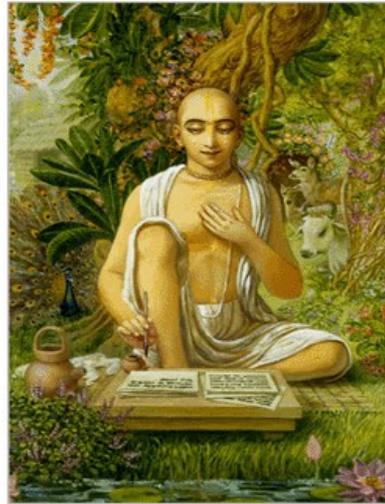




Glory of Bharath » Santh Darsan

Sri Rupa Goswami/td>



Rupa Goswami (1489-1564) was an Indian devotional teacher (guru), poet, and philosopher from the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition of Hinduism. Alongside his brother Sanatana Goswami, he was considered the leader of the Six Goswamis of Vrindavan associated with Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Biography

Rupa's lineage can be traced back to Karnataka in South India where his Saraswata Brahmana ancestors held influential positions. Rupa Goswami's nephew, Jiva Goswami has explained in his Laghu Tosani that Rupa's ancestors were of the Bharadvaja gotra and were learned in the Yajur Veda. A brahmana called Sarvajna was seventh in the ascending genealogical line of Rupa Goswami and was known by the title 'jagad-guru' (Universal teacher) being both a learned scholar and king. His son, Aniruddha was also an acclaimed scholar and had two sons, named Harihara and Rupesvara. While Rupesvara was knowledgeable in the Vedic literatures, his brother became expert in weaponry and politics. When their father died, the kingdom was divided between the two sons. However, Harihara took Rupesvara's land by force and forced the family to migrate to Paurastyadesa. Padmanabha relocated his family to Nabahatta (Naihati) on the banks of the Ganges River. Padmanabha had eighteen daughters and five sons, the youngest son being named Mukunda.

Early life

When there was religious upheaval, Mukunda's son, Kumaradeva, moved to Jessore. His sons were Santosha (Rupa), Amara (Sanatana) and Srivallabha (Anupama). On the demise of Kumaradeva, the three sons moved to Sakurma, near to the capital of Gaudadesa (Bengal) where they continued their studies.

The three brothers studied the Nyaya-sastras (treatise on justice) from the famous logician Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya and his brother Madhusudana Vidyavacaspatis. They also studied Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian.

Due to their noble characters and academic proficiency, Rupa and his elder brother Sanatana were later forced into government service by the sultan of Bengal, Alauddin Hussein Shah (1493-1519 CE) which led to their excommunication from Hindu society by the orthodox caste brahmanas of Gauda. Rupa became the Sultan's chief secretary (dabir khas), while Sanatana became the state revenue minister (sakara mallika).

First meeting with Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

Rupa and his brothers made their residence at the state capital of Ramakeli and it was here, in 1514 CE, that they met Chaitanya Mahaprabhu for the first time. The meeting changed their lives and they decided to leave the service of the Sultan and take up a life of renunciation in the association of Chaitanya and his followers. Rupa loaded all his wealth onto two boats and left with his brother Anupama for their ancestral home at Fatiabad in Jessore, where they distributed it. They then sent two messengers to Puri in Orissa to get news of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's plans. The messengers returned with the news that Chaitanya had already left Puri for Vrindavana. Rupa and Anupama immediately decided to go and they wrote a letter to Sanatana telling him of their plans and asking him to meet them in Vrindavana. They also told him that they had left 10,000 gold coins in case he was in need of financial help. Later, when Sanatana was thrown into prison by the Sultan for disobedience, he used this money to bribe the jailer and escaped to Varanasi to meet with Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Second meeting with Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

After visiting Vrindavana, Chaitanya stopped at the holy city of Prayaga (modern day Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh). It was here that Rupa and Anupama met him for the second time. At the Dasavamedha Ghat (a famous bathing area on the banks of the River Ganges), Chaitanya imparted instructions to Rupa Goswami and explained all the intricacies of the doctrine of Gaudiya Vaishnavism. Rupa Goswami was specifically

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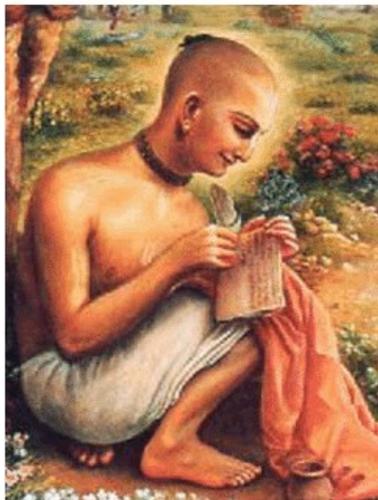
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commanded by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to carry out two tasks: to re-locate and preserve the lost holy places of Vrindavana, and to write and preach Gaudiya Vaisnava theology. He then sent Rupa Goswami to Vrindavana to carry out these orders.

