

**Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah**  
**Bhakti Vedanta Institute**  
**Princeton University Harinama**  
**Princeton, NJ**  
June 21, 2014

We went to our favorite shelter tree in front of Alexander Hall at Princeton University campus but again it was taken over by a big white tent, so the next best place was Palmer Square (a small memorial park dedicated to Edgar Palmer)<sup>[1]</sup> on Nassau Street across from Princeton University where Prabhus: Syamasundara das on guitar and Rasaraja das on kartals (hand cymbal) opened Harinam Sankirtan with Sripad Bhakti Madhava Puri Maharaj, Ph.D. (Sripad Puri Maharaj) leading the group at our new found spot.



Prabhus: Syamasundara das on guitar and Rasaraja das & Kushum dd with Sripad Puri Maharaj

After about an hour of the most wonderful kirtan we head back to the Bhakti Vedanta Institute (BVI) office where Sripad Puri Maharaj opened *sanga* by singing "*Param Karuna Pahu Dui Jana*"<sup>[2]</sup> by Locana Dasa Thakura.

"*Pahu dui jana*" means the two Lords, Gauracandra and Nitai, and *parama karuna* means "the most merciful," Sripad Puri Maharaj explained. *kevala ananda-kanda*, translates as "simply wonderful and joyful", *bhajo bhajo bhai chaitnya nitai* - chant, chant my brother, chant the names of Caitanya and Nitai. *sudridha biswasa kori* - with firm conviction and faith, just give up all engagement in sense gratification. *dekho ore bhai, tri-bhuvane nai*, - in all the three worlds, you will not find anyone as merciful as Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityananda. *Pasu pakhi jhure* - *pasu* means animals. So he is saying

that the animals cry and stones melt when they hear the chanting of Krishna's Holy Names. *samsare majiya, rohili poriya, se pade nahilo asa* - Locana dasa is the author of this song and he says, 'I am so lost in this material world of *samsara* that I have no attraction for the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityananda, so I am being punished. I am being punished by not being attracted to this joyful process - *kevala ananda-kanda*. This process is simply wonderful and I am such a contaminated rascal I don't even feel attracted to such a joyful process. Instead I just stay miserable and unhappy in this cycle of birth and death.'"

"We were sitting out there chanting so happily and the people were all walking by, going about their daily life. Going shopping, going to eat, going home, going to sleep, having sex and they are very seriously concerned about that way of life instead of being attracted to the joyful chanting of the Holy Names," Sripad Puri Maharaj said. "Devotees are there chanting with all their hearts, and may compassionately see these people passing by as being punished by Yamaraj (Lord of death) by not being attracted to the joyful chanting of the Holy Names. But Narottama das is feeling himself that he is one of those people who are being punished."

Kushum Didi asked, "Those that are just passing by, looking at us chanting, how can they get attracted to the chanting if they do not know the value of it or are not aware of it? In response, Sripad Puri Maharaj said, "It's the soul that hears the chanting and is affected. Some of them who have some connection with or awareness of the soul will feel very happy to see the devotees chanting. Those that do not have that connection may even become annoyed."

"If the souls came from that area of Brahmajyoti (Sri Krishna's effulgence), are they not originally Krishna conscious? It is our nature to be Krishna Conscious or not really?" Rasaraja das Prabhu asked. "*Tatastha Shakti* means undeveloped consciousness, which can grow or develop in any direction. It will depend on what kind of atmosphere we come in touch with, whether we become devoted or exploitive units.

Unless one is very pious, the soul would not feel any attraction to chanting but if they had some previous connection with bhakti (devotion) then they have some *sukriti* (good merit) then their attraction will awaken, but their devotion may not be developed. That only happens with *sadhana* (practice). It's our natural position to serve Krishna so it's spontaneous also," Sripad Puri Maharaj

responded. "But we don't start out with fully developed consciousness. Everyone is at a different point in their development. Much depends on whom they associate with, the devotees or the materialists; it also depends on how much their dedication or exploitation has developed. Those who are nascently from the *Brahmajyoti*, the very most original state, they experience an equilibrium to either side. Those who are coming back to this world after many lifetimes of material existence may have some Krishna consciousness and that would be revived when they hear the devotees chanting," Sripad Puri Maharaj explained. "Like Sukadev Goswami, he had undergone a whole process of purification before he was born so he could understand the devotional principles. It's not just any ordinary soul who comes out from the womb who can understand everything at once."

