascetics, and even Brahma and Shiva cannot access Her inner circle. Yet here is a truth that Mahaprabhu Ji knew and lived: the nikunja lila of Shri Radha and Krishna, witnessed by the sakhis, is the highest secret in all of existence - higher than moksha, higher than Vaikuntha, higher than any other rasa.

This knowledge was gupta - hidden, secret, protected. The Vedas could only say 'neti neti' (not this, not this). The Upanishads approached it and turned back. Brahma could not comprehend it. And yet - Mahaprabhu Ji's Radha Sudha Nidhi begins verse after verse with the longing to serve Her, to witness Her lilas, to be Her maid. He is revealing what no scripture dared to speak plainly.

***dharmādya-artha-catuṣṭayam vijāyatām kim tadvathāvartayā
saikānteśvara-bhakti-yoga-padaṅm tvāropitām mūrdhani
yo vṛndāvana-sīmni kaścana ghanāścaryaḥ kiśorī-maṅi-
tat-kaiṅkārya-rasāmṛtādihi param citte na me rocate***

Let religion, wealth, pleasure, and liberation be honored by those who seek them. Even exclusive devotion to the Supreme Being has its place. But nothing delights my heart more than the nectarean sweetness of serving Shri Rādhā, the astounding jewel of Vrindāvana maidens.

This is the declaration of Mahaprabhu Ji's entire mission in a single verse. Not dharma. Not artha. Not even mukti (liberation). The one thing he desired, the one thing he came to give, the one thing he declared as the highest goal - it is kankarya, the loving service, of Shri Radha Rani in Vrindavan's nikuṅjas.

Part Two: Shri Radha as the Supreme

Mahaprabhu Ji did not leave room for ambiguity. In his Sanskrit masterwork, the Radha Sudha Nidhi (270 verses), and in the 84 Braj-bhasha pads of the Hit Chaturasi, he presents a complete, consistent, and revolutionary theology. Let us walk through it carefully, with direct evidence.

2.1 Radha as the Supreme Deity - Visa-ya of Love

In conventional Vaishnava theology, Krishna is the vishaya (the supreme object of love) and Radha and the sakhis are the ashrayas (the vessels of love, who love Him). The Radhavallabh tradition, as explained by Hita Das Ji Maharaja in his commentary on the Hit Chaurasi, reverses this:

According to the other Vaishnava sampradayas (Rupa Goswami is obviously the source of the purva-paksha), Krishna is the object (vishaya) of love and Radha and the sakhis are the ashrayas. In Hit Harivansh Ji, this is reversed: Radha is seen as the object of love, with Krishna and the sakhis being the ashrayas. Furthermore, though the term rasika is used for Radha, Krishna and the sakhis, but a close look at Chaurasi shows that really only Krishna and the sakhis can be called rasikas, while Radha is rasa-adhishtatri, the deity of rasa - rasa-datri, the giver.

- Hita Das Ji Maharaja's commentary - as cited in 'Hit Harivansh's Method of Worship'

This is a fundamental and extraordinary statement. Shri Radha is not just the best devotee of Krishna. She is the deity of rasa itself. She is the giver. She is the source. Krishna Himself, in this tradition, exists as Her most intimate servant and Her dearest beloved - but She is the supreme.

And this is exactly what the Radha Sudha Nidhi proclaims, verse after verse:

Yasyaah kadapi vasanaanchal khelanottha

dhanyatidhanya pavanen krutarthamani

Yogindradurgamagatirmadhusudanopi,

tasyanamostu vrushabhanubhuvanodishepi.

- Shri Radha Sudha Nidhi, verse 1 -

'Even Madhusudana (Krishna), whose course is utterly inconceivable to ascetics of the highest order, feels gratified with a touch of the most blessed breeze any time generated by the movement of the border of the garment of that Shri Vrishabhanunandini (Shri Radha). So, I respectfully bow even to the side graced by Her presence.'

Pause and feel this. The very first verse of the Radha Sudha Nidhi declares that even Krishna - who is beyond the comprehension of the greatest yogis - feels gratified, becomes full, becomes complete, by a mere breeze from the movement of Shri Radha's garment. She is not subordinate to Him. She is the source of His fulfillment.

2.2 Radha Beyond the Vedas - The Unreachable One

Again and again, Mahaprabhu Ji returns to the theme that Shri Radha is beyond all ordinary spiritual categories. She cannot be reached by ritual, by scripture, by logic, or even by highest devotion to Krishna alone:

Yo brahmadrudrashukanaradabhish mamukhyair

arakshitonasahasa purushasya tasya,

Sadyovashikaranchoornamanantashaktim

tam radhikacharanarenumanusmarami.

- Shri Radha Sudha Nidhi, verse 3 -

'I remember the dust from Shri Radha's feet - that divine dust which has unlimited power, which can instantly attract and control even Lord Krishna,

and which the greatest beings like Brahma, Shiva, Shuka, and Narada can never truly understand or reach, even after great effort.'

Brahma cannot reach Her. Shiva cannot reach Her. Narada cannot reach Her. Shuka - the greatest of devotees - cannot reach Her. But the dust of Her lotus feet is easily available to the one who simply surrenders. This is the revolutionary compassion in Mahaprabhu Ji's mission: he brings the supreme, unreachable Radha within reach - not through Vedic ritual or asceticism, but through the pure, simple, direct love of a sakhi.

2.3 The Unreachable Becomes Accessible - The Mercy of Mahaprabhu Ji

Prabodhananda Saraswati Ji - a towering Sanskrit scholar and saint who knew Mahaprabhu Ji personally, who spent time with him in Vrindavan - composed the Shri Harivansh Ashtakam as an act of deep gratitude. In it he reveals exactly why Mahaprabhu Ji is so extraordinary:

Vrundaranya nikunj simani, nav premanubhavabhramad,

bhroobhangi lav mohit vraj manirbhaktaik chintamani.

Sa jayati harivamshodhvansha ko so kalinaam.

- Sri Harivansh Ashtakam, verse 3 (Prabodhananda Saraswati)

'In the pathways where Shri Radha's lotus feet land, in such a Vrindavan, you (Mahaprabhu) are the most excellent sakhi amidst the other rasa-filled sakhis. You are praised by the most brilliant of learned persons. You destroy the dirt of Kali-yuga. All glories to you, Shri Harivansh!'

Tvamasi hi harivansha shyamchandrasya vanshaha,

param rasad nadermohi tashesha vishvaha.

Anupam gunn-ratner-nirmito siddhajendra,

mama hridi tav gathashchitra lekhe-valagnah.

- Shri Harivansh Ashtakam, verse 1 -

'O Shri Hit Harivansh Mahaprabhu! You are Shyamsundara's flute, which has enchanted the entire world with sounds that bestow the highest rasa. O best of learned Brahmins! You are made up of the most priceless gems. Your glories and pastimes have become painted onto my heart.'

And in verse 5, Prabodhananda goes further - making a claim that no other saint makes about any other teacher of this era:

Gunagan gananair yarvashyate vashya krishnas,

tarati kalyato yadvartya satkadambaha.

Niravadhi harivanshe taitra sach prabhati,

nahi nahi buddh tasmatkrishna radha svabhaktihi.

- Shri Harivansh Ashtakam, verse 5

'Shri Krishna, the one who is always under Shri Radha's control, becomes controlled by your wonderful qualities. O Shri Harivansh, you possess those qualities and speak those words which cause the saints to swim across the material ocean. O crown-jewel of rasikas! You are the bestower of such naturally flowing bhakti towards Radha and Krishna which cannot be bestowed by anyone else.'

'Which cannot be bestowed by anyone else.' This is a staggering declaration from a great saint. Prabodhananda is saying that the particular bhakti Mahaprabhu Ji gives - Radha-centred, nikunja-focused, sakhi-bhava - is uniquely his to give. No other teacher in any other sampradaya possesses this specific gift.

