



**THAI PRAJÑĀ**  
International Journal of Indology and Culture  
(Peer Reviewed International Research Journal)

Volume IV

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Sanskrit Studies Centre,  
in collaboration with  
the Department of Oriental Languages  
and the Faculty of Archaeology,  
Silpakorn University,  
Bangkok, Thailand

2020

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*International Journal of Indology and Culture*  
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**Published by** Sanskrit Studies Centre and Department of Oriental  
Languages, Faculty of Archaeology, Silpakorn University

**Under the Auspices of** the Ministry of Culture, Government of India (Through  
The Embassy of India to Thailand, Bangkok)

**First Edition:** 200 copies in March 2020

**Printed at** Nititham Press. 76/251-3 Soi Watphrangern Kanchanapisek Road,  
Bang Meung, Bangyai District, Nonthaburi Province 11140  
Tel./Fax. 0-2449-2525 email: niti2512@hotmail.com

**ISSN 2586-9671**

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***Bhakti* as a means to Advaita: The Devotee,  
devotion and liberation in Utpaladeva's  
*Śivastotrāvalī* \***

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**Abstract:**

*Śivastotrāvalī* is a unique text in *bhakti* literature: the best testimony of the living spiritual tradition of the non-dualistic Śaiva philosophy of Kashmir as well as Utpaladeva's devotional sentiments and his mystical experiences. Utpaladeva is considered as a philosopher, a great devotee, a perfected being (*siddha*), and a mystic with enormous mystical experiences, which he expresses in his hymns from time to time. In the five eternal functions (*pañcakṛtyas*) of Śiva, i.e. *sṛṣṭi* (creation or emanation), *sthiti* (maintenance), *saṃhāra* (reabsorption), *tirodhāna* (concealment) and *anugraha* (grace), the last one (*anugraha*) is essential for the process of reunion with Lord Śiva. It becomes manifest as the devotee's devotion (*bhakti*) to the lord. In the hymns of *Śivastotrāvalī* devotion and grace are equally important. When the devotee merges his identity, he recognizes that the very act of his devotion is but another aspect of the Lord's bestowing of grace. The Lord is pleased when we are devoted to him and the devotion comes to us when He is pleased. One does not happen without the other. A verse

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\*Paper presented in the Session 'Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism' at the 17<sup>th</sup> World Sanskrit Conference, held at University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada, July 9-13 2018.

states that *bhakti* and liberation are not different. Indeed, the ripened devotion (*vipakvā bhakti*) is liberation. Therefore the devotee wants to worship the Lord with body, mind, speech, actions and with all the thirty-six elements of the universe while remaining in the abode of His Consciousness. Among a number of systems that claim to lead to that goal of identifying with the Ultimate, Utpaladeva considers the path of devotion to be truly effective. Advaita can be experienced through an intense devotion, *bhakti*, hence, there is no contradiction between *advaita* (non-dualism) and *bhakti* (devotion) as some might think. This paper aims at analyzing some of the very interesting verses in the context of *bhakti* occurring in *Śivastotrāvalī* and how it can be a means to attain advaita and thus liberation.

**Keywords:** Utpaladeva, Kashmir Shaivism, Pratyabhijñā, *Bhakti*, Devotion, Advaita, Non-dual.

*Śivastotrāvalī*, or as it is often called in the manuscripts, the *Stotrāvalī* or *Utpala Stotrāvalī*, is a unique text in *bhakti* literature. It is the best testimony of the living spiritual tradition of the non-dualistic Śaiva Philosophy in the Kashmir Valley which is evident in the teachings and recitations of Swami Lakshman Joo and his disciples in Kashmir, and elsewhere in recent times. It is also the best example of Utpaladeva's devotional sentiments and his mystical experiences besides his Philosophy of Recognition. Utpaladeva is considered as a philosopher, a great devotee, a perfected being (*siddha*), and a mystic with enormous mystical experiences which he expresses in his hymns from time to time. Although it is not expressed directly, his philosophy of Recognition (*Pratyabhijñā*) is reflected in the whole of *Śivastotrāvalī*. The *Stotrāvalī* is unique among the works of Utpaladeva. It is not

a straightforward text on Philosophy, like *Īśvara Pratyabhijñā Kārikā*, but rather a spiritual diary or a spiritual journey, of one who not only forms a theory about the path towards God realization, but has walked on it himself. Utpaladeva writes about his journey in the following words:

*ātmā mama bhavadbhaktisudhāpānayuvāpi san |  
lokayātrārajorāgātpalitairiva dhūsaraha || (1.2)*

Though my soul is young drinking the nectar of Thy devotion, yet, it is one who has turned gray, with hair whitened by the dust of the journey through the world.

