

Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah
Bhakti Vedanta Institute
Princeton University Harinama
Princeton, NJ
May 16, 2015

Sripad Bhakti Madhava Puri Maharaj, Ph.D (Sripad Puri Maharaj) led Harinama Sankirtana with the Panca Tattva mantra followed by the Maha Mantra, backed by Prabhus: Rasaraja das on kartals, Syamasundara das on guitar and Bhakta Steve clapping while Sringara Mataji video recorded the beautiful session.



Syamasundara Prabhu, Sripad Puri Maharaj and Bhakta Steve during Harinam

“Commitment, sacrifice, dedication, devotion,” Sripad Puri Maharaj opened *sanga* with these few words. “Srila Guru Maharaj (Srila B.R. Shridhar Maharaja) often spoke about the three attitudes we can take toward the environment: exploitation, renunciation and dedication. He said, ‘exploitation is the world of mundane existence, where we consider everything of inferior nature to ourselves and therefore to be exploited and handled by us.’ *Maya* comes from *ma*, which is to measure. What we measure is something that is within our grasp, that we can somehow or other manipulate. So the world of exploitation is that world which we conceive to be within our grasp that we can manipulate according to our own provincial purposes.”

“But why do we call it exploitation?” Sripad Puri Maharaj asked. “Because it is a one way relation. We are not giving back,” Syamasundara das Prabhu responded. “Human instinct is to keep taking” Syamasundara das Prabhu said.

“Then what is wrong with that? That is just the nature of this world,” Sripad Puri Maharaj pressed further. “That depends on what you are taking and who you are giving it to,” Bhakta Steve responded. “What if you are taking for yourself?” Sripad Puri Maharaj asked. “Then that’s exploitation because I am taking from someone, therefore I am exploiting that person, which has a negative connotation,” Bhakta Steve said. “Normally people will take what they need but when you take more than what you need or deserve, then that is exploitation,” Sripad Puri Maharaj explained.

To further explain the point of exploitation, Sripad Puri Maharaj referenced Alexander the Great, who had conquered the ancient world and gathered its riches. “As he was close to his death, he asked his close associates to put his dead body on a stretcher with his empty hands hanging out palms up, and for his doctors to carry the stretcher. He further asked that all his ambassadors follow behind him carrying all his wealth and to throw those riches into the streets so that people could gather them up like so much garbage from the streets. In this way he wanted to teach people the valuable lesson that ‘we come into the world naked and empty handed, and leave it in the same way.’ Whatever wealth or power we may amass in life, we will have to leave everything at the time of death. ‘My doctors will carry the stretcher to show that they cannot save us at the time of death, nor can a big palanquin offer glory to a dead body.’” Sripad Puri Maharaj continued. “What some people consider as valuable other people will consider as garbage. The point is we think of this world as meant to serve our needs but it was here when we came and it will be here after we go. We are here only for a short time. To accumulate wealth, fame, honor, power, knowledge is exploitation because nothing is ours to begin with. We have so many abilities within us but they are not meant for personal aggrandizement. Because people in general are ignorant of the real purpose of life, they don’t really know what they should do with this human form of life.”



Amit ji Prabhu with Sripad Puri Maharaj, Rasaraja das and Revant Prabhus

Why do we have a knowing capacity? What are we supposed to know? Sripad Puri Maharaj asked his attentive audience. "What is the conclusion our knowledge is supposed to reach? The acquisition of knowledge with no purpose whatsoever except for better eating, sleeping, mating and defending, is not the real goal for which our knowing faculty was created. According to the Vedas, *Athato Brahma Jigyasa* (we are to know that we are spirit). That knowing capacity is to know Brahman, our spiritual identity, and not only that, but to understand what is the source of that spiritual identity. This is what our knowing capacity (*jigyasa*) is for. When it is not utilized for its specific purpose, then our knowing capacity, and all the faculties that we have, will simply be misused, or used for misleading us into the illusions of material existence."

