

Chapter Sixteen

The Flow of Mahāprabhu's Line

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's Godbrothers clearly expressed their great regard for His Divine Grace. One mentioned to me in a letter that they would always continue to come here, because for as long as Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj is present they want to come and hear from him. They expressed that whenever they hear from Śrīla Śrīdhar Mahārāj, they feel they are in the shade of Prabhupād Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākur.

They all gave such honour to our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, and why? Their life's goal is the service of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda, and they understood that such service is coming through their Śrī Gurudev, Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākur. But they also saw that their Gurudev had transmitted his divine power to Śrīla Śrīdhar Mahārāj—so their idea was that Gurudev's merciful power is graciously present in our Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. It is for this reason that they always came to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj.

They had left all their mundane facilities and life's desires, and joined within the Mission for the service to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and to Prabhu Nityānanda and Mahāprabhu. In which way will they get that service? Only the mercy of the Vaiṣṇavas and the mercy of Śrī Guru can give that service. This was very clear to them, so they would all forego any personal position—everything—and come

from time to time to see Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. They expressed to him about their preaching work and preaching style, and they felt very happy to see his happiness.

So many of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's Godbrothers used to attend the meeting of the *Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-Rāja Sabhā* organised by our *Maṭh*. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj would always give the presidential chair to Śrīpād Bhakti Sāraṅga Goswāmī Mahārāj. Although Śrīpād Goswāmī Mahārāj took *sannyās* from Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj knew that Śrīpād Goswāmī Mahārāj's all-round position was so high within the Gauḍīya mission. He therefore always offered the presidential chair to him.

Once, after accepting that presidential chair, Śrīpād Goswāmī Mahārāj gave a particularly special lecture. He explained that he and other great preachers are active in all directions, but they all wait to see how Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj considers the quality of their preaching style. He used the word '*siṁhāvalokana*.' He indicated, "We are preaching over the whole world, but from time to time we look to see whether Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj is happy with our preaching activities."

Siṁhāvalokana refers to how a lion goes some distance then looks behind to check the environment, then proceeds further, then again looks behind. In this way Śrīpād Goswāmī Mahārāj described how all the preachers again and again look toward Śrīla Guru Mahārāj to see if their preaching has his approval.

'*Rūpa-Saraswatī Dhārā dekhena tomāte*.' Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhu is supreme in the Preceptorial Line of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. Actually, no one says, 'Chaitanya *Sampradāya*.' Rather, the correct name is *Rūpānuga Sampradāya*. Mahāprabhu wanted to establish Rūpa Goswāmī as the Guru of His *sampradāya*. That same

current of Rūpa Goswāmī is flowing through Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. This is the cause that all the devotees of Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākur respect Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. They always saw it, and still to this day they see it in this way.

Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhu was established by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. If we will try to understand this, we must especially take shelter in *Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta*. The expression is given there clearly.

When Mahāprabhu appeared He showed His effulgence as the Lord. At that time Rūpa and Sanātan were the chief administrators in the Bengal government, yet they were devoted to Kṛṣṇa. They felt that Kṛṣṇa would appear at that time, and they tried to understand where He would appear.

When they saw the exalted effulgence of Mahāprabhu they observed Him and came to see Him. It was clear to them that "He is our dearest Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Here He has appeared!" This was the special connection Śrī Rūpa and Śrī Sanātan had with the Lord. At that time their names were Dābir Khās and Sākar Mallik respectively. Sanātan Goswāmī was the Prime Minister, and Rūpa Goswāmī was the Finance Minister. They externally showed themselves as government servants, but internally they always hankered for Kṛṣṇa-*prema*. They saw Nimāi Paṇḍit, Mahāprabhu Gaurasundar as the shining bulb.

Many other devotees knew the divine personality of Mahāprabhu of the infinite world, and had connection with Him. These devotees included Advaita Āchāryya, Haridās Ṭhākur, Śrīvās Paṇḍit, Gadādhara Paṇḍit and Puṇḍarik Vidyānidhi.

So, Rūpa and Sanātan secretly came to see Mahāprabhu, and it was very clear to them that He was in fact their Lord; and they tried to serve Him. The

devotees would meet together and plan their future programme.

They knew Mahāprabhu would take *sannyās*, and they awaited that day. When eventually Rūpa and Sanātan heard Mahāprabhu had indeed taken *sannyās*, they became even more attached to Him. When Mahāprabhu tried to go to Vṛndāvan through Nabadwīp and Rāmakeli, thousands of people followed Mahāprabhu in *saṅkīrttan*. At that time, Rūpa and Sanātan secretly met with Mahāprabhu in the village of Rāmakeli.

