श्रीउज्ज्वलसारसङ्ग्रहः

Śrī Ujjvala-sāra-sangrahaņ

or

A Selection of Stanzas from: Rūpa Gosvāmin's Blazing Sapphire

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The Ujjvala-sāra-sangrahaņ

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A Selected Stanzas from Rūpa Gosvāmin's *Blazing Sapphire* (Kṛṣṇa in Love)

Selected, edited, translated, introduced, and annotated by Neal Delmonico and Elizabeth Delmonico

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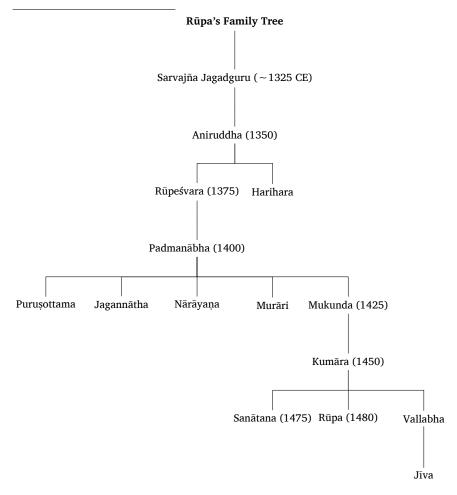
Introduction to the Blazing Sapphire

The Blazing Sapphire or Ujjvala-nīlamaņi is the work of Rūpa Gosvāmin, the 16th century poet/theologian who was a direct disciple of the Kṛṣṇaite reformer Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya of Bengal (1486-1534 CE). We know a few things about Rūpa: he and his elder brother Sanātana, for instance, were ministers in the court of the Muslim Nawab Husein Shah of Bengal (reigned from 1494–1519); his was a family of learned brahmins that, according to his nephew Śrī Jīva, were once kings in the distant land of Karnataka.¹ As ministers of the Nawab, Rūpa and Sanātana had probably lost their caste standing and were looking for a way to return to the Hindu fold in some way. Śrī Caitanya provided them with that avenue.

Rūpa and Sanātana met with Caitanya secretly in 1509 CE at a place called Rāmakeli—near the Nawab's capital—as Caitanya passed through on his first attempt at making a pilgrimage to Vṛndāvana, the holy land of Kṛṣṇa. Caitanya asked them to go to Vṛndāvana, write books on *bhakti*, and uncover the sites of Kṛṣṇa's divine play (līlā) there. Shortly thereafter the two brothers made their escape from the court of the Nawab and made a run for Vṛndāvana. Rūpa, who left first with his younger brother Vallabha, successfully evaded the

¹Śrī Jīva gives a history of his ancestry at the end of his *Abridged Pleaser of Vaiṣṇavas* (*Laghu-vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī*), a shortened version of a commentary by Sanātana on the *Bhāga-vata Purāṇa*. The passage is also given fully in *The Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana (Vṛndāvanera Chaya Gosvāmī*) by Nareśacandra Jānā, pp. 11-13 and his discussion of the passage is on pages 13-19. (Calcutta, India: Kalikātā Viśvavidyālaya, 1970)

Nawab's men and arrived at his destination without being troubled by the Nawab. Sanātana was less fortunate. Since he remained behind the Nawab arrested him and threw him in prison for some time until he was able to convince a guard to take a bribe. Once free he traveled incognito (dressed as a Sufi, it seems) to Vṛndāvana connecting on the way with Caitanya at Vārānasī. The brothers lived in Vṛndāvana for the rest of their long lives². He and his older brother produced



²The exact dates of the births and deaths of Sanātana and Rūpa are not known.

numerous poems, plays, and theological works in Sanskrit that helped place the tradition inspired by Śrī Caitanya on firm literary and textual foundations.

