

PRINCETON BHAKTI VEDANTA INSTITUTE

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The Whole Truth: Conversation With A Scientist

Sripad Bhakti Madhava Puri Maharaja, Ph.D (Sripad Puri Maharaja) with *kartals* (hand cymbals), accompanied by Rasaraja das Prabhu on *dhol* (small North Indian-style drum) opened Harinam sankirtan at the Princeton Bhakti Vedanta Institute (BVI). Begning our weekly *sadhu sanga*, Sripad Puri Maharaja explained to guest, Dr. Lina, the purpose and meaning of the *Mahamantra*. "It's a singing/chanting meditation - a simple means to concentrate, focus the mind on the absolute sound vibration of the Holy Names of the mantra. *Hare* is the name of the energy (*shakti*) and Krishna is the name of the possessor/source of the energy (*shaktiman*). So we meditate on the *shakti* and the *shaktiman*, both, and that is called Radha Krishna in the *vaisnava* (worshippers of Lord Vishnu) tradition. The Absolute is conceived as Shiva-Parvati in the *Shivaite* (worshippers of Lord Shiva) tradition. There are many traditions in India that have similar representations of the absolute in Feminie-Masculline form. There is also the more impersonal Yin-Yang in China, but we don't find the Female-Male form of God in the many monotheistic traditions in the world." "You can find this also in the Egyptian religion (Isis and Osiris)," Dr. Lina said.



L to R: Rasaraja das Prabhu, Sripad Puri Maharaja, Dorothy and Dr. Lina during Harinam

"We observe male and female forms in the world but where does that come from? Sripad Puri Maharaja asked then responded. "It isn't explained very easily by survival of the fittest. Evolutionists have a very hard time explaining how sexual reproduction arose since non-sexual reproduction is more energy efficient and the largest and most robust populations of living organisms correspond to non-sexually reproducing ones. It's much easier to not go through that whole process of having a male and female evolve at the same time. It becomes a real problem for evolutionary scientists to explain. However, if the origin of all creation is the Complete Whole energy (female) and

the energetic source (male) it is rational that the creation contains this difference as well.”

“At the simpler levels of life this differentiation remains formal or implicit and does not become explicit or real. There we find mitosis (the cell divides itself into two independent cells). This process expresses a primordial principle of the Absolute as explained in *Sri Isopanisd*,” Sripad Puri Maharaja continued,

*omī pūrṇam adah pūrṇam idamī
pūrṇāt pūrṇam udacyate
pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya
pūrṇam evāśīsyate.*

Purnam means whole, so this verse says that wholes come from the whole without diminishing it. This is un-intuitive from an ordinary logical point-of-view. Usually we think that to take something from a whole, is to remove a part of it, so how can a whole come from a whole? Yet this verse explains that a complete whole produces another whole and everything that comes from the whole is also a whole. It’s like looking at what happens in cellular mitosis. By the functioning of the cell itself, it produces another cell. There’s no sexual reproduction involved. It reproduces automatically by its own inherent constitution. A similar process occurs in the fertilized egg (zygote) in the mother’s womb. A single cell divides itself into two, which then divide into four, then eight, and so on at different stages of formation. Each stage is due to the reproduction of a whole cell from another whole cell - the original cell - without anything being lost from the original cell. The entire production of a multi-cellular organism proceeds by the internal reproduction of the cells, not by accumulation of anything. A whole produces another whole, just like we say ‘life comes from life.’”

“There’s something missing,” Dr. Lina said. “The reservoir, source itself, the *shakti-shiva* is missing in each cell to cause it to divide up and produce two cells.

Scientists have not been able to create a human being because they need the womb of the mother, because the womb is the reservoir.”

“Of course, in Nature as a whole the cell is but a finite part, so the womb or environment have to be included in the Complete Whole. But ideally the same principle is operating from the micro to the macro scale. You don’t need a male and female to reproduce bacteria like we find in more complex organisms, so the *Shiva-Shakti* principle must be implicit in them as well as explicitly when we consider the wider environment. The principle is still there even in an organism like a bacterium because it not only has its cellular body (*shakti*), but it also has a soul (*Jiva*) or in a wider collective sense (*Shiva*). In all cases the two aspects are there at the highest or most primitive levels. There’s always a concept (soul) and the body when we are talking about life in this world.”

