

Wednesday, the 17th of August



Arriving in Lake George

After a long flight and a long drive from New York City, we finally arrived at the Legacy Inn, a Motel owned by Maharajas sons Priyesh and Raj.

It was very very easy to find, because from the road we could see a man with saffran robes standing in front of the Inn, waving very friendly at us in the car. So we turned left, got out of our car and offered full obeisances to his feet...

After one and a half year, it was overwhelming to see Sripad Sadhu Maharaja again. So what followed were big hearty hugs for both of us. It was as if no time had passed between us...immediately we were in the presence of a great great human being.

We talked a bit and he showed us the premises and he was very proud that his sons take so nicely care of the two Motels, here the Legacy Inn and in Warrensburg, the Budget Inn. After arriving, he invited us for prasadam (holy food) and we gladly accepted. After that we moved into our room and went into deep-sleep-mode.



Thursday, 18/08/2011

The next day, after morning practices (meditation, japa and puja) I went for a swim in the Inn's swimming pool.

It was wonderful to just chill out in the wonderful weather with Maharaja and we talked a lot this day. Maharaja asked about all his disciples in Europe, about the festival in Dole (France) and we answered all his questions. He told us different stories from his wonderful tour in South America and we listened, completely mesmerized.

During the day, his son Raj (owner of the Inns) arrived and we immediately bonded strongly with him and a wonderful friendship started.

The Inn also has rooms for people who need social services, so we hang out with Maharaja and different people from the Legacy Inn.

One guy just came out of prison and he really was a bad guy. But Maharajas presence for a few days completely transformed him. I could NOT believe that this person was in prison for over 20 years. He adored Maharaja and said that he stole his heart...wow...

In the evening Raj provided 4 tickets for the boat-ride on Lake George with a ship called "Minnehaha". So, Govinda priya, Maharaja and my humble self went downtown to the Lake and cruised with the ship, Maharaja on board!!!

Yep, you should have seen the looks of the people on the ship...very funny.
After the cruise we went for a nice coffee and then back home to the Legacy Inn.



Maharaja told us, that in the evening they would have huge fireworks down at the Lake and he would love to watch it with us from the Inn. So at 8.30 pm we watched the fireworks and had a wonderful time outside.

Needless to say that in his association you feel bliss at every second. Again, we talked the whole day and everything Maharaja says makes a deep imprint in your heart.

Govinda priya went with Raj to the other motel to help him with something and when she came back she said:

"Tarun, we have a new brother."

Friday, 19/08/2011

So, after two wonderful days with Maharaja at the Legacy Inn the plan was to drive to the place of Priyesh, his youngest son, who lives with his mother, Maharajas former wife, in Albany.

So in the early morning we drove there. What an honour to meet a) another son of Maharaja and b) his former wife, called Mataji. She is a truly wonderful lady-devotee and you just can do nothing but love her.

She could for us all a most wonderful breakfast and we were immediately wholeheartedly welcomed by her.

Especially she was fond of my wife, Govinda priya. There was at once a wonderfully deep, like mother-daughter connection. Also I was very soon welcomed in her beautiful home and heart. She really radiates a very special power of deep love for Radha and Krishna.



So after breakfast, we drove to our first living base in North Andover (Mass). Maharaja knows there two wonderful devotees named Sridhar and Dr Deepa, both husband and wife and devotees of Sri Ramanuja Acarya.

It was really unbelievable how much love they had for Maharaja...all starting with proper welcome-ceremony aka foot-washing.



We found our beautiful room in their cellar and felt very very happy. After arriving, sumptuous prasadam was served and we all ate heartily and talked about many different things.

Then after some rest, we started for our 1st program. It was located in New Hampshire and Siddhanta das was the organizer.



We arrived a little late because Maharaja had to go to the dentist. Fortunately, Dr Deepa is one and she took great care of Maharaja. He really was in horrible pain for the last days and it was necessary to pull a tooth, shortly before leaving for New Hampshire.

So with a little lateness and painkillers for Maharaja, we arrived at the program and miraculously Maharaja delivered a wonderful lecture, based on the theme of sambhanda-jnana, knowledge of our relationship with Krishna and about the importance of hearing in great association (sadhu-sanga). People fell in love with him and pretty soon I realized how wonderful Maharaja was taking the people up from where they are spiritually. He knows the art of "reading" the atmosphere in the room, the combined consciousnesses of all there and speaks accordingly.

Questions were answered and prasadam was served and a beautiful 1st program found its end. After the program, we drove back to Sridhar/Deepa's place and rested peacefully for the night.

Saturday, 20/08/2011

After a wonderful south Indian breakfast, we had superb harikatha from Maharaja and also from Sridhar das, about the importance of sadhu-sanga and spiritual life.

