



# PRINCETON BHAKTI VEDANTA INSTITUTE

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## The Science of Krishna Consciousness

As our *sadhu sangha* program began, Sripad Puri Maharaja spoke about a particular picture taken in the late '70's where Srila Prabhupada<sup>[1]</sup> was sitting in the center surrounded by his disciples. He specifically had his scientists sitting in front of everyone at his lotus feet. "Whenever Sripad Swarup Damodara Maharaja (Sripad Maharaja)<sup>[2]</sup> would be there among the devotees, Srila Prabhupada would want to talk with him only and discuss Darwin," Sripad Puri Maharaja said as the group laughed. "The significance of that picture is that Srila Prabhupada always wanted to emphasize the importance of presenting Krishna consciousness in such a scientific way that it could be appreciated even by the scientists."



Original ISKCON Scientists Sitting L – R: Sripad Swarup Damodara Maharaja, Ph.D., Sripad Sadaputa Prabhu, Ph.D., (Eckendra?), Sripad Rupanaga Prabhu, Sripad Puri Maharaja, Ph.D.

"Did Srila Prabhupada intentionally want only a certain number of scientists initially?" Kushum DD asked. In response Sripad Puri Maharaja said, "No, we were the only ones available. There may have been others but if there were, we never heard of them until later. Sadaputa and I were the Ph.D.'s, Rupanaga Prabhu, who had a graduate degree always wanted to help with the college preaching programs. He was always involved in that. Swaup Damodara Maharaj was in the process of getting his Ph.D. at that time. There

were other devotees who also became involved later such as Jnana das and Brahma Tirtha Prabhus, but we were the original devotees along with Rabindra Swarupa Prabhu who started what became known as the Bhaktivedanta Institute,"

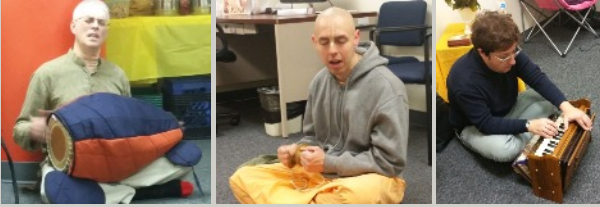
"When Srila Prabhupada asked Swarup Damodar to inaugurate the Bhaktivedanta Institute, he said 'BBT (Bhaktivedanta Book Trust - founded in 1972 by Srila Prabhupada) would fund it. He said, 'Tell me how much you need and every month you will get it.' That was the first time anyone ever heard Srila Prabhupada speak like that because he never spent his funds from BBT on anything but printing books, so for him to want to spend that money on scientific preaching means he put that on almost the same level of importance as his books. And he was ready to give 'whatever' amount was needed. Of course Swarup Damodar being very humble was trying to ask for the least amount, so he said, 'I can't think of how much we would need.' Srila Prabhupada then asked Tamal Krishna Maharaja, 'how much do you think he would need?' I believe Tamal Krishna Maharaja said, '\$10,000 a month' or something like that. We were given the prime space in the Mumbai temple for our offices, but I don't know if we ever received that much," Sripad Puri Maharaja continued smilingly.

"The point is that Srila Prabhupada put a lot of emphasis on science. He was serious about having Krishna Consciousness established in the modern civilization, scientifically. One who can sacrifice themselves that much, to that degree, not thinking about spiritual liberation or anything else, just using their scientific

training in the service of Gurudeva in presenting his teachings and how they can be accepted within the scientific community – that was our mission. He didn't tell us about chanting the Maha Mantra when he was talking to us. He said, 'Surrender your intelligence, whatever scientific knowledge you have to serve Krishna.' Vaisnavas (worshiper of Lord Vishnu) don't even think themselves to be Vaisnavas. They think themselves to be ordinary persons." After a brief pause Sripad Puri Maharaja continued, "*Panditah sama-darsinah* a learned scientist should possess equanimity of mind, free from ego. Ego means position (*pratistha*). One should not assume any position for oneself. A learned person sees every living entity including him/her self equally as spirit souls. Srila Bhakti Raksaka Sridhara Maharaja's<sup>[3]</sup> *Bhagavad Gita - The Hidden Treasure of the Sweet Absolute*: chapter 5 Verse 18 confirms this:

vidya-vinaya-sampanne  
brahmane gavi hastini  
suni caiva sva-pake ca  
panditah sama-darsinah

"The enlightened souls see transcendence within all living beings, whether the humble and learned *brāhmana*, the cow, the elephant, the dog, or the dog-eater. Therefore, they are to be known as *pandita* - men of true wisdom."



