



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

The Divine Appearance of Sri Krishna

*Īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ, sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ
anādir ādir govindaḥ, sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam*

Krishna 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. – Sri Brahma Samhita 5.1

Sripad Bhakti Madhava Puri Maharaja. PhD, (Sripad Puri Maharaja), opened our weekly *sadhu sangha*, saying, "today we are celebrating Sri Krishna *Janmashthami* (Appearance day of Lord Krishna) which occurred earlier this week." We then began a sweet *Harinam kirtan* along with the assembled devotees and guests.



Sri Krishna's bathing ceremony

After the wonderful *kirtan* Sripad Puri Maharaja began our *Harikatha* discussion on the topic of birth. "While Krishna is the *janmadasya* (source or cause of birth) of all conscious and unconscious beings, He also appears to take birth Himself to exhibit the divine nature of this miraculous event that occurs throughout nature. We understand that every individual cell has its own consciousness. When a mother gives birth to her children, each one of those children has an independent

consciousness, so it's possible that one consciousness can give rise to many other conscious entities, right? Within the womb of the mother the zygote or fertilized egg is also conscious but then when it divides, it gives rise to so many other cells. At first it divides into two, then into four, then eight, and so forth. It keeps multiplying in that way. Every time it doubles a consciousness appears in each of those multiples of itself, just as a candle flame can produce so many flames in the candles that are brought in touch with it. This ability to multiply is one of the amazing qualities of the soul and its associated consciousness. When the whole body is developed it's made of many different cells and each one of those cell has its own consciousness," Sripad Puri Maharaja explained. "One is more dominant than the other," Rasaraja das Prabhu interjected. "Yes, one remains dominant," Sripad Puri Maharaja confirmed then asked "Now how is that happening? Why is it so?"

"I have always had that question also," Rasaraja das Prabhu said. "I think it is not just one but a combination of them all together that create one big unity that becomes the dominant one in that particular human being. That's what I see it like," guest and friend, Zhanna said, "I think of the predominant consciousness of the body as being something like Lord Brahma, the original *jivatma* (living entity) who creates the whole universe, all the living entities and everything else. Yet he is only one," Sripad Puri Maharaja said. "Sometimes people speak of universal or cosmic consciousness - that's Brahma! It is not that the universe is conscious, it is Brahma's consciousness. He is the first consciousness of all the created

conscious living entities and everything else in his universal meditation. Of course, he only creates through the potency of Maha Vishnu.”

After a brief pause, Sripad Puri Maharaja asked “Brahma creates everything from His mind, like in a dream, mystically through his imagination. The material for His imagination is coming from the stem of the lotus flower that He’s sitting on while meditating. The material for manifesting the universe is coming from that stem, in other words, the stem of the lotus flower coming from the navel of Maha Vishnu’s expansion (Garbhodaksayi Vishnu). Karandaksayi Vishnu, lying on the ocean enters into the bubbles of each particular universe as Garbhodakasayi Vishnu and from that Garbhodakasayi Vishnu, the stem grows from His naval into the lotus upon which Brahma appears. Brahma is meditating and the material of His meditation is coming from Garbhodakasayi Vishnu and thus everything is appearing. Finally, Ksirodaksayi Vishnu enters into every appearance as the Supersoul,” Sripad Puri Maharaja explained. “We are thinking we are the predominant person of the body with so many other dependent conscious entities within. We only know ourselves, we may not know other conscious entities within the body because they remain dependent on the predominating person. In the same way Brahma only knows Himself in his creation but there is another order of living entities with independent consciousness who are the offspring of Brahma. He can be conscious of them and form relationships with them. In a similar way we can only relate to those living entities whose consciousness is independent of ours even if it apparently came from ours as our offspring. That is how I would explain it.”



Altar at Bhakti Vedanta Institute in Princeton

“One level of consciousness predominates over the conscious cells in our body as the *atma* along with *paramatma*, while there is another universal consciousness (Brahma) of the community or collective consciousness of *atmas*. Not all conscious entities have gross bodies. There are both those who have a subtle bodies and those who

have gross cellular bodies as we have. Brahma produces independent conscious entities that he can relate to just as parents can produce children that originate from them but have independent consciousness. In each case the *paramatma* enters every body along with the *atma*.” Sripad Puri Maharaja then said, “Children would not have any existence without parents but at the same time they are not completely dependent on their parents. The principle called *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva*’ - simultaneously one and different tries to express this situation. These are the mystical energies of God. How things happen are not so easy to understand but if we think about it a little, then we can appreciate something of the amazing nature of the soul and Supersoul that can produce other entities from itself. When we speak of consciousness, what exactly are we talking about? It is very hard to define that unless we have some technical knowledge about the concepts and philosophy of Spirit.”



Rasaraja das Prabhu, Sripad Puri Maharaja and Zhanna

“What about when someone says another person doesn’t have any consciousness, when that person does something really bad to another person because he cannot relate to the outer world but with only what is in his head, like all his connections are cut off even though he functions in this world. He knows how everything works but when they perform certain social acts, they cannot relate. Therefore the other people say he has no consciousness about what he’s doing,” Zhanna asked. Sripad Puri Maharaj responded. “We were just talking about that man who drove his SUV over all those people in Barcelona (Spain). Doesn’t he know that driving over innocent people is a cruel and inhuman thing to do? You start to wonder, who would do something like that? What kind of consciousness do you have to have to be able to do that? Can human beings become so radicalized that they seem to have no empathy, no human sympathetic quality about them.”