Then we went out a bit for "fresh air", meaning we took a walk to the nearby Starbucks, which Maharaja dearly loves...LOL.

Then after some rest, we had more talks and soon we prepared ourselves for the drive to Rhode Island, where the 2nd program was about to take place.

We arrived at Madhuri's house in Providence and from her place we drove to the apartment of Sri Krishna, a wonderful devotee who invited us for lunch prasadam. He cooked a glorious feast and Maharaja decided to stay there for the afternoon and talk and rest. So we drove together with Madhuri back to her place and went shopping for the feast to be served at the evening program.

So, after shopping, my wife and Dr Deepa helped me to cook a feast for the program. We made Dal, Subji, Rice, Raita and Salad and shortly after offering Maharaja arrived with Sridhar and Sri Krischna and slowly slowly the first souls arrived...



The house was packed and the lecture was again very beautiful. Maharaja put emphasis again on good association and he made the point of always remembering Krishna and never forget him. He asked Sridhar to tell the story of Gajendra the elephant and his fight with the crocodile.

He quoted the verse:

*name ruci, jive daya, vaisnave ullasa
daya kari' deha more, ohe krsna-dasa*

O servant of Sri Krsna, please be merciful and give me a taste for *sri-nama* and compassion for all *jivas* – and let me delight in the association of Vaisnavas.

He wonderfully explained three topics:

1) jiva daya - compassion to all living entities.

This he said means that we should start with our own self. We have to know our self and LOVE it. Then only are we able to love others and ultimately Krishna. Many people only try to love Krishna and they neglect the people in this world, most of all, themselves. I too was a victim of this bhogus-philosophy.

Maharaja saved me by clearly showing me how to first of all love your self and then go on from there...very important point for me and all the guest agreed totally.

2) name ruci - taste for chanting Krishnas name

Only by loving your own soul and the other souls we can develop love for Krishna and His Holy Name, the most important item in bhakti-yoga. If you have no love for everyone, no love for Krishna will be able to sprout, Maharaja explained.

3) Vaishnava-ullasa - delight in the presence of Vaishnavas

Always try to be in association with like-minded souls, devoted to the same goal in the same mood. Always try to serve those Vaishnavas, make friends with them, listen to them. Maharaja spoke very strongly on this point and on not committing offenses to the Vaishnavas and to all jivas.

The questions were really awesome and Maharaja expertly answered them to the full satisfaction of the ones who asked.

Prasadam was served and friendly chatter swept through the house, everyone in deep affection to Maharaja and by his grace to one and another.

Pretty late we drove to our "home" in North Andover and fell asleep instantly.

Sunday, 21/08/2011

Again, after morning sadhana, we had a wonderful south indian breakfast and Maharaja went with us for "fresh air", now a very funny inside joke...lol.

The whole morning was immersed in wonderful short talks and great instructions from Maharaja. Sridhar spoke about his lineage, the Sri-sampradaya, headed by Sri Ramanuja Acarya. More and more I liked to hear him speak and my foolish ego got more quiet.

Sridhar beautifully explained the prayers of the Alvars, especially about one dealing with bhakti to Krishna in Vrindavan.

Maharaja commented and elaborated here and there and it was very very nice to hear about these stories.



In the afternoon we drove to Holbrook, Mass, for the Janmastami festival at the Braj Mandir there. Maharaja was invited there as a special guest, honouring the functions.

We experienced bhajans, a very nice Bhagavatam class, kirtan, superb prasadam and a wonderful bathing ceremony.

Truly enriched in our spiritual life, we returned home to our North Andover house-base.



Monday, 22/08/2011

Needless to say...Dr Deepa again "killed" us with a superb breakfast.

After breakfast we drove to West Concord (MASS) to the healing center of Nimai Caitany das, where Maharaja was supposed to receive an accupuncture treatment.

WE arrive there at 11.30 am and were heartily welcomed by Nimai who never saw Maharaja before...and it was love at first sight. Also we felt a very deep bonding of our souls...instant friendship developed.

During Nimais accupuncture treatment, Maharaja asked me to read loud from Sripad Vishvanatha Cakravartipadas "Raga vartma chandrika".

रङ्गावर्तमचन्द्रिका

TEXT 3:

vaidhi bhaktir bhavet śāstrān bhaktau cet syāt pravartakam
rāgānugā syac ced bhaktau lobha eva pravartakāḥ

"When devotion is prompted by scriptural injunctions, then that is called *vaidhi bhakti*, but when it is prompted simply by spiritual greed, then it is called *rāgānugā bhakti*."