Rūpa and Sanātan lived near Rāmakeli. At night they changed their rich dress for very humble devotee clothing, and met with Mahāprabhu. They took blades of grass between their teeth and fell down at the Lotus Feet of Mahāprabhu, expressing:

**mat-tulyo nāsti pāpātmā
nāparādhī cha kaśchana
parihāre 'pi lajjā me
kiṁ bruve puruṣottama**

“We are most insignificant and unqualified, we are not fit to present ourselves before You. We are very fallen, please rescue us!” Hearing their words Mahāprabhu's heart melted to see their mood of devotion.

Mahāprabhu embraced them, and instructed them, “Do not be frustrated. Go back and do your jobs.”

Earlier Rūpa and Sanātan had written many letters to Mahāprabhu, and Mahāprabhu had encouraged them, saying,

**para-vyasaninī nārī
vyagrāpi gṛha-karmmasu
tad evāsvādayaty antar
nava-saṅga-rasāyanam**

“Be like a paramour lover who always thinks of her lover but outwardly does all the usual duties within the family. You be like that, and when the right time will come, Kṛṣṇa will relieve you from your mundane jobs.”

In this way Rūpa Goswāmī had earlier received some nourishment, and when he met Mahāprabhu in Rāmakeli, Mahāprabhu gave him and his elder brother Sanātan even more hope: “Go back, and at the right time Kṛṣṇa will take you from your mundane posts. You are both my eternal servitors so you have no fear from anywhere. Kṛṣṇa will help you.”

Before going back they explained, “Oh Mahāprabhu, the King here is Muslim. No doubt he is sympathetic towards You, but if he sees this large following, he may change his mind. If you go with these thousands and thousands of people the king may feel some threat from you and try to harm you.”

Later Rūpa met with Mahāprabhu when He was on his way back from Vṛndāvan. Mahāprabhu taught Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī and gave him the charge of organising His Mission in Maṭhurā and Vṛndāvan. Mahāprabhu instructed him to reveal the lost holy places of Kṛṣṇa’s Pastimes, and to compose scriptures to relay the teachings that He would impart to him. Mahāprabhu Himself was the teacher of Rūpa Goswāmī, and He expected that Rūpa Goswāmī would be the leader of His *sampradāya*.

Mahāprabhu met with Rūpa Goswāmī in Prayāg, and He met with Sanātan Goswāmī in Benares. Both of these Goswāmīs are the direct students of Mahāprabhu Śrī Chaitanyadev. Mahāprabhu did not teach others as a teacher but as an adviser, but He personally taught Rūpa and Sanātan Goswāmī. They learnt from Mahāprabhu as students, and Mahāprabhu made them into Masters in the

line of His divine conception. That was the first stage of the manifestation of Śrī Rūpa Goswāmī.

Later Rūpa Goswāmī met again with Mahāprabhu in Nīlāchala. At that time Mahāprabhu received Rūpa Goswāmī as His son. Mahāprabhu did not break any of the laws of Jagannāth-*kṣetra*, so he gave shelter to Haridās Ṭhākur in a thatched garden-house of Tapan Miśra. When Rūpa Goswāmī came there He also gave him shelter in that garden along with Haridās Ṭhākur. When Sanātan would come to meet with Mahāprabhu he would also stay with Haridās Ṭhākur.

Mahāprabhu's nature was to not disturb the environment. Sympathetic dealings with nature is the best attitude for Vaiṣṇavism. Our Guru Mahārāj said that actual *varṇāśram-dharmma* is to deal sympathetically with nature. *Varṇāśram* is organised so as not to disturb the natural flow within this world. Within that flow we can manifest our divine practising life through our activity, so there is no necessity to disturb that.

Mahāprabhu did not want to establish *brāhmaṇism*, an external thing, but what He gave was far superior. His gift is superior to any 'ism.' He taught Rūpa Goswāmī in Prayāg and told His associates, "You will come to see just how qualified he is." Establishing Rūpa Goswāmī as His best student He threw open a challenge to all the experts such as Rāmānanda Rāy, Svarūp Dāmodar, Sārva-bhauma Paṇḍit, Bhagavān Āchāryya, Sikhi Māhiti, and many *paṇḍits* of the King who were followers of Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. There were hundreds of very big personalities who were associates of Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. Furthermore, Mahāprabhu considered Rāmānanda Rāy as an equal to Himself, or even more—as Guru.

