

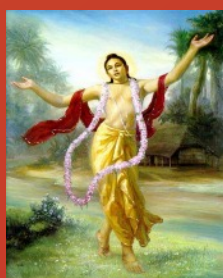
PRINCETON BHAKTI VEDANTA INSTITUTE

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The Appearance of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

On this special day Sripad Bhakti Madhava Puri Maharaja, Ph.D (Sripad Puri Maharaja) began *sanga* by announcing, "Today we are celebrating the appearance of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the *avatar* (incarnation or descent of Sri Krishna) Who appeared over five hundred years ago in India. This particular age in which we live is called *Kali* (*Kaliyuga* – age of quarrel, hypocrisy and strife) which makes it very difficult for spiritual practice because people are so full of mundane disturbances and inclinations. Mercifully, Mahaprabhu has come to give support to the sincere souls by distributing the joyful chanting of the Holy Names of Krishna so that we might make some spiritual advancement in this age of *Kali*."



Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

Sripad Puri Maharaja then introduced Rasaraja das Prabhu to speak on Mahaprabhu's appearance. "He's a senior vaisnava in our mission and a faithful devotee humbly fixed in his Krishna consciousness and service to Gurudeva." After offering obeisances to Guru, sadhu and Gauanga, Rasaraja das Prabhu began. "Vrindavan das Thakur said, 'May there be no offences in my attempt to serve the vaisnavas.' Every time we

talk about the vaisnavas we can commit offenses so we try to avoid that by begging for forgiveness."

"Last Wednesday we celebrated *Gaura Purnima*, the appearance day of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, also known as *Gauranga* because He's golden in color. He appeared in West Bengal, India five hundred and thirty (530) years ago. He was predicted in the scriptures and this incarnation comes once in every *Kaliyuga*. Every primordial time in the universe has four *yugas* (era) and *Kaliyuga* is the last one until another cycle so He always comes in *Kaliyuga*. His main purpose is to initiate the *sankirtan yajna* - the sacrifice for chanting the Holy Names of Krishna. Every *Kaliyuga* He comes for that purpose," Rasaraja das Prabhu said. "Krishna is considered the Supreme Personality of Godhead. God has many personalities, it's unlimited but the main one is Krishna, so Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is not different from Him. He came in a different aspect but He's the same Krishna. For example He came in the form of a devotee (*bhakta*) to show us how we have to pray to God, love God and engage in devotional activities. Mahaprabhu while preaching and chanting in the streets in India, many thousands of devotees would follow Him with *kartals* (hand cymbals) and *mridangam* (drums). They were chanting this Hare Krishna Mahamantra (great mantra) - *Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare*. This then became the inauguration of *sankirtan yajna*. Every *yuga* has some special way that people can develop their devotional activities, so in *Kaliyuga*, it's called *sankirtan yajna*. This verse explains,

*harer-nama harer-nama harer-namaiva kevalam
kalau nasty-eva nasty-eva nasty-eva gatih anyatha*

"Harinama, Harinama, Harinama is the only and foremost means to achieve emancipation. There is no other way, no other way, no other way in this age of Kali."

"In Kaliyuga, people have less devotional qualities as compared to other eras. It's the opposite of what the scientists say that in ancient time people were living in caves and were almost like animals but actually that's not the complete truth. People were more advanced in prior eras but in this era people are degraded. We live less years than before. At this moment, whatever we were doing in previous eras would be too difficult for us to do in this era, so they say that the simplest way to have some God consciousness is to chant the Holy Names of God. It is very simple, anyone can do it," Rasaraja das Prabhu continued. "Chaitanya Mahaprabhu brought at that time the highest conception of God. Many religions have some conception of God. They say that God is the most powerful, most intelligent but Chaitanya Mahaprabhu gave us a special conception of God, 'God is beauty, love and affection.' Another consideration of God is that our relation with Him is intimate. It is not so superficial that God is the most powerful and the strongest instead Mahaprabhu described God's characteristics as 'beauty, love and affection.' He revealed the pastime (*lila*) of Krishna in Vrindavan, where Krishna appeared five thousand years ago just to show the pastime of the spiritual world so people get some attraction to Him."

"The chanting of the Holy Names and how to have some devotional activities are not created by us. It's not like a person would sit down and started to think, 'Oh, let me invent how I can pray to God or how I can go to Him.' Actually these teachings are called the revealed truth because they come from the spiritual world and are revealed in the heart of the devotees. So it's a transcendental transaction from the heart of the pure devotees to the heart of others. The Mahamantra was first revealed to Lord Brahma, the first living entity and from there it was passed on to the other *gurus* through what is called *guru parampara* (disciplic succession) from the beginning of time directly from Krishna. A person has to be initiated to be able to receive this instruction by a *guru* in that same line. In this way the Absolute Truth is descending, coming to us. The persons whom we follow in this line are called Vaisnavas (worshippers of Lord Visnu.)"