Kṛpā-kaṅikā Vyākhyā: We have explained that there are two kinds of *sādhana bhakti* - '*vaidhi*' and '*rāgānugā*', and the author is giving the characteristics of these two kinds of devotion here. When devotion is prompted by orders received from the scriptures, which means that the revealed scriptures describe how those who are averse to worshipping Lord Hari will have to suffer by wandering through many miserable species of life as well as through hell, and one commences *bhajana* out of fear of this suffering, then this is called *vaidhi bhakti*. In Śrī Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu the definition of *vaidhi bhakti* is given -

yatra rāgānavāptavāt pravṛttir upajāyate
śāsanenaiva śāstrasya sā vaidhi bhaktir ucyate (1.2.6)

"That devotion that knows no attachment or greed, but that is prompted by the orders from the scriptures is named *vaidhi bhakti*." In his commentary on this verse Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda has written - *rāgo'tra śrī mūrter dāśanād daśama skandhīya tat tal līlā śravaṇāc ca bhajana lobhāḥ* "The word *rāga* can be used when one's worship is prompted by sacred greed after seeing the beautiful deity of the Lord or by hearing about His pastimes in the Tenth Canto of Śrīmad Bhāgavata." When worship is not prompted by such greed, but by the orders of the scriptures, then it is called *vaidhi bhakti*. In Śrīmad Bhāgavata (11.5.2-3) there is a clear scriptural warning to those who are averse to worshipping Lord Hari, in the words of the Lord:

mukha bāhūru pādebhyāḥ puruṣasyāśramaiḥ saha
catvīro jāṭīre varṇā gṛyāir viprādāyāḥ pṛthak
ya eṣān puruṣaṁ sakṣād ātma-prabhūṁ iṣvaram
na bhajantyaśāntanti sthānād bhraṣṭāḥ patantyaśubhāḥ

"From the face, arms, thighs and feet of the Puruṣa (the Universal form) the four social orders like the *brāhmanas*, the *gṛhas* like *śaiva* and the four stages of life, like householder life, gradually emanated. Those within the *varṇāśrama* system who do not worship their own origin Śrī Hari, and therefore disobey and disrespect Him will fall down from their social station." *cārī varṇāśramī yadi kṛṣṇa nāhi bhaje; sa-dharma koriyā-o raurave paḍi maje* (C.C.) "Those in the four social orders who do not worship Kṛṣṇa will fall into hell, even if they perform their occupational duties." The devotion or *bhajana mārga* that is thus prompted by scriptural injunctions is called *vaidhi mārga*.

And the devotion that is prompted by greed, caused by hearing about the pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is called *rāgānugā mārga*. Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has given the following definition of *rāgānugā*:

virājanīṁ abhīvyaktāḥ vrajavāsi-janūḍiṣu
rāgātmikāṁ anusṛtā ya sā rāgānugocyate

(Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu 1.2.270)

"The devotion which is clearly present in the eternal associates of Vraja is called *rāgātmikā bhakti*, and devotion in the wake of this *rāgātmikā bhakti* is called *rāgānugā bhakti*."

rāgātmikā bhakti mukhyā vrajavāsi-jane

"The people of Vraja practise *rāgātmikā bhakti* and the devotion that follows in its wake is called *rāgānugā*." In his *Bhakti Sandarbha* (310) Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has written: *atra viṣayīṇaḥ svābhāviko viṣaya sahsargacchātīśāyamayaḥ premā rāgaḥ yathā cakṣur ādinān saundaryādaḥ; tādrśa evātra bhaktasya śrī bhagavatyaḥ rāga ityucyate. * * * yasya pūrvokte rāga viśeṣe rucir eva jātaḥ na tu rāga viśeṣa eva svayam tasya tādrśa rāga sudhākara karābhāsa samullasita hṛdaya sphuṭika maneh śāstrādi śrūtāsu tādrśya rāgātmikāya bhakteḥ paripāṭitvāpi rucir jāyate. tatas tadīyam rāgaḥ rucyānugacchantī sā rāgānugā tasyaiva pravartate.* "The natural love and desire of a sense enjoyer for his favorite sense objects is called *rāga*. Just as the eyes are attracted to beautiful scenes and other senses are attracted to their favorite sense objects and need no encouragement in this, similarly when the heart of a devotee is naturally attracted to the Lord then this anxious thirst of love is called *rāga*. * * * When even a semblance of the moonrays of the aforementioned *rāga* (which is situated within the hearts of the eternal associates of Kṛṣṇa) falls on the crystal-like heart of a devotee who attained a little taste for this aforementioned *rāga*, but did not really developed the real *rāga* yet, then the whole heart rejoices, and when he learns about it from the scriptures he develops a taste for the expert devotional service of these *rāgātmikā* devotees." The purport of this is that when those devotees whose hearts are clear from lust, anger, greed and envy hear from the scriptures and the mouths of the saints about the loving skill in devotional service of the *rāgātmikā bhaktas* their taste will awaken. With such *ruci* they will follow them and thus their *rāgānugā bhakti* will commence. Thus it is to be understood. (3)

