

Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah
Bhakti Vedanta Institute
Princeton University Harinama
Princeton, NJ
October 18, 2014

*devam divya-tanum suchanda-vadanam balarka-celancitam
sandrananda-puram sad-eka-varanam vairagya-vidyambudhim
sri-siddhanta-nidhim subhakti-lasitam sarasvatanam-varam
vande tam subhadam mad-eka-saranam nyasisvaram sridharam*

"I fall at the feet of Srila Sridhar Dev, who with charming expression sings his songs of sweet nectar. Dressed in fine garments like the newly-risen sun, he is the true saint, the devotees have chosen. His detachment and knowledge are just like an ocean, the treasure-house of complete, perfect conclusions. Radiant in pastimes of loving devotion, the abode of pure ecstasy, bestower of good fortune; foremost true follower of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta, foremost great general of the whole renounced order, my lord and my master, my only shelter, I worship his feet, Srila Sridhar Dev," Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswami Maharaja wrote.



Om Vishnupad Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj

Due to some heavy traffic on the highways, the New York devotees arrived a bit late to the Bhakti Vedanta Institute (BVI) office at Princeton University, however, that did not stop our indoors Harinam from going on. Led by Sripad Bhakti Madhava Puri Maharaj,

Ph.D (Sripad Puri Maharaj) we sang the Panca Tattva mantra followed by the Maha Mantra. Rasaraja das Prabhu accompanied him on kartals (hand cymbal).

On the request of Sripad Puri Maharaj, Rasaraja das Prabhu sang - “*Sri-guru-carana-padma, kevala-bhakati-sadma*” by Sri Narottama das Thakur and Śrī Guru Ārati-stuti^[1] by Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj,^[2] as we celebrated Sri Vyasa-puja of Om Vishnupad Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj,^[3] lovingly known as Srila Sridhar Maharaj or Srila Guru Maharaj. We then offered flowers and obeisances to Srila Guru Maharaj followed by the offerings of lamps to our dear Sri Damodar (babyhood form of Sri Krishna), while singing *Sri Damodarashtakam*.



Lord Sri Damodar (boyhood form of Sri Krishna) and Mata Yasodha

Opening sanga Sripad Puri Maharaj said, “I was just thinking how fortunate it is to have devotees’ association to be able to celebrate our gurudev’s appearance day. Even one sincere soul is a great benediction for the whole world, that is why so many people came to Srila Sridhar Maharaj because he’s an extraordinary soul.” He continued “The sincere souls of this world are searching for that real nectar which they are always anxious to get, and one little drop of that nectar changed their entire lives, awaken our real dharma – *Sanatan Dharma* (eternal vocation),” Sripad Puri Maharaj said then asked what is our

real *dharma*? “Krishna says in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, ‘*sarva-dharman parityajya*,’ renounce all the duties you have in this material world.” This is confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* – *The Hidden Treasure of the Sweet Absolute* 4.34. It states,

*sarva-dharman parityajya
mam ekam saranam vraja
aham tvam sarva-papebhyo
moksayisyami ma sucah*

“Give up all kinds of religion and surrender to Me alone. I will liberate you from all sins, do not despair.”

“Renounce all our worldly duties? Then what are we to do? This material platform is the plane of death, *mrityalok*. The ultimate thing you can find here is death. Whatever you may think is so important to do here, the final result will be death. We are not to be involved in such things . We have a *sanatan dharma*, a life that is not in the plane of temporality. There’s a plane beyond the temporal plane that is eternal, so why are you settling for death in a temporary plane?” Sripad Puri Maharaj asked. “You don’t want to die. No one wants to die and yet you are all settling for a life that will end in death. Where is your intelligence? Why is it that no one is happy to accept death? We are trying to avoid death. Why? We are going to die eventually. Isn’t it natural to die? If it’s so natural to die, why then are so many people going to the doctors to preserve their lives? Is it to live only for a few more years, but then what happens after that? Krishna says, ‘*sarva-dharman parityajya*.’ Give up your worldly pursuits that eventually lead to death! Then what to do if we leave all those things? Sripad Puri Maharaj asked. “We come to *sanatan dharma* and inquire about our eternal duty. Where is that eternal life, that eternal occupation we have that will not end in death? Is there such a thing? Should we not inquire about that eternal life and occupation?” Sripad Puri Maharaj posed these questions to his attentive audience.

Referring to a *Vyasa-puja sanga* he had listened to on the SCSMath website, Sripad Puri Maharaj said, “I remembered Srila Sridhar Maharaj gave a talk to the devotees where he said ‘you are all going to die, so what are you doing in the plane of death? No real engagement is to be found there; don’t be attached to that plane. You don’t have your real business there. You have your eternal business. You are an eternal soul and you have your eternal *dharma* – *sanatan dharma*. There you should be looking for your real occupation, your real concern. You are going out preaching to everyone. What are you telling them? Are you telling them this – Do not get absorbed in your bodily affairs? You don’t want to live in that death plane. Then how to escape death? What should we do when we are in the world of *mrityalok*, the plane of death? That’s what we want to preach, to understand and practice – positive and progressive immortality.”