"It's considered normal to be an exploiter, to not know what everything is for because that is what we were taught from childhood. It is considered normal not to inquire about spiritual things and if anyone does wonder what is the purpose of life beyond mundane achievements then they are considered abnormal. The actual purpose of this human form of life is to develop the mood of being a loving servant of the servants of God, Krishna, and to utilize everything of this world in the spirit of loving devotion to its Supreme Owner," Sripad Puri Maharaj continued. "Everybody has to labor in different ways but the labor of love is a joyful type of labor. That dedication is directed to love of the Divine. It's like watering a plant. You put the water on the root and all the branches and leaves will benefit. But if you try to water the branches and leaves directly, the tree will perish. Divine service must be offered to the source, *janmady asya yatah*, the source from which it is all coming. That kind of devotion is real dedication. That is intelligent use of our life."

"A devotee is always feeling he must dedicate more and more. There's no particular reward that is tangible in that type of service - only more service is considered most desirable. Devotees are asked to sacrifice, to give their whole heart, energy, body, mind and soul to be utilized in the service of the Lord. The false ego, that subtle part of the mundane self, the provincial singular self, is the main culprit in creating the entire self centered conception of life. We have to constantly work to overcome that and Krishna helps His devotees by giving them different directions through His devotees to guide them spiritually to the plane of immortality," Sripad Puri Maharaj continued.

"Real ego means 'I am an eternal servant of Krsna - *jivera svaupa hoy krsnera nitya dasa*.' The more one is liberated from the self-centered attitude of existence, the more one comes to realize or actualize the true self in its relation to God. 'Die to live' means that one must take up the life of service, devoted service to the Supreme Lord Krishna. Everyone is given the chance to come to that platform of

service life, but they may accomplish it more or less according to their degree of surrender (*sharangati*)."

"We have to have faith first, and when we put our faith in that, then the results, the fulfillment of that faith will manifest itself. Not that we have to have anything big in life, we can have a humble life, nonetheless. Die to Live!, where we are sacrificing everything for the service of Guru, Vaishna and Krishna seva (service)," Sripad Puri Maharaj said. "We sacrifice everything, yet, we don't die. Krishna says, '*sarva-dharman parityajya*' all your so called responsibilities relinquish. '*mam ekam saranam vraja*' and just surrender to Me." This is confirmed in the Bhagavad Gita - The Hidden Treasure of the Sweet Absolute, 18.66:

*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."

"A revolutionary idea Krishna has given to us and that is called "die to live.' Everyone thinks they have to exploit to live but Krishna says 'give up everything' but not only giving up everything but to 'utilize everything for Me. Use yourself for Me', then you get *moksayisyami ma sucah*, 'I will give you liberation,'" Sripad Puri Maharaj continued. "Krishna says, '*bhoktāram yajñā-tapasām sarva loka maheshwaram* - everything is Mine. As Narayana I am the owner, the proprietor of everything. As Govinda I am the enjoyer of all your endeavors.' Then He says, '*suhṛdam sarva-bhūtānām* - As Krishna I am the friend in the heart of my devotees.' Krishna says, 'If you are looking for Me, you can find Me in the heart of my devotees.'" *Bhagavad Gita - The Hidden Treasure of the Sweet Absolute*, 5.29 confirms this:

*bhoktāram yajñā-tapasām
sarva-loka-maheśvaram
suhṛdam sarva-bhūtānām
jñātvā mām śāntim ṛcchati*

"I am the enjoyer and objective of the sacrifices performed by persons of action, and of the austerities performed by persons of knowledge. I am Nārāyana, the indwelling monitor of all planes of life, the worshippable Supreme Personality who awards liberation. I am Kṛṣṇa, the well-wisher of all and the dear friend of

the devotees. One who knows Me thus, attains the bliss of knowing his own original divine identity.”

“What is the result of understanding these things?” Sripad Puri Maharaj continued. “*jnatva mam santim rcchati - shanta* means peace. This is real knowledge. This is what we are to know. If you can understand properly Who is the enjoyer, the proprietor and the friend, then you can get peace. Without understanding these things, what comes from such ignorance? Anxiety, worrying about everything, where’s my enjoyment, who is my friend, where’s my property.” With this our educative, informative and blissful discourse came to an end.



Back: Bhakta Steve, Prabhus: Syamasundara das, Rasaraja das. Middle: Dorothy with Sripad Puri Maharaj. Front: Manisha, shy Nitai das Prabhu and Srngara Mataji

Prasadam was served and honored by all.

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

Your humble servant
Kushum devi dasi
(New York)

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