In the words of Bettina Bäumer, “If his *bhakti* is defined by his advaita, we could call the *Stotrāvalī* the laboratory of Recognition, a laboratory in which he experiments with all possible states of separation, union and the ever achieved state of non-duality (*satatodita*).”<sup>1</sup>

Madhurāja yogin, a disciple of Abhinavagupta, praises the *Śivastotrāvalī* very highly. He calls it a sacred river which flows between this world and the world of Celestials, purifying everything along its path. In the words of Madhurāja:

*santyeva sūktisaritaha paritaha sahasrah  
stotrāvalī surasarit sadṛśī na kācit,  
yā karnatīrthamatiśayya punāti puṃsaha  
śrīkaṇṭhanāthanagarīmupakaṇṭhayantī. (8)<sup>2</sup>*

Though there are over thousands of Streams of beautiful poetries around, none of them can be compared to the celestial Stream of the *Stotrāvalī*. As it passes through the channel of

<sup>1</sup> Viṣamapyamṛtāyate – Paramādvaita in the Mystical Hymns of the *Śivastotrāvalī*, in Torella, Raffaele; Bäumer, Bettina, ed. Utpaladeva, Philosopher of Recognition, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla and D.K. Printworld, New Delhi, 2015, p.1.

<sup>2</sup> Śāstraparāmarśa of Madhurāja Yogin, verse 8, quoted in “Abhinavagupta: A Historical and Philosophical Study, by K.C. Pandey, Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Studies, No. 1, 2nd ed., p. 765, 1963.



the ear, purifying the (soul of) man it approaches to the throat, where lays the city of *Śrīkaṇṭha*.

More importantly, the path, which Utpaladeva has treaded, is the path of the householder. One does not need to abandon one's home in order to follow this spiritual path, rather to change one's perception of the world and attain *Śiva-samāveśa* (God realization) while remaining in the household and being in this body.

As we go through the text of *Śivastotrāvalī*, we see Utpaladeva more as a devotee, as a Mystic and a Siddha rather as a philosopher which we see in his *Īśvara Pratyabhijñā Kārikā*. In many of his hymns we see a clear picture of an extraordinary relationship between *bhakti*, *bhaktimān* and *anugraha* or devotion, devotee and the grace of Lord Śiva. How much of the spiritual achievement depends upon the devotee's devotion and how much is divine grace? Or both are equally related with each other, is understood from this text.

The theme of *bhakti* is dealt with adopting different approaches. In this text Utpaladeva prefers a very special approach, connecting it to the system of Upāyas in the Pratyabhijñā philosophy.

There are four upāyas, the first is *āṇava upāya*, the path of *anu* (minuteness) or a limited individual. In this *upāya* the practitioner has to do much effort through his practice of rituals, repetitions of mantras, *prāṇāyāmas* and so on.

The second is *śākta upāya*, the path of *śakti*, energy. It is also known as *jñānopāya* or the path of knowledge, which gives greater emphasis on mental awareness. It is also called *bhedābhedopāya*.

The third one is *śāmbhava upāya*, the path of *Śambhu* or Śiva. It is also known as *icchopāya*, the path of Will (*icchā*). On this path the practitioner is able to induce at his will

and can retain the awareness of the whole universe as pure consciousness for a long time.

The fourth one is called *anupāya*, pathless or without path. It is called so, for it is not a path or actual *upāya*. It is known as the highest *upāya* and represents the transcendence of all the *upāyas*. It is also known as *ānanda upāya* or the path of Bliss. It requires no spiritual discipline for the practitioner to follow. The practitioner has entered into a higher state of realization which is beyond all practices.

The very first verse of *Śivastotrāvalī* is an example of this *anupāya* or no path or the highest path where the practitioner is beyond the need for any meditation (*dhyāna*) or recitation (*japa*) of any kind. Without meditation, without recitation of prayers, he attains the abode where he is one with Lord Śiva. This is also called as *pratyabhijñā upāya* or the path of Recognition.

Another significant point of this verse is that it serves as the benediction in the beginning of the *Stotrāvalī*. (However, it is not his choice). A standard obeisance or a prayer to the favorite deity for protection or for the smooth conclusion of the text or for the well being of the readers is expected before the author introduces the actual subject. The object of homage in the first verse is not the deity but the devotees which is unique in itself. It shows the intention of the author and suggests that the author gives equal reverence to the devotees of Lord Śiva with Lord Śiva himself.