Going back to his original point, Sripad Puri Maharaja asked, how can a whole come from a whole? In response he said, “Just like a seed which you plant in the ground produces a whole tree and from that tree comes its blossoms, which then produces its fruits and in those fruits you have again the seeds which will produce other trees, so that the cycle repeats itself. In this way a seed comes from a seed. Life goes on in a cycle in which one thing produces itself without any loss. This is the amazing thing. No chemical reaction has that property. No chemical reaction can produce something endlessly without losing something according to thermodynamic principles. But there’s no loss when a living organic whole produces itself, so where is this amazing sustainability coming from?” Sripad Puri Maharaja asked then said. “This is a manifestation of the movement of the absolute itself. It’s the principle of Absolute self-creation. The Absolute creates itself and it doesn’t lose itself in its creation. It can create its own self in its full potency, just as a flame can be used to light another flame without losing its original

brightness. Here we are dealing with the Infinite so finite logic does not apply. This creation of itself as something that is the same as yet other than itself represents the fundamental dynamic of the Absolute Self. Thus we find in this one *sloka* (verse) of the *Isopanisd* the foundation of Vedic ontology. Many similar axioms are found there.”

“How was the world created?” Dorothy asked. “The world originated from Maha Vishnu. When Krishna expands Himself according to the principle of wholes coming from wholes, a particular form arises that lies down to sleep in the causal ocean. In His dream (*Yoga Nidra*) Maha Visnu creates the various material universes, so the material world is really a dream-like state of Maha Visnu. As absolute there is nothing beside God. Krishna is the whole of everything, so even when a whole is created as other than Himself, it is simultaneously the same as Himself. Because the material universe appears to be what is merely other than God it is only a formal or abstract conception that can also be called an illusion, a dream,” Sripad Puri Maharaja responded.

“When Krishna and Rama incarnated was there a world already and if so, who created it?” Dorothy followed-up with. “Yes, the world was already there. Maha Vishnu creates the world in His dream. So this world is really a creation in the mind of Maha Vishnu. This means that when Krishna apparently enters the material world, He is already there behind it. Thus He merely manifests Himself. When we can see through the appearance of this world to what is behind it, then we can understand things properly” Sripad Puri Maharaja responded. “Just like the scientists, when they look at a carpet, for instance, they just don’t see a carpet they look beyond the carpet and describe what it is made of in scientific terms such as its atomic and molecular constitution. They don’t look at the thing as it appears to us. They seek the essence behind what superficially appears to us.

Philosophers talk about Being and Essence. Being is what ‘is’ but Essence is what is behind that ‘is.’ Reality (noumena) and appearance (phenomena) express a similar relation - what is appearing and what is causing that appearance. You may go on the stage and appear to be King Lear but who is that person who is appearing in that role? There’s a difference between what is appearing and what is there underneath. Phenomena and noumena – what reality appears to be is called phenomenal and what is in itself is called noumenal.”

“The question is how do we reach the noumenal reality, the absolute, the essence without having to go through the the finite self that can know only the phenomenal world?” Sripad Puri Maharaja asked then responded. “Science is concerned with understanding the phenomenal world, empirical knowledge derived through the experience of the senses of the scientists, but religion does not rely only on the senses. Religion is based on faith in God as the noumenal reality or truth beyond or behind the world that appears to the senses. Creation thus means the manifestation of the appearing world from an original noumenal substance that is also subject or personal. Therefore, religion is based upon the rational conception that there is a complete Whole that may or may not be understood or directly perceived by the senses. Science errs if it denies the rationality of such faith/intuition upon which religion is based.”

After a brief pause he continued to explain the relation between faith and reason. “Religion is based on faith in a noumenal reality that may not be seen yet is axiomatically accepted as truth. Science is no less based upon faith in its axioms and principles of phenomenal existence. The reality beyond the senses that religion teaches is a ‘beyond’ that doesn’t mean it’s not connected to the world. ‘Beyond’ means that whatever is appearing right in front of us has an essence that is hiding just behind the appearance and causing it. We only see the appearance, we don’t see what is causing that appearance and religion tries to focus upon

that. So really science and religion have a mutual role to play together. Science deals with what is visible, the phenomenal world of appearance, and religion tries to raise one's awareness to the noumenal reality that lies behind the appearing world. Different religions have different levels of understanding the Ultimate Reality which they call God, or Shiva-Shakti, or Lakshmi Narayan, or Radha-Krishna. There are deeper levels of understanding both the phenomenal and noumenal world."