TEXT 4:

*bhaktau pravṛttir atra syāt taccikṛṣṇa suniścayā
śāstrīn lobhat tac cikṛṣṇu syātān tad adhikāriṇau*

"Engagement in devotion according to the devotional scriptures means having an exclusive desire to perform devotional practices. The two kinds of candidates for devotional service (*vaidhī* and *rāgānugā*) commence for two different reasons: fear of scriptural injunctions (the *vaidhī bhakta*) and intense sacred greed (the *rāgānugā bhakta*) respectively."

Kṛpā-kaṇikā Vyākhyā: In the *bhakti sādhana mārga* there is no consideration of individual qualification or distinction between different levels of practitioners, as is the case in the *jñāna, karma* and other *sādhana mārgas*. *Bhakti* is a *sādhana* path that can be followed by anyone. *Bhakti* is beneficial for all, whether well behaved or ill behaved, knowledgeable or ignorant, detached or attached. Since *bhakti* is the path for everyone there is no obstacle for anyone to tread it. Thus the only factor that causes one to commence the practise of *bhakti* is simply a strong desire to take part in its different events. This desire can arise for two reasons, one is fear of the scriptural injunctions, which means that the scriptures prescribe that all living entities should worship the Lord, and one commences *bhakti* out of fear that otherwise there will certainly be trouble. The other one arises when one hears from the scriptures about the expert love of the Lord's eternal associates and out of sacred greed one begins to desire *bhājana*. In this way there are two kinds of candidates for *bhakti*. Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmī has given definitions of both these kinds of candidates, for *vaidhī* and *rāgānugā bhakti*. The definition of the *vaidhī-mārga's* candidate is as follows:

*yaḥ kenāpyati bhāgyena jāta śraddho'sya sevane
nātikto na vairāgya bhāgasyām adhikṛjyasau*

(*Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu* 1.2.14)

Maharaja brilliantly explained *vaidhī-bhakti* and *rajanuga-bhakti*...revealing true inner realizations...not meant for public readers, though. We three, my wife, Nimai and myself were completely blown away by the deep insights of Maharaja about our goal of life, *prema*...unbelievable...



After the treatment of Maharaja and actually also our treatment, we drove to Nimais beautiful home in Maynard (MASS).

There we were welcomed by his wonderful wife and his kids and the sister of Nimais wife. In the living room Maharaja immediately started speaking about the process of pure bhakti, encouraging the 3 new people he just met and they loved him from minute one.

After a wonderful introduction about the true nature of bhakti by Nimai (reading Bhajana rahasya-verses), Maharaja commented on them beautifully and went into the tattva of abhideya, the knowledge about the "what-to-do" in bhakti-yoga.

He told me to explain Sripad Rupa Goswamis verse in Bhakti rasamrta sindhu:

adau sraddha tatah sadhu-
 sango 'tha bhajana-kriya
 tato 'narta-nivrttih syat
 tato nistha rucis tatah
 athasaktis tato bhavas
 tatah premabhyudancati
 sadhakanam ayam premnah
 pradurbhave bhavet kramah

"In the beginning there must be faith. Then one becomes interested in associating with pure devotees. Thereafter one is initiated by the spiritual master and executes the regulative principles under his orders. Thus one is freed from all unwanted habits and becomes firmly fixed in devotional service. Thereafter, one develops taste and attachment. This is the way of sadhana-bhakti, the execution of devotional service according to the regulative principles. Gradually emotions intensify, and finally there is an awakening of love. This is the gradual development of love of Godhead for the devotee interested in Krishna consciousness."

I tried to explain the different stages and we all agreed that it is a long way to the top, but totally achievable in the association of sadhus, Maharaja as the best example.



After a wonderful lunch on the porch of Nimais house, we drove back to the healing center for the evening program there. We started with wonderful bhajan-songs and Maharaja gave a very nice lecture.

Again I realized how expertly Maharaja "feels" his audience. Many of the people had no clear conception of God as a true spiritual person, and so he cleverly talked according to their understanding, slowly bringing them near to our concept of a personal God. But never once he "forced" his opinion on someone else. He truly knows the art of comforting even the hardcore impersonalists or even atheists. They all just love him and all barricades break down. Many questions and again, wonderful prasadam.

But the quest for truth of the audience did not end. After eating, they again bombarded Maharaja with intelligent questions and he gently replied to all of them. Again we could see a true master of understanding and compassion at work.