Part Three: Harilal Vyas ji

Sri Harilal Vyas Ji is one of the most learned and respected scholars to have ever emerged from within the Radhavallabh sampradaya itself. A Sanskrit scholar of the highest order, he produced among the most extensive commentarial works on the Radha Sudha Nidhi - including three separate Sanskrit tikas of varying depth. He is not an outsider. He is not a critic. He is among the most devoted insiders this tradition has produced.

And it is precisely because of this insider authority that his following verse carries such extraordinary weight. In this Sanskrit pada, Harilal Vyas Ji lays out with breathtaking clarity what the Radhavallabh sampradaya is, who its true acharya is, what its mantra is, and what its supreme object of upasana is:

The Verse of Sri Harilal Vyas Ji:

*Radhāevaishṭam sampradāyaikā kartā āchārya
Rādhā manṭro Rādhā manṭradah sadgurus cha
Manṭro Rādhā yasya sarvātma niṣṭhaiva
Vande Rādhā pāda padmaṃ pradhānam
- Sri Harilal Vyas Ji*

Translation and Commentary:

Line 1 - 'Radhaevaishṭam sampradayaikā kartā āchārya' - 'Shri Radha alone is the Ishta (the worshipped), the founder of this sampradaya, and its sole true Acharya.'

This single line overturns the entire logic by which the sampradaya has sometimes been presented as centered on Harivansh Mahaprabhu as its supreme identity. Harilal Vyas Ji says: the Acharya of this sampradaya is Radha herself. Mahaprabhu Ji is not the Acharya - he is the instrument, the flute, the messenger. She is the Acharya. The tradition belongs to Her and comes from Her.

Line 2 - 'Radha manṭro Rādhā manṭradah sadgurus cha' - 'The mantra of this path is Radha's mantra. The one who bestows this mantra - the Sadguru - is Radha herself.'

Here Harilal Vyas Ji echoes what we established in Part One: Mahaprabhu Ji received his mantra not from a human guru but from Shri Radha herself. The mantra is Radha's. The true Guru is Radha. Any human teacher in this lineage - including Mahaprabhu Ji himself - is only a transparent medium through whom Shri Radha's own mantra flows to the eligible devotee.

Line 3 - 'Mantro Radha yasya sarvātma nishthaiva' - 'That mantra, which is Radha, is the very life-breath and complete dedication of the one who holds it.'

The mantra is not a tool for attaining Radha. The mantra IS Radha. In this tradition, the name and the named are one. 'Radha' spoken with love is not pointing toward something elsewhere - it is the very presence of Shri Radha herself arising within the devotee's heart. This is why Mahaprabhu Ji wrote verse upon verse about the glory of the Name, the sweetness of Her name, the miraculous power of Radha-naam alone.

Line 4 - 'Vande Radha paada padmam pradhaanam' - 'I bow to the lotus feet of Shri Radha as the Supreme, the Primary, the Pradhana.'

Pradhana. Not secondary. Not one among equals. Not a co-deity alongside Krishna or Mahaprabhu. Pradhana - the singular supreme, the one who stands at the center of all centers. This is Harilal Vyas Ji's final declaration, and it is also Mahaprabhu Ji's declaration in the very first verse of the Radha Sudha Nidhi: she is so supreme that even Krishna is fulfilled merely by a breeze that touches her garment.

Part Four: The Sakhi Bhav - The Vehicle of the Real Upasana

4.1 What Is an Upasana Riti?

Every great saint who has descended to reveal a path of devotion has brought with them not just a philosophy - a set of ideas about who God is - but a riti: a specific method, a lived way of approaching the Divine. Shri Ramanuja brought the riti of prapatti, total surrender to Vishnu. Shri Vallabhacharya brought the riti of pushti, nourishment through Krishna's grace. Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu brought the riti of sankirtan and the cultivation of manjari bhav through the Vraja-gopika mood.

And Shri Hit Harivansh Mahaprabhu Ji - what riti did he bring?

The answer is not hidden. It is declared in every verse of the Radha Sudha Nidhi, in every pada of the Hit Chaturasi, in the testimony of every great saint who knew him. The riti he brought is sahachari bhav - the devotional identity and inner life of the sahachari, the intimate companion of Shri Radha Rani - practised entirely and exclusively for the happiness of Shri Radha Rani. This is what Radha-Pradhan means in lived experience. Not merely that Radha is theologically superior. But that every breath of upasana, every moment of bhav, every act of seva in this tradition exists for Her pleasure, Her joy, Her delight.

Understanding this riti from the inside - what it is, how it works, why it is the natural expression of Radha-Pradhan theology - is the purpose of this section of the paper.

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4.2 The Sahachari - Who She Is and What She Lives For

The word 'sahachari' comes from 'saha' (together with) and 'char' (to move, to live). A sahachari is one who lives alongside, moves alongside, breathes alongside. In the language of this tradition, the sahachari is Shri Radha's intimate companion in the eternal nikunja lila - not a servant in the sense of a hired worker, not a devotee at a respectful distance, but someone who lives within the innermost circle of Shri Radha's world.

The sahachari is distinct from all other categories of devotee that Vaishnava traditions describe. She is not a dasya-bhav devotee who relates to the Divine as Master and servant. She is not a sakhya-bhav friend who relates to Krishna as an equal companion. She is not in vatsalya, parental affection. And she is not herself in madhurya rasa, the beloved mood - meaning she is not herself the object of Krishna's love-attention. The sahachari occupies a unique and utterly extraordinary position: she is the intimate companion of the one who IS in madhurya rasa. She lives in the field of Radha and Krishna's love, but her own love is directed toward Radha herself.

This is the revolutionary originality of Mahaprabhu Ji's upasana riti. He did not merely say 'worship Radha.' He gave a specific inner identity, a specific point of view, a specific relationship within the divine world - the sahachari who loves Shri Radha, serves Her happiness, witnesses Her love-lilas with Her Beloved, and finds her own complete fulfilment in Radha's joy.

In the Radhavallabh tradition, Mahaprabhu Ji himself is understood to be present in the eternal lila as 'Hit Sajni' - the beloved sahachari companion of Shri Radha. Every pada of the Hit Chaturasi is spoken from within this bhav. He is not watching the lila from outside as a narrator. He is inside it, as the Sahachari who is present in Shri Radha's intimate world.

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4.3 Radha-Pradhan - Lived Structure of Bhav

The term 'Radha-Pradhan' is often understood as a philosophical position: that Radha is supreme, that she holds the highest place in the theological hierarchy of this tradition. And this is true. But Mahaprabhu Ji's genius was to make Radha-Pradhan not merely a belief one holds but a bhav one lives from.

Consider what it means practically for the upasana to be Radha-Pradhan. In most Vaishnava paths, the devotee's goal is Krishna - to reach Krishna, to please Krishna, to be united with Krishna. Even where Radha is honoured and worshipped, she is typically

approached as a means: 'through Radha's grace, reach Krishna.' The devotee's final destination remains Krishna. Radha is, in this framing, the most powerful gateway - but a gateway nonetheless.

Mahaprabhu Ji dismantles this structure entirely. In his upasana riti, Shri Radha is not the gateway. She is the destination. She is not the means. She is the end. She is not the path to rasa. She is rasa itself - 'Shuddha premaikalila nidhirahah,' the exclusive treasury of the lilas of pure love, as the Radha Sudha Nidhi declares in verse 127. And what does the Sahachari seek? Not to reach Krishna. Not to be united with Krishna. The Sahachari seeks only one thing: to be near Shri Radha, to serve Her happiness, to witness Her joy with Her Beloved, and to live in the light of Her grace.

