

Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah
Bhakti Vedanta Institute
Princeton University Harinama
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*Harer Nama Harer Nama Harer Namaiva Kevalam
Kalau Nasty Eva Nasty Eva Nasty Eva Gatir Anyatha*

“In this Age of Kali there is no other means, no other means, no other means for self-realization than chanting the Holy Name, chanting the Holy Name, chanting the Holy Name of Lord Hari,” as stressed by Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu as the easiest means of God-realization for this Kali-yuga, age of darkness and quarrel.

Seeing the multi-colored fall leaves falling upon us as we took our respective seats under a tree at the architecturally beautiful campus of Princeton University, Sripad Bhakti Madhava Puri Maharaj (a/k/a Maharaj) reminded us of how auspicious it is for that tree to be receiving the sound vibration of the Lord’s Holy Names. Not only the trees but also the passers-by and animals benefit from the auspicious vibration of the Hare Krishna Maha-mantra (Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare). Jai!

One very important lesson learned at the onset of the chanting was when Maharaj asked Syamasundar das Prabhu to begin the Harinama sankirtana (“Harinam” - congregational chanting of Sri Krishna’s Holy Names) with the glorification of the Panca Tattva mantra (Sri Krsna-Caitanya Prabhu Nityananda...) to remove all offenses to chanting, One can also begin with the glorification of Srila Prabhupada Pranati (Nama Om Visnu Padaya...) followed by the Panca Tattva mantra.

What could be more beautiful and serene than chorusing at the hour-long Harinam lead by Syamasundara das Prabhu on guitar and Maharaj on kartal? For me personally, there could be absolutely nothing more transcendently satisfying in this material life than being a part of Harinam party. As Srila Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya said, “This sweet transcendental sound is a special creation of the Lord known as prema-sankirtana, congregational chanting in love of Godhead.” Yes, Harinam puts one in such an ecstatic mood that you pray for the chanting to continue without interruption or end.

Syamasundara das Prabhu skillfully began each set of kirtans, which primarily emphasized the Hare Krsna maha-mantra slowly with a gradual build-up that lasted between ten to fifteen minutes in length and ended at the crescendo. Masterfully he played the guitar.

Previously, I was told that a Harinam party can be anywhere from two to hundreds of devotees glorifying the all-auspicious and transcendental names of our Sri Sri Radha Govinda, Sri Sri Gaura Nitai and Gurudeva, but that there are no written rules. In our

case, this past weekend, there were only three of us in the Harinam party but we were later joined by Prabhus: Anatha Bandhu das, Dayal Chand das and Jayanta Ram das.

Our little Harinam party was greeted with many smiles of those who passed by, charmed by the sweetness of the Lord's Holy Names being chanted.



L to R are: Syamasundara das Prabhu, guest, Prabhus: Jayanta Ram das and Dayal Chand das with Sripad Bhakti Madhava Puri Maharaj, Prabhu Ananta Bandhu das and Kushum devi dasi

Later, while my humble, insignificant self went out actively meeting and distributing invitations to the public, Syamasundar das Prabhu mentioned that there were “two backpackers” who came and sat down while the chanting was going on. By the end of the hour-long Harinam session, one student of Astro-Physics, Cosmology and classical singing,, who is living on campus, joined us to delve further into the serious scientific aspects of our *siddhanta* with Maharaj.

Too early, the perfect end to a transcendently glorious *kirtan* arrives. We then honor *prasadam* on the campus grounds. Afterwards we head back to the office for a very inspirational and scientific *sanga* by Sripad Bhakti Madhava Puri Maharaj.

Personally, my heart is truly satisfied knowing that Harinam is purely a gift with the potential to reach even those whom we have not thought about. A gift that is so unique and gloriously beautiful with unlimited *prema*. It reinforces in me that devotees going on Harinama Sankirtana are not just there to bliss themselves out, but are there to glorify the Lord and to teach others about *prayojana*, the ultimate goal of life, to attain Krsna-prema, love of God.

Harinama Sankirtana Ki Jai!

Your humble servant, Kushum devi dasi