**Rasaraja, Dr. Murali Gopal, and Syamasundara Prabhus**

"Even our consciousness is not only for us, it is also for Krishna. It belongs to Krishna. We identify our individual instance of consciousness as separate and isolated from Krishna, but there is an inseparable connection or relation, just as each vital member of an organism is intrinsically related to an organic whole. Krishna is the supreme Whole and we are infinitesimal parcels of His marginal energy that is completely dependent upon Him," Sripad Puri Maharaja continued. "Srila Sridhar Maharaja would remind us that we are objects to Krishna the Supersubject. Just as when you see someone, they are the object of your vision, but they are also a subject. In that way He's the Supersubject and we are His objective subjects."

"What was your daily routine like?" Dr. Murali Gopal das Prabhu asked. "We followed the whole morning program at the temple beginning with *Mangal arati*, chanting and prasadam. While we

were in Boston, we had a separate office, right next to the building that housed the temple, so after the morning program we would go to that office and study, write, discuss and write some more, then we would go out and hold conferences just like we are currently still doing in India, visiting all the colleges and speaking to the assembly of students and teachers," Sripad Puri Maharaja responded. "When we would visit the colleges Srila Prabhupada asked us to wear suit, tie and *tilak*. He did not want us to wear devotional attire. He said 'I want them to respect you as scientists' and he would emphasize 'this is a science not a sentimental religion. Religion without science is sentiment and science without religion is mental speculation.'" After a brief pause, Sripad Puri Maharaja continued, "Kant said something like that. He said, 'intuition without concept is blind' and 'concept without content is empty.' Concept without a corresponding sense of reality is incomplete.

"If we are just sensuous beings, then we would be like animals. Right?" Sripad Puri Maharaja asked his attentive audience. "They also have senses. They can also experience the environment and react to it without a concept of what they are doing. It is just stimulus-response, acting and reacting. Of course they have a basic instinct of what they are doing. On the other hand, concept without sense is just abstract thinking. Anyone can think about horse's eggs, or horns of a hare, but there's no validation of whatever it is that you are thinking. It becomes just a flight of imagination. Without the senses, you can think, 'I am the king of England.' But when you come down to reality, if you try to get into the palace the queen will say 'you are not the king of England.' In this way you can recognize if what you are thinking is correct or not. People have ideas but these ideas are determined to be true or not on the basis of their agreement with reality. So there must be a reality besides concept."

"Do you study any philosophy?" Sripad Puri Maharaja asked Dr. Murali Gopal das Prabhu. In response he said, "Yes, right now we are reading *Nyaya* in Sanskrit" under the tutelage of Sheldon Pollack at Columbia University. We are going slowly so right now we are learning what are the categories of knowledge," Dr. Murali Gopal das Prabhu said. "If you want to get the aims of human life, the *purusarthas*, you need a method, a process and then you need something that explains to you the process. Then you need to be able to tell whether this is correct or not. That is what *Nyaya* is all about." "Proof" Sripad Puri Maharaja interjected. "Yes, proof. Like understanding what is authoritative and what is not. Then we have *dharma shastra*, the Vedas and like that," Dr. Murali Gopal das Prabhu continued.



**Prabhus: Rasaraja das with Sripad Puri Maharaja, Nila Madhava, Dr. Murali Gopal, Ved ji and Syamasundara Prabhu.**

Sripad Puri Maharaja then spoke of the five stages or types of knowledge that were taught by Srila Prabhupada. “They are *Pratyaksha* (knowledge of the senses and perception), *Paroksha* (knowledge that comes from the experience of others), *Aparoksha* (deductive knowledge, or knowledge that comes down to us from transcendental authorities), and above that is *Adhokshaja* (transcendental knowledge that does not originate from any worldly source, Vaikuntha). And beyond the stage of *Adhokshaja* is *Aprakrita* (knowledge of the divine spiritual plane of Goloka),” Sripad Puri Maharaja explained then asked if anyone knows what *Aprakrita* means? In response Nila Madhava das Prabhu said, “*Prakrita* means material, and ‘A’ means without so together it means without material.”