Srila Sridhar Maharaja gave us *Sri Sri Prapanna Jivanamrtam* (the nectar of the surrendered souls) book. The nectar of the souls who are surrendered to Krishna, the souls who are engaged in *sanatan dharma*. What is that *sanatan dharma*?” Sripad Puri

Maharaj asked then responded, “Surrendered to Krishna, serving Krishna, thinking only of Krishna, making Krishna the center of our life and establishing one’s whole existence in that plane of *antaranga-shakti*, *svarup shakti* – the plane of dedication, the service world, finding one’s permanent occupation, eternal duty in that service world.”



Our beautiful altar at BVI office

“Mahaprabhu told Sanatan Goswami, ‘*jivera 'svarupa' haya -- krishnera nitya-dasa'* Your *svarupa*, your actual form, who you are, your identity is ‘*krishnera nitya-dasa'* – you are an eternal servant of Krishna. That’s who you are. That is your *sanatan dharma*, your constitutional make-up,” Sripad Puri Maharaj said.

Sri Caitanya Caritamrita Madhya 20.108-109 confirms this:

jivera 'svarupa' haya -- krishnera 'nitya-dasa'
krishnera 'tatastha-sakti' 'bhedabheda-prakasa'
suryamsa-kirana, yaiche agni-jvala-caya
svabhavika krishnera tina-prakara 'sakti' haya

"It is the living entity's constitutional position to be an eternal servant of Krishna because he is the marginal energy of Krishna and a manifestation simultaneously one with and different from the Lord, like a molecular particle of sunshine or fire. Krishna has three varieties of energy.”

“We are not in that plane of eternity so how do we get there? Do we have faith first of all that such a plane exist?” After a brief pause, Sripad Puri Maharaj asked if we have any experience of anything eternal in this world. “Ideas, Mathematics, abstraction,” Revant Prabhu said. “They are not eternal because somebody had to think about it at one point. They were not there before anyone invented mathematics. Another mathematical invention or discovery may come and the whole thing would be dismissed. They are not eternal,” Sripad Puri Maharaj responded. Rasaraja das Prabhu said he has not experienced anything eternal because “everything has a beginning and an end.” Sripad Puri Maharaj interjects, “I don’t think so. Everybody has one thing that we experience that is eternal,” he said patiently waiting for our response. Not getting a response, smiling he said, “The present.”

“The only place that we are at and the only place that is with us all the time is the present moment, and it is forever. Almost everyone doesn’t really know the eternal present. The thing that seems to always be slipping away, vanishing at every second, is the only thing that remains there all the time. That is what we are part of, that eternal world. To be part of the eternal world is to be part of the present,” Sripad Puri Maharaj said then asked. How do we inhabit the present? Where is that eternal present that we are part of? “We get so distracted and drawn away from that eternal truth, that eternal reality by so many desires, ambitions or whatever there may be that we endeavor for that will come in some future time. ‘Oh I hope soon I will be wealthy, famous, smart or this or that. They are missing the point - the eternal present. You have it in your hands or does it have you in its hands? So, at every moment we have to keep our attention fixed in the proper eternal life, and in the right place.”

“Could we just ward off everything that is non-essential, those distractive desires and ambitions?” Revant Prabhu asked. “We have to understand what is that eternal life. It’s not anything to do with trying to renounce this world because this world is only a distraction, and our real eternal *dharma*, duty, is to serve Krishna and understand our relationship with Him,” Sripad Puri Maharaj responded. “One moment of Krishna consciousness is enough to solve all our problems. We will never be able to turn away if we ever capture that moment of Krishna consciousness. Somehow if we can satisfy Him, his devotees, Gurudev - which is possible only by His grace, and if we can catch a drop of that true life, our eternal life, we will be fixed forever. We wouldn’t have to come back to the world of death, *mrityalok*.”

“We want to have Krishna consciousness with real faith and devotion. That’s our only aspiration. Srila Bhakti Vinod Thakur told: ‘Forget the past that sleeps and ne’er the future dream at all, but act with times that are with thee and progress thee shall call.’ That eternal present is where we want to be. This is the thing we want in order to make the best use of our life. This is the most substantial thing we have. If we can situate ourselves in that, we will find something substantial, not some dreams of this and that. If we settle for only dreams, those dreams are not good because they are leading us away from the eternal present moment. So, if we have nothing else to do then chant the Manhamantra (*Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare / Hare Rama Hare Rama*

Rama Rama Hare Hare) and that would be the most perfect use of your present, to get the maximum satisfaction,” Sripad Puri Maharaj continued. “Call Krishna into your presence or enter into His presence with His holy name.”