Again we drove home after the wonderful program, fully satisfied and full of DEEPEST impressions of bhakti-tattva.

Tuesday, 23/08/2011

On this day, we had kind of a "day-off", but not really...

We fasted until noon and it was actually "our own" Janmastami day. In the morning Maharaja spoke about Krishnas birth and Sridhar read another poem of one of the Alvars and the poem was about Krishnas birth too.

Very ecstatically it described the circumstances, both in Mathura and then in Vraja. All of us really entered the spirit of Janmastami.

Dr Deepa had a wonderful idea...she made a paste from rice flour and water and with it she "painted" Krishnas footprints on the floor, leading from outside into the kitchen...





It really looked wonderful and helped "stimulating" the mood...Maharaja also was in bliss. For hours we talked and Dr Deepa was preparing a HUGE feast!!!!

Spontaneously we decided to invite Nimai Caitanya and his wife, but only Nimai found the time. When he came, we continued talking about bhakti-tattva and Maharaja had Nimai read from Brahma-samhita by Sripad Narayana Maharaja the chapter about the gopal-mantra. What an ecstatic reading with the comments of Sripad Sadhu Maharaja.

After some time, the cooking was done and we were short before the offering ceremony.





Sridhar sang beautiful prayer-hymns and then offered the food also to my Sri Giriraja. During and after the ceremony we sang beautiful bhajans and then Dr Deepa and Govinda priya served the best feast EVER.

After prasadam, we chilled out a bit on the couch and everyone shared some realizations.

Short before he left, Nimai gave Maharaja another accupuncture treatment and a nice massage. It broke his heart to leave Maharaja, but late at night, he had to. He stayed in contact the whole time and he even called Maharaja on the last day, 15 minutes before Maharajas flight was due. We truly found another brother in Nimai...now our family grew and grew...Madhuri, Sridhar, Dr Deepa, Nimai, his wife...what great souls we were allowed to meet by the mercy of Sripad Sadhu Maharaja!!!!

Wednesday, 24/08/2011

After our own personal wonderful Janmastami, it was time to say goodbye to our new family, Dr Deepa and Sridhar. Breakfast again was unbelievable and then we packed our things with a heavy heart.

Tears were shed on all sides and in separation we drove away. But not too far away, for Maharaja wanted some "fresh air" at a location which rhymes with "Schmar Schnucks"...lol.

From there we drove to New York in about 4 hours and again, we had the experience of Maharaja telling us many many intimate sharings which we "swallowed" with our yearning hearts.

The next location for a few days would be in Tarrytown, NY at a place called The White House and really, it was a White House.

It stood on private property and was the home of a very nice pastor there.

We were welcomed by two elderly ladies, D and Genie and also the pastor joined us soon enough. We had leftovers from our wonderful Janmastami-prasadam and we made plateaus for everyone in the room.

They immediately fell in love with our kind-hearted Maharaja and they hung on his words with all their attention.

Since they are practicing Christians and Maharaja knows and LOVES Jesus, they at once entered common territory and Maharaja again ecstatically interwove eastern and western philosophy.

Maharaja knows the Bible very well because he went to a good catholic school and he adores Jesus and his true teachings.

After the wonderful sit-in and talk, each went to his/her room and took a little rest.



In the evening a program was scheduled in NYC at Lalitamba Mandiram (110 West 86th street).

Again, a completely different crowd gathered, mainly esoteric searchers.

There Maharaja spoke about the importance of our relationship with a personal God. Love needs two, he said. When you "become" God, there will be no more love, no exchange of love.

He truly represented the teachings of our bhakti-tradition again without forcefully "imposing" our ideals on the audience. But they accepted anyway, just because they loved Maharaja.

Again I had a deep realization: Even here, deep in New York City, many souls wandered to this evening program, without even knowing what would they receive or whom they would meet...

Again I could see how Maharaja immediately stole their hearts with his true humility and honest love and compassion for all the beings.

Each person in that smallish room felt loved and respected and just at peace.



This was the day when the enormous loving service of the couple Krishna Das and his wife Lalita dasi started. From now on, they catered prasadam to each and every program in NYC...absolutely stunning in quantity AND quality!!!!

After prasadam we left for our new residency, the White House in Tarrytown and everyone rested very nicely.

Thursday, 25/08/2011

This was to become a very very astonishing and marvellous day...

After resting and sadhana-practice in the morning, Maharaja was invited to the home of (another wonderful) Deepa from India to have breakfast at her place.

And again we found another family member...another sister with a beautiful heart...

She cooked a wonderful breakfast meal and she invited 4 more devotees, so it became a small program.

One nice devotee and his wife had a book with them about the Ratha Yatra-festival in Puri.

