

Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah
Bhakti Vedanta Institute
Princeton University Harinama
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Jayadev das Prabhu on mridanga and Sripad Puri Maharaj on kartals opened today's sanga with a kirtan beginning with the Pancha-Tattva Maha Mantra, the Maha Mantra (Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare /Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare), and ending with Nitai Gauranga, and Jaya Gurudeva.

Sripad Bhakti Madhava Puri Maharaj, Ph.D (Sripad Puri Maharaj) began today's discourse on the "renunciation of action" from chapter 5 of the *Srimad Bhagavat Gita* 5.1-2.

arjuna uvaca
sannyasam karmanam krsna
punar yogam ca samsasi
yac chreya etayor ekam
tan me bruhi suniscitam

"Arjuna said: O Krsna, after instructing me in renunciation of action. You are again advocating the path of selfless action. Therefore, please give me a clear understanding which of the two is most beneficial for me."

sri-bhagavan uvaca
sannyasah karma-yogas ca
nihsreyasa-karav ubhau
tayos tu karma-sannyasat
karma-yogo visisyate

"The Supreme Lord said: Both renunciation of action and the path of selfless action are greatly beneficial. Yet, of the two, you will have to understand that the application of selfless action is superior."

Delving right into the topic, Sripad Puri Maharaj explained that "the path of renunciation is being described as *sankhya-yoga*, which is basically yoga of analytical philosophy." Giving it a thought, he continued, "so a person who is engaged in study of the material nature, for instance, are considered renounced because they are not engaged in fruitive activities, being absorbed in the mental world. So actually, it is a kind of a renounced life." He went on to further explain that in the path of selfless action (*karma-yoga*), "one offers the result of their actions to the Absolute."

Reading several consecutive verses, Sripad Puri Maharaj explained that, "if one acts without affection (such as in anger, greed or without love) he/she will get some bad

reaction, but for one who acts out of love, there's no adverse reaction.” He further explained that “love does not mean lust or attachment...but to genuinely appreciate others, to sincerely value them.”



Sripad Puri Maharaj chanting



Jayadev das Prabhu on mridanga

While explaining *Bhagavad-gita* verses 5.8-9, Sripad Puri Maharaj said that a true renunciant does not consider himself as performing any action that is carried out by the material energy, though the “sense organs come in touch with their respective objects...this is something the organs are performing.” He then went on to explain that the key to success is to “offer everything to the Supreme Lord.” Citing an example by Srila Prabhupada^[1] Sripad Puri Maharaj said, “Srila Prabhupada said to me ‘you are a scientist, use your scientific knowledge for Krishna.’ In the same way if you are a businessman, do business for Krishna. Whatever it is that you are doing, do it for Krishna.” Of course, this should be done under the guidance and direction of Gurudeva. This is confirmed in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.187:

*īhā yasya harer dāsyē
karmaṇā manasā girā
nikhilāsv apy avasthāsu
jīvan-muktaḥ sa ucyate*

“Anyone who, by his actions, mind and words, lives only for the transcendental loving service of the Lord, is certainly a liberated soul, even though he may appear to be in a condition of material existence.”

In further reading, the next topic Sripad Puri Maharaj discussed was on serenity and equanimity of those who are the knower of the Absolute Truth, Krishna. He said that “the

knower of the Absolute Truth enjoys an ocean of bliss. He is a yogi^[2] who knows the true self. However, “you can’t know yourself without knowing Krishna. It’s like being unable to know if you are a human being, an animal, a male or female without the sun or light. In a similar way the self can not be known without knowing Krishna.”

*bahya-sparsesv asaktatma
vindaty atmani yat sukham
sa brahma-yoga-yuktatma
sukham aksayam asnute*

“Such a knower of the Absolute Truth, his mind detached from sensual pleasure, initially attains the happiness of self-realization. Thereafter, linking himself with the Absolute, he attains inexhaustible joy.” *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* 5.21

“The identity we try to establish as separate from Krishna, is an illusory existence, a concocted ego that attempts to live a separate life from God, Krishna,” Sripad Puri Maharaj said. “Krishna gives life to us all - a Krishna conscious life – that’s reality – Reality the Beautiful! And to see that there is one universal spirit in all creatures - a brahmana, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a dog-eater - is actual knowledge of self. There is one spirit in all life.”