"Some *sukriti* has to be accumulated to have some awareness of the chanting," Rasaraja das Prabhu said. "They have to have some *sukriti* or some connection with someone who has experienced life in Krishna consciousness and through association with them they can also learn to become familiar with that kind of life of dedication," Sripad Puri Maharaj said. In another example, he said, "Just like the four Kumaras (Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana, and Sanat – mind born sons of Lord Brahma), they were absorbed in consciousness of the *brahmajyoti* but they smelled the Tulasi (holy basil) leafs and became attracted to the Holy Names immediately. That was a very neutral attraction because they were coming from a neutral stage." After a brief pause he said, "So we need to have pure devotees of the higher order to learn from by their example and instructions. Following them and serving them, we may develop their mood of service and dedication by their grace. By pleasing them with our sincere dedication and service, they can give us admission to the highest regions of the service world."



**Lion statue in Edgar Palmer's park      The Kirtanias after a wonderful Harinam**

Going right into our weekly program, Sripad Puri Maharaj asked Rasaraja das Prabhu if he would like to read the *slokhas* (verses) from Srila Sridhar Maharaja's<sup>[3]</sup> *Bhagavad Gita – Hidden Treasure of the Sweet Absolute*, Chapter 8, verses 16, while the rest of us repeat after him.

*abrahma-bhuvanal lokah  
punar avartino 'rjuna  
mam upetya tu kaunteya  
punar janma na vidyate*

"O Arjuna, from the plane of Lord Brahmā down-wards, all planes or their residents are subject to return. But, O Kaunteya, there is no rebirth after reaching Me."

In explaining the verses Rasaraja das Prabhu said, "What it is saying is that all of creation is coming from the highest, Lord Brahma (the Creator) and all are assured to return to this material creation. We have to take birth again, but here it said, 'the ones that reach Me,' the ones that have developed Krishna consciousness, 'there's no rebirth for them.' They do not have to come back to this material existence."

Then he read verse 17,

*sahasra-yuga-paryantam  
ahar yad brahmano viduh  
ratrim yuga-sahasrantam  
te 'ho-ratra-vido janah*

"A day of Lord Brahmā lasts for one thousand *chatur-yugas*\* and his night is of the same duration. Persons who know this have the true conception of day and night."

"This verse talks about the duration of Lord Brahma's day and night, which is millions of years. If a person has a true conception of day and night of Lord Brahma, for him, that is equal to about one hundred human years," Rasaraja das Prabhu continued. "Also for a small creature or a germ, its life is equal to one hundred years, which might be only for a few hours in our calculation. So in that time, the living entities give birth and die, regardless if it's millions of years or a few hours."

"Sometimes we think that Krishna is not paying attention to us. We are working so hard, praying to Krishna and it seems like He doesn't even notice us, especially when we need Him the most. But if you think in perspective, His one day and night is like millions of our years. So many things are happening – flood, tsunami, earthquakes, people are dying – so many disasters are happening, and we are thinking God is so unkind, where is God? What kind of God is this? " Sripad Puri Maharaj said smilingly. "Millions of years for us are like one second for Him. We may want His immediate response, but if it takes Him a second or two it becomes millions of years for us. We give so much importance to our lives and yet our connection with the Infinite is so insignificant. To the degree of material renunciation and detachment devotees may develop, they may accordingly have some realization and understanding of those things. We won't have any conception of the Infinite if we don't recognize what is our own actual insignificant position."

After a brief pause Sripad Puri Maharaj said, "Some stars are moving at such a distance from us, the light from those stars will never reach us in our whole lifetime. Those stars will be travelling for billions of years from the beginning to the end of the universe expanding outward and we will never be able to see them in our lifetime, that's how far away they are. Light travels at the speed of 186,000 miles a second. They will always remain unknown to us or to anyone for billions of years. We will never get to see the edge of the universe either, so in this way we can get an idea of how insignificant we are. Being so insignificant, who do we think we are going to impress with our prayers, service or chanting?"