The Blazing Sapphire is among Rūpa's final works, composed after a lifetime of poetic and dramatic study and practice. It contains over fourteen hundred Sanskrit stanzas (*sloka*), some of which are didactic in nature, but most of which are single-stanza poems designed to exemplify and evoke the various complex moods and feelings (*bhaktirasa*) associated with the culture of love (*prema*) centered on Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is the lover god of India before whom all the beauties and loves of the world are said to fade into insignificance. The text, therefore, is not only meant to analyze and to teach about the religious experience of the Caitanya tradition, but to provide the literary vehicle through which it can be experienced as well. The "sapphire" in the work's name points to the blue-complected Kṛṣṇa, the blue jewel or sapphire (*nīlamaṇi*), and the quality of "blazing" (*ujjvala*), which refers to Kṛṣṇa in a state of aroused passion, enflamed with love.

In Rūpa's works, divine love (prema) is expressed in terms of human love which in turn is viewed as a pale semblance of the ultimate loving intimacy of relationship with the divine lord Krsna. Thus, from the perspective of this tradition, what we humans seek most thirstily in the many temporal and temporary intimacies of love among other human beings can only be found in fullness in the intimacy of a loving relationship with Krsna. This emotional connection or relationship with Krsna is called bhakti and to rejoice in that connection is called bhakti-rasa. That relationship contains the prototypes of the rich variety of feelings involved in any loving relationship. This view creates an interesting orientation toward the world in this tradition. The world receives a positive evaluation by being rooted in divine experience, and yet its inability to satisfy is also accounted for. The principals in all our mundane relationships partake of the transitory nature of all the things of this world, making the relationships themselves transitory. This affirmation of the world is a refreshing ori-

Since Caitanya treated Sanātana as a senior collaborator (See Cc. 3.4.154-155, 161-169) I believe that he was somewhat older than Caitanya, perhaps by as many as ten years older, and thus was born around 1475-6 CE. He is thought to have passed away in Vṛndāvana in around 1554-5 CE. Rūpa was younger than Sanātana but slightly older than Caitanya. He was probably born around 1480-1 CE and passed away a couple years after his brother in about 1556-7 CE.

entation in Hinduism, which otherwise has embraced such a strong current of rejection of the world. As the luscious sensuality present in so many of Rūpa's poems indicates, the relationship with Kṛṣṇa is also a sensual and passionate one, but one thought to be based on eternal bodies and identities. As is illustrated by another work of the tradition, the *Eternal Sport of Govinda (Govinda-līlāmṛta)* by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja (1520?-1612?), in Kṛṣṇa's paradise his play (*līlā*) is eternal. According to this tradition, we all have a place in it.

Of the various ways of loving Kṛṣṇa recognized by the Caitanya tradition: loving passively as a serene, contemplative sage or *yogī*, loving as a servant, loving as a parent, loving as a friend, and loving as a lover, the highest for Rūpa was the "sweet one" (*madhura*), loving as a lover, because it affords the greatest possibilities for intimacy with and surrender to Kṛṣṇa. Although Rūpa has mentioned this way of loving and discussed it briefly in his earlier, general work on *bhaktirasa*, the *Ocean of the Nectar of Bhakti-rasa* (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*), the *Blazing Sapphire* is devoted to providing a full elucidation of this sweet way of loving Kṛṣṇa. He says in the second verse of this text that this way of loving Kṛṣṇa is private. There Rūpa suggests that *The Blazing Sapphire* in which sacred erotic rapture forms the main topic is a secret treasure of the followers of Śrī Caitanya, among whom Caitanya is believed to have revealed and personally embodied this kind of love.³

In this work, erotic rapture (*madhura*), the king of sacred raptures (*bhakti-rasa*), is described separately and in great detail. Because it is secret, it has previously been mentioned only briefly among the major forms of sacred rapture.⁴

anarpitacarīm cirāt karuņayāvatīrņah kalau samarpayitum unnatojjvalarasām svabhakitśriyam harih puratasundaradyutikadambasamdīpitah sadā hrdayakandare sphuratu vah śacīnandanah

May Hari (Kṛṣṇa) as the son of Śacī who is radiant with the beautiful glow of gold forever appear in your hearts. He has descended in the Age of Kali out of compassion to bestow a treasure of his own *bhakti* — the sublime blazing rapture (sacred erotic rapture) which has not been given before.