To clarify the topic he was discussing, Sripad Puri Maharaja gave the analogy of the elephant and the five blind men in a room. "There were five blind men so they couldn't see what they were feeling. One grabbed the elephant's leg and said, 'It is a tree stump,' another one touched the side and said, 'No it's a wall,' the third one grabbed the tail and said, 'It's a rope,' another one grabbed the trunk and said, 'Oh, this is a snake,' the fifth one was holding the ear and said, 'No, it's a fan.' Because they couldn't see what the whole was, they were only able to describe the parts, and even that understanding was wrong because the parts could not be identified properly without knowing the whole of which they were its various members. Science also deals only with the parts, without knowledge of the whole. Knowing the DNA, RNA, enzymes, proteins, and all the different parts of what we call a cell without knowing what the living cell itself is as an organic unity leads only to misunderstanding at both the cellular and molecular levels. There is no definition of a living cell and how it is controlling the whole or its parts," Sripad Puri Maharaja explained. "Without that whole of which there are parts, scientists can't tell what those parts really are or mean, just like you can't tell that there's an elephant in the room by blindly experiencing its parts. Even if they put those parts of their misunderstanding together, it wouldn't correspond to an elephant."

"As Hegel concluded, 'the true is the whole.' An organic whole is not merely the sum of its parts. All partial analyses will only give the wrong conception because you are taking the parts to be something substantial in and of themselves but that cannot be the truth of what's actually there. As one poet wrote about the elephant and blind men, 'Though each was partly in the right, all were in the wrong!' In order to know the truth you need a conception of the Whole beyond the limited knowledge of empirical investigation for properly understanding things. One has to adopt another process beyond empirical science and that's where philosophical reason or religious faith comes in. Philosophy and religion are not different, except religion is for everyone while philosophy may not be. Of course both science and religion are abstract if they are just concentrating on the parts or just concentrating on the whole, so it is necessary to find out how to combine these two. You can't just rely on the parts and you can't rely on the whole without understanding their relation, then the true conception can be had. This more comprehensive stage beyond Being and Essence corresponds to what Hegel calls the Concept, and further when he includes Reality, the Idea."

"Besides the scientific analytic process there are other ways of understanding part and whole and their relation that we find in the Vedic schools of thought. We also find the analysis of the parts in the *Sankhya* philosophy. Sankhya admits that beyond *prakriti* (nature), there's a *purusha* or personal aspect to reality. They don't eliminate that as is done in modern science. Modern science only thinks in terms of atoms and molecules but there's no concept of consciousness or person. What is a person? Scientist can't tell you that," Sripad Puri Maharaja continued. "To understand consciousness, values, feelings of love, anger and so on, or God requires another type of science. We are parts of a whole but we require a conception of the whole to get a proper conception of what the finite or partial

experiences mean or signify. We have to have an idea of the whole before we can get a proper conception and proper knowledge of things. *Vedanta* actually means the goal/conclusion of knowledge. *Veda* means knowledge and *anta* means end/conclusion. What is the conclusion of all these little bits of empirical knowledge that we have? What is the total picture of which all these fragments of knowledge are parts? It is only proper knowledge when we have knowledge of the whole, the goal or end of things otherwise, no matter how extensive our partial knowledge may be, it is only going to be wrong without knowledge of what it is that they are all parts."



L to R: Ralph, Rasaraja Prabhu, Sripad Puri Maharaja,, Dorothy and Dr. Lina during *Sadhu sanga*

"Aristotle explained that a hand separated from the body is not properly a hand. 'Hand' only has meaning as the part of the body that grasps. It is not just a shape with five appendages. What we mean by hand is something that helps us to grasp, write, eat, and so forth. It's not just a geometrical shape with five appendages. It is properly defined only in terms of its functional integration with the body."

"So what if a hand is malfunctioning?" Ralph asked. "In order to recognize a malfunction, you will have to know what is the proper function. We have to know what the real hand is before we can say there's a malformed or malfunctioning hand," Sripad Puri Maharaja responded.

"The senses intuit different things in their separated existence but to recognize that 'this' and 'that' are related requires something more than what the senses provide," Sripad Puri Maharaja said. "We are receiving data from these senses. *Da* in Sanskrit means 'give,' so data it is what is given to us, not what is interpreted or mediated but what is immediate. In philosophy it is called intuited or unmediated experience. In order to unify intuitions of sensuous phenomena into a whole requires relating or integrating the given sense impressions or data of the senses."