*na dhyāyato na japataḥ syād yasyāvidhipūrvakam |  
evameva śivābhāsataṃ numo bhaktiśālinam || (1.1)*

We praise the one, who is filled with devotion, who neither meditates nor recites by the rule, and yet without any effort, attains the Glory of Lord Śiva

In another verse Utpaladeva has also paid his obeisance to the devotees of Lord Śiva in a similar manner.

*vande tān daivatam yeṣāṃ haraśceṣṭā harocitāḥ |  
haraikapraṇāḥ prāṇāḥ sadā saubhāgyasadmanām ||*  
(20.3)

I eternally bow to those (devotees of Lord Śiva), who are fortunate to have received the highest Bliss, whose deity is Lord Śiva, whose endeavors are worthy of (attaining) Lord Śiva, and whose life breath is devoted only to Lord Śiva.

*kāmakrodhābhimānaistvāmupahārīkṛtaiḥ sadā |  
ye'rcayanti namastebhyasteṣāṃ tuṣṭo'si tattvataḥ ||*  
(17.47)

Adoration to those (devotees) who, always perform your worship having offered their desires, anger, and pride. You are truly pleased with them.

Further, Utpaladeva goes on paying his homage to those devotees who are on a highly enriched spiritual path and those who without going anywhere and renouncing anything realize the supreme abode of Lord Śiva. Kṣemarāja explains the phrase “*na kvāpi gatvā hitvāpi na kiṃcididameva*” as *ekāntadvādaśāntādipadam paramalokaṃ cāgatvā, bhogānadhara bhūmīḥ śarīraṃ cātyaktvā*. This also indicates that those devotees do not need to practice *kuṇḍalinī* yoga and do not need to abandon their body, can attain the supreme abode of Lord Śiva. This again does show the path of *anupāya* (No means). And further more it shows that one can achieve liberation in this body only while living, an example of *Jīvanmukti*.

*na kvāpi gatvā hitvāpi na kiṃcididameva ye |  
bhavyaṃ tvaddhāma paśyanti bhavyāstebhyo namo  
namaḥ || (20.10)*

I bow to them, who without going anywhere and renouncing anything, yet view all this as your glorious abode.

Those who are prosperous in the devotion of the Lord, they have nothing else to desire in this world. On the other hand those who are deprived of it, what else is worthy of desire for them. It shows that if one lacks the devotion towards the Lord, everything else is insignificant in this world. Thus says Utpaladeva in the following verse:

*bhaktīlakṣmīsamṛddhānām kimanyadupayācitam |  
etayā vā daridrāṇām kimanyadupayācitam || (20.11)*

What else remains to be desired by those graced with the wealth of devotion? What else is worthy of desire for those deprived of it?

To attain Lord Śiva, neither the practice of yoga, nor the ascetic practices (*tapas*) or even any kind of worship (*arcā/pūjā*) is prescribed. Only the path of devotion (*bhakti*) is highly recommended. *Bhakti*, intense devotion or passion for God consciousness is the only requisite for God realization.

*na yogo na tapo nārcākramah ko 'pi pranīyate |  
amāye śivamārge 'smin bhaktirekā praśasyate || (1.18)*

Neither yoga nor penance nor even any mode of worship is laid down on this path of/to Lord Śiva, which is free from *māyā*. On this path, only devotion is glorified.

Having said this, Utpaladeva further says that, the lord is obtained only sometimes on some particular yogic state of *samādhi* etc. and somewhere in the centers of heart (*hrdayacakra*) etc. through the practice of yoga i.e. through restraining the fluctuations of mind and so on. This is deception. Otherwise, how is it possible that you manifest yourself to your devotees in all states? This shows that to attain the state of lord, one does not need to give up the world or shun the worldly activities. On the other hand one can achieve the state of god

consciousness while one is situated in the worldly activities living in this very world. It also reveals that this universe is not separate from the state of God-consciousness. In fact, this universe is the real manifestation of God-consciousness. One does not have to shun all the activities and go to the caves for God realization. There are such devotees in this world, who have become one with the lord, while living in this world and performing their worldly activities. The true devotees perceive the presence of Lord in each and every act of life, on every state of life. But the yogis perceive you only in some particular yogic states. This is hypocrisy. Therefore, one should find out the ways and means to attain God in the worldly activities and not by shunning them. This is the most appealing way of Śaivism. In the words of Utpaladeva:

*kadācitkvāpi labhyosi yogenetīśa vaṁcanā |*  
*anyathā sarvakakṣyāsu bhāsi bhaktimatām katham ||*

(1.16)

Through yoga, you are attained at particular times and in particular places. This is deception. Otherwise, how is it possible that you manifest to your devotees, O Lord, in all states.