The Pancha Tattva

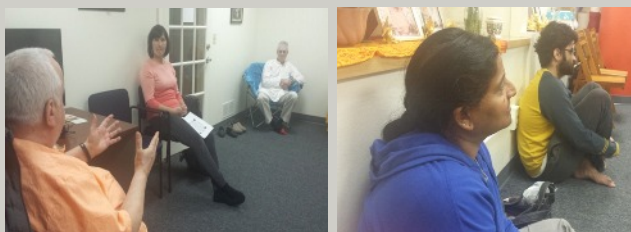
"When Krishna appears, He doesn't come by Himself. He comes with all His eternal associates from the spiritual world. These personalities, His associates are like His friends, His parents, His relatives — all of them come together and appear in this material world just to reveal His pastimes. He never comes alone. All these personalities are qualified to develop His pastimes," Rasaraja das Prabhu continued. "In the last two hundred years, several persons in India took the instructions of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and began to develop many modern ways to spread the Mahamantra everywhere, not only in India. Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur was a pure devotee of Krishna and his mission was to travel and spread the Holy Names of Krishna. He said that 'the Holy Names had to be chanted in every town and village in the planet.' His son, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur, took up the mission and started to send some devotees to England and the USA. He had some success but one of his disciple, Srila Prabhupada^[2], was the first of the devotees to come to the Western worlds in 1966, to Boston and to New York. He came with no money, no friends. He came alone with the instructions from his Gurudev and started to chant the Mahamantra in the parks in New York. From that one person, it started to increase only after a few years. Maybe people became attracted to this because of his purity. Today there are hundreds of *mandirs* (temples) around the world and thousands of devotees. Now we can say that he opened a tunnel from India to the Western world to spread Krishna consciousness," Rasaraja das Prabhu continued. "We see that after 530 years, this movement which was started in India, we see now in Princeton, NJ, many thousands of miles away trying to continue to give this message to everyone. Vaisnavas are very merciful people and always trying to help other people also to understand their relationship with God. So, one way to attract the people is by chanting in the streets and by following the instructions from the *gurus* to try to rescue the fallen souls." In closing, Rasaraja das Prabhu said, "We also have to thank Sripad Bhakti Madhava Puri Maharaja for giving us the opportunity to associate with you and everyone that comes to BVI."

At this point Sripad Puri Maharaja carried on *sanga* by responding to a question of getting to the root of a particular

problem. Sripad Puri Maharaja explained that “There’s a system to everything. Without understanding how things are working and without the faith that God is in control, imaginary solutions will not work. God is the ultimate controller (*isvara*) of everything.” This is confirmed in the *Brahma Samhita*, 5.1:

*ishvarah paramah krishnah
sac-cid-ananda-vigrahaha
anadir adir govindaha
sarva-karana-karanam*

“Krsna who is known as Govinda is the Supreme Godhead. He has an eternal blissful spiritual body. He is the origin of all. He has no other origin and He is the prime cause of all causes.”



L-R: Sripad Puri Maharaj, Zhanna, Rasaraja Prabhu, Shobha ji, Revant ji

Ishvarah means the controller, *paramah* means the highest and *Krishna* is the name of who that controller is. Everybody is a controller and everyone is controlling something or someone in this world but who is the supreme controller? Sripad Puri Maharaja asked then responded, '*ishvarah paramah krishnah*.' In the last line it says '*sarva-karana-karanam*'. Krishna is the cause of all causes. Everything has some reason for being there but what is the reason for that reason? That necessity is found in Krishna. Everyone is conditioned to think in their own limited way but if we have the understanding, that firm faith that 'We are not the ultimate controller,' then we can only do what we can. We don't have the final say in what ultimately happens."

"I always say to friends that more than half of the problems are resolved by themselves if we don't touch them," Zhanna said. In agreement, Sripad Puri Maharaj laughingly said, "Actually, it's true," then explained that "Five thousand years ago *Kaliyuga* began with a war, as reported in the Mahabharata (the battle at Kurushetra, India), and it is going on even today. Since WWII, there has never been a day on this earth when there wasn't a war happening somewhere in the world, then what to do?" Sripad Puri Maharaja said. "The scriptures tell us 'don't try to solve the problems of the world, you would not get very far. It's not your business.' It's not what we were created for or meant for. EVERYthing is going

on by the laws of Karma but what we can do is try to water the root, put our attention to the cause of all causes, Krishna. Try to satisfy Him. In the ancient days, they were doing all these sacrifices to God. They understood that there are higher authorities than themselves in the universe and to appease them was the way to bring a level of peace. Today we have lost all of that. We are thinking that it is all up to us. The world is getting worse with that kind of mentality because we are not seeing what is the system of the universe, how it is structured, how are we to act within that system. There's no intelligence, no understanding of the deeper, truer nature, so they are all working at odds to one another and thinking they are getting somewhere, thinking they are doing something great. It's a crime actually because no one wants to listen or learn," Sripad Puri Maharaja continued. "Come and listen if you don't know. Come and listen to what the great *Rshis* (seers) have said and then try to apply it. The real test is in applying yourself. Don't just say 'Oh, that is old fashion or some superstition.' Apply it, try it, this is the scientific attitude."