This is what makes the sahachari's love so extraordinary and so unique. Even in the nikunja lila that she witnesses - the most intimate moments of Radha and Krishna's love - her attention is not on Krishna. Her attention is on Radha. She watches Radha's face. She notices Radha's mana. She delights in Radha's laughter. She is moved by Radha's generosity, Radha's pranaya-kopa (loving anger), Radha's graceful walk. The entire nikunja lila, as Mahaprabhu Ji witnesses it in the Hit Chaturasi, is experienced through the lens of the Sahachari's love for Radha - and therefore everything in it is, ultimately, about Radha.

Shuddha premaikalila nidhirahah...
She is the exclusive treasury of the lilas of pure love.
- Shri Radha Sudha Nidhi, Verse 127

This verse from the Radha Sudha Nidhi is not a statement of abstract theology. It is the lived reality of the Sahachari's experience. In her bhav, Shri Radha is the exclusive source. Everything - the nikunja, the lila, the rasa, the joy - everything originates in Her and returns to Her. The Sahachari's upasana is simply the act of living within that field of Radha's supremacy, consciously and lovingly, moment by moment.

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4.4 The Hit Chaturasi - The Sahachari Bhav in Living Practice

The 84 padas of the Hit Chaturasi are not devotional poems about the nikunja lila. They are the nikunja lila, as experienced by the Sahachari from within. Mahaprabhu Ji does not describe the lila from a scholarly distance. He inhabits it - as Hit Sajni, as the intimate companion who is present in Shri Radha's world.

The padas move through the hours of the day and night - the dawn scene after the couple's night of love, the morning when the Sahachari speaks with Radha about Her Beloved's love, the midday lilas in the bower, the evening preparations, the night of union. Each pada is a window into a specific moment. And in every moment, the Sahachari's gaze is fixed on Radha.

She notices Radha's face filled with bliss after a night of love. She serves Radha's mana with soft words. She delights in Radha's generous love - calling Her 'Karunaakar' (ocean of mercy) and 'Udaar' (the generous one) because Radha gives Her entire self to Her Beloved without holding anything back. She watches with wonder when Radha brings Shyamasundar fully under Her control - 'baikiye Shyam sikhaye sat mainn' - teaching him a hundred lessons of love. She blends her own voice in praise when the divine couple sings together at dawn.

There is no moment in the Chaturasi where the Sahachari is seeking her own pleasure, her own liberation, her own union with Krishna. Her joy is entirely derivative - it flows from Radha's joy. When Radha is happy, the Sahachari is filled with bliss. When Radha is in mana, the Sahachari's heart is devoted to dissolving that mana, to restoring the union that Radha's heart truly wants. The Sahachari has no agenda of her own. She has no desire that is not a desire for Radha's happiness.

This is an extraordinary spiritual position. In the world of bhakti, it is more common to speak of the devotee desiring union with the Divine, desiring the Divine's grace, desiring liberation through the Divine's mercy. The Sahachari desires none of these things for herself. She desires Radha's joy. And in desiring Radha's joy, she has, paradoxically, found the highest possible spiritual state - because she is living entirely within the divine will,

entirely within the supreme consciousness that Shri Radha is, with no trace of self-seeking remaining.

Mahaprabhu Ji himself declares this in the Hit Chaturasi. In pada 30, speaking as the Sahachari, he says that everything he describes - all the rasa of the divine lilas, all the beauty of the nikunja - he describes it for one purpose only: so that the listener develops rati, deep loving attachment, to Shri Radha's lotus feet. Not to Krishna. Not to himself. Not to any abstract ideal. To Radha's lotus feet. This is the fruit. This is the goal. This is the entire direction in which his upasana riti points.

*hit harivansh yathāmati varnatā,
krishna rasāmrita-sāra sravana
sunata prāpaka rati rādhā pada-ambuja sukumāra*

- Hit Chaturasi, Pada 30

'Harivansh describes the essential rasa of the divine lilas - so that upon hearing it, love for the delicate lotus feet of Shri Radha arises in the heart.' His purpose as a singer, as a Sahachari, as a teacher, as a saint - all of it is contained in this single declaration. Radha's lotus feet. That is where everything points.

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4.5 Shri Radha's Supremacy in the Upasana - Vishaya and Ashray Reversed

The great commentator Hita Das Ji Maharaja, in his commentary on the Hit Chaturasi, draws attention to something that distinguishes this tradition from every other Vaishnava path at a structural level. In conventional Vaishnava theology - including in the theology of Shri Rupa Goswami - Krishna is the vishaya (the supreme object of love) and Radha along with the sakhis are the ashrayas (the vessels of love, those who love Him). The Radhavallabh tradition, as Hita Das Ji Maharaja explains, reverses this:

*In Hit Harivansh Ji, Radha is seen as the object of love - the vishaya -
with Krishna and the sakhis being the ashrayas.*

*Furthermore, Radha is not merely a rasika but rasa-adhishtatri -
the deity of rasa itself - and rasa-datri, the giver of rasa.*

- Hita Das Ji Maharaja, Commentary on Hit Chaturasi

This is the structural reality of the upasana riti. In this tradition, the devotee - the Sahachari - is not in the position of loving Krishna with Radha as the mediator. The Sahachari is in the position of loving Radha, with Krishna as the one who loves Radha most completely and most intimately. Krishna in the nikunja is not the destination. He is the one who, more than anyone else, knows Radha's glory - and by witnessing him in that state of knowing, the Sahachari's own love for Radha deepens.

This explains something that is easy to miss on a first reading of the Chaturasi. When Mahaprabhu Ji describes Krishna's complete subjugation to Shri Radha - his nail-marks on his chest as the signs of Her love, his heart churned by the mere play of Her eyebrows, his garment exchanged with Hers in a state of self-forgetfulness - he is not diminishing Krishna. He is revealing something about Radha. He is showing that the one who knows rasa most completely, the greatest lover in all of existence, is himself completely, utterly, joyfully in Radha's power. If even He is like this in Her presence - what must She be? This is how Mahaprabhu Ji makes Radha's supremacy visible: not through philosophical argument, but through the living testimony of Krishna's own love.

And it is this Radha - the Radha before whom even Krishna is helpless, the Radha who is rasa-datri, the Radha who is beyond the Vedas and the comprehension of Brahma and Shiva - whom the Sahachari loves and serves. Her upasana is not small. It is the highest possible relationship with the highest possible being.

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4.6 The Nikunja - The Only Place This Upasana Lives

The sahachari bhav of this tradition is inseparable from the nikunja - the sacred bower of Vrindavan where Shri Radha and Krishna's most intimate eternal lila takes place. The nikunja is not a physical location one can visit with a bus ticket to Vrindavan. It is a spiritual realm that exists in the consciousness of the Sahachari who has entered this bhav. It is the inner world that Mahaprabhu Ji's Chaturasi opens up.

The nikunja is the place where only Radha's dearest companions can enter. Brahma cannot enter. Shiva cannot enter. Narada cannot enter. The Vedas themselves circle

around it and cannot pierce it. Even the cowherd friends of Krishna, the Vraja-sakhas, have no access here. The nikhunja belongs entirely and exclusively to Shri Radha and Her intimate companions. And this exclusivity is not a barrier - it is a declaration of supreme preciousness.

Mahaprabhu Ji knew this, and this is precisely why his upasana riti centres on the sahachari bhav. The sahachari is one who has access to this world. Not by power, not by scholarship, not by asceticism - but by Shri Radha's own grace and love. The Sahachari enters the nikhunja only because Radha has allowed her in. And once inside, the Sahachari's sole purpose is Radha's joy. The nikhunja and the sahachari bhav are, in this sense, the same thing: a world that exists entirely for Radha's happiness, entered only through Radha's grace, experienced only through the eyes of one who loves Radha above everything else.