“Sometimes I would think that I have not heard from such and such person for a long time then within that day that person would call me. When these things happen with me, I just tell

people 'look I was just thinking about you,'" Zhanna said. "Mental telepathy may happen to anyone at some point in their lives," Sripad Puri Maharaja responded then asked if we have heard of Carl Jung (Swiss psychiatrist and psychotherapist who founded analytical psychology)? "Carl Jung called it synchronicity. It is found that in history when someone comes up with a completely new idea, another person came up with the same idea at the same time - just like in the case of calculus which was developed by two people (Newton and Leibniz) apparently independently of one another. In the quantum theory Schrodinger and Heisenberg independently developed integral and matrix mechanics respectively to deal with quantum phenomena. At certain times people will develop important, significant theories at the same time. There's no explanation in science for that."



During *Harinam kirtan*: Rasaraja das Prabhu with Sripad Puri Maharaja and Zhanna

"This is why I kind-of-believe that we are one big consciousness and we have invisible WiFi, something like that but there's a connection there," Zhanna continued as we all laughed. "We are all connected, definitely. Like I said our children or relatives are separated from us but they also have some connection with you through origination - birth," Sripad Puri Maharaja responded then asked "What do we mean by the word 'we'? In response he said, "When we say 'we' you are connecting yourself with other people as a collective whole or one. It's like one entity is acting, although you are many. For example when it says 'We, the People' in the Declaration of Independence, there's a unity and diversity implied in which many are acting as one. In this universe that unity is called Lord Brahma who is the collective consciousness of us all. At a higher level Lord Brahma is only one of millions of Brahmas and they are all part of Maha Vishnu, who is one of numerous expansions of the *Chatur Vuyhas* of Sri Narayan (Vishnu in Vaikuntha) and even above Narayan there's another higher plane and that's the abode of Krishna. So this system of unity and diversity, universality and particularity holds throughout the entirety of the material and spiritual worlds."



Sripad Puri Maharaja, Zhanna, Kushum DD and Rasaraja Prabhu

Coming full circle back to *Janmasthan*, Sripad Puri Maharaja said, "Krishna appears in this world for many reasons. One is to show us that He is not merely an idea, or imagination. So the Absolute Truth appears in this world and walks among us. This is also said in the Bible. 'In the beginning was the word, who was God, and the word was made flesh and dwelt among us.' Anybody can say the word 'God' but when that word becomes visible to us, then it is no more just talk. We are not just talking about some philosophical concept; we are talking about something real and substantial and that is the meaning of Krishna's appearance. He appears to show us that the truth is not just an idea but that we have a substantial relationship with Him and He demonstrates His relationship with His devotees just as we find in the *Srimad Bhagavat-Gita*," Sripad Puri Maharaja explained. "Krishna is the friend of Arjuna, and as a good friend He is advising him in his life. Krishna says in *Bhagavad-gita* 15.15 'I am what the Vedas are all about' (*vedais ca sarvair aham eva vedyo*). Again, the Vedas are words and what those words are about is Krishna and so Krishna comes and says 'This is who I am. This is what the Vedas are teaching - you have a relationship with Me. By establishing your relationship with Me you can take your proper place as an eternal servant in My eternal kingdom. This world is a temporary thing, but you have an eternal existence, an eternal relationship, and that's what Krishna wants to remind us of and what we are to strive for. That's the purpose of His appearance for the devotees. He also has another purpose of making sure that things are going according to His Will. Krishna says in *Bhagavad gita* 4.8, *paritranaya sadhunam* ... I come to help my devotees thrive and demolish the non-devotees so they don't ruin civilization."

"How does Krishna appear in this world?" Sripad Puri Maharaja continued. "Not everyone can understand that. In the *Bhagavad-gita* Krishna says, *janma karma ca me divyam* - if one can understand that My birth and activities are in truth all transcendental, that person doesn't have to take birth again in this world." This is confirmed in Srila Bhakti Raksaka Sridhara Maharaja's [2] *Bhagavad Gita - The Hidden Treasure of the Sweet Absolute*: 4. 9:

*janma karma ca me divyam
evam yo vetti tattvatah
tyaktva deham punar janma
naiti mam eti so 'rjuna*

"O Arjuna, one who comes to know thus the truth of My pastimes of divine birth and activities, does not undergo rebirth. After giving up this body, he attains Me. My grace is revealed to him as My personal transcendental joyful potency, *hlāḍini-sakti*. His heart is melted in divine love and he attains My eternal devotional service."

"But it is not simply by knowledge that the Supreme Lord may reveal Himself. There are many places in the scripture where this is explained. In the *Mundaka Upanisad* 3.2.3 for instance it is written:

*nayam atma pravacanena labhyo
na medhaya na bahuna srutena
yam evaisha vrinute tena labhyas
tasyaisha atma vivrinute tanum sva*

"The Supreme Lord is not obtained by expert explanations, by vast intelligence, or even by much hearing. He is obtained only by one whom He Himself chooses. To such a person, He manifests His own form."

"Thus only those with whom Krishna is pleased by their service to *Guru* and *vaisnava* are given that higher knowledge," Sripad Puri Maharaja continued. "Somehow or other some have causelessly received that grace, that finer theistic intelligence. They can cultivate and develop that further and further. From such *acharyas* (spiritual teachers) a spiritual serving community can develop and that's what we try to encourage and cultivate ourselves. Those who develop a proper serving mood don't try to see Krishna but act in such a way that Krishna will want to see you."



With this our wonderful *sadhu sanga* on the auspicious appearance (*Janmasthanam*) of Sri Krishna concluded after *prasadam* was served and honored by all.

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

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Pictures from the Event

