

Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah
Princeton University Harinama Nov. 17, 2012
Bhakti Vedanta Institute
Princeton, NJ

*matra-sparsas tu kaunteya
sitosna-sukha-duhkha-dah
agamapayino 'nityas
tams titikhasva bharata*

“O son of Kunti, the nonpermanent appearance of happiness and distress, and their disappearance in due course, are like the appearance and disappearance of winter and summer seasons. They arise from sense perception, O scion of Bharata, and one must learn to tolerate them without being disturbed.”
Bhagavad-Gita 2:14

This past Friday I received a phone call from Sripad Bhakti Madhava Puri Maharaja, Ph.D. (Puri Maharaja*) wanting to know what the plans were for our (the New York devotees) Saturday Harinam Sankirtan program at Princeton University. Not receiving feedback from any of the other devotees, with the exception of Syamasundara das Prabhu, I immediately rushed to make some follow-up calls. About three hours later, Surottama das Prabhu texted me back that he would be able to make the two-hour drive to New Jersey. Immediately I passed on this good news Puri Maharaja.



L-R: Guest:Nancy, Symasundar Pr, Surottam Pr., Nitai Pr., Didis: Kushum, Sringara, Vidya Vadhu, and guest: Revant

“Harinama Sankirtan is the ancient medicine for modern man,” I once heard a visiting Swami say at the Brooklyn International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) mandir.

Friday night arrived and the *prasadam* pre-preparation begun. Around 11 PM I decided to go to bed, but my eagerness for Harinam was consuming me. I couldn’t sleep so I got up, took shower and went right back into the kitchen. The making and offering of *bhog* was completed around 9 AM. I got dressed and was ready to go. Unfortunately we were not able to leave NY until around 12 Noon due to a train delay that held up Syamasundara das Prabhu and his family. Driving towards our mission, traffic moved along nicely. With only thirty minutes away from our destination, the left side tire of our vehicle blew out. We pulled over; Surottama das Prabhu tried to re-inflate the tire with a portable tire-inflator but to no avail. We got back into the car, drove a little further when he asked a local resident who then directed us to a tire shop one exit away.

For the next two and a half hours we went dancing from one tire shop to a mechanic shop to yet another tire shop trying to find the right tool and tire to replace the damaged one, as it is a “low-profile-tire,” which is not abundantly available. However, by the recommendation of one mechanic, who did not have the required tire, we landed at yet another flat-fix tire shop. That mechanic had the know-how for assembling a make-shift tool needed to fix the problem, but only with the purchase of a very expensive new tire.

Throughout all of this frustration and anxiety, I was starting to feel sad at the thought of not being able to go out on Harinama and pamphlet distribution. As that thought arose in my head, Puri Maharaja called and offered to pick us up from wherever we were. With tears in my eyes and a bright smile on my face, I realized it was probably Lord Nityananda’s divine arrangement to quell my eagerness and put them in perspective. My heart just melted as it reminds me of the first *sloka* (verse) of the *Sri Siksastakam*:**

*ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam bhava-mahā-dāvāgni-nirvāpaṇam
śreyaḥ-kairava-candrikā-vitaraṇam vidyā-vadhū-jīvanam
ānandāmbudhi-varধানam prati-padam pūrṇāmṛtāsvādanam
sarvātma-snapanam param vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam*

“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.”

By the mercy of Sri Guru and Sri Gauranga, though late, we reached Princeton University, where Puri Maharaja was nicely preaching to two invited guests, Revant and Nancy. Nancy had driven for 1 ½ hours just to listen to the scientific and philosophical talks on the evidence in Quantum Mechanics that confirms the “priority of consciousness

over matter.” In the question and answer session that followed, Puri Maharaja clarified that initiation is not merely a superficial matter of agreeing to follow certain rules and regulations. Rather, the Lord’s Transcendental Names, when received from our Nama Guru, purify us and awaken our love for Krishna when chanted with heartfelt faith, in a mood of spontaneous, and not merely mechanical service. Puri Maharaja also delved further into the meaning of *mantras*, *japa* (chanting) and honoring karma-free, transcendental *prasadam* (remnants of the foodstuffs offered to the Lord).

My true disappointment came when we were not able to go out either on Harinam or to distribute pamphlets for the weekly program that is dedicated to spreading the “transcendental teachings As They Are,” that were mercifully received through His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada (Srila Prabhupada***), authorizing and empowering Srila Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Maharaja, Ph.D. (Dr. T. D. Singh, also known as Sripad Maharaja****) to continue the mission of educating the modern scientists and scholars about the “Science of the Soul” and “Science of God,” as stated on our *Sadhu-Sanga* webpage. Prior to his divine disappearance on Oct. 2, 2006, Sripad Maharaja was always inspiring Puri Maharaja for furthering their studies on this most important subject matter, and, by his grace, continues to do so.

Srila Prabhupada is quoted by Sripada Maharaja as saying,

“Although there are so many departments of knowledge, medicine, astronomy, etc., the science of God is still to be introduced. When the scientists, philosophers, medical men will get the opportunity to study systematically what is God, what are His energies, what is my relationship, how to approach him, then only there will be paradise.”

Jai! After about thirty minutes, that beautifully elaborated scientific *sanga* came to an end and we honored *prasadam*. Puri Maharaja’s two invited guests, Revant and Nancy, left.



The New York devotees stayed on for a little longer to honor Srila Prabhupada’s disappearance day by singing *Je Anilo Prema-Dhana* and chanting the Mahamantra,

which was led by Surottama das Prabhu, who played harmonica, with Syamasundara das Prabhu on guitar - sublime ecstasy indeed.



Prabhus: Surottama das Prabhu and Syamasundara das Prabhu

Harinama Sankirtana Ki Jai!

Your humble servant,
Kushum devi dasi

*Sripad Bhakti Madhava Puri Maharaja, Ph.D., is the senior-most devotee scientist of Bhaktivedanta Institute, who serves under the shelter of Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaja, Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswami Maharaja and Srila Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Maharaja, Ph.D. Following behind the footsteps of Sripad Maharaja, Puri Maharaja, Ph.D. is carrying on the mission of Bhaktivedanta Institute.

**Sri Siksastakam (instruction) contains the eight *slokas* (verses) personally composed by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Within His *Siksastakam*, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu stressed the importance of *sankirtan* (congregational chanting) of the Holy Names of the Lord.

***His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada is the founder Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), and a *shaktyavesha* avatar, empowered to spread Krishna consciousness throughout the world.

****Srila Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Maharaja, Ph.D., was a scientist and devotee known for his worldwide efforts in synthesizing science and religion for the purpose of developing a deeper spiritual understanding of life and the universe, and perfectly fulfilling his spiritual master's desire.