"The senses smell, taste, see, touch and hear, but which sense relates one thing to another?" he asked then responded, "There's no sense that does that, instead the mind is required to reflect on the sense data and then relate those data inputs to one another. This is the essential function of the mind. In other word, without the mind we would not be able to make any 'sense' of the sensuous world. Establishing relationships is the activity of the mind. The mind is the judging faculty. The senses detect 'that' something is, but the mind determines or judges 'what' it is. For example, the eyes see something (we call 'it') but the mind judges 'what' it is: Thus it is a judgement to say, 'It is a cow.' The senses only tells that something is there but what the indeterminate 'it' is requires a judgement which is the function of the mind. So this connection of an idea with the sense intuition is the activity of the mind," Sripad Puri Maharaja continued. "There are other functions beside the senses and mind such as the intellect and ultimately the ego behind all of that. Above that still there is the *atma* (soul), and above that is *Paramatma* (supersoul), and above that is *Bhagvan* (the original Person). This is the profound knowledge that the ancient sages of India have explained, for example in

the *Bhagavad-gita* 3.42,

*indriyani parany ahur
indriyebhyah param manah
manasas tu para buddhir
yo buddheh paratas tu sah*

The learned men did not settle for only the superficially appearing surface world. They delved deeply into things to trace all those levels of reality to their ultimate conclusion or *Vedanta*. To understand that requires another science and that is what we are interested in learning, cultivating and teaching.”

“I know scientists who study consciousness - Penrose, Hameroff, and others who each have their own twist on consciousness but, I’m going to be blunt, I think it’s all packaged for the western audience. They don’t like to touch the old teachings of the *Vedas* but they try to be ‘New Agey,’” Dr. Lina said.

“In any field of study knowledge of the existing scientific literature on a subject is essential. When I began thinking about how to understand consciousness my first thought was that India had developed the field of yoga centuries before consciousness studies became important in the West. It’s ridiculous to study that subject and not even be aware of that existing knowledge. The Western scientists’ idea is now that consciousness can be created in a kind of microscopic test tube (*microtubule*),” Sripad Puri Maharaja said. “It’s almost like there is nothing you can do about it. Its like talking to a brick wall almost,” Dr. Lina continued.

“Stephen Hawking wrote in his latest book *The Grand Design*, ‘It is not necessary to invoke God to light the blue touch paper and set the Universe going.’ [Blue touch paper refers to a fuse for lighting an explosive, or something said to evoke an explosive response.] This always seemed silly to me because for anyone who tries to understand the universe in terms of mathematical

equations (as laws of physics), how would you get from there to a grain of sand, what to speak of a universe! All the mathematical equations in the world cannot produce an atom of physical reality. All the science and all the scientists in the world together cannot make a single blade of grass. I interpret ‘the blue touch paper’ to mean that God is absolutely necessary to convert abstract mathematical laws into a physical universe,” Sripad Puri Maharaja responded. “That is true,” Dr. Lina agreed.



L to R: Ralph, Rasaraja Prabhu, Sripad Puri Maharaja, Dorothy and Dr. Lina during *sanga*

“Ramanujan was not formally educated but was still a great mathematician. When it was asked of him, ‘where do you get your inspirations to see those complex equations’ he replied, ‘I pray to the Goddess Saraswati. I get my inspiration from over there, not down here.’” Dr. Lina said.

“Yes, sometimes it’s due to inspiration. Many scientists that have a problem have experienced when they are sleeping or doing something else, that they suddenly see the answer. Something comes to them but they cannot explain where it came from,” Rasaraja das Prabhu said.

Continuing the conversation Sripad Puri Maharaja said, “Science accepts the conservation of mass and energy as an axiomatic truth. We accept that life which comes from the soul is a non-material principle

that is also conserved. According to the *Bhagavat Gita* 2.13

*dehino 'smin yatha dehe
kaumaram yauvanam jara
tatha dehantara-praptir
dhiras tatra na muhyati*

"As the living being passes through the bodily changes of childhood, youth and old age, it similarly attains another body at death. The wise are not deluded by this."

