

Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah
Bhakti Vedanta Institute
Princeton University Harinama
Princeton, NJ May 4, 2013

The New York devotees arrived at the Bhakti Vedanta Institute's office at Princeton University about 12:15pm. Immediately after meeting with Sripad Bhakti Madhava Puri Maharaj, Ph.D (Sripad Puri Maharaj) we went out for Harinam on the college's campus. Fully equipped musically, we set out for "our" favorite spot only to discover it was occupied by a student. Without saying anything we looked for a new spot a few feet away under the shade of another tree.

Syamasundara das prabhu, on guitar, opened the hour-long Harinam Sankirtan "jam" session by paying obeisances "*nama om vishnu-padaya, krishna-preshthaya bhutale....*" to His Divine Grace Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (Srila Prabhuapada).^{*} Surottama das Prabhu played harmonica while Sripad Puri Maharaj joined in on kartals. But there was a uniqueness to today's Harinam. I am not sure what it was but it was quite different, completely different from all those other times we had done Harinam before. Maybe it was the style, the rhythm, maybe it was the melody and the harmony, then again, it could have been the softness in Sripad Puri Maharaj's kartals or maybe Surottama das Prabhu's harmonica that rhythmically synced with Syamasundara das Prabhu's melodious voice and guitar notes. Whatever it was, it was pure *amrit* (nectar) that not only held me back from my usual flyers distribution but also had many passers-by stopping and shaking a leg to the wonderful kirtan.



L to R: Srngara Mataji, Surottama das Prabhu, Sripad Puri Maharaj & Syamasundara das Prabhu

*ceto-darpana-marjanam bhava-maha--davagni-nirvapanam
shreyah-kairava-chandrika-vitaranam vidya-vadhu-jivanam
anandambudhi-varadhanam prati-padam purnamritaswadanam
sarvatma-snapanam param vijayate sri-krishna-sankirtanam*

“Glory to the Sri Krishna Sankirtana, which cleanses the heart of all the dust accumulated for years and extinguishes the fire of conditional life, of repeated birth and death. This sankirtana movement is the prime benediction for humanity at large because it spreads the rays of the benediction moon. It is the life of all transcendental knowledge. It increases the ocean of transcendental bliss, and it enables us to fully taste the nectar for which we are always anxious.” *Sri Siksastakam – Text 1*

We were so involved in the sweetness of Harinam that none of us realized we had spent over an hour doing Harinama until Sripad Puri Maharaj motioned us its time to head back to the office as he was expecting some guests for the 2 PM *sanga*. Harinam was amazing but ended too early. *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 12.3.52 states that:

*kr̥te yad dhyāyato viṣṇum
tretāyām yajato makhaiḥ
dvāpare paricaryāyām
kalau tad dhari-kīrtanāt*

“Whatever result was obtained in Satya-yuga by meditating on Viṣṇu, in Tretā-yuga by performing sacrifices, and in Dvāpara-yuga by serving the Lord's lotus feet can be obtained in Kali-yuga simply by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra.”

“Sri Sri Guru Gauranga Gandharva Govinda Sundar Giridhari Goplajiu are the deities at the Nabadvip Dham mandir...have you heard of Them,” Sripad Puri Maharaj asked as he opened today's *sanga*. “In this form we pray to Srimati Radharani to engage us in service. Who is Radharani?” In response, he said, Srimati Radharani is “the Supreme Personality of Servitor Godhead. Gauranga Mahaprabhu is Krishna, who comes as His own servant and as guru. Without guru's grace we can not get anything but with his mercy we can get everything. When we have recieved his grace the proper mood of service will come.”



Sri Sri Guru Gauranga Gandharva Govinda Sundar Giridhari Goplajiu

*svayam evātmanātmānaṁ
vettha tvaṁ puruṣottama
bhūta-bhāvana bhūteśa
deva-deva jagat-pate*

Arjuna said: “Indeed, You alone know Yourself by Your own internal potency, O Supreme Person, origin of all, Lord of all beings, God of gods, Lord of the universe!”
Bhagavad-gītā 10.15

“Guru has the duty of guiding Krishna’s servants to Him,” Sripad Puri Maharaj said. “We should see everything relative to the Lord and everything should be utilized for the service of the Lord. Those who are serving nicely and with full dedication, we want to serve them. They know how to please Krishna, so we want to serve them. That is the proper conception of Radha *dasya*; not that we want to serve Krishna directly.”