Maharaja then said, "The planets are going around and everybody thinks that Newton's laws are governing planets movements around the sun without problem but that's not true. Even Newton never believed that. He established that there's some mathematical formula for the movement of the planets based on gravity but it's not possible for them to remain in stable orbits for billions and billions of years. It just won't happen because there are so many other planets, moons, stars, and comets disturbing their movement. They would never remain stable by themselves unless there was the hand of God (*Pantokrator*) ultimately governing everything over those billions of years. The planets would have already left their orbits and the whole solar system would be gone but the fact that it exists proves that some intelligence is there guiding it. Only a person of intelligence can understand that yet today people don't understand it at all. They think it's all just mechanical, they say it's just the laws of physics, but this is just thinking in such a small limited way. To properly understand truth in the eternal world requires a different kind of intelligence and there may not be that many people who have that kind of intelligence. Only those who after millions of births become aware, intelligent enough to recognize what Krishna says, 'I am there. I am controlling everything. The enlightened souls surrender to Me, give their life to Me knowing that I am Supreme.'" Srila Sridhar Maharaja's *Srimad Bhagavat Gita - The Hidden Treasure of the Sweet Absolute*, 7.19 confirms this:

*bahunam janmanam ante jnanavan mam prapadyate
vasudeva sarvam iti sa mahatma su-durlabhah*

"After many births, the enlightened soul {blessed with devotional association} realizes that everything is of the nature of {subordinate to} Vāsudeva, and thus he surrenders unto Me. Such a great soul is very rare."

"*Vasudeva sarvam iti* means that Krishna is behind everything. *Vasudeva* is another name of Krishna. Krishna says, 'I am the only truth. Don't think that everything else has any validity without relation to Me. Anything that's not related to Me is called *Maya* [illusion/not (*na*) that (*ya*)].' If there's something not related to Krishna, that's *Maya*," Sripad Puri Maharaja explained. "*Maya* is when we take something to be what it is not. This is the situation when we are taking this world and whatever we are experiencing to be something completely apart from Krishna. But something completely different or apart from Krishna is not possible because God [the Complete Whole] means there's nothing greater than or opposed to Him. There's nothing to compete with Him. He's the foundation of everything and all else has its dependence on Him, His energy. We can't do anything without Him but we forget this because we don't have that kind of infinite wisdom. We have this limited wisdom that we developed over the duration of our lives in which we've become conditioned to think in such limited ways. It is explained in the *Bhagavad-gita* (2.69) that "those souls who are wise, seem to be asleep to the ordinary persons but to the wise souls, the ordinary persons seem to be asleep."



Sripad Puri Maharaja responding to Zhanna's questions

"God and His name are non-different. The name of God is so powerful. Everything that is in God is in His name. Just by chanting His name you get everything, His knowledge, His wisdom, His beauty, the sweetness, they all come to you and the only cost to you is that you have to just say it, 'Hare Krishna,' that's all," Sripad Puri Maharaja continued. "When I first came to Krishna consciousness, I was a scientist. I have a PhD in Theoretical Chemistry and I was thinking that if I want to determine if what they are saying is true, I have to try it. I have to put myself in the test tube. Scientists are putting so many things in the test tube, now they (Hameroff and others) want to put consciousness in a tube. They now foolishly say consciousness can be created in a tube.

So you may try to practice *bhakti yoga*, chanting, learning the wisdom of the *Srimad Bhagavat Gita* and see what kind of knowledge, realization, satisfaction you get in your life. Examine it, test it and see if you don't become more certain about your own spiritual existence, the purpose of your life and the relationship you have with Krishna. This is what we understand to be the science of self realization."

After a brief pause Rasaraja das Prabhu said, "The leaders of this material world are trying to solve the problems of cancer, the terrorists, energy, and so on. Everybody is trying to solve problems, but instead of watering the roots of a tree, they put water on the leaves but nobody is saying the actual problem is that we are all going to die. Like the consciousness of an animal we think we are this body, we don't think about the soul, so it's a low consciousness. Everybody is trying to save the body. The body will die and become nothing but nobody is trying to save the soul."