⁴Un., 1.2:

 $^{{}^{3}}$ Rūpa suggests as much in one of the opening stanzas of his play *Clever Mādhava* (*Vidagdha-mādhava*):

Rūpa gives three reasons for avoiding discussion of this "sweet" way of loving Kṛṣṇa in his earlier works: there is a strong possibility of its being misunderstood, it is secret, and it is unsuited for people in the renounced stage of life.⁵ This is more evidence that Caitanya Vaiṣṇavism had departed from the long Hindu-Buddhist tradition of prizing renunciation and rejection of the world above all else. The greatest treasure of the Caitanya tradition is not for renunciants which means *sannyāsins*, those who have renounced family life and worldly attachments in what is typically the fourth stage of life in the Hindu social order.

In structuring his discussion of *madhura-rasa*, Rūpa plugs into the long tradition of reflection on the nature of the experience of art and poetry in classical India, a tradition that culminates in the theory of *rasa* or aesthetic pleasure or rapture.⁶ Literary critics of Sanskrit literature have carefully analyzed the process whereby *rasa* is experienced through literature and art. When certain elements of common

⁵Rūpa Gosvāmin, Ocean of the Nectar of Bhakti-rasa, 3.5.2:

nivrttānupayogitvād durūhatvād ayam rasah rahasyatvācca samksipya vitatāngo'pi likhyate||

⁶I use the word rapture because in Viśvanātha Kavirāja's description of *rasa* in his *Mirror of Literature (Sāhitya-darpaṇa)*, the standard text on *rasa* in the middle ages (14th-15th cents. CE), he describes it as a moment of joyful astonishment that drives all other thoughts and feelings out of the mind. Here is *Sāhitya-darpaṇa*, 3.2:

sattvodrekād akhaņda-svaprakāsānanda-cinmayah vedyāntara-sparša-sūnyo brahmāsvāda-sahodarah lokottara-camatkāra-prāņah kaiscit pramātrbhaih svākāravadabhinnatvenāyam āsvādyate rasah

From an abundance of pure being (*sattva*) it is undivided, self-revealed, joyful consciousness, free from the slighest touch of other objects of awareness, akin to the experience of Brahman, the very life of transcendent astonishment. This rapture (*rasa*) is experienced by some knowers as non-different from themselves like their own bodies.

This understanding of *rasa* is comparable in many ways to Nietzche's notion of *rausch. Rausch* is a German word etymologically related to "rush," but most commonly translated "frenzy." But according to David Farell Krell in a footnote (92, fn) to his translation of Martin Heidegger's work on Nietzsche's conception of the will to power as art, "rapture" the past participle of *rapere*, "to seize" is a better alternative. One is seized by the aesthetic experience. See Heidegger's fascinating study of Nietzche's aesthetics in *Nietzsche (Volume One): the Will to Power as Art*, especially Chapter 14: Rapture as Aesthetic State. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979)

mukhya-raseșu purā yah samkșepenodito rahasyatvāt| prthag eva bhakti-rasa-rāț sa vistarenocyate madhurah||

experience, identified by the technical the terms—deterimants (*vib-hāvas*), consequents (*anubhāvas*), and transitory emotions (*vyabhicāri-bhāvas*)—are described in works of art, particular emotional responses are evoked from the residual memories of audience members and become powerfully present to them once again. Those emotional experiences are shorn of their original occasions or contexts. Freed from those real life situations, they are experienced anew, detached from time and space, and are called *rasa* to distinguish them from ordinary, everyday emotional experiences. In Rūpa's hands *rasa* becomes transformed into *bhakti-rasa*, sacred rapture, the religious experience evoked, as with the aesthetic pleasure, through poetry, drama, and other arts, except that sacred rapture occurs in response to works featuring the the sacred stories of the gods, specifically, in Rūpa's case, the gods. In the third stanza of his *Blazing Sapphire* he says:

When the type of love (*rati*) called *madhura* (sweet, i.e. erotic) is enjoyed through expression of the determinants, and the rest (*vibhāvas*, etc.), it becomes the kind of sacred rapture (*bhakti-rasa*) the wise call sweet.⁷

