

Srila BR Sridhar Maharaja affirms our Srila Prabhupada's manjari-bhava and preaching strategy

In this extract from the very end of "Sri Guru and his Grace", Srila Sridhar Maharaja eloquently reveals the sublime position of the manjari followers of Sri Rupa Manjari. He also very tactfully and poetically points out that our Srila Prabhupada is in this group, and that he has given indications to us that we will understand and follow when we mature in bhakti. This is a most sublime example of Maharaja's appreciation of our Srila Prabhupada's position, and of his tactful explanation that our Srila Prabhupada left covered instructions for us ("he gave you a clue") that we will understand and realise when we have matured sufficiently ("we are minors, but we must become majors").

Srila Sridhar Maharaja

Who is Rupa? Rupa Manjari. Generally the hierarchy in the spiritual world is eternal. New recruits can occupy a particular rank of manjari, assistant, in madhurya-rasa. And the leader of the manjaris is Sri Rupa Manjari.

What is the special feature in the manjari camp which is not found among the sakhis, girlfriends of Krishna? First there is Radharani, then the camp of Her right-hand personal attendant, Lalita. Then, under Lalita, there is Sri Rupa Manjari. What is the unique position of the followers of Sri Rupa? The new recruits can attain to that status. Now, the privilege of this manjari class we are to conceive most respectfully and attentively.

When Radha and Govinda are in secrecy, in a private place, the sakhis, who are well-versed in the art of that kind of play because they are a little grown-up, do not like to approach there to disturb Their confidential mixing. If the more grown-up sakhis enter there, both Radha and Govinda will feel shy. So their presence may create some disturbance. But the younger girls can enter there, and then Radha and Govinda have no hesitation in free mixing. So in that highest stage of the mixing of Radha-Govinda, the free play of Radha-Govinda, these manjaris, the younger girls, can have admission. But the grown-up sakhis cannot have admission there. New recruits may come up to the manjari class. And the manjaris have that sort of special advantage under the leadership of Sri Rupa Manjari. So, they get the best advantage there, the most sacred type of pure service, which is not open even to the sakhis, is open to the manjaris.

That is found in Radharani's camp. So, the position of the rupanugas, the followers of Sri Rupa, is the most profitable position.

Comment

"Anuga" means following, and "rupanuga" means following Sri Rupa. Here, Srila Sridhar Maharaja defines "rupanuga" as our Srila Gurudeva has done, as following, not only Sri Rupa Goswami, but also Sri Rupa Manjari.

Srila Sridhar Maharaja

That has been given out by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. That has been shown by Him, and that is fixed as the highest limit of our fortune in Krishna's concern. This is unexpectable, undesignable and beyond hope, but our prospect lies there in that subtle camp of Sri Rupa Manjari, Rupa Goswami. So, the camp, the sampradaya of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is known as the rupanuga sampradaya.

Comment

Srila Sridhar Maharaja affirms that our particular line of descent from Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is a sampradaya of manjari followers of Sri Rupa Manjari. According to his statement, this must include anyone in this sampradaya, including himself and my Guru Maharaja, Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja Srila Prabhupada.

Srila Sridhar Maharaja

There our fate and our fortune is located. Now we have to conduct ourself in such a way that naturally we can connect with that highest, purest spiritual conception from here. We must not allow ourselves to be satisfied with anything less than this highest ideal. That should be the highest goal of our life. And we must adjust our approach from our present position.

### Comment

Srila Sridhar Maharaja is speaking with a group of Swami Maharaja Srila Prabhupada's disciples. He includes himself in the group ("we" "our"), although he is of course on a totally different level. When Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Prabhupada was preparing to leave this world, he famously instructed Srila Sridhar Maharaja to sing "sri rupa manjari pada".

### Srila Sridhar Maharaja

We are minors. Our father has left us with so many important documents about the properties we are to inherit. As minors, we should try to find out what properties belong to us in those documents. When we come of age, then we shall take possession of our rightful inheritance. The raganuga-shastra, the scriptures of spontaneous devotional love, has been given to us, left to us, by our guru, our guardian, our father.

### Comment

Here, Srila Sridhar Maharaja is humbly including himself in the group of devotees who have not yet matured in devotion. (He is senior to our Srila Prabhupada, who referred to him as his shiksha-guru.) "We are minors" means "we are not yet mature in bhakti." In the context of this conversation, "our guru, our guardian, our father" refers to our Srila Prabhupada, who holds that position for the disciples to whom Maharaja was speaking. It cannot mean Srila Sarasvati Prabhupada, because he is parama-guru and grandfather for the devotees in that group. The "so many important documents" are the many references and descriptions in Srila Prabhupada's books that point to raga-bhakti as the real goal of vaidhi-bhakti. "The properties we are to inherit" refers to the wealth of rupanuga-bhakti that Srila Prabhupada wants us to have. "When we come of age" means "when we mature sufficiently to understand and realise that raganuga-bhakti is the real goal of bhakti".

### Srila Sridhar Maharaja

And as we grow more and more in the spiritual line, we will have to detect what is our prospect, what is our real wealth. We must recover that. We must have that. It is there in the document. It is ours. This is our position. We are minors, but we must become majors and demand the service meant for us by our guardians.

Devotee: We are putting in our claim with you. We think that in the absence of our father, the court has appointed a guardian, in order to keep us out of mischief and also to regulate our inheritance.

Srila Sridhar Maharaj: This is not mine. This is the property of my gurudeva. And Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada gave you a clue. He has distributed the key widely, and given a clue: "With the key come and open the iron chest and find out what valuable ornaments and gems are within the chest."

### Comment

"It is there in the document" means "Your Srila Prabhupada has clearly stated this in many places in his books." The devotee tries to put Srila Sridhar Maharaja in his natural, superior position, but Maharaja humbly demurs. Then he says that Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada "gave you a clue". In other words, he did not state so openly what he meant us to understand. "Has distributed the key widely." What has our Srila Prabhupada distributed widely? His books, which Maharaja has already identified with the raganuga-shastra. Did Srila Prabhupada state this openly for all? No. "He gave you a clue." The "iron chest" suggests something that is not very attractive or beautiful in itself, but it has a wonderful treasure inside. The iron chest is regulated devotional service, vaidhi-bhakti, which sometimes appears drab, but is a necessary stage in our onward progress. When we have understood the real import and intention of Srila Prabhupada's books (by studying them under the guidance of rasika devotees), we will have that key in our hands. Then we will be able to open the iron chest of vaidhi-bhakti, and find the ornaments and gems inside. This is reminiscent of Srila Narottama dasa Thakura's description of his manjari svarupa: kripa-alankara bhusitam, "I am decorated with ornaments of divine mercy."

I know that some will relish these sweet moods of Srila Sridhar Maharaja as they obviously are. I also know that some will want to argue that white is black and black is white. May they be satisfied by their own activities, because the sweetness of submission to our sublime acaryas will elude them

altogether.

Srila Sridhar Maharaj ki jaya!

Srila Prabhupada ki jaya!