“Yes, it is the non-material, spiritual plane, but ‘A’ also means negation, so *Aprakrita* means the negation of the material world. Just as we have matter and anti-matter, both have the same characteristics but one is the negation of the other, similarly *aprakrita* and *prakrita* have similar characteristics yet are negatively related. Thus *prakrita* means the world of exploitation and *aprakrita* means the world of dedication. So in Goloka Vrndavana there are trees and cows, and Krishna and His cowherd friends and gopies, mother and father all resemble the world of *prakriti* but they are all *aprakrita*, spiritual beings,” Sripad Puri Maharaja explained. “It is the world of pure heart and pure thought.”

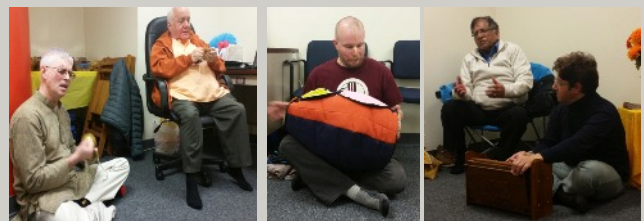
Isn’t the mind created from false ego? Dr. Murali Gopal das Prabhu asked.

“You are saying that mind and thought is the same thing? Sripad Puri Maharaja asked in clarification. “No, I’ve heard it in several lectures by Srila Prabhupada that thoughts are the sound vibration of the mind,” Dr. Murali Gopal das Prabhu responded. “That may be but thought can be pure or conditioned. There’s something called pure thought or reason, as we find in Kant’s three Critiques: the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the *Critique of*

*Practical Reason* and the *Critique of Judgment*. So there are thoughts of pure reason that are not those of the conditioned mind,” Sripad Puri Maharaja responded. “The mind actually means ‘mine – what is private to me.’ Our mind is a private sector. We don’t know each other minds unless we speak but there’s also thought that is not of the material mind and higher than the mind. Aristotle developed the absolute idea of *noesis noeseos noeis* (thought thinking thought). Even intelligence is higher than mind, right? Then what is intelligence?” Sripad Puri Maharaja asked. “False ego and action” Dr. Murali Gopal das Prabhu responded. In clarification Sripad Puri Maharaja asked if the “intelligence is thinking also.”

“It’s the discriminating thought of all dichotomy?” Dr. Murali Gopal das Prabhu responded.

“Yes, discrimination here means thinking,” Sripad Puri Maharaja said then continued. “It means thinking. Judgment belongs to the mind but intelligence is something more than judgment. It determines whether judgment is correct or not. It’s like a proof of judgment. In other words judgment says ‘it is an elephant.’ The mind negates the immediate ‘it’ to produce a determinate ‘elephant.’ The immediate means the indeterminate and to think what the indeterminate is is to determine it. The next thing would be to discriminate or decide if that is a true determination.” Sripad Puri Maharaja continued, “That is where the intelligence comes in. If it is this, then it should have certain characteristics as proof of itself. So intelligence is also thinking, but not in relation to things that are immediately given. Then what about the things that are higher than the intelligence? Can we think of those things, like the self?” Sripad Puri Maharaja asked then responded, “Of course, just as Descartes did within the terms of his *cogito ergo sum*.”



**Prabhus Rasaraja das with Sripad Puri Maharaja, Nila Madhava das, Ved ji and Syamasundara das**

“When you say God, is it a thought or not?” Sripad Puri Maharaja asked further then responded that “God can only be thought” because “we don’t see God with our eyes. *Shastra* (Vedic scriptures) or *sabdha* is necessary because we don’t experience God with our material senses. We can hear and learn about Him. He can teach us about Himself through the revealed scriptures. He can be revealed,

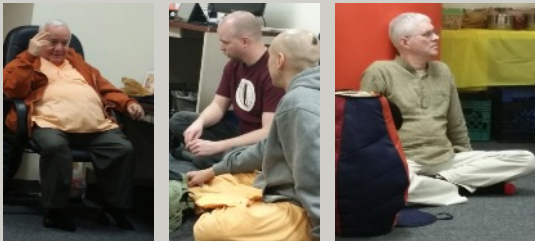


but we can't enter that region merely through our mundane sense experiences."