Svarūp Dāmodar is considered as a second manifesta-

tion of Mahāprabhu: *śākṣāt Mahāprabhura dvitiya Svarūpa*. However, Mahāprabhu decided that His *sampradāya*, His succession, would be through Rūpa Goswāmī. He did not say that it will go through Svarūp Dāmodar although he was considered to be almost more than Mahāprabhu. If anyone wanted to offer Mahāprabhu a poem or any composition it would come first to Svarūp Dāmodar, and if it was agreeable to him, only then would it be presented to Mahāprabhu. Without this process, none could go directly to Mahāprabhu.

Mahāprabhu wanted to learn from Rāmānanda Rāy when they were on the banks of the Godāvārī. *Eka Rāmānanda hoy ithe adhikāra*: “He is a living *mukta-puruṣa*. No one else can behave like Rāmānanda Rāy within this mundane plane.” Although Mahāprabhu gave him such a great certificate, He did not show His succession there.

Instead, Mahāprabhu made Rūpa Goswāmī His successor and presented him in an assembly of all the generals. Mahāprabhu told them, “Test this man.” Rāmānanda Rāy was the judge and he questioned Rūpa Goswāmī about his plays *Lalitā Mādhava* and *Vidagdha Mādhava*. Rāmānanda Rāy himself had earlier written the play *Jagannāth Vallabha Nāṭaka*.

Mahāprabhu made as judges Rāmānanda Rāy, Svarūp Dāmodar and Sārsvabhauma Bhaṭṭāchāryya, but the chief judge was Rāmānanda Rāy. He questioned Rūpa Goswāmī on the style in which he had written various parts of the plays, and also posed many questions about Rūpa Goswāmī’s opinions. Rūpa Goswāmī answered them perfectly, one by one. Everyone in that assembly was stunned, including Haridās Ṭhākur who was the first person to preach the Hare Kṛṣṇa Mahāmantra, before even Mahāprabhu by a few years.

Several times Haridās Ṭhākur had undergone great austerity and trials. He was even beaten in twenty-two market places by guards intending to kill him. He faced so many tests but he crossed them all, and showed the glories of *Śrī Harinām*. Haridās Ṭhākur said about Rūpa Goswāmī's *śloka* glorifying the Name, "We have never before heard such chanting of the glories of the Holy Name."

Rāmānanda Rāy said, "*Kim kāvyena kavas tasya....* The real Kṛṣṇa conception that has been given by Mahāprabhu has been presented by Rūpa Goswāmī in this assembly, and we are stunned to hear it. Such things are beyond human expression, yet Rūpa Goswāmī has accomplished this."

When Mahāprabhu asked Rāmānanda Rāy, "What have you gathered from his expression?" Rāmānanda replied, "It is unbelievably excellent. You have given him everything You heard from me. I have no doubt of this. Furthermore, his presentation is superior to anyone's. *Kim kāvyena kavas tasya*. He is certainly a great poet. We are stunned to hear his poetry. *Kim kāṇḍena dhanuṣ-mataḥ*: if a hero cannot strike his target he cannot be a great hero. Rūpa Goswāmī is such a great hero that he never once misses. We all accept that he is Your representative."

They said, "You must have given all Your mercy to him, otherwise it is not possible that he can give us this presentation in this way."

Mahāprabhu accepted their statements although this was very much against His nature, in the sense that Mahāprabhu never expressed, "I am a *paṇḍit*." But on this occasion He said, "Yes, I have given My mercy to him." This is extraordinary. The Lord did not stop there. "It is not sufficient for Me to say that I have given My mercy. I

want you all to give your mercy and blessings to Rūpa that he will give My conception in this world.”

They replied, “When You have given Your grace, that is sufficient.”

But Mahāprabhu objected, “No, it is not sufficient. You are all my friends, so give him your mercy, then he will be enriched with pure love of Kṛṣṇa and will be able to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness.”

They all unhesitatingly gave their blessings to Rūpa Goswāmī. This was a beautiful meeting. In this way Mahāprabhu made the exalted, golden form of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī and gave him the whole charge of His *sampradāya*.

After that, Rūpa Goswāmī stayed with Mahāprabhu for one year in Jagannāth Purī where he learned more and more. Then he went to Vṛndāvan Dhām to preach.