The Radha Sudha Nidhi speaks of this world in verse after verse. In verse 1, even the first breath of the entire text is not a prayer to enter some future state - it is a bow toward where Radha already is, in Her nikhunja, in Her lila:

*Yasyaah kadapi vasanaanchal khelanoththa
dhanyatidhanya pavanen krutarthamani
Yogindradurgamagatirmadhusudanopi,
tasyanamostu vrushabhanubhuvanodishepi.*

- Shri Radha Sudha Nidhi, Verse 1

'Even Madhusudana (Krishna), whose course is utterly inconceivable to the greatest yogis, feels gratified - fulfilled, complete - by a mere breeze arising from the movement of the border of the garment of Shri Vrishabhanunandini (Shri Radha). I bow even to the direction graced by Her presence.'

This is the world the Sahachari inhabits. The world where a breeze from Radha's garment completes even Krishna. This is where Mahaprabhu Ji's upasana riti lives - in this fragrant, impossible, supremely sweet world of the nikhunja, where Radha's every gesture is more than enough to fill all of existence with bliss.

4.7 Seva Without Self - The Complete Logic of Sahachari Bhav

There is a profound spiritual principle embedded in the sahachari bhav that deserves to be stated clearly: this is an upasana of complete self-transcendence, not through renunciation or austerity, but through love.

In paths of jnana (knowledge), the self is transcended by realising its non-existence - the individual dissolving into the formless Brahman. In paths of karma-yoga, the self is transcended by offering all actions to God without attachment to fruit. In paths of bhakti centred on direct union with the Divine, the self is transcended by absorption in the Beloved.

The sahachari bhav offers a different and perhaps the most complete form of self-transcendence: the self is transcended by living entirely for another's happiness. The Sahachari has no goal for herself. No liberation she seeks, no bliss she accumulates, no union she desires for her own fulfilment. Her 'I' exists only as the one who loves Radha. And in that complete dissolution of self-seeking into love for Radha, something extraordinary happens: the Sahachari finds herself inside the nikunja lila, inside the innermost world of divine existence, witnessing and participating in the most sacred reality in all of creation - because Radha, who is the supreme, has drawn her in.

This is why Mahaprabhu Ji's path is called a path of shuddha prema - pure love. Shuddha means unmixed, undiluted. This love is not mixed with any desire for the Sahachari's own gain. It is not diluted by any other goal. It is entirely and only for Radha. And it is precisely this purity - this complete absence of self-interest - that makes it the highest and most refined form of devotion that exists.

Prabodhananda Saraswati Ji, in the Harivansh Ashtakam, declares that the specific bhakti Mahaprabhu Ji gives - this Radha-centred, nikunja-focused, sahachari bhav - cannot be given by anyone else:

*Niravadhi harivanshe taitra sach prabhati,
nahi nahi buddh tasmakrishna radha svabhaktihi.*
- Shri Harivansh Ashtakam, Verse 5 - Prabodhananda Saraswati

'O Shri Harivansh - you are the bestower of such naturally flowing bhakti towards Radha and Krishna which cannot be bestowed by anyone else.'

'Which cannot be bestowed by anyone else.' This is a staggering statement from a great Sanskrit scholar and saint who personally knew Mahaprabhu Ji. What is this bhakti that no one else can give? It is the sahachari bhav - this particular love, this particular inner identity, this particular way of living entirely for Radha's happiness that Mahaprabhu Ji alone came to reveal. It was the Sahachari's own bhav that he brought into the world. It was Radha's own commission that he carried. And the bhav he gives is not a theological position - it is a living, breathing, love-soaked way of being in the world of Shri Radha Rani.

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4.8 The Upasana Riti in Summary

Mahaprabhu Ji's upasana riti can be stated simply, though to live it is the work of a lifetime of grace:

The devotee enters the sahachari bhav - the inner identity of Shri Radha's intimate companion in the eternal nikunja lila. From within this bhav, everything in the devotee's inner life - every meditation, every nama, every moment of remembrance - is oriented entirely toward Shri Radha's happiness. The devotee does not seek her own union with Krishna. She does not seek liberation. She does not seek anything for herself. She seeks only to be near Radha, to serve Radha's joy with Her Beloved, to witness the lilas of Shri Shyama Shyam through the eyes of love, and to live in the grace of Radha's own nearness.

This is Radha-Pradhan not as a theological claim but as a living truth: in this upasana, Shri Radha is genuinely, actually, practically the center of everything. Not because a philosophy says so, but because the Sahachari's entire bhav makes it so, moment by moment, in the innermost chambers of devotion.

The Hit Chaturasi is the map of this world. The Radha Sudha Nidhi is its theology. The sahachari bhav is its practice. And Shri Radha Rani - the Pradhana, the supreme, the

rasa-datri, the one whose garment's breeze completes even Krishna - She is its destination, its path, and its very life.

When Mahaprabhu Ji signed each pada with 'Jai Shri Hit Harivansh' - he was not pointing to himself. He was pointing to what the name means: 'hit' means the welfare and happiness of the one he loves. 'Harivansh' - the lineage of Hari, the flute. He is the one who lives for the happiness (hit) of Shri Radha, carrying her music through the flute of his own existence. This is his upasana riti. This is what he came to give. And this is what the tradition must, in every generation, return to.

Part Five: Radha Naam - The Supreme Practice

If the theological understanding is Radha Pradhan and the bhav is sakhi bhav, then the practice - the sadhana - that Mahaprabhu Ji gave is equally clear. It is the naam of Shri Radha Rani. Not as one of many names. As the supreme nama, beyond all others.

5.1 Radha Naam in the Radha Sudha Nidhi

The final section of the Radha Sudha Nidhi - verses 94 through 99 - is an ecstatic meditation on the two syllables 'Ra' and 'dha'. These eight or so verses are among the most extraordinary in all of bhakti literature:

Yajjapah sakridev gokulpaterhakarshakastat kshana, dyatra premvatam samast purushartheshu sphurettucchata. Yannamankit mantra japanaparah pritya svayam madhavah, shrikrushnopi tadadbhutam sphuratu me radheti varnavayam.

- Shri Radha Sudha Nidhi, verse 94 - 'May the two wonderful letters Ra and dha, forming the name Radha, flash on my mind! Those letters, when muttered even once, attract the King of Gokul (Shri Krishna) instantly. To those who have developed love for them, all human pursuits seem to be vain. Even Shri Krishna Himself affectionately mutters the Mantra marked by these two letters.'

Let us be very clear about what is being said. The name 'Radha' - just two syllables - when uttered even once, draws Krishna instantly. Not the other way around. Krishna is drawn to Radha's name. He himself recites it. And to those who love this name, all other human goals - dharma, artha, kama, moksha - become insignificant.

Kalindi tat kunj mandiragato yogindra vadyatpad, jyotirdhyan parah sada japati yam premashrupurno harih. Kenaapyadbhutamulla sadratirasananden sammohitah, saa radheti sada hrudi sphuratu me vidyapara dvyakshara.

- Shri Radha Sudha Nidhi, verse 95 - 'May the Supreme Knowledge - beyond the scope of Vedas - in the form of two letters Ra and dha, dawn upon my mind! This name Radha is incessantly muttered by Hari (Shri Krishna) with tearful eyes, and He is extremely charmed by the rapture of love beaming in a wondrous form...'

'The Supreme Knowledge beyond the scope of Vedas' - this is what Radha Naam is. The Vedas themselves cannot grasp it. Krishna weeps while chanting it. And Mahaprabhu Ji

prays that this two-syllable supreme knowledge may always live in his heart. This is his sadhana. This is what he wants to give every devotee.

Devanamath bhakt mukt suhridaamatyanth duram ch yat, premanand rasam mahasukhakaram chocharitam prematah. Premnaakarnayate japatyath muda gayatyatha lishvayam, jalpatyashrumukho haristadamrutam radheti me jivanam.

