

Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah
Bhakti Vedanta Institute
Princeton University Harinama
Princeton, NJ
April 12, 2014

After the long winter here broke, we were finally able to have Harinam outdoors.



Rasaraja das w/kartals, Syamasundara das w/guitar with Sripad Puri Maharaj

Back at the Bhakti Vedanta Institute (BVI) office at Princeton University, Rasaraja das Prabhu offered a garland to Srila Govinda Maharaj^[1] as we honored his disappearance day, while Sripad Bhakti Madhava Puri Maharaj, Ph.D (Sripad Puri Maharaj) sang *je ânilo prema*dhana korunâ pracur* ^[2] in Srila Govinda Maharaj's remembrance.

*Prema*dhana* has a very precious meaning, Sripad Puri Maharaj said as he opened sanga. "*Prema* means love and *dhana* means "to give". Srila Gurudeva (spiritual teacher) gives us the gift of love. The greatest gift Krishna can give to the living entity is love, love for Himself and that comes through Gurudev's affectionate mercy. The function of Gurudev is the same function as Krishna. That's the meaning of Guru."

"The message of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu delivered by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur^[3] to us all are encompassed by three things and nothing else: '*Jive*doya Name-ruchi Vaisnava*seva*' S *Jive*doya* means kindness to the jiva (living entity), *Name*ruchi* means taste for Krishna's Holy Name and *Vaisnava*seva* means

service to the Vaisnavas (worshippers of Lord Vishnu/Sri Krishna). Whoever has these three, they have understood everything that Mahaprabhu came to teach,” Sripad Puri Maharaj explained. “To be very merciful to one another, to chant Krishna’s Holy name with relish and serve the Vaisnavas, help them in their mission in teaching these things, that is our life. We have seen all these qualities perfectly expressed and manifested in Srila Govinda Maharaj. He was known for his affection for everyone.” To further emphasize Srila Govinda Maharaj’s personality, Sripad Puri Maharaj referenced Spd. Madhusudana das Prabhu’s website which describes Srila Govinda Maharaj as ‘the sweetest personality.’ From childhood Govinda Maharaja had developed a taste for chanting the different Vaisnava songs of the Holy Names of Krishna,” Sripad Puri Maharaj further explained.



Srila Govinda Maharaj, “Personification of Sweetness” while in Venezuela



Srila Govinda Maharaj's Pure mercy and love for all shining through

"I remembered when he went to Venezuela, he started to sing and his energy started to transmit to everybody, they started to sing and began jumping. It was like a power full of spiritual potency or something. Everyone was dancing and jumping and singing when he started to sing. I never saw something like that before," Rasaraja das Prabhu said of his Gurudev, remembering Srila Govinda Maharaj's visit to Venezuela in 1999. "It was ecstasy and his voice was so powerful when he was singing."

"He was the personification of Vaisnav seva S to Srila Guru Maharaj, to the Vaisnavas, to everyone. He was a living example for all of us on how to serve Guru. He was the living embodiment of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur's message of Mahaprabhu. He showed us how to live that message," Sripad Puri Maharaj said. After a brief pause, he continued, "Our Math is named Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math, which shows in its name how much importance we give to Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur. Before Srila Sridhar Maharaj's^[4] Math, none of the other Mathas has the name Saraswat in it, only after Srila Sridhar Maharaj established that name, then the emphasis on Sarasvati Thakur, who established the Gaudiya Math, became recognized. Srila Sridhar Maharaj made that distinction S Chaitanya Saraswat Math – the message of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu^[5] through Sarasvati Thakur which is the lineage we are following. There are so many lines coming from Chaitanya Mahaprabhu but we are following the lineage coming from Sarasvati Thakur, who is coming from Bhaktivinod Thakur, so it's a very pure and unique line."

"I am always thinking that it was our great good fortune to come in contact with Srila Prabhupada,^[6] Srila Sridhar Maharaj, Srila Govinda Maharaj and Srila Svarup Damodar Maharaj,^[7] all in one lifetime.

They are all very sweet, wonderful Vaisnavas. In our one life, who can imagine the good fortune and incomparable mercy we have had," Sripad Puri Maharaj said, "and that sweetness is still potent in their followers. It has not dissipated."

At this point of sanga, Sripad Puri Maharaj asked if anyone of us would like to say something about Srila Govinda Maharaj. Rasaraja das Prabhu said, "I remember once someone asked a question to Srila Govinda Maharaj in Venezuela when he was on his world tour and the question was: 'Is Guru is the representative of Nityananda Prabhu?'^[8]" After a brief pause, he continued, "Because Nityananda Prabhu is the most merciful, even more merciful than Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, so that question was asked if the Guru is a representative of Sri Nityananda Prabhu, and Srila Govinda Maharaj said 'NO! The Guru **is** Nityananda Prabhu, not a representative, but Nityananda Prabhu!'"

