

such love. In their friendly exchanges, the cowherd boys are oblivious to his position as Supreme Godhead.

Interaction between friends is casual, informal. Love that has evolved still further sheds that informality and reaches the level of *vatsalya-rasa* or parental affection. The adult residents of Vrindavan manifested this loving mood, and the tradition describes this stage of love as having the consistency of molasses further condensed into crystals.

When love for God achieves its most intense stage, the parental sense of duty disappears. What remains is ecstatic abandon, a “merging” of self-interest into that of the divine Lover. This stage, *madhurya-rasa* to conjugal affection, transcends rules, responsibilities and social conventions. The Gopis or cowherd girls of Vrindavan expressed this highest, passionate love of God, which the tradition compares to rock candy. The union of Krishna and the Gopis is the highest realm of meditative experience in the *bhakti* tradition, a place George hints at in his remarkable song “Sat Singing.”

George never considered himself a guru. We don't find these details of progressive stages of spiritual love in his lyrics. He preferred to let the music speak for itself. There are times, though, like that afternoon in the classroom, when a student's appreciation for what meditation can achieve will send me back to those heady days when my own spiritual life was tender and unformed, and a single line from a George Harrison song somehow managed to magically summarized a shelf-full of feelings and emotions.

Check this website: <http://www.atma.org/>



*The author (front row on the right) and students at Hofstra University*