- **Shri Radha Sudha Nidhi, verse 96** - **'That nectar-like word Radha is the sustenance of my life. It is beyond comprehension of gods, devotees, and persons redeemed. It is veritable bliss of love. Shri Hari with face moistened with tears hears it affectionately, mutters it repeatedly, and sings joyfully among Shri Radha's companions.'**

'Radha is the sustenance of my life' - these are the words of Mahaprabhu Ji in his own scripture. Not Harivansh nama. Not 'Radhavallabh Shri Harivansh'. **Just Radha. The two syllables. The supreme nectar.**

“NO DOUBT , “Shri Harivansh or Radha Vallabh Shri Harivansh) WILL ALSO TAKE A RASOUPASAK TO THE SAME STATE OF BHAV (NIKUNJ, SECHARI BHAV UPASANA” -MADHURI SAKHI

5.2 The Name 'Radhavallabh Shri Harivansh' - Its Proper Understanding

We must here address something with love and care. The naama 'Radhavallabh Shri Harivansh' - which is chanted in the sampradaya - does have deep significance. It was by chanting this name that Narvahan, the dacoit-chief, was liberated and became a disciple. The name is indeed powerful.

But notice its structure: it begins with Radhavallabh - **the beloved(vallabh) is Radha** . And then it names Shri Harivansh. The very architecture of the name places Radha at the beginning and at the center. Harivansh Ji's name exists within the orbit of Radha's supremacy.

Moreover - and this is important - the tradition of chanting Harivansh's naam became more formally prominent after the great Shri Sevak Ji composed his mahasya (eulogy) of Mahaprabhu, expanding the awareness of Mahaprabhu's greatness in the sampradaya.

This was a beautiful and appropriate development - a sampradaya honoring its founder. **And no doubt that chanting Shri Harivansh will take to the same destination or bhav result (nikunj , sechari bhav seva) But the question Mahaprabhu Ji himself would ask is: 'Are you chanting my name, or are you chanting the name I came to give you?'**

The answer from his own scriptures is unambiguous. He came to give Radha Naam. The Radha Sudha Nidhi is 270 verses of Radha. The Chaturasi is 84 pads of Radha's lila. His guru is Radha. His mission is Radha. His life is Radha. 'Radha iti me jivanam' - Radha is my life.

Part Six: 'Hit Tatva' - Later Theological Construction and Its Proper Place

We now come to an important and sensitive topic that must be addressed honestly and with love. The concept of 'Hit Tatva' - as a philosophical system, a named doctrine - emerged in the sampradaya tradition as a way of articulating what is unique about the Radhavallabh path. This was a natural development in any living tradition.

However, there is a critical distinction to be maintained: Hit Tatva as a philosophical articulation of the sampradaya's identity is not the same as 'Hit Upasana' - the upasana actually given by Hit Harivansh Mahaprabhu Ji himself.

The word Tattva signifies "thatness," "principle," or "categorical truth". In the history of Indian philosophy, Tattva is an analytical tool used to build logical systems—such as the 25 tattvas of Samkhya, the 36 tattvas of Shaivism, or the dualistic Tattvavada of Madhvacharya.

6.1 Defining Hit Tatva

The concept of 'Hit Tatva' (the Principle of Hit/Love) has become, over the centuries, an important theoretical framework within the Radhavallabha Sampradaya. In its most refined form, it proposes that the ultimate reality is not merely a personal deity but Love itself — 'Hit' or 'Prem' — and that this Love finds its perfect expression in the eternal love between Radha and Krishna in the Nikunja grove.

This is a beautiful and theologically sophisticated concept. And it is not wrong. It is consistent with the spirit of Hit Harivansh Mahaprabhu's teaching — indeed, his very name contains the word 'Hit,' meaning love. The question we must ask is: when did this concept achieve the prominence it now has, and does its prominence serve or obscure the Mahaprabhu's original Radha-pradhan upasana?

6.2 Hit Tatva as a Later Development

When we examine the Mahaprabhu's own compositions — the Hita Chaurasi, the Radha Sudha Nidhi, the Sphut Vani — we find something remarkable: the concept of 'Hit Tatva' as a distinct theological category does not appear. The Mahaprabhu does not

describe his upasana as 'Hit upasana' in the sense of worshipping the principle of Love as an abstract category. He describes Radha. He names Radha. He glorifies Radha. He sings to Radha. He prays to Radha. His theology, in his own words, is Radha.

The elaboration of Hit Tatva as a distinct theological framework appears to have developed primarily in the later literature of the tradition — through later acharyas, commentators, and particularly through Sevakji's Sevakvani and the writings of later gosvamins. This development served an important purpose: it gave the Radhavallabha Sampradaya a philosophical identity that distinguished it from other sampradayas in the landscape of Braj Vaishnavism.

6.3 The Sampradaya-Identity Function of Hit Tatva

Consider the landscape of Braj traditions in the 16th-17th century. Each sampradaya had developed a distinctive theological identity:

- The Gaudia tradition (Chaitanya) had its Achintya-bhedabheda philosophy and Panca-tattva
- The Vallabha tradition had Shuddhadvaita and Pushti Marga
- The Nimbarka tradition had Dvaitadvaita
- The Haridasi Sampradaya had its emphasis on the Nitya Vihar and claimed to be original founder of nitya vihar ras — the eternal pastimes — as the central devotional focus

In this context, the Radhavallabha Sampradaya needed a way to articulate its unique theological position. The concept of Hit — love as the supreme principle, more fundamental than even the categories of Nirguna and Saguna, the very substance of the Param Tatva — provided this. It was philosophically original, it was consistent with the Mahaprabhu's teachings, and it distinguished the tradition clearly from all others.

But — and this is the crucial point — in acquiring this theological identity, the tradition risked (and in some circles did) shifting its emphasis from the utterly concrete and personal figure of Radha to the more abstract category of Hit/Prem as a principle. The Mahaprabhu's upasana was not the upasana of an abstract love-principle. It was the

upasana of Shri Radha, the specific, beautiful, gracious, supreme personality who is Love itself.

It is true that among the great sampradayas of the Braj tradition - the Vallabha sampradaya, the Nimbarka sampradaya, the Gaudiya sampradaya - the Radhavallabh tradition needed a way to articulate its distinctive identity. The Hit Tatva framework served this purpose admirably. It distinguished the Radhavallabh path as the path of pure Radha-centered love, without the emphasis on Vedic ritual, without affiliation to advaita or vishishtadvaita, standing alone in pure prema bhakti.

This is a noble and correct distinction. **The sampradaya is indeed unique. But the uniqueness comes from Mahaprabhu Ji's original teaching - which is entirely Radha Pradhan - not from a separate tatva named after 'hit'. The hit is the love. The love is for Radha. The tatva is Radha.**

6.4 Hit Tatva in Proper Perspective

To be entirely fair: Hit Tatva, properly understood, does NOT replace Radha. The most learned teachers of the Radhavallabha tradition have always maintained that Hit Tatva finds its fullest personal expression in Shri Radha — She is Hit personified. She is Prem in its most complete, most beautiful form. Hit Tatva as a philosophical concept is only valid and meaningful when it points to Her.

The concern this paper raises is not about the concept itself, but about its misuse — cases where Hit Tatva becomes a substitute for Radha bhakti, where the sampradaya's distinctive philosophy becomes more prominent than its distinctive upasana. When a devotee talks more about Hit Tatva as a philosophical category than about Radha as the living, breathing, gracious reality to be worshipped, the tradition has drifted from its source.

Hit Harivansh Mahaprabhu received the title 'Hit' from Radha- and since then he was known as 'Hit Harivansh'. The 'Hit' seal was given by Shri Radha Rani herself. It does not denote an abstract philosophical principle. It denotes love - specifically, the love that a sakhi has for Shri Radha and Shri Krishna's mutual happiness.