This is a fairly standard expression of how *rasa* is evoked. Emotions when portrayed in literature are experienced differently from those experienced in our daily lives. Emotions portrayed in literature become generalized ($s\bar{a}dh\bar{a}ran\bar{b}h\bar{a}van\bar{a}$) and touch us in different ways and on deeper levels than emotions experienced in daily life.⁸ For Rūpa and those who follow him, when emotions are portrayed as Kṛṣṇa's or as those of one of his companions' in relationship with Kṛṣṇa, one not only has an opportunity for aesthetic experience (*rasa*), one also and more importantly for the Caitanya tradition, has a chance for a profound religious experience (*bhakti-rasa*), provided one is able to connect with the religious dimensions of the subject matter of the poem or play. Kṛṣṇa can be taken just as an ordinary hero or leading character ($n\bar{a}yaka$) in a poem or drama and thus evoke aesthetic

⁷Rūpa, Blazing Sapphire, 1.3:

vaksyamāṇair vibhāvādyaiḥ svādyatāṃ madhurā ratiḥ| nītā bhatirasaḥ prokto madhurākhyo manīṣibhiḥ||

⁸Compare this view with Jeffrey Zacks' recent work on the neuroscience of film. He says drama gives viewers distilled, condensed, refined emotional experiences. *Flicker: Your Brain on Movies.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014)

rapture. Or, if one's mind is sufficiently steeped in the worldview and ritual practices of the worship of Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa will be recognized not as an ordinary human hero, but as a divine being, or indeed as *the* divine being. Then aesthetic rapture is replaced by sacred rapture. Art becomes a vehicle for religious experience; aesthetic experience is transformed into experience of the sacred.

Part I Text and Translation

Chapter One: Varieties of the Hero

नामाकृष्टरसज्ञः शीलेनोद्दीपयन् सदानन्दम्। निजरूपोत्सवदायी सनातनात्मा प्रभुर्जयति॥१॥

nāmākrstarasajñaḥ śīlenoddīpayan sadānandam | nijarūpotsavadāyī sanātanātmā prabhurjayati|| 1|| Glory to the eternal Lord¹ Whose name attracts those who know rapture.² His character always excites Nanda,³ Giver of the joy of his own beauty.

(or)

Glory to the Master,⁴ who is The very self of my Sanātana.⁵ His tongue repeats the holy name, His character ever delights the good, And he gives joy to his Rūpa.⁶

(or)

Glory to my guide in Sanātana,⁷ Whose tongue repeats the holy name. His character ever delights the good, And he gives joy to his Rūpa.⁸ (1)

¹That is, to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This verse is an example of poetic pun or double-entendre. The same verse is meant to be interpreted in at least three different ways, that is, as indicating three different people, by reading its words in three different ways. The technical term for this in Sanskrit literary theory is *śleṣa* or "embrace." Three different meanings are embraced by this one set of words. In order to demonstrate those three meanings, I have given three translations of this verse. Rūpa has succeeded in offering praise to Lord Kṛṣṇa, his *guru* Śrī Caitanya, and his older brother Sanātana who was also his mentor.

²*Rasa*, or *bhakti-rasa*, sometimes translated as aesthetic rapture and sacred rapture, respectively.

³Nanda, leader of the cowherders of Vraja, who believes he is Kṛṣṇa's father.

⁴In this case, to Śrī Caitanya

⁵Sanātana Gosvāmin, the author Rūpa's elder brother and mentor.

 $^{^6{\}rm The}$ author, Rūpa Gosvāmin. This could also be taken as before: "Giver of the joy of his own beauty."

⁷Again Rūpa's older brother.

⁸Un., 1.1

मुख्यरसेषु पुरा यः संक्षेपेणोदितो रहस्यत्वात् । पृथगेव भक्तिरसराट् स विस्तरेणोच्यते मधुरः॥ २॥

mukhyaraseșu purā yaḥ saṃkṣepeṇodito rahasyatvāt | pṛthageva bhaktirasarāṭ sa vistareṇocyate madhuraḥ|| 2|| Since it's secret among major raptures, It was discussed only briefly before.⁹ *Madhura*,¹⁰ the king of sacred raptures, We describe in depth by itself. (2)

⁹Un., 1.2. In his previous work, *The Ocean of the Nectar of Sacred Rapture (Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu)*, Rūpa gives the following reasons for not expanding on this form of sacred rapture in that book (3.5.2):

nivrttānupayogitvāddurūhatvādayam rasah rahasyatvācca samksipya vitatāngo'pi likhyate

[&]quot;Because it is not suitable for the renounced, because it is hard to understand, and because it is esoteric, this rapture is only briefly described here, though it is vast."