Pratyāhāra, or the withdrawal from sense objects (*yama, niyama, āsana, prāṇāyāma, pratyāhāra, dhāraṇā, dhyāna, samādhi*) is one of the eight limbs of yoga for attaining *samādhi* state. The devotees of Lord Śiva enjoy all the benefits of *samādhi* without following the established rules of yogic practice. Thus, the devotees are higher than the yogis who practice all the different limbs of yoga. Because what the yogis perceive in their yogic states, the devotees can perceive that in their ordinary states.

*pratyāhārādyasaṁsprṣṭo viśeṣosti mahānayaṁ |*  
*yogibhyo bhaktibhājāṁ yadvyutthāne pi samāhitāḥ ||*  
(1.17)

There is a specialty of the devotees than the yogis, that they without touching upon the *Pratyāhāra* and other practices can realize God even in ordinary states of life such as in *vyutthāna* (awaking state).

The devotion (*bhakti*) has been termed as the best celestial nectar or drink (*bhakti-pīyūṣa-rasa-āsava-vara*), after drinking which the devotee becomes intoxicated in God consciousness. Such devotees are beyond duality, yet they retain you as “the second”. The true devotees have overcome the sense of worldly subject-object dualistic perception. Through this perception, the world becomes Śiva himself. The notion of subject-object perception vanishes and the devotee realizes the entire world as Śiva (1.5).

When the objective world is dissolved by the practice of fervent meditation and similar practices, the Lord stands alone. At that stage who does not visualize him? But even in the state of differentiation between the knower and the known (*vedya-vedaka-saṁkṣobha*), in the agitation of subjective and objective world, in all the activities of daily life, Thy devotees see you easily (1.8).

Here it is very clear that for the realized devotees, the Lord is always easily visible, even when they are in the normal state of their ordinary life where they differentiate between the knower and the known, subject and object. In these above verses, the non-duality is clearly experienced and it is *bhakti* which leads the devotee towards this non-dual state.

However, this *bhakti* is inherent in all. It is natural. It happens spontaneously. One does not need to make effort to have *bhakti*. In the words of Utpaladeva:

*tvamevātmeśa sarvasya sarvaścātmani rāgavān |  
iti svabhāvasiddhāṃ tvadbhaktiṃ jānan jayejjanah ||*

(1.7)

O Lord, you alone are the self of all and everybody loves his own self. Therefore, victorious is the one who knows that devotion is inherent in everybody.

It should be kept in mind that *bhakti* does not mean offering of flowers, food etc. and burning incense sticks. It means viewing God in all life and to be dedicated to the Divine in word, thought and deed. *Bhakti* is not dualistic but unity with the Lord. Advaita is a process and not static one. Thus a very significant definition of *bhakti* is found in Śrī Gītāniṣyanda quoted under the verse 42 of Mahārthamañjarī as following:

*na pādapatanaṃ bhaktirvyāpinaḥ paramātmanaḥ |  
bhaktirbhāvasvabhāvānāṃ tadekībhāvabhāvanam ||*

*Bhakti* is not (simply) falling at the feet of the all-pervasive supreme Lord. *Bhakti* is to realize the nature (*svabhāva*) of all things (*bhāva*) as identical (*ekībhāva-bhāvanam*) with that of the supreme Lord (*tad*).

In the Vijñānabhairava Tantra another verse mentions that intensive devotion can lead one to God realization. The intensity of longing for the Lord is a very dynamic and effective technique that is explained in Vijñānabhairava, which is a path of Śāmbhava Upāya. When there is intensity of devotion or love towards the Lord, there arises detachment in the mind of the practitioner. His mind becomes tranquil and a very firm intuitive insight is born which is none other than the Energy of Śaṅkara. Contemplating on that Energy constantly, one becomes Śiva. This verse clearly shows that an intense devotion can lead one towards the union with the Lord. Perhaps it was one of the sources for the devotion of Utpaladeva.