I had to read an excerpt and Maharaja went really very very deep.

He explained the true inner meaning of the cart-festival.

"What means the Jagannatha-temple? It means that Krishna is now in Dvaraka, living in opulence. What means the Gundica-temple? It represents Vrindavan. Who is pulling the cart? Mahaprabhu in the mood of Radhika. So actually, Krishna is leaving Dvaraka for Vrindavana for one week."

Maharaja elaborated on the emotions of the inhabitants of Vraja, awaiting THEIR Krishna and tears welled up in his eyes...the atmosphere in the room changed and EVERYONE could "feel" the pangs of separation which Maharaja felt...unbelievable...one moment we chill out at a wonderful breakfast, next minutes we are in Vrindavan...wow!!!

After this truly moving story we had to leave for the afternoon program.

Saranagati dd oranized together with other persons a conference at the UN-Plaza. The conference was called "Peace after consciousness" and Maharaja was scheduled to speak there. So we drove there and it was very impressive. The huge UN-building-komplex with all the flags and we are there in the middle...interesting...

After introductory speeches and very nice singing from a famous lady-singer, Maharaja also started to sing "Radhe Govinda" and slowly the room started to fill up and the atmosphere changed AGAIN...love was in the air!!!!





Then Maharaja spoke on "REAL PEACE". You only can be at peace when you know your self, your relationship with the Highest Self and know about what to do. He called bhakti "love-in-action" and everybody could grasp the meaning at once. There is only one goal, pure love of God and we all are brothers and sisters. No need for any qualification, no need for racism, this -ism that -ism...love is universal, Maharaja said. And I watched every face and every pair of eyes and every pair of ears was in tune with Maharaja.

The room was full and Maharaja went a little deeper in the understanding of our PERSONAL relationship with God (Krishna). Many questions and again masterful answers...

Again Krishna das and Lalita dasi served wonderful prasadam and everyone was in bliss.

After eating, Maharaja was asked to be part of a internet-television show, which can be watched very soon at

www.newrealities.com.

The moderator, Alan Steinfeld, asked Maharaja many questions and Maharaja was very nicely explaining to him every aspect of personal Godhead. He strongly emphasized on the concept of the soul and the Highest Soul and the love between them. He rejected the modern idea of merging into God or becoming God in a very funny and heart-warming way, without being forceful or imposing.



After the program in the UN-Plaza, we drove back to our White House in Tarrytown. The evening program was scheduled there and Maharaja was invited to speak to the Christian community of Tarrytown.

So after a short rest, the program started at 7:30 pm.

Many members of their community arrived and after a short bhajan-singing, Maharaja asked me to read from of their books, a comparative study of different religions on different topics.

Maharaja chose the topic "LIBERATION" and he had me read a verse from the Bible:

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to release the oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (LUKE 4, 18-19)

Maharaja explained, that there are 3 important things here:

The spirit, God and Jesus. The spirit is the energy of God, God is the person God and Jesus is the self-realized master.

Maharaja explained what "annointed me" means: The Lord gave His mercy to Jesus and made him self-realized, imbibed him with the guru-potency. So Jesus was able to preach good news to the poor. Who is poor?

Everyone in the bodily conception of life is poor. We all are. What means freedom for the prisoners? Who is a prisoner? Again, we all are. Prisoners in our body, ruled by the senses, no peace, always pain.

Freedom? Only realizing the self as soul brings freedom, liberation. No waiting for death and then freedom (liberation). No, in this lfe, freedom is possible by realizingthe soul and its eternal relationship to Krishna.

Blind? Our eyes are blinded by ignorance. We are all ignorant of our true self, of our beloved God. So the great masters came to give freedom, to open our eyes for divya-jnana, divine knowledge and ultimately divine vision.

You could here a needle reak havoc in the room...total stillness...Maharaja really was at his best...quoting scriptures here and there...unbelievable...Amen, Amen, here and over there, Amen and Amen again...the people were thunderstruck by Maharajas words of wisdom, of his ability to combine their true faith with the spirit of true, pure bhakti.

At the end one lady had to read the letters of St. Paul.

The Supremacy of Love

If I speak in the languages of humans and angels but have no love, I have become a reverberating gong or a clashing cymbal.

If I have the gift of prophecy and can understand all secrets and every form of knowledge, and if I have absolute faith so as to move mountains but have no love, I am nothing.

Even if I give away everything that I have and sacrifice myself,[a] but have no love, I gain nothing.

Love is always patient;
love is always kind;
love is never envious
or arrogant with pride.
Nor is she conceited,
and she is never rude;
she never thinks just of herself
or ever get annoyed.
She never is resentful;
is never glad with sin,
but always glad to side with truth,
whene'er the truth should win.[b]
She bears up under everything,
believes the best in all,
there is no limit to her hope,
and she will never fall.