"According to my understanding of the *Gita*, those things should also be done, but there's a way in which it should be done without any expectation of the fruit, right? Isn't that what *karma yoga* is about? I would think it's like you should do it as a sense of duty, right?" Revant ji asked in his comment. "Yes," Sripad Puri Maharaja said.

"In my view, if a two years old child is suffering from cancer and the doctors are artificially sustaining his life or if something happens to the health of a particular person, I believe that that was pre-ordained. What the doctors and science is doing is putting their hands in there where it was already pre-ordained. I don't know if this is good or not," Zhanna said.

"Krishna is ultimately behind everything. In the Vedic tradition, there's a science called *Ayurveda* (knowledge of life) and in the *Ayurveda* it is explained that there are so many herbs, natural cures in this world that God has given to help us but we have to understand that ultimately, according to the *Ayurveda*, it's up to Lord Visnu/Lord Krishna whether these herbs/cures work or not," Sripad Puri Maharaja responded. "It's not these medicines that actually cure us, it's up to Krishna whether they solve the problem or not. The doctors or the medicines are not the ultimate thing. We need to understand that all these things are available by the grace of God only and they are to be utilized with the consciousness that God is behind it all. The scriptures tell us that one can see Krishna behind it all, beyond *Maya*, who has a pure hearted love for Krishna, there's no question about it." This is told in the *Brahma-sarhitā*: 5.38:

*premāñjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena
santaḥ sadaiva hṛdayeṣu vilokayanti
yaṁ śyāmasundaram acintya-guṇa-svarūpaṁ
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

"I worship the primeval Lord, Govinda, Who is always seen by the devotee whose eyes are anointed with the salve of Divine love. He appears within the eternally peaceful heart of the devotee in His transcendental form of inconceivable qualities as Śyāmasundara ."

"*Premāñjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena*, when the devotee's eyes are anointed with Krishna *prema*. *Premāñjana* – means the ointment of love. When our hearts are no longer filled with so many other things, but in self forgetfulness are filled only with pure love of Krishna. *Bhakti-vilocanena* – whose eyes are used only for devotional purposes. Whatever one sees is for the devotional service of the Lord. Those eyes, whose seeing is only for the purpose of service. Such eyes follow the heart that is completely given over to the service world. *Santaḥ sadaiva hṛdayeṣu vilokayanti* – those persons whose hearts have become eternally peaceful, who are no longer filled with any anxiety, stress or anything else because they know they are in the hands of the most beautiful, perfect, loving, all attractive Lord, sweetness personified, Sri Krishna. *Yaṁ śyāmasundaram acintya-guṇa-svarūpaṁ* - they can see Śyāmasundara, whose qualitative form is otherwise inconceivable to anyone who doesn't have that kind of loving heart. It is inconceivable to the ordinary people how that form of Krishna can be seen. It is not something for your brain to understand. One who becomes devoted, purified in devotion, is endowed with the blessing to see Krishna when the Lord is pleased to bestow His vision to such a soul."

"How does one know when they reach that stage? It's so easy to fool ourselves." Revant ji asked. "When you experience yourself to be completely unqualified for it," Sripad Puri Maharaja responded. "It is possible only for one who is humbled by the mood of separation in Krishna consciousness."

"Krishna consciousness means to remember Krishna at every moment," Sripad Puri Maharaja continued then recounted something Srila Prabhupada said. "Once Prabhupada mentioned while in New York, 'When I see a truck, I don't see a truck I see Krishna.' When the bombs were coming in Kolkata everyone was leaving but Prabhupada didn't leave. He was asked, 'Aren't you worried about the bombs?' Srila Prabhupada replied, 'If Krishna wants to come in the form of a bomb to kill me, let Him kill me.'"

"Krishna consciousness," Rasasraja Prabhu said, "Yes, this is pure Krishna consciousness." Sripad Puri Maharaja agreed and continued. "*Mare krsna rakhe na, rakhe krsna mare na*. It means if Krishna wants to kill you no one can save you, and if Krishna wants to save you no one can kill you. It is all the mercy of Krishna. A devotee prays, 'I am a humble servant. My heart is surrendered to whatever You want. I am ready to serve You in any capacity and situation.' This is devotional life. No one can live like that or understand that way of thinking who is not a devotee. We don't expect that from everyone but for a devotee that is the norm, the standard of Krishna consciousness."



LR: Rasaraja das Prabhu, Sobha ji, Zhanna and Sripad Puri Maharaja

As the discussion ended we began chanting Harinama before honoring *prasadam*.



Srila Bhakti Nirmal Acharya Maharaja ki jai
Sripad Bhakti Madhava Puri Maharaj ki jai

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

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

[3] 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.