"The Eleventh Canto of *Srimad Bhagavatam* talks about the four different levels of sound, is that the way to see Him?" Dr. Murali Gopal das Prabhu asked. "Yes, the four aspects of *vak* (sound or speech, not noise), *vaikhari*, *pashyanti*, *madhyam*, *para*. Anybody can make a noise but that is different from intelligible sound when we speak," Sripad Puri Maharaja responded then asked "Where do these sounds we call 'words' come from? There is *Viakhari* (spoken sound), then there is the silent, unspoken word in the mind, then beyond that there's the *Pasyanti* and the *Para* stage. It's similar to the four stages of consciousness. There's a comparison between sound and consciousness. These four stages are: waking, dreaming, deep sleep and *turiya* (fully awakened spiritual state)."

"So in deep sleep, at least according to *Vedanta*, one enters into the region of the heart, once merges into the super-soul and there's like a black out in that state for some time, so what is the state of *Madhyam* at that point? Would there be any consciousness to vibrate?" Dr. Murali Gopal das Prabhu asked. "*Vaikhari* comes from the throat *chakra* (*Vishudha*), *Madhyam* comes from the heart *chakra* (*Anahata*), *Pashyanti* comes from the navel *chakra* (*Manipura*), and *Para* comes from the root *chakra* (*Mooladhara*), according to the system of the chakras in Yoga," Sripad Puri Maharaja explained then asked, "So you are asking about the vibration of *Madhyam*?"

"Yes, in the state of *Madhyam* you are like in a blackout, a deep sleep, you are not dreaming. It's like you went to sleep and lost consciousness then you woke up again and you are in a state like you have merged into the Supersoul. If you are unconscious, then where is the question of vibration of your thoughts in your deep sleep if there's no consciousness there?" Dr. Murali Gopal das Prabhu reiterated.



**Sripad Puri Maharaja with Prabhus: Nila Madhava das, Dr. Murali Gopal das and Rasaraja das**

"First we have to understand something. Does anyone know how they think? How you are digesting your food?" Sripad Puri

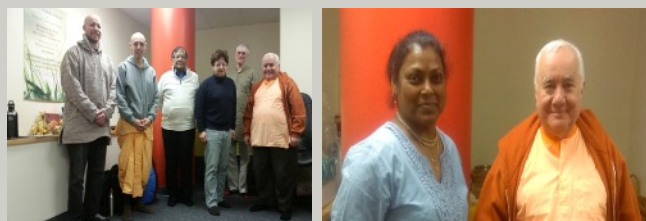
Maharaja asked his attentive audience then responded. "The scientists give their explanations in terms of neurons and chemicals but you are not conscious of how that is all happening, and if you try to reproduce it in the lab you will not be able to. Just like the blade of grass - they will tell you the formulas for photosynthesis and cellulose but if you ask them to make it in the lab, they are lost; they do not know how it is made. They think they know but practically they don't know. The proof of understanding something is if you can actually make it," Sripad Puri Maharaja responded. "There's something beyond what we think we know. We don't know how we are producing thought or even if we are doing it. Why are we assuming we are doing it? There are things going on that we don't know how they are happening but we identify that 'I am doing it.' This is called *ahankar*. Even if thinking is not being done by us, it is being done by a power beyond ourselves, then what do we say of that? Who's thinking is it? Is it mine? Can I claim that it is mine, that I am doing the thinking?"

"Thinking is done by the mind" Dr. Murali Gopal das Prabhu responded.

"You say *the* mind. You have a mind, I have a mind, everyone has their own mind, so who is *the* mind? Is the thinking done by your mind, my mind, whose mind is the thinking done by?" Sripad Puri Maharaja countered. "The mind that I am carrying right now." Dr. Murali Gopal das Prabhu responded as the attentive group laughed. "So you have no way to manipulate that in some way?" Sripad Puri Maharaja followed-up with. "To some degree you can do something, like controlling your desires and all these things," Dr. Murali Gopal das Prabhu responded.