Love never fails.

Now if there are prophecies, they will be done away with.

If there are languages, they will cease. If there is knowledge, it will be done away with.

For what we know is incomplete and what we prophesy is incomplete.

But when what is complete[c] comes, then what is incomplete will be done away with.

When I was a child, I spoke like a child, thought like a child, and reasoned like a child.
When I became a man, I gave up my childish ways.
Now we see only an indistinct image in a mirror, but then we will be face to face.
Now what I know is incomplete, but then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.
Right now three things remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.

(1 Corinthians 13)

We should become again like a child, Maharaja said. With a pure, innocent heart we can all see God face to face.

Like a dirty mirror needs to be cleaned, our heart needs to be cleaned...by chanting the Lords Holy Name our heart, our internal mirror becomes pure and then we can see our self and the Self of God.

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.





After the speech many persons asked very personal questions and Maharaja answered them again to their full satisfaction. One issue was the importance of true family life and he made a strong point in being a very good and truthful and caring parent if we want our children to be happy.

Again, for the 2nd time this day, Krishna das and his wife served wonderful prasadam and everyone loved it.

After eating, some devotees stayed up with us and Maharaja until 1:00 pm, discussing many intimate things of bhakti-interest.

Friday, 26/08/2011

After a good morning with rest and morning practices Maharaja was greeted by the school children of the Church in Tarrytown. They loved our signs on our foreheads called "tilak" and most of them wanted to have one.

So I marked them with the sign of bhakti!





Then we went on our way to our next program. This one was scheduled in Jackson Heights in a company room called "Parents in action".

We arrived there early, like 11:45 am and Maharaja had a pleasant talk with the store owner and soon they were talking about philosophy, the owner being a devotee of Sai Baba. The subject matter was Maharaja Pariksit and his remaining seven days...

The evening program was in New Jersey.

We arrived there in the evening before Maharaja.

It was in Englewood, New Jersey at the lovely home of Jay Sri dd. She was just finishing cooking and so we helped her prepare the lecture room with cushions and pillows and stuff...

And then Maharaja came to the house. Then lecture started and he started by describing the wonderful pictures on the wall, done by Syamarani dd. We were all spellbound. There were like 5 of them, one more beautiful than the others...and Maharaja beautified them even MORE!!!!

Then he had me bring in one of Sripad Narayana Maharajas books, so I went and got it. Then I had me choose a nice verse and since he was very nicely explaining the maha-mantra in the beginning of the class, I chose some verses from Bhaktivinod Thakurs "Bhajana rahasya" about the glories of the Holy Name and Maharaja was very happy with my choice.

The lecture went on very nicely and Maharaja spoke very strong about being in the right association, aiming at the right goal. He clearly made the point that Caitanya Mahaprabhu gave us something special, something never given before.

Maharaja focused the subject of manjari-bhava, the highest rasa possible.

He said we are all Radhikas servants, female servants of course. He really went deep into the topic of Radha-dasyam, servitude to Radhika. Krishna is only interesting for us because He is Radhas Krishna. We love Radhika more. We only live to be with and FOR Her.

Everyone was so mesmerized, again.

But since here were more senior devotees present, Maharaja decided to speak on another level, much deeper than before because the audience could digest it. And they LOVED it. Many questions were asked and always he came up with the best answer. So right after that, wonderful prasadam was served and everyone ate to their gusto. Thank you, dear Jay Sri dd for hosting such a wonderful program.





Maharaja also had some prasadam and he was very happy with everything, especially with the fact, that his daughter-in-law Diana showed up with his grand-kids (2 boys and 1 girl). He decided to stay with his family for the night and after the feast they were ready to go. Everyone wanted to say goodbye and like always, Maharaja gave everyone a hug. Then Maharaja left with his family and we drove straight to Tarrytown.

Saturday, 27/08/2011

At about 6.30 am Maharaja called and told us to meet him outside the house in one hour to go to the next program at the Omega Center. Then, some time later he called again and told us to meet him at Exit 13 on the way to Albany.

He cancelled the program in Long Island because at 12:00 that day they closed all traffic in NYC, no buses, no subways, pure mess.

So we met with him and with his daughter-in-law Diana at said Exit and from there we drove on to the highway 87 towards Albany. We decided to sleep over in his son Priyeshs place and go there right now because the hurricane came closer. In the evening there was a program scheduled in Rhinebeck at the Omega center, but it started at 8:00 pm and for this night, there were big hurricane warnings... We arrived at Priyeshs place in Albany, had a wonderful lunch cooked by Mataji and rested for the rest of the day and watched CNN for hurricane news. At 5:00 pm, Maharaja decided to cancel the evening program. It just was too dangerous. So we stayed there for the night.







