



# PRINCETON BHAKTI VEDANTA INSTITUTE

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Bhakti Vedanta Institute  
of Spiritual Culture and Science  
20 Nassau St., Ste. 116  
Princeton, NJ 08542  
Phone 732-604-4135  
Website: [bviscs.org](http://bviscs.org)

### The Evolution of Consciousness

With the warmer weather arriving, our little Harinam group set outdoors for another wonderful Harinam sankirtan on the campus of Princeton University. Accompanied by Srngara Mataji on *kartals*, Rasaraja das Prabhu on *mridangam* opened our outdoor harinam, while Kushum intermittently distributed our pamphlets. We were later joined by our dear friend Dorothy. As we headed back to the Bhakti Vedanta Institute's (BVI) center a few more guests arrived and we began indoor kirtan with Nila Madhava das Prabhu on *mridangam*.



Rasaraja Prabhu , Srngara Mataji, Dorothy and Kushum devi dasi

Today's talk began with a brief discussion between Nila Madhava das Prabhu and Sripad Bhakti Madhava Puri Maharaja. PhD, (Sripad Puri Maharaja) on Nila Madhava's *darshan* of His Holiness Tripurari Maharaja, who is currently in North Carolina. "Health wise he seems good. I believe he is working on another book which is an original script, not a commentary," Nila Madhava das Prabhu responded to Sripad Puri Maharaja's inquires about the well-being of HH Tripurari Maharaja. "He always tells us stories of Sridhar Maharaja and Srila Prabhupada," Nila Madhava das Prabhu added.

"Srila Prabhupada called him the 'incarnation of book distribution.' He seems to have an hypnotic power when he's talking to a person he meets on the street about Srila Prabhupada books and he can somehow mystically get them to buy the books. He has that power. I saw it in him when I was speaking with him. He has that very unique gift," Sripad Puri Maharaja said smilingly. "He came a few of times to the Math (Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math) in Nabadvip to visit Srila Sridhar Maharaja. Always very focused in his usual

style he asked questions of Guru Maharaja but never stayed around much. He knows how to get the essence and utilize it in service. Srila Prabhupada was very happy with the devotees who were distributing his books."

After a brief pause Sripad Puri Maharaja said, "It seems to me that something happened in the world after Srila Prabhupada's movement began. The whole environment in America had changed in that so many more people became vegetarian that they now have special sections in the supermarket for them. Now-a-days many people are engaged in kirtan (congregational chanting), yoga and the strangest thing is that many scientist are talking about consciousness for the first time since Newton. A few years ago scientists would not even think about it but today it's a topic of great interest and several scientific journals are published on consciousness studies. Of course, much of it is about neurophysiology in terms of neurons in the brain, but it's a change we didn't think would happen so soon. Even Darwinian evolution is being challenged along with theories of the origin of life. Scientists are finally frustrated witj trying to prove how life started from molecules. They realize that there's no way it could happen in the whole history of the solar system by combination and permutation of molecules," Sripad Puri Maharaja continued. "Even the most basic form of life cannot be formed from chemicals. The DNA molecule is such a large complex molecule, you cannot find it in nature outside of a living organism. The scientists have no idea how they were naturally formed by a trial and error process of evolution. The solar system is only 4.5 billion years old and the universe is 15 billion years old so they don't have that much time in the solar system for their formation by chance. Some even proposed they may have come from outer space – called panspermia." "That is the easiest way," Rasaraja das Prabhu said in relation to making life. "What else can they say? They don't want to accept God, so they are willing to consider any other explanation, however remote, even to the point of saying that life came from an alien planet," Sripad Puri Maharaja said.