*bhakyudrekādviraktasya yā matiḥ kriyate dṛdhā |*  
*sā śaktiḥ śāṅkarī nityam bhāvayettāṃ tataḥ śivaḥ ||*  
(ViBhai 121)

The intuitive insight, which is born from intense devotion in one who is detached is the very Energy of Śāṅkara; then one becomes Śiva Himself. (Tr. J. Singh).

Indeed, *bhakti* is like a very efficacious plant which is of high value with its medicinal qualities. It is called here *mahaṣadhi*, i.e. a great herb, which the devotee wants to taste and whose natural extract is liberation.

*mādrśaiḥ kiṃ na carvyeta bhavadbhaktimahauṣadhiḥ |*  
*tādrśī bhagavanyasyā mokṣākhyo 'nantaro rasaḥ ||* (1.22)

O Lord, why should a person like me not taste the great herb (*mahaṣadhi*) of your devotion, whose final extract is known to be liberation.

Another verse states that *bhakti* and liberation are not different. Indeed, the ripened devotion (*vipakvā bhakti*) is liberation or when the devotion ripens, one becomes liberated in this world. When the creeper of devotion ripens, it bears fruits called *siddhis* that begins with *aṇimā* etc. and culminates in liberation. As the devotion grows in the devotee, accordingly each of the *siddhis* develops and leads him towards liberation.

*aṇimādiṣu mokṣānteṣvaṅgeṣveva phalabhidhā |*  
*bhavadbhaktervipakvāyā latāyā iva keṣucit ||* (1.25)

When the vine of devotion ripens, it bears fruits called *siddhis* that begin with *aṇimā* and others and culminate in liberation.

*muktisaṃjñā vipakvāyā bhaktereva tvayi prabho |*  
*tasyāmādyadaśārūdhā muktakalpā vyaṃ tataḥ ||* (16.19)

O Lord ! what is called liberation is simply the ripeness of devotion in you (and) having taken the first step towards that, we are even almost liberated.



The power of devotion is such that even though the devotees live in this world are not stained by the mud of worldly attachments such as passion, anger, lust greed etc. Because they have experienced some inexplicable bliss through the downpour of the nectar of devotion that the worldly attachments do not contaminate them.

*bhavadbhaktisudhāsārastaiḥ kimapyupalakṣitam |  
ye na rāgādipaṅke ’smimllipyante patitā api || (1.24)*

They have experienced inexplicable bliss through the downpour of the nectar of your devotion. Even though they have fallen in the mire of worldly attachments and other such things, are not stained (by that).

This shows that *bhakti* is the highest path to *advaita* and thus to liberation.

Another example also shows that *bhakti* leads to that non-dual path where the devotee wants to see the entire world as filled in with Lord Śiva. This happens due to the effect of the extra-ordinary bliss which is produced by the delight of *bhakti*. In the commentary to the verse 7.8, Kśemarāja paraphrases that ‘*bhakti-madena as samāveśa-praharṣeṇa janita*’, i.e. *bhakti* as *samāveśa*, i.e. devotion is liberation. Due to the intensity of devotion, the devotee sees through his senses the entire world to be consisting of Lord Śiva and all his actions to consist of his worship.

Utpaladeva considers a devotee even superior than the Vedic gods like Viṣṇu Indra and Brahmā. The image in the following verse suggests that the heart of Śiva is like a royal palace where only the devotees can have access, by the power of their devotion and not the gods like Viṣṇu, Indra and Brahmā due to their supremacy.

*tasminpade bhavantam satatamupaślokayeyamatyuc-  
caih |*

*hariharyaśva viriñcā api yatra bahiḥ pratīkṣante* || (7.7)

(O Lord), may I sing forever my praises to you loudly, being on that state where Viṣṇu (Hari), Indra (Haryaśva) and Brahmā (Viriñca) wait outside.

In the five eternal functions (*pañcakṛtyas*) of Śiva i.e. *sṛṣṭi* (creation or emanation), *sthiti* (maintenance), *saṁhāra* (reabsorption), *tirodhāna* (concealment) and *anugraha* (grace), the last one (*anugraha*) is essential for the process of reunion with Lord Śiva. It becomes manifest as the devotee's devotion (*bhakti*) to the lord.

In the hymns of *Śivastotrāvalī* devotion and grace are given equally importance. When the devotee merges his identity, he recognizes that the very act of his devotion is but another aspect of the Lord's bestowing of grace. The Lord is pleased when we are devoted to him and the devotion comes to us when He is pleased. *Bhakti* and the Grace of the Lord are a mutually dependent cycle. One does not happen without the other.