¹⁰The "sweet" sacred rapture (*bhakti-rasa*), that is, the erotic sacred rapture.

वक्ष्यमाणैर्विभावाद्यैः स्वाद्यतां मधुरा रतिः। नीता भक्तिरसः प्रोक्तो मधुराख्यो मनीषिभिः॥ ३॥

vakṣyamāṇairvibhāvādyaiḥ svādyatāṃ madhurā ratiḥ | nītā bhaktirasaḥ prokto madhurākhyo manīṣibhiḥ|| 3|| Sweet erotic love, when tasted by means of verbal signs and the rest—¹¹ as shall soon be described— Becomes the sacred rapture the wise call "the sweet one."¹² (3)

na hi rasādrte kaścidarthaḥ pravartate| tatra vibhāvānubhāvavyabhicārisaṃyogādrasanispattiḥ|

vibhāvairanubhāvaiśca sāttvikairvyabhicāribhih svādyatvam hrdi bhaktānāmānitā śravaņādibhih esā kṛṣṇaratiḥ sthāyibhāvo bhaktiraso bhavet||

"This enduring emotion, love for Kṛṣṇa, becomes sacred rapture, when led to the state of being enjoyed in the hearts of *bhaktas* by the stimulants, reactions, and transitory emotions through hearing, and other kinds of *bhakti*." See the introduction and the glossary for a more detailed account of the production or evocation of *rasa*.

¹²Un., 1.3.

¹¹These are the stimulants (*vibhāva*, also translated as "determinants" or "excitants"), the consequents or reactions (*anubhāva*), and the transitory emotions (*vyabhicāri-bhāvas*) which when combined cause or suggest an enduring emotion (*sthāyi-bhāva*). The emotion that is evoked by the stimulants is "tasted" or experienced as *rasa* or rapture, according to Bharata's $N\bar{a}tya$ -śāstra (6.32).

[&]quot;Without *rasa* (enjoyment, pleasure, aesthetic rapture) no meaning or value arises. In this matter, from the combination of stimulants, reactions, and transitory emotions, rasa is produced."

In Rūpa's adaption of aesthetic rapture to sacred rapture (*bhakti-rasa*) the same general principles apply as he says in his previous book, *The Ocean of the Nectar of Sacred Rapture (Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu)* (2.1.5):

तत्र विभावेष्वालम्बनाः अस्मिन्नालम्बनाः प्रोक्ताः कृष्णस्तस्य च वल्लभाः॥ ४॥

tatra vibhāveṣvālambanāḥ asminnālambanāḥ proktāḥ kṛṣṇastasya ca vallabhāḥ|| 4|| There, among the stimulants are the supports:

Kṛṣṇa and the women he loves are called "supports"¹³ of this rapture.¹⁴ (4)

tatra jñeyā vibhāvāstu ratyāsvādanahetavah te dvidhālambanā eke tathaivoddīpanāh pare|| kŗsņaśca kŗsṇabhaktāśca budhairālambanā matāḥ| ratyāderviṣayatvena tathādhāratayāpi ca|| tadbhāvabhāvitasvāntāḥ kṛṣṇabhaktā itīritāḥ|| uddīpanāstu te proktā bhāvamuddīpayanti ye| te tu kṛṣṇacandrasya guṇāśceṣṭāḥ prasādhanam||

¹⁴Un., 1.4.