Bhagavad Gita 10.8 confirms:

*aham sarvasya prabhavo
mattah sarvam pravartate
iti matva bhajante mam
budha bhava-samanvitah*

“I am Kṛṣṇa, the Sweet Absolute, the origin of all. The entire universe of material and transcendental play, activity, purpose, and the Vedas and allied scriptures which give guidance—all evolve from Me alone. Realizing this hidden treasure, persons of fine theistic intelligence surpass the mundane and embrace the path of love divine, ragamarga, and adore Me forever.”

This implies that even the tendency to serve Krishna, which is directed by His internal potency, Radharani and also Guru, comes from Him.



Srimati Radharani - The Supreme Personality of Servitor Godhead

In the *Srimad Bhagavatam* 2.3.23 purport, Srila Prabhupada states that, “...Kṛṣṇa is never obtainable directly. Lord Caitanya therefore designated Himself as *gopī-bhartuḥ pada-kamalayor dāsa-dāsānudāsaḥ*, or ‘the most obedient servant of the servants of the Lord, who maintains the gopī damsels at Vṛndāvana.’ A pure devotee therefore never approaches the Lord directly, but tries to please the servant of the Lord’s servants, and thus the Lord becomes pleased...”

In delving further, Sripad Puri Maharaj said that there are three aspect of service we need to recognize. The first aspect is that we need to “have the knowledge that everything is coming from Krishna.” The second aspect is “even our service is coming from Krishna,” while the third aspect is “whoever is serving the Lord in the most perfect way that person I must serve. We must learn how not only how to serve, but how to serve the most

perfect servant of the Lord, Srimati Radharani. Those who want to worship Krishna directly, we cannot accept them to be on the highest platform of dedication.”

Further clarifying the seriousness of service to the servant of the servant, Sripad Puri Maharaj said “some may worship Baladev or Nityananda Prabhu as Guru but that cannot help us achieve the highest level of *madhurya rasa*.” He further states that “only the Rupanuga devotees, those who serve Rupa *manjari*, who is the gopi servant of Srimati Radharani, can connect us with the highest plane of dedication, (*Radha dasya*).”

*jīvañ chavo bhāgavatāñghri-reṇuṁ
na jātu martyo 'bhilabheta yas tu
śrī-viṣṇu-padyā manujas tulasyaḥ
śvasaṅ chavo yas tu na veda gandham*

“The person who has not at any time received the dust of the feet of the Lord's pure devotee upon his head is certainly a dead body. And the person who has never experienced the aroma of the tulasī leaves from the lotus feet of the Lord is also a dead body, although breathing.” *Srimad Bhagavatam* 2.3.23 states.

“In Vṛndāvana all the pure devotees pray for the mercy of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the pleasure potency of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is a tenderhearted feminine counterpart of the supreme whole, resembling the perfectional stage of the worldly feminine nature. Therefore, the mercy of Rādhārāṇī is available very readily to the sincere devotees, and once She recommends such a devotee to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Lord at once accepts the devotee's admittance into His association.” *Srimad Bhagavatam* 2.3.23 purport by Srila Prabhupada.

Sripad Puri Maharaj further states that there are different conceptions of Srimati Radharani. For example, “Some worship Her because she worships Krishna and others worship Krishna because He worships Radha.”

So then why do we follow a certain path? Sripad Puri Maharaj asked of his attentive audience. “Without the help of Acharyadeva, these things will be unknown to us. Why? Because we do not know anything, basically, what to speak of these higher things. Only highly advanced persons like Brahma know these things because they have received them from the Lord.”

The Vedas** (knowledge), “have to be heard or else we will never know about these things. We may also learn of this higher knowledge from the six Gosvamis*** because they were intimate associates of Mahaprabhu****” Sripad Puri Maharaj continued.