*tvam bhaktyā prīyase bhaktiḥ prīte tvayi ca nātha yat |  
tadanyonyāśrayam yuktam yathā vettha tvameva tat* ||

(16.21)

O Lord, you are pleased with devotion and devotion arises when you are pleased. You alone understand how these two are connected with each other.

Therefore the devotee wants to worship the Lord with body, mind, speech, actions and with all the thirty-six elements of the universe while remaining in the abode of His Consciousness. Those who have accomplished the devotion, which brings reunion with the lord, have no further desire to be fulfilled. And those who are deprived of it, what else they can long for other than devotion!

*tvaddhāmani cinmaye sthitvā śattrimśattattvakarmabhiḥ |  
kāyavāk-cittaceṣṭādyairarcaye tvām sadā vibho* || (17.11)

Remaining in the abode of your consciousness, may I worship you, O Lord, by means of body, mind, speech and with the activities, which are the products of thirty-six tattvas (elements/principles).

Among a number of systems that claim to lead to that goal of identifying with the Ultimate, Utpaladeva considers the path of devotion to be truly effective. *Advaita* can be experienced through an intense devotion, *bhakti*, as we see in these verses. Hence, there is no contradiction between *advaita* (non-dualism) and *bhakti* (devotion) as we experience in the hymns of *Śivastotrāvalī*.

That is why the devotee wants to sprinkle his mind, which is the seed of all sufferings with the sap of the devotion of the Lord. By sprinkling the mind with the devotion, one achieves the magnificent fruit, i.e. liberation (*paramānanda-maya-mokṣa-mahāphalam*).

*citraṃ nisargato nātha duḥkhabījamidaṃ manaḥ |*  
*tvadbhaktirasasaṃsiktam niḥśreyasamahāphalam ||*

(1.26)

Lord! How wonderful it is that the mind naturally is the seed of all suffering. When it is sprinkled with the nectar of devotion, bears the magnificent fruit of liberation.

Therefore, the devotee wants to have the nectar of devotion to shine forth before him everywhere and at all times as his companion. In this context Kṣemarāja, has paraphrased *bhaktirasa* as *samāveśacamatkāra*.

*vāci manomaṭiṣu tathā śarīraceṣṭāsu karaṇaracitāsu |*  
*sarvatra savadā me puraḥsaro bhavatu bhaktirasaḥ ||*

(5.22)

In speech, mind, thought, in the activities of the body and senses, may the sentiment of the devotion be my companion, everywhere, at all times.

*yato 'si sarvaśobhānām prasavāvanirīśa tat |*  
*tvayi lagnamanargham syād ratnam vā yadi vā tṛṇam ||*  
(16.26)

O Lord, you are the source of everything beautiful. All things become precious at your touch, whether it is a gem or a piece of straw.

### **Conclusion:**

We see from the above verses that Utpaladeva gives more importance to *bhakti* rather than practice of yoga, tapas, performing rituals and worship etc. The devotees are considered to be equal to Lord Śiva and are even superior to gods such as Indra, Viṣṇu and Brahmā. Another significant point is that *bhakti* is not only regarded as means/*upāya* to achieve liberation, rather it is also the Goal/*upeya* or Liberation. It is said to be the synonym of liberation (*mokṣākyo 'nantaro rasah*, and a great herb (*bhavadbhakti mahauśadhi*, 1.22), as well as a great wealth (*bhakti mahādhanam* 15.10) and the goddess of fortune (*bhaktilakṣmī* 20.11).

Other words which are used in the context of *bhakti* such as *bhaktyāveśa* (16.6), of Utpaladeva; *samāveśamayī bhakti* (16.21), devotion that consists of union with the lord, of Kṣemarāja; *bhaktipīyūṣa* (17.26) the nectar of devotion, of Utpaladeva; *samāveśāmṛta* (17.26), the nectar for the union with the lord, of Kṣemarāja; *samāveśātmikā bhakti* (15.14), devotion as the nature of unification with the lord, of Swami Lakshman Joo; *bhavad-bhakti mahāvidyā* (1.12), devotion as supreme knowledge that leads towards liberation; and *bhaktisudhā*, (1.13, 1.21), devotion as nectar, indeed show the density, the intensity and significance of the concept of *bhakti*, devotion and that it leads to advaita, non-duality and finally culminates in liberation (*samāveśa*).

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