Jagannatha Puri

Later, on the order of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Rupa Goswami came to Puri and resided there for ten months. During the time of the annual Rath Yatra festival in Puri, Rupa Goswami composed one mystical verse that Chaitanya Mahaprabhu requested him to read to his most intimate associates. Upon hearing this verse, all the assembled Vaishnavas praised Rupa Goswami for his outstanding composition that was filled with deep devotion to Krishna. Due to this, it was proclaimed that Rupa Goswami was the very embodiment of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's esoteric teachings of rasa (divine mellows). Because of this, Rupa Goswami is considered by Vaishnavas to be the foremost follower of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and those that strictly follow in his preceptoral line are known as Rupanugas (followers of Rupa).



Vrindavana

Rupa and Sanatana remained in Vrindavana for the remainder of their lives. Their mood of renunciation and devotion was exemplary. Rupa uncovered various holy places associated with the pastimes of Krishna and rediscovered the famous deity of Govindadeva, which was originally installed and worshipped by Krishna's great-grandson, Maharaja Vajranabha. Rupa and Sanatana were intimately connected with other Vaishnava saints in Vrindavana such as Lokanatha Goswami, Bhugarbha Goswami, Gopala Bhatta Goswami, Raghunatha Bhatta Goswami and Raghunatha Dasa Goswami.

Shortly after, they were also joined by their nephew Jiva Goswami who was given initiation by Rupa and personally trained by him in the philosophy of Gaudiya Vaishnavism. Rupa Goswami departed from this world in 1564 CE and his samadhi (tomb) is located in the courtyard of the Radha-Damodara temple in Vrindavana. In Gaudiya Vaishnava theology, Rupa Goswami is considered to be the incarnation of Rupa Manjari, the foremost junior cowherd damsel who eternally serves Radha-Krishna under the guidance of Lalita (gopi).

Importance

Even though there are so many great acaryas, Srila Rupa Goswami has been attributed with the honor of being that person who has established the mano-'bhistam, the innermost heart's desire, of Sri Krishna in the form of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Lord Chaitanya gave one drop of the ocean of rasa to Srila Rupa Goswami, and that one drop was sufficient to inundate millions upon millions of universes. Later, He met with Srila Sanatana Goswami in Varanasi.

After some time Srila Rupa Goswami and Srila Sanatana Goswami came here to Vrindavana and began to perform their bhajana, their hearing, chanting, and remembering Krishna.

Rupa Goswami thought, "In order to fulfill the innermost heart's desire of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu I will write a drama. In this drama I will explain the beauty of the meeting pastimes of Srimati Radhika and Sri Krishna in Vrindavana, and also the separation pastimes, when Lord Krishna leaves Vrindavana and goes to Mathura and Dvaraka. I will explain how, by their expansions, Srimati Radhika and all the sakhis somehow or other went to Dvaraka and became Lord Krishna's 16,108 queens." He intended to write about this, but while he was traveling towards Jagannatha Puri he came to the village of Satyabhama-pura. There, Srimati Satyabhama-devi, Lord Krishna's chief queen, appeared to him in a dream and told him, "Please don't make this only one drama. Rather, divide it into two parts."

Then, when Srila Rupa Goswami finally arrived at Jagannatha Puri and met with Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the Lord confirmed what he had heard from Srimati Satyabhama in his dream. Sriman Mahaprabhu told him, "Don't take Lord Krishna out of Vrindavana." "Krishna never leaves Vrindavana. He never even sets one foot outside of Vrindavana." Srila Rupa Goswami then divided his drama into two parts. The first part is called Vidagdha-madhava, Sri Krishna's pastimes in Vrindavana; and in the second part, called Lalita-madhava, He goes to Dvaraka and all the gopis of Vrindavana were reunited with Him in the form of the queens of Dvaraka.

Srila Rupa Goswami, has written about the moods of both meeting and separation - because this separation mood is a very deep transcendental ecstatic feeling. At the time of meeting, though Radharani and Krishna are together, something may be forgotten or lost in the heart. On the other hand, at the time of separation, there is complete meeting in new and fresh ways in the heart; and not only inside, but sometimes externally there are sphurtis, temporary visions in which the loved one is actually present.

Knowing all these very deep transcendental established truths, and wanting to establish the desire of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu within the world, Srila Rupa Goswami also glorified the mood of separation. Although

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this mood is very high and has many transcendental features that will not come at the time of meeting, still, it is not our goal of life.

No Gaudiya Vaisnavas want Sri Radha and Krishna to be eternally separated. What kind of person would want this? No Vrajavasi would want it. Rather, there is a place for this separation mood, and Srila Rupa Goswami has explained this in his book, *Ujjvala Nilamani*: "Na vina vipralambha sambhoga pusti masnute. Without the mood of separation, the mood of meeting will not be nourished and come to increasingly higher stages. The pastimes of separation are very important because they play the role of nourishing the sweetness of meeting."

When Srila Rupa Goswami was in Puri with Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the Lord was dancing at the Rathayatra festival and uttering a verse from a book of mundane poetry called *sahitya-darpana*: No one could understand why Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was uttering this verse and in what mood He was absorbed. There was one young boy there, however, named Rupa, who later on became that very same Rupa Goswami. There and then, upon hearing this verse from Mahaprabhu, another verse appeared in his own heart, and he wrote down that verse.