**L-R: Prabhus: Rasaraja, Nila Madhava, Sripad Puri Maharaja, Dorothy during kirtan**

“Once I was on a morning walk with Srila Prabhupada and he was asking me about evolution. I told him how the scientists say, ‘this life came from another life and that life came from another life’ so Prabhupada said ‘Yes, another and another and another, and that another is Krishna.’ Krishna is the origin of all life.” Sripad Puri Maharaja said. After a brief pause, guest and friend, Dorothy asked, “So you don’t believe in evolution?” “The scientists say the first life was a single cell, like a bacterium. Why did that single cell become an elephant or a human being or anything else?” Sripad Puri Maharaja asked and then responded, “Even if you grant them a single cell in the beginning they cannot explain what happened next. Those single cells they call bacteria are excellent reproducers. They can multiply their numbers in a very short time very easily by asexual process of mitosis. Then how would it improve their survival if they evolved to a more complicated state where you have to have sexual relations between male and female of each species of life. It takes so much more energy for nature to produce that type of living organism than those that just divide and multiply like bacteria. Why would evolution naturally produce such things like an elephant or a giraffe? It is very difficult, to explain as far as expenditure of energy is concerned. It requires much more energy to produce such things and evolution cannot explain why that would happen.”

“So we do not think there is good enough science behind the idea of evolution. It doesn’t have a good enough scientific explanation to support it. Yet many believe it. So why do they believe it so strongly? Why do they have such firm faith in it?” Sripad Puri Maharaja asked his attentive audience. “They believe it because it does not require belief in God. They don’t want to say that God had anything to do with this world. They want to be able to figure out how it’s all coming about according to their own understanding, in which everything is within the grasp of their own intelligence, within their own minds, and within their ability to manipulate things. No God is required in that idea of things. They want it to be like that so they can maintain a superior position to Nature. Thus they maintain firm belief in such unscientific ideas as evolution in the name of science. It really doesn’t make any sense scientifically, logically, energetically, chemically, mathematically, or physically. Being a scientist myself, I cannot see how anybody can believe in evolution. I don’t have that much faith to believe in evolution. God, I can understand. There must be God who has the capacity for everything, that I can understand because

it makes more sense to me than to start with some impotent material stuff that produces life and everything else. That doesn’t make any logical or rational sense to me,” Sripad Puri Maharaja continued. “It’s more rational to think that an omnipotent being, a more powerful being can create all these lower things.” “According to Krishna’s philosophy, who was the first human being in this earth?” Dorothy asked. “Lord Brahma is the first living being, but he was born before the earth and even the cosmos was formed. But he’s not exactly a human being like us. He has four arms and four heads in this universe,” Sripad Puri Maharaja responded. “Lord Brahma is coming directly from the lotus flower growing from the navel (*Nabi*) of Lord Vishnu. Then from the stem of that lotus flower the whole universe was created.”

“I notice you always mention the lotus flower, not roses or any other flower but the lotus flower, Why?” Dorothy followed up with. “The lotus flower represents beauty, purity, and aloofness/transcendence,” Sripad Puri Maharaja responded. “Well if Brahma has four arms and four heads, maybe the evolution came until we have two,” Dorothy commented as the group laughed. “From which generation did Krishna come? The 7<sup>th</sup>, the 9<sup>th</sup> incarnation?” Dorothy asked. “Krishna is the original. He is the transcendental, absolute truth from whom all the spiritual worlds, His Vishnu expansions, Brahma and the material world come from. Everything is coming from Krishna originally. He is in a different plane altogether from everything else. Afterwards that original Krishna Who is in His own transcendental abode comes into the material world and that is called Avatar (incarnation). He is the *adi-purush* (First Person) so He comes from the higher plane into this material world to show us that He really exists and for His own purpose of playful *lila* with His devotees,” Sripad Puri Maharaja responded.