Rasaraja das Prabhu continued, "At the beginning we try to see the Guru as a regular person but then eventually we have vision that Guru is more than that. Krishna Himself is manifest as the Guru. We have to see that Krishna is coming to us as Gurudeva. The Guru is not different from Krishna (*acharya mam vijñaniyat*), so whatever comes from Guru is no different than what is coming from Krishna or Nityananda Prabhu. Nityananda Prabhu came to rescue the most fallen souls." This is confirmed in the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādiṅilā 5.208, which states:

*preme matta nityānanda kṛpā*avatāra
uttama, adhama, kichu nā kare vicāra*

"Because He is intoxicated by ecstatic love and is an incarnation of mercy, He does not distinguish between the good and the bad."

"In this verse it says that Nityananda Prabhu is the Kripa avatar (merciful personality) and because He is intoxicated with divine love, he make no distinction between the *Uttama* and *Adhama Adhikari* (the most advanced or the lowest person). He gives mercy to everyone, and I see that the practical standard of the Guru is like that. He came to rescue the most fallen souls. They make no distinction between who is high or who is low," Rasaraja das Prabhu continued. Guru is closer to us than Krishna. When we are drowning in the ocean and someone is rescuing us, the closest thing to us is the finger of that person who came to rescue us and that is Gurudev and the mercy of Krishna coming to us is through Gurudev. Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur said if we stand up a little higher we will see Srimati Radharani

(eternal consort of Krishna) standing behind Gurudev. It depends on our vision. Guru is more than what we see."

"Yes, it depends on the vision of the disciple, how much we are advanced in Krishna consciousness we can see to that level who is Guru," Sripad Puri Maharaj emphasized. "That vision comes by the mercy of Gurudeva. He gives us that knowledge, that vision, that potency to see."

"*Sastra* says that this world is a perverted reflection of the spiritual world or inverted reflection, so what's the inversion? Sripad Puri Maharaj asked. "The inversion or pivot point is found in us. What should be a proper life of dedication becomes inverted and becomes a life of exploitation. By developing the mood of exploitation, we desire to be the lord of the environment. The whole world becomes mundane, something impersonal that we can exploit with our own personality. To get the proper version, we have to go to the turning point which is in our heart, then the true spiritual world becomes known to us. Our eyes must become smeared with love, *premanjana*cchurita*bhakti*vilocanena*. This verse is confirmed in the *Sri Brahma*samhita* 5.38,

*premanjana*cchurita*bhakti*vilocanena
santah sadaiva hridayeshu vilokayanti
yam syamasundaram acintya*guna*svarupam
govindam adi*purusham tam aham bhajami*

"I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who is Syamasundara, Krishna Himself with inconceivable innumerable attributes, whom the pure devotees see in their heart of hearts with the eye of devotion tinged with the salve of love."

"*Prem* means love and *anjana* means ointment, *bhakti*vilocanena* means the eyes of devotion. When our eyes becomes smeared with love, then what happens? You see Syamasundar (Krishna), *acintya*guna*svarupam*, otherwise Syamasundara is inconceivable. And how do we see Him? Sripad Puri Maharaj asked then responded, "Through Guru. So if we catch the message of Guru, then we understand *Jive*doya*, how to be compassionate towards the living entity." Sripad Puri Maharaj went on to ask, "What real compassion can we give to anyone except Krishna consciousness because that is all we know to be of genuine value, so to give that is real *Jive*doya!* Not just to give them some mundane association or mundane pleasures. Real kindness is to share the teachings and practice of Krishna consciousness, *Name-ruchi* and *Vaisnava*seva*. "

"His (Srila Govinda Maharaj) sincerity and humility were very palpable. Sincerity is from the heart, not from the lips. His dedication to Srila Guru Maharaja was spontaneous and transcendental, like something out of this world," Rasaraja das Prabhu said. "He would not tolerate any falseness. No one could retain their false ego before him," Sripad Puri Maharaj confirmed.



L-R: Sai, Revant, Syamasundara das and Rasaraja das with Sripad Puri Maharaj

Harinam Sankirtana ki jai!

Prasadam was served and honored by all.

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

Your humble servant
Kushum devi dasi
(New York)

[1] Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda Maharaj, SevaiteSPresidentSAcharya of Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math:
http://scsmath.com/docs/govinda_maharaj.html

[2] Vaisnava Kirtan composed by Narottama Dâsa Thâkur S
<http://www.vaishnavsongs.com/jesaniolospremsdhana/>

[3] Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura:
http://scsmath.com/docs/saraswati_thakur.html

[4] Srila Sridhar Maharaj:
http://www.scsmath.com/docs/sridhar_maharaj.html

[5] Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu appeared in in Mayapur, West Bengal, India in 1486. Although He is the Supreme Lord Himself, Sri Krishna, He posed as a devotee, and revealed the most sublime sentiments and the natural disposition of a devotee. He taught us by His own example how to establish a connection with the Lord through the practice of pure devotion. Srila Rupa Goswami has glorified Lord Chaitanya as being the most munificent Lord because He freely distributed pure love of Godhead.

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

[7] Srila Bhakti Svarup Damodar Maharaj:
<http://www.bhaktiswarupadamodara.com/>

[8] Sri Nityananda Prabhu: http://www.vaisnava.com/sbr_magn.html