*vidya-vinaya-sampanne
brahmane gavi hastini
suni caiva sva-pake ca
panditah sama-darsinah*

“The intelligent souls who have attained divine qualities and abandoned all mundane prejudice, perceive the absolute transcendence within all living beings the humble and learned brahmana, the cow, the elephant, the dog, or the outcast eater of dog-flesh. Therefore, they are known as pandits or men of true wisdom.” *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* 5.22

Sripad Puri Maharaj continued that “we differentiate, try to separate and isolate our self from Krishna and that is where we get into some difficulty, but what are we differentiate for? He asked as he replied that “it’s all for our self pleasure, independent existence and satisfaction.” Sripad Puri Maharaj further explained that “when we think in terms of our own self interest that is material existence. In a spiritual life of devoted service, Krishna’s satisfaction is the central interest. That is the difference between material and Krishna conscious existence.” He went on to say that, “we should be directing our energies to that center, Krishna, not just out of duty or because we are supposed to be doing that, but with full heart and dedication.”

Jayadev das Prabhu said, “It is easier to serve ourselves. In a way we are in the illusion that this is reality which can sometimes make it hard to serve Krishna, since we really cannot see Him or experience Him as we experience sensory stimulation.” He then asked how can we practically apply ourselves to find Krishna? *Bhagavad-gita* 5.14-15

described that the problem is all based on knowledge. From time immemorial we have been trapped in ignorance. The trap of our illusionary existence is due to the lack of proper knowledge, our ignorance, and the key to awaken our consciousness is transcendental knowledge,” Sripad Puri Maharaj responded. “We have the *shastra* (scriptures), guru, *sadhu* and vaishnava to hear from, so we can learn these topics, and by the practice of *bhakti-yoga* realized knowledge will come.

As a follow-up question, Jayadev das Prabhu asked, so once our knowledge is reawakened then Krishna would become more easy to access? “Everything is already there. It’s just that we don’t realize it. Our ignorance is preventing us from understanding what we already have,” Sripad Puri Maharaj responded. “We have no one to blame but our ignorance because it is blocking us from understanding the knowledge given by guru, *sadhu* and *shastra*. We have to remove the darkness. The method is there – hearing, practicing, associating, serving – all these things are part of the process to lift us out of the ignorance, the darkness.”

To further emphasize his point, Sripad Puri Maharaj quoted Srila Govinda Maharaj,^[3] ‘One must practise. The devotee who gave you the seed will not come and practise Krishna consciousness for you.’ By practicing you will come to understand what is what. Our *guru varga* gives us this knowledge and we have to have faith in that knowledge.” *Bhagavad-gita* 5.29 concludes with the essence of all true knowledge, “I am Krishna, 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.”



Sripad Puri Maharaj and Jayadev das Prabhu complementing each other musically

“So we have to distinguish between the *jnana* and *vijnana* – knowing the philosophy and actually experiencing it?” Jayadev das Prabhu stated in a questing manner. “There are three steps we have to follow if we want to learn the truth – *pranipatena* (humbly approach the spiritual master); *pariprasnena* (sincere questions) and *sevaya* (rendering service). These are the ABC’s of spiritual life, so we have to follow both the philosophical inquiry and the practical service process to make progress,” Sripad Puri Maharaj said. This is confirmed in the *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* 4.34,

*tad viddhi pranipatena
pariprasnena sevaya
upadeksyanti te jnanam
jnaninas tattva-darsinah*

“You will be able to attain knowledge by satisfying the divine master with submission, relevant inquiry, and sincere service. The enlightened souls who are learned in scriptural knowledge and endowed with direct realization of the Supreme Absolute Truth will impart divine knowledge to you.”

This most informed sanga came to an end and prasadam was served.

Harinam Sankirtana ki jai.

Srila Rupanuga guru varga ki jai.

Srila Bhakti Nirmal Dev-Goswami Acharya Maharaja ki jai

Sripad Bhakti Madhava Puri Maharaj ki jai

Your humble servant
Kushum devi dasi

^[1] His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada is the founder Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)

^[2] A *Yogi* is a practitioner of Yoga. The word is also used to refer to ascetic practitioners of meditation in a number of South Asian religions including Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. (Wikipedia)

^[3] Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswami Maharaj - Sevaite-President-Acharya: Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math (SCS Math)