"According to Samkhya philosophy, the material world – mind, intelligence – everything is going on by what cause?" Sripad Puri Maharaja asked then responded, "By the modes of material nature. They are doing it, not me. The modes of material nature are creating the mental, physical, intellectual, sensual - isn't it? I have nothing to do with that. The yogis are withdrawing their sense of doing things (*ahamkar*), withdrawing the pervasion of their self from those things that they think they are doing until they come to that place of pure soul, *atma* or *paramatma*. We may believe it is not a thinking stage, but to come to that place you have to be thinking, otherwise how do you reach it? But at that highest point of purification you realize it is not *your* thought - that is the change that has to occur. You recognize that pure thought is not mine, that is why Aristotle came to the conclusion of *noesis noeseos noesis* (thought thinking thought) - the unmoved mover that moves itself."

“So what are the characteristics of the *madhyam* state of sound?” Dr. Murali Gopal das Prabhu asked. “I am not sure, but since *madhyam* is in the heart chakra it is sometimes called the mind,” Sripad Puri Maharaja responded. “So it would be the mental representation of the word we are going to speak. Every word denotes something and connotes something (has a meaning) at the same time. Then there is the person for whom it has a meaning. Thus the four stages of *vak* might refer to the vocalized word, the mental thought, the meaning, and the person.”




**Prabhus: Nila Madhava das, Dr. Murali Gopal das, Ved ji, Syamasundara das, Rasaraja das, Sripad Puri Maharaja, and Kushum devi dasi with Sripad Puri Maharaja**

With this our wonderful scientific *sadhu sangha* came to an end after *prasadam* was served and honored by all.



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

<p style="text-align: center;">Your humble servant, Kushum Devi Dasi (New York)</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">Donations via PayPal may be sent to <a href="mailto:seva@bviscs.org">seva@bviscs.org</a></p>
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[1] His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada (Srila Prabhupada) is the founder Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)

[2] Sripad Bhaktiswarupa Damodara Maharaja  
<http://www.bhaktiswarupadamodara.com/>

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

## In Loving Memory of a Humble Vaisnava Sripad Yudhamanyu Prabhu Seva Vikram



### In his own words:

*In 1981 I started going over from ISCKON, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, in Mayapur to the Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math in Nabadwip. I used to go there with Srila Goswami Maharaj. This is how I started to make a connection with Srila Guru Maharaj,*

*At that time I was living in South Africa. After the darshan of Srila Sridhar Maharaj when I went back to South Africa we were inspired to start the temple there; a Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math temple. We started distributing Sri Guru and His Grace and other books. Srila Guru Maharaj was very happy with that! When I went back to India he asked me if it would be alright if he gave me a title. I almost fell backwards! A title! He said he wanted to give me the title ‘Seva Vikram’ which means “one who is strong and courageous in service”. Then he asked me to form a collecting party for the Nabadwip Math, and he used to call that party ‘my personal party’.*

*After Srila Guru Maharaj left this world, Srila Govinda Maharaj asked me to come help Srila Janardan Maharaj restart the San Jose temple. This was around 1991.*

*At the beginning we started in a rented house on 17th street. But then when Srila Gurudev came to San Jose on his first world tour. he asked me to visit him in his room after his afternoon rest: ‘so I can beat you’, he said! When I went up there he asked me to get a permanent place, a place that we could use for the San Jose and Santa Cruz devotees not to rent but to own! And from that request the Soquel Ashram was manifested. That was the year of 1993.*

*Then in the years that followed our Srila Gurudev installed the Deities in our Soquel Seva Ashram and arranged for Sri Mahaprabhu Gauranga-Sundar, to be sent to the San Jose temple.*

*Then in 2003 he sent me to China, where I have been for the last 10 years. In Gurudev’s Last Will & Testament he asked my wife, Srimati Jivana devi, and myself to take care of the Ashram in California until the day we die!*

[From <http://www.sevaashram.net/4397/yudhamanyu-prabhu/> ]