Rasamay kare charit parashansh. Jagaguru vidit Shri Harivansh. Shri Radha Anugrah kiyau. Shri Mukh Mantr Niju Kar Diyau. Dayita Krishn Jinake Isht. Puni Guru Bhaav Preeti Garisht. Dini Reejh Hita Ki Chhaap. Ta Kari Badhyau Bhakti Prataap.

- Chacha Vrindavan Das Ji - 'Shri Radha gave him grace, gave him the mantra from Her own mouth. She gave him the seal of Hita out of her own joy. Through this, the glory of bhakti increased.'

Hit is Radha's grace. Hit is Radha's gift. Hit is not a separate system - it is the name Radha gave to the love she placed in Mahaprabhu Ji's heart and sent him to share with the world.

6.5 The Danger of Misemphasis

The subtle danger in any tradition is that the vehicle becomes confused with the destination. The sampradaya - with its beautiful customs, its samaj-gayan, its ashtayam seva, its unique theology - is the vehicle. The destination is Shri Radha Rani's lotus feet. The acharya - however great - is the guide. The goal is Shri Radha.

Mahaprabhu Ji himself would be the first to redirect us. Look at his own words in the Radha Sudha Nidhi:

Alam vishayavarttaya narak koti bibhatsaya, vrutha shrutikathashramo bat bibhemi kaivalyatah. Pareshabhajanonmada yadi shukaadayah kim tatah, parantu mam radhika padarase mano majjatu.

- Shri Radha Sudha Nidhi, verse 83 - 'Let us not talk of worldly things, which are more despicable than countless hells. Vedic recitation is also in vain. Oh, I simply dread salvation. What to me if Shri Shukadeva and others are intoxicated with devotion to the Supreme Being? My only wish is that my mind should be immersed in the rasa of the lotus-feet of Shri Radha!'

Here Mahaprabhu Ji explicitly goes beyond even devotion to 'the Supreme Being' (param purush - Krishna) and says the one desire of his heart is immersion in Radha's rasa. This is the clearest possible statement of the direction of his upasana. And this is what he wants his devotees to experience.

PART SEVEN : Hit Upasana vs. Hit Tatva Upasana — A Critical Distinction

7.1 The Distinction Explained

This is perhaps the most important section of this paper. We must be precise about a distinction that has sometimes been obscured:

Hit Upasana = The upasana GIVEN by Hit Harivansh Mahaprabhu. Its subject is Shri Radha. Its method is sakhi-bhava. Its goal is Radha-seva and Radha-prapti. Hit Tatva Upasana = The upasana of the PRINCIPLE of Hit/Love as an independent theological category. This is a later formulation, useful as a philosophical framework but not to be confused with the Mahaprabhu's own teaching.

The Mahaprabhu gave 'Hit Upasana' — not 'Hit Tatva Upasana.' He said: 'Worship Radha.' He did not say: 'Worship the abstract principle of love.' He said: 'Serve Radha as Her sakhi.' He did not say: 'Cultivate the Hit principle in yourself.' He said: 'Sing of Radha's Nikunja lila.' He did not say: 'Meditate on the metaphysics of love.'

7.2 Evidence That the Mahaprabhu's Upasana Was Radha-Centric, Not Principle-Centric

Let us summarize the evidence we have gathered throughout this paper:

- His first words in this world, at six months old, were about Radha (Radha Sudha Nidhi)
- His Guru and initiator was Radha Herself (biographical record)
- His mantra was given by Radha (biographical record)
- His name 'Hita' was given by Radha (Chacha Vrindavan Das)
- His 84-verse Chaurasi is entirely about Radha's lila and glory
- In his own words, he describes himself as singing 'a tiny portion' of Radha's glory
- His deity is named Radhavallabha — Radha's beloved
- His temple places Radha's name on the central throne
- His Samaj Gayan is structured as sakhis serving Radha

- Prabodhananda Saraswati, in the Harivanshashtak, defines him entirely by his love for Radha
- His disappearance from this world happened when he followed Radha's fragrance into the Nikunja

Every single point of evidence leads to the same conclusion: the Mahaprabhu's upasana was Radha. Period. Not a principle. Not a concept. Not a philosophical framework. Radha — the living, luminous, gracious Param Tatva who he loved from before his birth, who initiated him, who sent him, who received him back at his departure.

Part Eight: The Practices Mahaprabhu Ji Established - All for Radha

Let us now look at the specific practices and innovations Mahaprabhu Ji established in Vrindavan, and see how each one flows directly from his Radha-centered vision.

8.1 The Deity - Shri Radhavallabh Ji

The very name of the deity Mahaprabhu Ji established reveals the theology. 'Radhavallabh' means 'the beloved of Radha' - one who is dear to Radha, one who belongs to Radha. The deity is named from Radha's perspective. He is Her Vallabh - Her most beloved.

And in the temple, extraordinarily, there is no separate murti of Shri Radha. Instead, next to the deity, there is a 'gaddi seva' - a throne - representing Radha's presence. She is too sublime for material representation. She is above form. Only Her throne is shown, indicating that She presides over everything but cannot be bound by any image. This theological statement is profound: Radha is the ultimate reality, beyond even divine form.

This practice was established directly by Mahaprabhu Ji. It is his clearest institutional statement about Radha's supremacy - She who is beyond representation, in whose presence even the most beautiful deity (Radhavallabh Ji) exists as Her servant-beloved.

8.2 Ashtayam Seva - Eight Times a Day for the Divine Couple

The ashtayam seva (eightfold daily service) that Mahaprabhu Ji established is a complete meditation on the nitya lila - the eternal daily pastimes of Shri Radha and Krishna. Eight times a day, the devotee meditates on what Radha and Krishna are doing in the nikunja: their morning awakening, their bath, their games, their midday rest, their evening dances, their night lilas.

This seva is not Vedic ritual. It is not mechanical worship. It is internal absorption - the devotee mentally entering the nikunja as a sakhi, serving the divine couple. And at every moment of this seva, Shri Radha is at the center. Her morning awakening, Her bath, Her ornamentation, Her moods, Her joy - all of it is the meditation.

8.3 Samaj Gayan - Singing the Nikunja Lilas

The samaj gayan - collective singing of the lilas - is another signature practice of Mahaprabhu Ji. He developed specific ragas and specific tunes (called 'samaj') in which the devotees sing the pada-lilas of Shri Radha and Krishna in the nikonja. This is not just kirtan for the sake of sound. It is a form of manasic (mental) entry into the lila through music.

And notice: the Chaturasi's ragas are listed in its concluding section. These ragas are not arbitrary. They are the specific emotional modes that correspond to specific moods and moments in Shri Radha's experience. Todi for Her tender longing. Bhairav for Her dawn awakening. Dhanashri for the playfulness of the nikonja. The music itself is constructed around Shri Radha's emotional world.

8.4 The Theatric Raas - Witnessing Radha's Lila with Open Eyes

One of the most extraordinary things Mahaprabhu Ji did was to inaugurate the theatric raas - a physical performance of the nikonja lila in which Brajwasi children (and later devotees) dressed as Shyama Shyam and the sakhis to physically enact the lila. This was inaugurated around 1592 at the Raasmandal in Vrindavan.

The purpose was not entertainment. The purpose was to give the rasika devotees - those who are in their sakhi bhav - the experience of actually witnessing the lila with their physical eyes, as the sakhis do in the eternal realm. This is called 'darshan of the nitya lila'. And who is at the center of this lila? Shri Radha Rani. Always.

The biography tells us that once, during this theatric raas, the anklet of the child playing Shri Radha broke. Shri Hariram Vyas Ji - a great saint present there - immediately gave his own sacred thread (yagyopaveet) to repair it and placed it at the lotus feet of 'Shri Priya Ji'. The lila was so real for him that he served the child as Radha herself. This is the depth of the practice Mahaprabhu Ji introduced.