“We have this human form of life (body) to understand the purpose in life and gain spiritual realization. However, if we did not do any of those things but instead left this body and, let’s say for example, in our next life we became a cat - how, as a cat with lower consciousness can we become aware of spirituality?” Kushum asked. In response, Sripad Puri Maharaja asked Nila Madhava das Prabhu to respond. “For a devotee, or someone that is practicing *bhakti* (devotion), you will not become a cat in your next life because the spiritual advancement you make, it will always remain with you. It never goes away. Krishna says, ‘I preserve what they have and I carry what they lack,’ we just keep progressing and Krishna keeps giving us more. It is not likely that the devotees will take birth as a cat unless you become like King Bharat, who was on the plane of *bhava* (almost pure devotion), but his *sadhana* (spiritual practices) got distracted by a young baby deer. That baby deer’s mother passed away and King Bharat picked it up and took it to his *ashram* (hermitage) and became attached to it while taking care of that deer. So when he died he became a deer but as a deer he could remember that he practiced devotional service in his previous life. So as a deer he would go to the *ashram* where the *sadhus* (saints) lives. He would eat their remnants, whatever they will throw out, he would eat. He would sit close by and listen to Krishna *katha* (stories of Krishna’s pastimes) from the *sages* (enlightened souls), then in his next life he was again born as a human (Jadabharat). In this form he was an *avadhoot*, always behaving like he was crazy but internally he was always thinking of

Krishna. So as long as you are practicing *bhakti* (devotion), there's no reason you will be a cat in your next life," Nila Madhava das Prabhu explained then interjected, "Krishna also said, 'whatever you are thinking about at the time of death, you will achieve without fail.' In case they are not thinking of Krishna they will have to go through the cycle of *Karma* (deed) to burn through all their negative *karma*."



**L-R: Srngara Mataji, Prabhus Rasaraja, Nila Madhava, Sripad Puri Maharaja, and Dorothy during sangha**

"For those non-devotees in the lower forms of life, there's an automatic progression to reach the human life," Sripad Puri Maharaja added. "It may be by the laws of karma and/or the laws of material nature but I think the lower forms of life progress automatically because they don't have the consciousness to make progress on their own so the material nature itself provides the means for them to progress from one stage to the next."

"I remember Tripurari Maharaja telling the story about the devotee who went to Sridhar Maharaja and said 'I don't feel like I am making any advancement, any progress.' Then Sridhar Maharaja said 'What are you talking about? You are in a human body and you are practicing *bhakti*. That's progress. Just the fact that you are chanting, practicing *bhakti-yoga*, you are in a human form, that is proof of progress.' Sometimes it doesn't feel like we are not advancing because maybe we think we cannot become pure *prema-bhaktas* and be able to see Krishna but his answer was 'if you are in a human body and you are practicing *bhakti* and inquiring about Krishna that is proof of progress. So as long as you keep doing this, in your next life you will be born again in a suitable situation where you will continue to hear about Krishna.' I thought that was an interesting answer. I know that before I heard that I had thought I was not making any progress," Nila Madhava das Prabhu said.

"We may all think that at some point," Sripad Puri Maharaja confirmed. "But we also have to understand that it is not entirely up to us if we are making progress or not. It is up to Krishna if He is satisfied with us. Krishna says in the *Bhagavad-gita* 'dadami buddhi-yogam tam.' *dadami* means 'I give the intelligence.' So Srila Prabhupada used to say, 'Don't try to see Krishna instead act in such a way that Krishna will want to see you.' That's progress. We can try our best but the result is up to Krishna. Whatever service we render: remembering, chanting, book distribution, cooking, cleaning, we perform as our service without expecting anything for ourselves - the result is upto Krishna ultimately if He is pleased to reveal Himself to us." Srila Bhakti Raksaka Sridhara

Maharaja's<sup>[1]</sup> *Bhagavad Gita - The Hidden Treasure of the Sweet*

**Absolute: chapter 10 Verse 10** confirms this:

*tesam satata-yuktanam  
bhajatam priti-purvakam  
dadami buddhi-yogam tam  
yena mam upayanti te*

"To those devotees who are always lovingly engaged in My service, I give the divine inspiration by which they can come to Me."