Referring to a program he had attended a few weeks ago at a mandir to give some talk where the topic was only about “*dharma* (worldly duties), *artha* (wealth/prosperity), *kama* (worldly desires) and *moksha* (liberation), he said, “That’s all they had discussed. But when Krishna says *sarva-dharman parityajya*, He meant that all these things - *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksha* should also be abandoned. Even liberation (*moksha*), so-called freedom - throw it out. This is not what you want. There’s something more valuable. These benefits are not your eternal concern,” Sripad Puri Maharaj said. “Your *sanatan dharma* is what you should focus on. Everything else is diversion into temporary or unfulfilling things.” Referring back to the mandir program, he said one man stood up and asked ‘what am I going to do with *moksha*? After going through all this trouble to get *moksha*, then what? Who’s going to enjoy it?’ However, there was no answer to his questions,” Sripad Puri Maharaj continued smilingly.

At this point Puri Maharaja said he got up and spoke about Sriman Mahaprabhu’s ^[4] philosophy. “What you are looking for is found here in Sriman Chaitanya Mahaprabhu’s philosophy, not in Madhava, not in Ramanuja, not in Shankara but in Chaitanya Mahaprabhu’s conception,” Sripad Puri Maharaj said. “They could not understand. It’s like wax was in their ears. Whatever I told them it didn’t register because they were not ready for that. They could not understand it. What to think has been drummed into their heads. They can’t believe that there’s some service you can perform in the eternal spiritual world. Not that you are supposed to just say ‘Dear God please liberate me. Give me *moksha*. Give me Your mercy. Me, Me, Me,’” Sripad Puri Maharaj continued. “Moksha is like a ghost” Rasaraja das Prabhu said. “They are like, ‘everything is for me. I pray to God only for myself. God has everything what do I have to serve Him for? What does He need from me?’ One person said ‘God doesn’t need anything. I am the one who is needing. He [God] already has everything.’”

Revant Prabhu wanted to know what is the answer to that question. “When a child goes to the father he says ‘father I need some money. I want to buy you a present.’ The father is very happy to give his child that money. The child goes out and buys a tie for the father and says ‘here father, here’s your birthday present.’ The father knows he gave the money for it so what is he so happy about. The father is happy because the child has shown him love. This is more valuable than anything money can buy. The love that the child has given to him, he wants that,” Sripad Puri Maharaj responded. “Yes, He [Krishna] supplies you the sunshine, the food, the water, the air to breath, everything He supplies it all to us free and we are praying ‘Dear God give me my daily bread.’ He is giving it already. He doesn’t need our prayers for things. He is giving us everything but what He wants is our hearts, our affection, our love. That is the only thing He desires. Everything exists for that purpose only – for loving God. Nothing would satisfy us more and nothing will satisfy Him more than that and therefore we get the satisfaction of doing that also.”

“We have to understand that He is the source. Just like the root of the tree. If you put water on the root, the whole tree gets the water. In the same way when you give your love to God, the whole creation feels the joy that He feels. He feels and then everyone feels, therefore He is called Krishna, who is receiving pleasure and also giving pleasure,” Sripad Puri Maharaj said. “*Sastra*, Veda has revealed these things, and we have to understand scientifically and philosophically also how these things are there. If we don’t understand but at least if we have faith, then we can experience it for ourselves also.”



Flowers decorate the altar for the Vyas Puja of Srila Guru Maharaja

Prasadam was served and honored by all.

All Glories to Sri Guru and Sri Sri Gauranga
Srila Bhakti Nirmal Acharya Maharaja ki jai
Sripad Bhakti Madhava Puri Maharaj ki jai

Your humble servant
Kushum devi dasi

[¹] Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj - Founder-President-Acharya: Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math

[2] <http://scsmath.com/books/KirtanGuide7thEd-pdf-of-iPadApp-1203.pdf>

[3] http://www.scsmath.com/docs/sridhar_maharaj.html - Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj - Founder-President-Acharyya: Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math

[4] Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu appeared in in Mayapur, West Bengal, India in 1486. Although He is the Supreme Lord Himself, Sri Krishna, He posed as a devotee, and revealed the most sublime sentiments and the natural disposition of a devotee. He taught us by His own example how to establish a connection with the Lord through the practice of pure devotion. Srila Rupa Goswami has glorified Lord Chaitanya as being the most munificent Lord because He freely distributed pure love of Godhead.

Please Participate in the Sankirtan Yajna with Your Contribution

<https://ipn.intuit.com/pay/BhaktivedantaInstitute>