Part Nine: Prabodhananda Saraswati's Testimony - An Outside Witness

The testimony of Prabodhananda Saraswati is particularly valuable because he was an outsider who became an insider. He was a Shankarite sannyasi, a scholar of Advaita Vedanta, living in Varanasi - until he came under the influence of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's movement and then, later, came to Vrindavan and associated closely with Shri Hit Harivansh Mahaprabhu. His witness carries the weight of someone who had nothing to gain from praising this tradition except pure love.

9.1 What Prabodhananda Saw in Mahaprabhu Ji

The Shri Harivansh Ashtakam - composed by Prabodhananda in Sanskrit - is a systematic celebration of Mahaprabhu Ji that also clarifies his mission and teaching. Let us go through the key verses:

*Adhik rasa vatinaam radhikaaya sakheenam, charan kamal vithi kaanane
raaj-hansaha. Tadatai lalit leela gaan vidvatprashansaha, sa jayati
harivamshodhvansh ko so kalinaam.*

- **Shri Harivansh Ashtakam, verse 3 - 'In the pathways where Shri Radha's lotus feet land, in such a Vrindavan, you (Mahaprabhu) are the most excellent raja-hansa (royal swan) amidst the other rasa-filled sakhis. Due to your very charming singing of the lilas of Shyama-Shyam's nikunja-rasa, you are praised by the most brilliant learned persons. You destroy the dirt of Kali-yuga. All glories to you, Shri Harivansh!'**

Prabodhananda describes Mahaprabhu Ji as existing 'in the pathways where Shri Radha's lotus feet land' - that is, he lives in Radha's world, within the space defined by Her footsteps. He is the best among the rasa-filled sakhis. His glory is inseparable from Shri Radha's footpaths.

*Hridaya nabhasi shuddhe yasya krishnapriyaayaa, shacharana nakhar
chandrabhaatyalam chanchalayaah. Tadatai kutuk kunje bhaav labhdalimurtihi,
sa jayati harivamsho vyaasavansh pradipaha.*

- **Shri Harivansh Ashtakam, verse 6 - 'Within whose pure heart the restless beautiful feet and moon-like shining toenails of Krishna-priya (Beloved of Krishna, i.e., Shri Radha) are perfectly manifested - who through his bhava**

has a wonderful form as a sakhi within the amazing kunjja - all glories to such Shri Harivansh!'

Prabodhananda confirms it directly: in Mahaprabhu Ji's heart, what shines? The feet and toenails of 'Krishna-priya' - the one dear to Krishna, i.e., Shri Radha. And through his bhav, he has the form of a sakhi in the nikunja. This is the internal reality of the man. His heart is Radha's lotus feet. His bhav is sakhi bhav in the nikunja.

Charan kamal renuryasya sansaar setuhu, paviriv-suvilasi darp shailendra mauli. Kalush nagar daahi yasya sansarg leshaha, sa jayati harivamsho krishna-kaantaavatansaha.

- Shri Harivansh Ashtakam, verse 7 - 'The dust of whose lotus feet are like a boat carrying one across the ocean of material misery. Whose very slight association devastates the corruption of Kali-yuga. Whose adornment is the beloved of Krishna (i.e., Shri Radha) - all glories to such Shri Harivansh!'

'Whose adornment is the beloved of Krishna' - krishna-kaantaavatansaha. Shri Radha is Mahaprabhu Ji's ornament, his crown, his glory. He is beautiful because he is Radha's. This is not devotion to the acharya alongside devotion to Radha. This is the acharya himself saying, and those who know him confirming: his identity is inseparable from Shri Radha.

9.2 The Last Verse - The Divine Sakhi Who Took Human Form

The eighth and final verse of the Harivansh Ashtakam is perhaps the most revealing:

Raman jayan nrityodbhram kottaal puraa, tadati lalit kunjjaadaazhyaaraad upatyee. Lalit bhajan dehe maanushe shveshvarau tau, sa jayati harivamsho labdhavaan yahah samakshaha.

- Shri Harivansh Ashtakam, verse 8 - 'The one who can control Shri Krishna and is resplendent with wonderful skills in dancing. She has come from the very beautiful kunjja on the order of Shri Radha and has, for the purpose of performing attractive bhajan, taken up the form of a human and attained her two beloveds. All glories to such Shri Harivansh!'

Prabodhananda, in the final verse, uses the feminine pronoun for Mahaprabhu Ji - 'she has come from the kunjja on the order of Shri Radha, has taken a human form.' This is the ultimate statement of who Mahaprabhu Ji is: a divine sakhi of the eternal nikunja who came to earth in human form, carrying the order of Shri Radha, to establish her worship

and reveal her lila. This testimony, from a great outside scholar who personally knew Mahaprabhu Ji, seals the case.

Part Ten: The Practical Upasana - What Mahaprabhu Ji's Devotee Actually Does

Having established the theological foundation and the scriptural evidence, let us now speak practically. What does the real upasana given by Shri Hit Harivansh Mahaprabhu actually look like in daily life?

10.1 Manasic Seva - Mental Worship in the Nikunja

The primary practice of this upasana is manasic (mental) seva - internally accompanying Shri Radha and Krishna in their nikunja lila as a sakhi. This is the siddha-deha smarana: the devotee meditates on their eternal spiritual form as a sakhi in Vrindavan, serving the divine couple.

This seva follows the daily schedule of the nitya lila - the ashtayam - and the devotee mentally enters each moment of the divine couple's day, serving them according to their mood and need. The Hit Chaturasi pads are the guidebook for this manasic entry. Each pada is a gate into a specific moment of the lila.

*Kada vrundaranye madhur madhuranand rasade, priyeshvaryah keelebhavan
nav kunjani mrugaye. Kada shriradhayah padakamal madhvik lahari,
parivahaischeto madhukaramadhiram madayita.*

- **Shri Radha Sudha Nidhi, verse 137 - 'When shall I be in search of my Swamini's ever-new Vrindavan bowers that bestow the sweetest bliss and rasa, and when shall I infatuate my bee-like confused mind with the flow of waves of intoxicating rasa of Shri Radha's lotus-feet?'**

10.2 Radha Naam Japa - The Core Sadhana

The japa - the repetitive chanting - that Mahaprabhu Ji prescribes is Radha Naam. The Radha Sudha Nidhi dedicates multiple verses to the glory of these two syllables. The devotee chants Radha's name on a tulsi mala, in the awareness that this name is beyond Vedic knowledge, that Krishna weeps with love while chanting it, and that it is the 'jivanam' - the very life-breath - of Mahaprabhu Ji himself.

The mantra given by Shri Radha to Mahaprabhu Ji is preserved in the sampradaya - it is the Yugal Mantra, containing both names. But the primacy is always Radha's. In every formula of the sampradaya, Radha comes first.

10.3 Samaj Gayan - Singing the Lilas as Entry into the Nikunja

The samaj gayan - collective singing of the Hit Chaturasi pads and other lilas in the specific ragas established by Mahaprabhu Ji - is a devotional practice that goes beyond ordinary kirtan. The specific ragas are tuned to specific emotional states in Shri Radha's life. By singing them, the devotee enters those emotional states and approaches the nikunja consciousness.

This is why the Raag Sankhya (raga index) at the end of the Chaturasi is so important. Mahaprabhu Ji was not just a poet who happened to use different ragas for variety. He was mapping the emotional landscape of Shri Radha's eternal experience through music.

10.4 Nikunja Upasana - The Secret of Vrindavan Nivrit

The highest form of this upasana is what the tradition calls 'Vrindavan Nivrit Nikunja Upasana' - the inward Vrindavan, the nikunja that is internal. In this practice, the devotee so fully adopts the sakhi bhav and so fully enters the manasic lila that the boundary between inner meditation and outer reality becomes thin.

