

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

August 9, 2014

Sripad Bhakti Madhava Puri Maharaj, Ph.D (Sripad Puri Maharaj) opened sanga with The *Pancha Tattva Mahamantra* (Jaya Sri-Krishna-Chaitanya Prabhu Nityananda / Sri-Adwaita Gadadhara Shrivasadi-Gaura-Bhakta-Vrinda) followed with the Hare Krishna Mahamantra (Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare). Accompanying him on musical instruments were Prabhus: Syamasundara das on guitar, Rasaraja das and Bhakta OJ on kartals (hand cymbal), while Bhakta Steve and myself clapped as we gathered to celebrate the appearance day of Lord Sri Balaram, Sri Krishna's older brother.



Syamasundara das on guitar, Rasaraja das and Bhakta OJ on kartals with Sripad Puri Maharaj

“How can Krishna be the *adi-purush* and have an older brother?” Sripad Puri Maharaj asked his audience. Smilingly he said, “It’s the *lila* (pastime) of the Lord. It’s a particular mood (*rasa*), and because Krishna is Transcendental we cannot understand His *lila* with the mind, but with the heart.”

In a pre-sanga conversation, Sripad Puri Maharaj asked why was the advice *amanina manadena* (don’t expect respect or honor but give honor and respect to others) given to us by Mahaprabhu? ^[1] This requires putting ourselves down in a very submissive position, but the question is why would we want to do such a thing? Why would Mahaprabhu instruct us to take such an insignificant position? In response Bhakta Steve said, “So we can be closer to Krishna.”

“Because that would help us become Krishna Conscious,” Sripad Puri Maharaj agreed then asked what is Krishna Consciousness? Not getting a response he said, “to remember that Krishna is always there and He is always over us. This instruction of Mahaprabhu is very useful to help us become Krishna Conscious.” In Mahaprabhu’s *Sri Siksastakam*, text 3 states:

*trinad api sunichena
taror api sahishnuna
amanina manadena
kirtaniyah sada harih*

“One should chant the holy name of the Lord in a humble state of mind, thinking oneself lower than the straw in the street; one should be more tolerant than a tree, devoid of all sense of false prestige and should be ready to offer all respect to others. In such a state of mind one can chant the holy name of the Lord constantly.”

The next question was what or who is a *Karmi*? Sripad Puri Maharaj explained that a *karmi* is “a person who engages in fruitive activities. One who acts for some result. When you act for some result, you are also getting some reaction. When you take something from the environment, the environment will also take something back from you. This is the law of nature -- Newton’s law that every action produces a reaction. So *karmi* means one who is exploiting nature or the environment for some selfish purpose and he’s going to get a reaction for that.” Sripad Puri Maharaj then explained the difference between and *bhakta* (devotee) and *karmi*. A *Bhakta* acts out of devotion and dedication. He utilizes the environment for the pleasure of the Lord and His devotees, not for himself. On the other hand, the *Karmi* (exploiter) wants to get something for everything he does. The environment is there to take from for his-own-self. The devotee sees the environment as belonging to Krishna and to be utilized in His service. The renunciate on the other hand, doesn’t have anything to do with the environment. He remains isolated and does nothing. Exploitation, renunciation and dedication are the three attitudes we can take in life.”

Going right into *sanga* in remembrance of the appearance day of Lord Sri Balaram, Sripad Puri Maharaj read a series of quotes taken from the *Srimad Bhagavatam*, Tenth Canto in describing the appearance, form, characteristics, marriage, mercy, pastimes and disappearance of Lord Sri Balarama. In recapping the essence of what was read, Lord Balaram is described: “The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna, is the fountainhead of all incarnations. Lord Balarama is His second body. They are both one and the same identity. They differ only in form. Balarama is the first bodily expansion of Krishna, and He assists in Lord Krishna's transcendental pastimes. He is the

source of the entire spiritual world and is the *adi-guru*, the original spiritual master.”

Sripad Puri Maharaj continues, “He assumes five other forms to serve Lord Krishna. He Himself helps in the pastimes of Lord Krishna, and He does the work of creation in four other forms called the *catur-vyuha* (four-armed) forms known as Vasudeva, Sankarshana, Pradyumna and Anirudha. He executes the orders of Lord Krishna in the work of creation, and in the form of Lord Sesa He serves Sri Krishna in various ways. In all the forms He tastes the transcendental bliss of serving Krishna. No one can approach Krishna without first getting the mercy of Baladeva.”



Sri Balaram

Lord Balaram was also called Sankarshana,” Sripad Puri Maharaj explained. The word *karshan* has the same Sanskrit root as in Krishna - ‘to attract’ and *san* means ‘together.’ So Lord Balaram is known as Sankarshana because he was attracted from the womb of Devaki to the womb of Rohini by transcendental potency.”

Further reading described the mercy of Lord Balarama. “Lord Balarama exemplifies the service attitude to Krishna. His only mission is to please Krishna by rendering service to Him, whether it is in the creation of the material worlds, maintaining the spiritual world or as His personal paraphernalia. Lord Balarama is the eternal companion of Sri Krishna. He came as Lakshmana with Rama and later as Nityananda Prabhu with Caitanya Mahaprabhu. He is the original spiritual master, and any one desiring to make spiritual progress must first get the mercy of Lord Balarama.”

“The most important thing for us is that Lord Balaram is the manifest energy of the Lord (Sri Krishna). He manifests the spiritual world, the bodies of the devotees (but not of the Gopis), the land, the paraphernalia, the seat of the Lord (and therefore He is known as Anantashesh),” Sripad Puri Maharaj explained. “He manifested the material energy through His *catur-vyuha* (four armed) expansion, Maha Vishnu. Not only that, He manifests the knowledge of Krishna to us as guru. Here He’s the revealer, the manifestor and therefore He’s called the *adi-guru* because Krishna is first revealed to us through gurudev, otherwise we don’t automatically know anything about Krishna -- only when it is revealed to us by the words of guru and *shastra* (scriptures) and that’s the potency of Lord Balaram to reveal/manifest the Lord. So He always comes before the Lord in that sense because only through Him and through His mercy we can have any contact with Krishna,” Sripad Puri Maharaj said. “The Lord (Krishna) is also known to have three energies. *Samvit* (the internal conscious energy/knowledge) which is Krishna Himself, *Sandini* (manifesting energy) which is Balaram and *Hladini* (internal/pleasure potency of the Lord) which is Srimati Radharani.”

Before wrapping up sanga, Sripad Puri Maharaj asked his audience if they know any other pastimes of Lord Sri Balaram that he has not read about. Bhakta OJ said he is aware of the birth of Lord Balarama because of one of the past dramas he acted in at the mandir. Both Rasaraja das and Syamasundara das Prabhus and also Bhakta Steve talked about the battle between Kamsa and Lord Balaram.

Why does Lord Balaram carry a plow? Kushum dd asked. “Because of his strength, the bull is plowing the field, so in that way Balaram (Bala = strength) has the strength of a bull,” Sripad Puri Maharaj responded. “As guru, he also prepares the field of our hearts and plants the seed of bhakti.”

In conclusion, Sripad Puri Maharaj said, “Just like Krishna left this planet in a special way, it is said that Lord Balaram left in meditation while sitting at the bank of the Yamuna river after Krishna’s disappearance.”



Prasadam was 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)

[1] 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.

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