At the BVI office for sanga with Sripad Puri Maharaj, Prabhus: Syamasundara das and Rasaraja das

At this point of *sanga* Revant Prabhu, Princeton astrophysics major, joined the group and Sripad Puri Maharaj gave a recap of our discussion thus far. "We were talking about how we will never be able see the stars at the edge of the universe." In response Revant Prabhu said, "The horizon is shrinking further away." "The point we are making is how insignificant we are. What is our significance with respect to the universe?" Sripad Puri Maharaj said. "We are reading how one day of the demigod's life is 1,000 *chatur yugas*. A *chatur yuga* is 4,320,000 years and 1,000 of those is one day for them. The night is just as long also. Sometimes we are praying to God and wondering why doesn't He answer our prayers, but one of our days is not even a second for Him. What is urgent for us, may seem different for Him, If He says, "Oh, can you wait a second or two? A second or two for Him is like millions and millions of years for us," Sripad Puri Maharaj said laughingly as he describes the Lord's nectar with us.

"We have to have proper perspective if we want to deal with the Infinite, the Supreme, the Absolute. We cannot go with an ordinary mentality to that platform. It's quite beyond anything ordinary. The life of renunciation and dedication is required for that higher platform. Considering our position, our meager existence, what should we do? What is our duty? Sripad Puri Maharaj asked his attentive audience. "Look for a meaning, the purpose of our life. Something superior," Rasaraja das Prabhu responded.

"Yes," Sripad Puri Maharaja replied, then said, "When Rupa Goswami was writing down what the teachings of Mahaprabhu<sup>[4]</sup> to him were, he composed *Bhakti Rasamrta Sindu* (Ocean of Devotional Sweetness)<sup>[5]</sup> and then explained 'it is only a drop of what is available.' This showed his realization of the Infinite. Rupa Goswami has given us so much, such wonderful knowledge of *rasa* is revealed in his books, yet he was thinking it is only a drop of the Infinite."

"We can understand and appreciate our insignificance by learning about the infinite expanse of the universe," Revant Prabhu remarked. "But even the universe is insignificant with respect to the Infinite," Sripad Puri Maharaj responded. "If we live in the consciousness that somehow or the other we know something, we have not understood the Infinite. When we try to understand how insignificant we are compared to the Infinite, what would be the benefit? What would be accomplished by actually realizing how insignificant we are?" Sripad Puri Maharaj asked. "We can try to realize that which is more significant than ourselves," Revant Prabhu responded. "OK, but what is

more significant than us?" Sripad Puri Maharaj pressed. "To have a realization of Krishna," Rasaraj das Prabhu responded. After several minutes of debating various answers, Sripad Puri Maharaj said, "To understand that you are insignificant is already to realize what is that more significant Infinite. The more you understand the true Infinite, the more you will understand how insignificant you are. The more we are in touch with that Infinite, the more in touch we are with our own insignificance. That's the criterion by which we can understand properly. And that realization can only come by grace of the Infinite."

"We will understand the Infinite by understanding our own insignificance. One who understands the Infinite knows he's insignificant. He doesn't try to reach it by his own effort -- it's impossible. He submits himself before the Infinite as the most insignificant entity. In this way he gains a consciousness of the Infinite and the awareness of his relationship with the Infinite. He's liberated from the illusion that he is significant," Sripad Puri Maharaj continued. "That's why these things are good to contemplate. Don't end with the universe. Go beyond the universe, there's much much more."

"This can be known only by the mercy of the Infinite, the Lord. We can't get to that place by our own efforts. The idea or conception comes to us by the grace of the Lord, Sri Krishna, and the grace of the Lord comes to us by the grace of His devotees. They have some conception of these things, therefore we can realize them by listening to and serving them," Sripad Puri Maharaj continued. "We learn this knowledge from gurudev (spiritual teacher) and we may actually get some realization by gurudeva's mercy."



Father and son rock climbing after Harinam



Rasaraja Prabhu feeding *prasadam* to the geese

Prasadam was then served and honored by all.

Harinam Sankirtana ki jai

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)

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[1] [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palmer\\_Square](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palmer_Square)

[2] <http://www.iskcondesiretree.net/page/param-karuna-pahu-dui-jana>

[3] Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj - Founder-President-Acharyya: Sri Caitanya Saraswat Math

[4] Sri Krishna Caitanya 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 His highest 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 Caitanya as being the most munificent Lord because He freely distributed pure love of Godhead.

[5] [ebooks.iskcondesiretree.info/index.php?q=f&f=%2Fpdf%2FGaudiya\\_Books+%2FRupa\\_Goswami](http://ebooks.iskcondesiretree.info/index.php?q=f&f=%2Fpdf%2FGaudiya_Books+%2FRupa_Goswami)

\*One yuga {age} in the time calculation of the demigods equals the four yugas or one chatur-yuga in the time calculation of man, or 4,320,000 years.

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