"Krishna says '*aham sarvasya prabhavo* - I am the source of everything. Everything is coming from Me. I am the cause of all causes.' Srila Guru Maharaja explained that verse in such a way that even our devotion, our devotional service is coming from Krishna. '*Aham*' means I, '*sarvasya*' means everything, '*prabhavo*' coming from Me. There is nothing excluded in that '*sarvasya*,'" Sripad Puri Maharaja explained. "It is descending, not ascending. I remember Srila Govinda Maharaj said 'You have to make yourself negative (humble) and the positive will attract you'," Rasaraja das Prabhu said. *Bhagavad Gita - The Hidden Treasure of the Sweet Absolute*, 10.8 confirms this:

*aham sarvasya prabhavo  
mattah sarvam pravartate  
iti matva bhajante mam*

"I am Krsna, the Sweet Absolute, the origin of all. The entire universe of material and transcendental play, activity, purpose, and the Vedas and allied scriptures which give guidance - all evolve from Me alone. Realizing this hidden treasure, persons of fine theistic intelligence surpass the mundane and embrace the path of love divine, *rāga-marga*, and adore Me forever."

"I guess if you try to be positive, then you repel Krishna. If you try to be Krishna, then you repel Krishna but if you try to serve Krishna and the devotees then you attract Him," Nila Madhava das Prabhu said. "Positive is called *pratistha* (position). We are holding ourselves in some position, like a very strong and stable post, then you are incapable of being influenced by the flow of the current of devotion, the Lord's will and love. You will not be caught up in that flow. You will be there standing like a post and the current will be flowing around you but you wouldn't be part of it. That is *pratistha*. A surrendered soul will remember everything is Krishna's wills." Sripad Puri Maharaja said. "Krishna tells us, '*sarva-dharman parityajya, mam ekam saranam* - Surrender to me. I am the flow.' *Bhagavad Gita - The Hidden Treasure of the Sweet Absolute*, 18.66 confirms this:

*sarva-dharman parityajya  
mam ekam saranam vraja  
aham tvam sarva-papebhyo  
moksaisyami ma sucah*

"Give up all kinds of religion and surrender to Me alone. I will liberate you from all sins, do not despair."





L-R: Sripad Puri Maharaja, Prabhus: Nila Madhava das, Rasaraja das, Matajis: Dorothy, Srngara and Kushum

“Conditioned souls want to control things according to their own desires rather than submitting to the Lord’s will. We try to bring the higher down to a lower level that we can manipulate and be in control of,” Sripad Puri Maharaja said then asked how we can control the infinite? In response he said, “The finite cannot control the infinite. We have to give the infinite His free play, His free will, and allow Him to utilize us.”

“The conception that Srila Guru Maharaja speaks of is ‘slavery’ and not so many people accepts that conception. Actually, we are slaves and it depends on His mercy, whatever He wants to do. If we accept that position then we can be attracted to Krishna otherwise if we think that we have a position then we are nowhere. It is not easy to swallow that conception of slavery,” Rasaraja das Prabhu said. “Slavery is the most hated thing in this world and in the spiritual world it is the highest position to be a slave of Krishna.”

“Slavery is one idea but higher than that is ‘self forgetfulness.’ There is no question of yourself anymore at that stage. Of course you are there but one is forgetful of the self,” Sripad Puri Maharaja said then asked how does one get to that place? In response he said, Krishna says, “*man-mana bhava mad-bhakto*’ – always fix your mind upon Me. Fix your mind on Me as My devotee.’ Filling our thoughts and memories with Krishna, when the mind is totally absorbed in Krishna then there’s no room for anything else, not even the self. It is said that Krishna has lost His mind to the gopis (cowherd girls) and Srimati Radharani. He is lacking in that, so He needs our mind - we have to give our mind to Krishna only, then He’s very satisfied. The mind and heart are focused on what you cherish - ‘your heart is where your treasure lies.’” ***Bhagavad Gita - The Hidden Treasure of the Sweet Absolute***, 18.65 confirms this:

*man-mana bhava mad-bhakto  
mad-yaji mam namaskuru*

*mam evaisyasi satyam te  
pratijane priyo 'si me*

“Think of Me always, devote yourself to Me, worship Me and bow to Me, and surely you will come to Me. I promise you this, because you are dear to Me.”

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



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

<p>Your humble servant, Kushum Devi Dasi (New York)</p>		<p>Donations via Pay Pal <a href="http://bviscs.org/donation">http://bviscs.org/ donation</a></p>
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