Kavi Karṇapūra was also empowered by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and he gave the corresponding identities of all Mahāprabhu’s devotees in Kṛṣṇa-*līlā*. He said that in Kṛṣṇa-*līlā* Rūpa Goswāmī is Rūpa Mañjarī, the leader of all the *mañjarīs*. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the Chief Mistress Servitor of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and Lalitā, Viśākhā, Chitrā, Champakalatikā, Tuṅgavidyā, Indulekhā, Sudevī and Raṅgadevikā are the eight principal *sakhīs* of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. The head is Lalitādevī, and under Her is Rūpa Mañjarī who is present in Gaura-*līlā* as Rūpa Goswāmī.

If we don’t consider Vakreśvara Paṇḍit as Mahāprabhu’s disciple, we may say that Kavi Karṇapūra was the only disciple of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu at that time. Kavi Karṇapūra was the son of Śivānanda Sen. When he was still in the womb, Mahāprabhu instructed Śivānanda Sen to give him the name Purīdās. However, when he was born, Śivānanda Sen gave the name

Chaitanyadās instead. When the boy was young, not more than five years old, he came with his father to see Mahāprabhu. The Lord asked his name. Someone said it is Chaitanyadās, and Mahāprabhu was a little shy and objected, “No, his name is Puridās. Why have you given him the name Chaitanyadās?”

Mahāprabhu then gave good nourishment to that boy. He instructed him, “Oh Puridās, now you chant the Holy Names. Chant ‘Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare, Hare Rāma Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma Hare Hare.’” But that boy would not say anything. Twice and thrice Mahāprabhu insisted that he chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. Mahāprabhu was surprised. He thought, “The whole world is chanting the Holy Names of Kṛṣṇa as soon as I tell them to chant, but this boy cannot chant! What is this?”

He asked Svarūp Dāmodar why this boy did not chant: “Everyone chants the Hare Kṛṣṇa Mahāmantra when I instruct them, but not this boy. Why won’t he chant?”

Svarūp Dāmodar replied, “Oh, that boy has just been initiated by You. He feels You are the World-Guru, You are Kṛṣṇa Himself, and You have just given him initiation. He has just received the mantram from You, therefore he is not saying it outwardly.”

Surprised, Mahāprabhu said, “This boy is very intelligent!” In this way Puridās received his special initiation. That Puridās was later known by the name Kavi Karṇapūra and he composed *Chaitanya Chandradoya Nāṭaka*, an inconceivably excellent play. We cannot believe it humanly possible to write such a play. He graced that play with all the wealth of Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. He also composed *Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā* and *Kṛṣṇa-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā*.

We learn through Kavi Karṇapūra and other devotees

such as Svarūp Dāmodar, Raghunāth Dās and Śrīla Jīva Goswāmī, that Mahāprabhu Himself gave the power of His *sampradāya* to Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī. Rūpa Goswāmī is the supreme personality in Mahāprabhu Chaitanyadev's *sampradāya*, and he carries the preceptorial line of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. This is the history, a very serious subject matter. I think you may understand what I have tried to express.

Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhu is also glorified by Narottam Dās Ṭhākur who, it is mentioned in the Scriptures, is a non-different form of Mahāprabhu Himself. In his glorification of Rūpa Goswāmī, Narottam Dās Ṭhākur included the entire *siddhānta*, the supreme mood of devotion and the supreme glories of Rūpa Goswāmī. Until this very day, that particular devotional prayer is the life of the Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇavas. Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākur wanted to hear this during his last moments in this world, and he wanted to hear it from no one but Śrīla Guru Mahārāj.

Although Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākur was very soft-hearted, he could not tolerate anyone else but Śrīla Guru Mahārāj singing that song. So he exclaimed, "No, I do not want to hear the tune. This song will be sung by Śrīdhar Mahārāj only." That song was:

**śrī-rūpa-mañjarī pada sei mora sampada,
sei mora bhajana-pūjana;
sei mora prāṇa-dhana, sei mora ābharāṇa,
sei mora jīvanera jīvana.**

I do not wish to try to express this song in English, because very deep truths are within it. On special days such as the Appearance and Disappearance Days of Śrīla Saraswatī Ṭhākur and Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhu, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj would himself sing this song, thereby giving the blessings

of Rūpa Goswāmī to all the assembled devotees. He would sing it at other particular times as well.

Remembering these Pastimes, I am thinking we are so fortunate to be in the line of that Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhu.

Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhu, *kī jaya!* Prabhupād Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākur, *kī jaya!* Om Viṣṇupad Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj, *kī jaya!* All the assembled devotees, *kī jaya!* Harinām Saṅkīrtana, *kī jaya!* Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Śrīdhar Mission, *kī jaya!* Jaya Nāmāchāryya Śrīla Haridās Ṭhākur, *kī jaya!* Gaura Premānande, Hari Hari bol!