In this verse Srila Rupa Goswami has clarified Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's inner meaning and thus he revealed to the world the importance of *parakiya-rasa*, the mood of paramour love between Lord Krishna and the gopis. Srila Rupa Goswami is that very person who established within this world the innermost heart's desire of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

According to scripture, mundane *rasa*, this world's love between those who are unmarried, is very immoral, illicit and sinful. However, in addition to manifesting the endless varieties and wonder of *vipralambha* and *sambhoga*, the meeting and separation pastimes of Radha and Krishna, Srila Rupa Goswami also established the superiority of *parakiya-rasa*. By using evidence from many different sastras, he proved that Lord Sri Krishna is not an ordinary *nayaka* (lover) and Radhika is not an ordinary *nayika* (beloved). In other words, when there is meeting between a mundane lover and beloved in the *parakiya* mood it is very sinful, but Sri Krishna is a transcendental personality, God Himself, and everything is possible for Him. Therefore, if He is the object of the *parakiya-bhava*, there is no fault or defect in this. Rather this is the topmost supremely pure manifestation of *madhurya-prema*, the romantic mood.

Srila Rupa Goswami established the fact that Lord Krishna Himself came into this world to taste these mellows, and, as Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Krishna Himself experienced this *parakiya-bhakti-rasa* which is within the heart of Srimati Radhika.

Works

Rupa Goswami wrote a number of texts in Sanskrit on philosophy, poetics, drama and dramaturgy. The following is a list of some of his most well-known works:

- **Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu** (The Ocean of Nectar of Divine Love): *Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu* can be considered to be one of the most important books in Gaudiya Vaishnavism. It elaborately describes gradations of *bhakti* from its lowest stage of *sraddha* (faith) up to its highest stage of *maha-bhava* (ultimate ecstasy in love of Godhead).
- **Ujjvala-nilamani** (The Sapphire of Divine Love): This work exclusively explains the conception of *madhurya-rasa* (divine conjugal love). *Ujjvala-nilamani* is considered to be a sequel to the *Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu*.
- **Laghu-bhagavatamrta** (A Summary of Nectar about Godhead): It is a summary of Sanatana Goswami's book *Brhat-bhagavatamrta*. It begins by explaining the intrinsic nature of Krishna and his incarnations and subsequently deals with devotees of Krishna.
- **Vidagdhamadhava** (1524) & **Lalitamadhava** (1529): Rupa originally began to write these two dramas as one in 1516 but he completed them as two separate plays in *Vikram Samvat* 1581 (1524) and *Saka era* 1451 (1529) respectively. It is said that Rupa had a vision of *Satyabhama*, one of Krishna's queens in *Dvaraka*, who told him to divide the book into two separate dramas. Thus, *Lalitamadhava* deals with Krishna's pastimes in *Dvaraka*, and *Vidagdhamadhava* narrates Krishna's pastimes in *Vrindavana*.
- **Stavamala** (The Flower Garland of Prayers): This is a compilation of short works, some of which are often published as separate books.
- **Danakelikaumudi** (The Lotus-like Tax-collecting Pastimes) (1549): This *Bh??ik?* (one-act play) was written in *Saka era* 1471 (1549) and narrates the *danakeli* (tax-collecting pastime) between Krishna and the Gopis of *Vrindavana*.
- **Sri Radha-Krishna-ganoddesa-dipika** (A Lamp to See the Associates of Radha-Krishna) (1550): In this book, Rupa Goswami lists the associates of Radha and Krishna and describes their characteristics.
- **Mathura-mahatmya** (The Glories of Mathura): This book tells the glories of Mathura, in the form of a conversation between *Varaha* (the boar incarnation of Vishnu) and the Earth Goddess. Rupa Goswami explains various processes of devotional service by quoting statements from various Hindu scriptures and establishes that Mathura vanquishes all one's sinful reactions and awards piety and liberation.
- **Uddhava-sandesa** (News of Uddhava): In this work, Rupa Goswami narrates the story from the *Bhagavata Purana* of Krishna requesting his friend Uddhava to go to *Vrindavana* and pacify his friends and relations by reminding them of their pastimes with him.
- **Hamsa-dutam** (The Swan Messenger): This text tells the story how *Lalita*, the confidante of Radha, sends a messenger in the form of a swan to Krishna in *Dwaraka*.
- **Sri Krishna-janma-tithi-vidhi**: This short work is a *paddhati* (manual on ritual worship) explaining

the process of worshipping the deity of Krishna during the festival of Janmastami, the birthday of Krishna celebrated by Vaishnavas in August/September.

- **Nataka-chandrika** (The Illuminating Moon of Dramatics) This book explains the rules of Gaudiya Vaisnava dramaturgy.
- **Upadesamrta** (The Nectar of Instruction): This short work contains eleven verses of instructions to aspirants on the path of devotion to Krishna. The Upadesamrta was originally a part of the Stavamala.