Sunday, 28/08/2011

After a very nice breakfast, consisting of Lasagne, pasta and green salad (LOL) we all drove together to the Legacy Inn in Lake George. Maharaja, Priyesh, Mataji, Govinda priya and me.

There we met with Raghunatha Batta and his wife who were eagerly awaiting Maharaja. Also we were very happy to meet again with our brother Raj and the guys staying at the Legacy Inn. It just IS a wonderful place to be and chill out in beautiful natural surroundings.

In the afternoon, Maharaja gave his best lecture. I never heard him speak like that. He spoke on guru-tattva, commenting on Narottama Thakurs "Sri Guru Carana Padma".

(1)

śrī-guru-caraṇa-padma, kevala-bhakati-sadma,
bando muñi sāvadhāna mate
jāhāra prasāde bhāi, e bhava toriyā jāi,
kṛṣṇa-prāpti hoy jāhā ha'te

(2)

guru-mukha-padma-vākya, cittete koribo aikya,
ār nā koriho mane āśā
śrī-guru-caraṇe ratī, ei se uttama-gati,
je prasāde pūre sarva āśā

(3)

caṅṣu-dān dilo jei, janme janme prabhu sei,
divya jñān hṛde prokāsīto
prema-bhakti jāhā hoite, avidyā vināśa jāte,
vede gāy jāhāra carito

(4)

śrī-guru karuṇā-sindhu, adhama janāra bandhu,
lokanāth lokera jīvana
hā hā prabhu koro doyā, deho more pada-chāyā,
ebe jaśa ghuṣuk tribhuvana

Honestly, this lecture answered ALL of my questions and those of my wife. He exactly KNEW what was on our minds and just spoke about it. It was utterly fantastic. Extremely sweet and ocean-deep. Then came the blackout, no more electricity. So Raj, Govinda, Mataji and me went to Walmart to get some candles.



Maharaja was very tired so he went to sleep shortly after we brought the candles and he took us both with him to his room, where we had a wonderful confidential talk about special-guru-seva, mentioned by Sripad Jiva Goswami.

After that we had a wonderful candle-light-sit-in with Raj up to midnight and then we went to bed, dog-tired!

Monday, 29/08/2011

Today was the appearance day of Sripad Gour Govinda Swami, the guru of our friend Raghunatha Batta das. So he together with his wife organized a program in the living of Raj at the Legacy Inn and during the program, his wife cooked a nice feast.

Raghunatha Batta das very nicely spoke about his meetings with his Gurudeva and about his realizations. Then Maharaja spoke a bit and we had some bhajans.

Feast was served and after the feast, we went outside into the sunshine to relax.

I decided to go for a last swim in the swimming pool, much to the delight of Maharaja.

At about 15:30 pm we said goodbye to our new brother Raj and even I shed some tears, because we really developed a deep friendship and it always is hard to say goodbye to a good friend. But we will come back!

We arrived again at Priyesh's place and in the evening Mataji cooked a nice dinner. I invited my longtime friend Paramananda das (Porcelly) and his girlfriend and Maharaja was very pleased to see them both. He spoke with them for some time, let them accept prasadam and after a nice little sit-in, they left and we started packing and confirming our flights, because tomorrow was Maharaja's and our flight. So, after arranging everything nicely, everyone went to sleep.

Tuesday, 31/08/2011

Departure day.

At 7:30 am, we said goodbye (again) with a heavy heart to Mataji and Priyesh and we thanked them for their unbelievable hospitality and kindness. It was not from this world. Their association is PRICELESS!

Govinda priya dd mastered the enormous challenge to drive all the way from Albany to JFK in New York City.

By Maharaja's mercy, everything went very smoothly and we arrived safely at Terminal 4 at 11:55 am. Maharaja's flight was at 4:35pm, so we had a picnic at the airport with lots of instructional talks by Maharaja and then he went through Gate 7 at about 2:30pm. "My time now is over. No crying now, just a quick goodbye!"

And there we stood, watching him disappear into the crowd, his silvery hair on the horizon of human beings and then he was gone.

But NOT from our heart. There, he will ALWAYS stay, our dearly beloved siksa-guru und Gurudeva!!!!

I cannot even begin to describe what that trip meant to us...what INCREDIBLE mercy came upon us...it was like a dream and then better...and with tears in my eyes I mentally bow down to a TRUE sad-guru who REALLY lives a LIFE OF LOVE, showing it to others...how it really can be done.

There are no words good enough to use as a "thank you-note". None. But my heart will tell him my eternal thank you when I meet him again.

All glories to Sripad Sadhu Maharaja!