After a brief pause, Sripad Puri Maharaj asked, “Why is it that Sanjaya narrates the *Bhagavat Gita*, which was spoken by Sri Krishna, instead of Krishna Himself?”

Surottama das Prabhu responded that “we accepted the fact that Srila Prabhupada said the *Bhagavat Gita* was spoken by Krishna.” However, Sripad Puri Maharaj said, “we are all

blind like Dhritarashtra****. We do not see these higher transcendental things but we can hear about it. Sanjaya was a very elevated soul, and that is why these things were revealed through him by the mercy of his Gurudeva, Srila Vedavyas, who has empowered him.” He further explained that, “Sanjaya represents that way of hearing. We should not misunderstand Krishna’s *lila* (pastimes) with His devotees in a mundane way, as merely some historical events. They are transcendental, belonging to the subjective plane of consciousness.”

“*Bhagavat Gita* is more than just an historical narration. Sanjaya was conceiving these things in his heart because they are transcendental. These things (Krishna’s *lila* with His devotees) not merely occurred once, rather they are going on eternally,” Sripad Puri Maharaj continued.

Coming full circle back to the beginning of *sanga*, Sripad Puri Maharaj said, “we do not try to short circuit the mediator. We do not try to go directly to Krishna but through the mediator or qualified person who serves Krishna and that most qualified person is Srimati Radharani. The highest conception of service personified.”

Moving into the question and answer period of *sanga*, Surottama das Prabhu asked if we have people today who can see the past, present and future. “A scientist tries to do that by using Newton’s equations.. He tries to calculate where the planets were in the past, and where they will be in the future, Sripad Puri Maharaj responded.

Surottam Prabhu mentioned that everything is stored in the akashic record, and some people can access that to know the past and future. Sripad Puri Maharaja replied, “For everything we do there’s a karmic record. We think we are just acting but what we do not know is that we are being made to act. Still we have the free will to recognize that we may act for our own satisfaction or for the satisfaction of Krishna.” This is confirmed in the Bhagavad Gita 3.5:

*na hi kascit ksanam api
jatu tisthaty akarma-krt
karyate hy avasah karma
sarvah prakrti-jair gunaih*

“All men are forced to act helplessly according to the impulses born of the modes of material nature; therefore no one can refrain from doing something, not even for a moment.”



L- R: Surottama das prabhu, Sripad Puri Maharaj & Syamasundara das Alexander Hall, Princeton University campus

In closing Sripad Puri Maharaj talked about Vrndavan das Thakura, as this day was his disappearance day. “Vrndavan das, who was the incarnation of Vyasa, was the son of the daughter of Srinivas Prabhu’s brother. He was also a disciple of Lord Nityananda, and wrote the book, *Chaitanya Bhagavat* (originally called *Chaitanya Mangala*) in glorification of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. However, later Srila Krishnadas Kaviraj wrote the *Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta*, which explains in more detail the later pastimes of Mahaprabhu.” It was also mentioned that Srinivas Prabhu is part of the Pancha Tattva, as the incarnation of a devotee.

We then honored *prasadam* while at the same time we could not stop talking about that wonderful, most transcendental Harinam Sankirtan from earlier in the day.

Harinam Sankirtan ki jai.
 Srila Acharya Maharaj ki jai
 Sripad Bhakti Madhava Puri Maharaj ki jai.

Your humble servant,
 Kushum devi dasi

* Founder-Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON).

** The Vedas - a large body of texts originating in ancient India, which is composed in the Vedic Sanskrit language and are the most sacred scriptures of Hinduism.

***The Six Goswamis of Vrindavan were a group of devotional teachers (gurus) from the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition of Vedic Religion who lived in India during the 15th and 16th centuries. They are Sri Rupa, Sri Sanatana, Bhatta Raghunatha, Sri Jiva, Gopala Bhatta, and Dasa Raghunatha.

****Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (1486–1534), is the Supreme Person, Sri Krishna, appearing as His own worshiper. He is the combined form of Krishna and His most dear devotee Srimati Radharani. He came to experience the love She feels for Him.

*****In the *Mahābhārata*, Dhritarashtra was the King of Hastinapur (now New Delhi) at the time of the Kurukshetra War, the epic's climactic event in Ancient India.