This is what Pujya Shri Premanand Ji Maharaj describes as the most confidential gift Mahaprabhu Ji came to give:

Not only is He providing aspirants a solid foundation but also is one of the few Rasik Saints who is graciously bestowing the most confidential and supremely sacred 'Vrindavan Nivrit Nikunja Upasana' and 'Nitya Vihar Ras' which was first shared by Prem Swaroop, Vanshi Avtar Shri Hit Harivansh Mahaprabhu.

- Shri Hit Radha Keli Kunj - Pujya Shri Hit Premanand Govind Sharan Ji Maharaj

10.5 The Five Pillars of Hit Harivansh's Real Upasana

Drawing together the full evidence of the scriptures and tradition, the real upasana given by Shri Hit Harivansh Mahaprabhu can be summarized in five pillars:

- Radha Pradhan Shraddha - The unwavering conviction that Shri Radha Rani is the supreme being, the deity of rasa, the giver of love, beyond Vedas, beyond even Krishna's comprehension, the primary object of all devotion.
- Sakhi Bhav - The devotional identity of the spiritual companion of Shri Radha, serving the divine couple's happiness with tat-sukh bhav (finding one's joy in their joy), with Radha Charan as the primary refuge.
- Radha Naam Japa - The constant, loving repetition of Shri Radha's name as the supreme nama, the two syllables that are beyond Vedic knowledge, that Krishna himself chants with tears of love.
- Nikunja Smaran - The mental entry into the eternal nikunja lilas of Shri Shyama Shyam, following the pads of the Hit Chaturasi as the guidebook, witnessing and serving as a sakhi.
- Vrindavan Vas Bhav - The consciousness of living always in Vrindavan - even while physically elsewhere - seeing all of Vrindavan as Shri Radha's domain, breathing its sacred fragrance in the heart at every moment.

Part Eleven: A Gentle Reflection - For the Harivanshi Heart

This section is written not as an academic conclusion but as a heart-to-heart conversation between one who loves this tradition and those who live within it. Please receive it as such.

11.1 The Question in Every Harivanshi's Heart

If you have read this far, something in you already knew most of what has been said here. The evidence from Mahaprabhu Ji's own scriptures is not hidden - it is there in the Radha Sudha Nidhi, which every devotee has, and in the Hit Chaturasi, which every devotee knows. The question is not whether this evidence exists. The question is whether we are fully living into it.

Mahaprabhu Ji gave us the Radha Sudha Nidhi - 270 Sanskrit verses that begin and end with Radha, that weep for Radha's darshan, that sing of the two syllables of Her name as the supreme knowledge. If we hold this text in our hands and our heart is not primarily oriented toward Shri Radha, something has shifted from his original intention.

11.2 The Beautiful Paradox

Here is a beautiful paradox that Mahaprabhu Ji himself embodied: he loved Harivansh - his own name, his own identity - by dissolving it entirely into Radha's service. The greatness of Harivansh Ji is precisely that he pointed away from himself and toward Shri Radha. His own glory is his self-effacement before Her.

Prabodhananda captures this: the acharya's 'adornment' is Shri Radha. His beauty comes from Her. His identity is defined by Her. The more a devotee honors Mahaprabhu Ji rightly, the more they will find that honoring him means following where he pointed - which is always, without exception, toward Shri Radha Rani's lotus feet.

11.3 Mahaprabhu Ji's Own Feeling - What Would He Want?

Imagine Mahaprabhu Ji seeing a devotee who chants his name daily but doesn't spend much time absorbed in Radha's nama or Radha's lila. What would he feel? The evidence of his heart is in his scriptures. In the Radha Sudha Nidhi, he prays:

Radhanam sudharasam rasayitum jihvastume vihvala, padau tatpadaankitasu charatam vrundaatavi vithishu. Tatkarmaiv karah karotu hridayam tasyah padam dhyayat, taddbhavotsavatah param bhavatu me tatpran nathe ratih.

- **Shri Radha Sudha Nidhi, verse 141 - 'Let my tongue be ever impatient to drink the nectar of Shri Radha's name. Let my feet keep on strolling in Vrindavan alleys marked with lotus-feet of Shri Radha. Let my hands do only such acts as are related to service to Her. Let my mind meditate upon Her lotus-feet. And my enthusiastic affection towards Shri Radha help me create love for Her beloved (Shri Krishna) in my heart.'**

This is Mahaprabhu Ji's own prayer for himself. This is what he wanted. Tongue chanting Radha's name. Feet walking where Her feet have walked. Hands in Her service. Heart meditating on Her lotus feet. And then - only then - as the fruit of that Radha love, love for Krishna naturally arises in the heart.

He would want his devotees to have this same experience. Not tongue chanting his name, but tongue chanting Radha's name. Not heart meditating on the acharya, but heart meditating on Shri Radha's lotus feet. This is not disrespect to the acharya. This is the highest honor - to become what he himself was.

11.4 Hit Upasana Is Radha Upasana

Let this be the central, clear, luminous conclusion of this entire paper:

Hit Upasana - the upasana given by Shri Hit Harivansh Mahaprabhu Ji - is Radha Upasana.

It is not a tatva about love in the abstract. It is love for Shri Radha specifically. It is not a philosophical school that can be compared with Gaudiya or Vallabha in terms of intellectual positions. It is the living experience of being a sakhi in Shri Radha's nikunja, chanting Her name, serving Her lotus feet, witnessing Her lila, dissolving one's entire existence into Her happiness.

The Hit of Hit Harivansh is the hit that Shri Radha Rani placed in his heart when she appeared to him in Devavan and sealed him as Her instrument. That hit - that love - is Radha's love. **The upasana of that hit is the upasana of Radha Rani.**

Conclusion: Returning to the Source

Every river, no matter how far it travels, always returns to the ocean. Every tradition, no matter how rich its history, is most alive when it returns to its source. The source of the Radhavallabh tradition is not a set of customs or a theological framework. The source is a moment in the eternal nikunja - Shri Radha handing Her flute to Lalita Ji, saying 'reveal our eternal pastimes.' That flute became Shri Hit Harivansh Mahaprabhu. And the one word that flute always plays is: Radha.

The evidence gathered in this paper - from the Radha Sudha Nidhi's 270 verses, from the Hit Chaturasi's 84 pads, from Prabodhananda Saraswati's Harivansh Ashtakam, from the detailed biography, from the sampradaya's own understanding of sakhi bhav - all of it points in one direction. **Mahaprabhu Ji came to reveal Shri Radha. He lived for Shri Radha. He wrote for Shri Radha. He established every practice for Shri Radha's glory.**

'Radha iti me jivanam' - Radha is my life. These are his words. May they become the words of every devotee who walks in his path.

The real marga of Shri Hit Harivansh Mahaprabhu is this: go to Radha. Go through his scriptures - but let them take you to Radha. Honor the acharya - but let that honor motivate you to do what he did, which is to love Radha with your entire being. Chant his name with gratitude - but let it remind you to chant Her name with your very life.

When a devotee sits in the samaj and sings the Chaturasi pads, and the sound of the raga opens the heart, and for a moment the nikunja feels real, and somewhere inside there is a flash of awareness of Shri Radha's smile - that is the moment Mahaprabhu Ji came for. That is the mercy he descended to give. That is the real marga.

Shri Radhike! mayi vidhehi krupaakataksham - O Shri Radha! Cast Your merciful glance on me.

- Shri Radha Sudha Nidhi, verse 31

He came as Her flute. Let the devotees be the breath that moves through that flute — and let the sound that emerges be, always and only: Radha.

-Madhuri Sakhi

Jai Shri Radhe! Jai Shri Hit Harivansh!

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Dedicated at the lotus feet of Shri Radha Rani
and in grateful memory of
Anant Shri Vibhushit Vanshi Avtar Prem Swaroop
Shri Hit Harivansh Mahaprabhu Ji