¹³The stimulants or *vibhāvas* are divided into two types, supports (*ālambana*) and excitants (*uddīpana*). Here the support type (*ālambana-vibhāva*) of this rapture is described. Rūpa says in his earlier work (B.r.s., 2.14,16,273,301,2.21-2):

[&]quot;Here it is to be known that the stimulants (*vibhāvas*) are the causes of the tasting of love (*rati*) and the other enduring emotions. They are of two kinds: some are supports (*ālambana*) and others excitants (*uddīpana*). Kṛṣṇa and his *bhaktas* are considered supports by the wise, either as the objects of that love or as the possessors or vessels of that love. Those whose hearts of infused with feelings for him are Kṛṣṇa's *bhaktas*. The excitants are Kṛṣṇa's qualities, actions and embellishments that excite the enduring emotions." Rūpa's discussion of the support variety of stimulants extends over the first nine chapters of this book. In the tenth chapter he takes up the excitant (*uddīpana*) variety of stimulant.

तत्र कृष्णो यथा पदद्युतिविनिर्धुतस्मरपरार्धरूपोद्धतिर् दृगञ्चलकलानटीपटिमभिर्मनोमोहिनी। स्फुरन्नवघनाकृतिः परमदिव्यलीलानिधिः क्रियात्तव जगत्रयीयुवतिभाग्यसिद्धिर्मुदम्॥४॥

tatra kṛṣṇo yathā

padadyutivinirdhutasmaraparārdharūpoddhatir dŗgañcalakalānaṭīpaṭimabhirmanomohinī | sphurannavaghanākṛtiḥ paramadivyalīlānidhiḥ kriyāttava jagatrayīyuvatibhāgyasiddhirmudam|| 5|| Among them, Kṛṣṇa, for example:

May he whose self is perfect pleasure, divine adventure, richest treasure of women young in all three worlds—
May he bring joy to you.
He, whose eyes with their side-glancing enchant all hearts like devīs dancing—
He, whose grey-blue body, glistening seems a rain cloud newly swelling—
He, whose feet eclipse with their gleaming the pride of millions of gods of love—

May Kṛṣṇa bring joy to you.¹⁵ (5)

 $^{^{15}}$ Un., 1.5. This is a blessing given by the elder lady Pūrņamāsī to Rādhā who was bowing to her in her state of prior passion (*pūrva-rāga*) for Kṛṣṇa, that is, her passion for him before their first meeting. From the commentary of Viśvanātha Cakravartin (Viśvanātha,[V]

अयं सुरम्यो मधुरः सर्वसल्लक्षणान्वितः। वलीयान्नवतारुण्यो वावदूकः प्रियंवदः॥ ६॥ सुधीः सप्रतिभो धीरो विदग्धञ्चतुरः सुखी। कृतज्ञो दक्षिणः प्रेमवश्यो गम्भीराम्बुधिः॥ ७॥ वरीयान् कीर्तिमान् नारीमोहनो नित्यनूतनः। अतुल्यकेलिसौन्दर्यप्रेष्ठवंशीस्वनाङ्कितः॥ ८॥

ayam suramyo madhurah sarvasallakṣaṇānvitah | valīyānnavatāruṇyo vāvadūkaḥ priyaṃvadaḥ|| 6|| sudhīh sapratibho dhīro vidagdhaścaturaḥ sukhī | kṛtajño dakṣiṇaḥ premavaśyo gambhīrāmbudhiḥ|| 7|| varīyān kīrtimān nārīmohano nityanūtanaḥ| atulyakelisaundaryapresthavamśīsvanāṅkitah|| 8|| [Kṛṣṇa's many attractive qualities are:]

He is very handsome, sweet— All good traits are Hari's— Strong in his fresh-blooming youth, Loquacious, tongue like honey.¹⁶ (6) Steady, wise, intelligent, Clever, expert, happy, Skilled and grateful when he loves, Loves with abandon, yet an ocean of solemnity is Hari.¹⁷ (7) Great repute is part of him; loved ones flock to sport with him, None can play the flute like him; He excels in everything, matchless beauty, ever new.¹⁸ (8)

 $^{^{16}}$ Un., 1.6. Viśvanātha points out that the first five traits are Kṛṣṇa's physical qualities. Loquaciousness and having a tongue like honey are his verbal traits. The remaing fourteen are his mental traits.

¹⁷Un., 1.7.

¹⁸Un., 1.8.