"But the soul changes, matures," Dr. Lina said. "The soul may not change but the consciousness that is connected with the soul changes - it evolves. What is always already there becomes covered by improperly formed consciousness. When our consciousness becomes purified, the soul becomes known. Our consciousness is not fully developed but when we become fully realized, all that covering will dissipate. It's not that the soul has changed, it's that we realize what that soul is, what our self is," Sripad Puri Maharaja responded. "We have to learn the process of purification then we will see what is already there. The soul has its own spiritual light in the true world. Right now it's being directed by the lower activities that are material, not spiritual. There are gross material and subtle material coverings and when both are cleansed, washed away, then the soul becomes known and its relation with the spiritual plane begins. It is described that there are three phases, (1) *bhukti*, (2) *mukti* and (3) *bhakti*. *Bhukti* means exploitation, *mukti* means liberation and *bhakti* means dedication. Exploitation (*bhukti*) refers to the material conception of life where we feel ourselves to be subject and everything else is object of our enjoyment. Liberation (*mukti*) refers to the attitude of renouncing the world, 'I have nothing to do with this material world.' Here the subject and object distinction is ignored. In the *bhakti* stage of devotion I (as subject) become the object and there's a subject or Super subject above me. I become objective

to a higher subject. This happens in the ordinary world of relations in which I am an object of other's subjectivity, and their subjective selves are objective to me. Still they do not lose their subjectivity but become subject/object to me, as do I to them. The same is true with God as the Super subject. We do not lose our subjective free will in that relation."

"The practice of *bhakti-yoga* is a way of making the dedicating plane tangible and by purifying the practitioner of tendencies toward *bhukti* and *mukti* through engagement in devotional activities. Chanting or talking about Krishna and listening to topics related to Him are considered two of the processes of *bhakti-yoga*," Sripad Puri Maharaja explained. "Later we will be taking some food that was first offered to Krishna and Gurudeva (spiritual teacher) that is called *prasadam* (mercy). Thus eating also becomes a part of devotion. Associating with the devotees (*sadhu sanga*) is likewise a part of devotional service. Basically all the activities that we normally engage in can be directed toward devotional service under the guidance of Guru."

"Krishna advises His devotee, Arjuna, in the *Bhagavad Gita*, '*Sarva Dharmam Paritajyam Mam Ekam Sharanam Vraja*' - to surrender unto Him (*saranagati*). Our identity is not to maintain a separate independent existence but to be lovingly related to the Complete Whole - to Krishna. With this understanding we can enter the higher life of dedication, devotion and pure love of God. What we call love in this material world is not real love. Real love is love for God," Sripad Puri Maharaja said. "So what would you call that?" Ralph asked. "Mundane love is part of the world of exploitation if it does not help us to attain love of God. We consider it a kind of a reflection, a shadow of real love in the spiritual world."

"Until we know the Complete Whole, the Organic Whole, everything we are dealing with, whether it be partial things or their relations, can only lead to misunderstanding. Only when we understand 'the elephant in the room' can we get a proper understanding of love, God, real knowledge of what life is. Before then, all so-called knowledge can only be a misconception," Sripad Puri Maharaja concluded.

"How can we live in both worlds?" Dr. Lina asked. "Depending on the development of our consciousness we have to live accordingly," Sripad Puri Maharaja responded. "As much as we have the consciousness of material existence we are living in the plane of exploitation. As much as we have the consciousness of spiritual existence, the plane of dedication, we live in that world. We may be living in both worlds at the same time depending on our own level of development, but we are capable of progressing in one direction or the other by our choice of dedication or exploitation. Those who choose surrender to the Lord at each moment in their lives follow the path of positive and progressive immortality. It is at every moment that we can make progress into the higher world of serving spirit or plunge into the lower selfish exploitive mentality. The process of *bhakti-yoga* is given to help us develop the serving spirit on the journey to the spiritual world of dedication and love."

"But then won't you have to re-learn how to practically make a living when you come down from the *bhakti* stage to the material stage?" Dr. Lina questioned. "It may seem like that at first, because we have become materially habituated to doing everything for ourselves. One can't know what is there in the spiritual world until you've entered it. You don't know how that world works until you've actually lived in it. It is a world of service in which things are taken care of in an automatic way that you don't even have to try to plan for." Sripad Puri

Maharaja responded. "Now you think you are in-charge but there everything is already arranged for you."

"But you do have to exercise wisdom when you are living in the *bhakti* stage with the non-*bhakti* folks. You have to relearn how to talk, when not to talk, when to let God do it for you. Even inaction is sometimes an action because He's operating. You just have to allow it and be quiet because you pontify. There's such a big difference between here and there," Dr. Lina followed-up with.

"Sriila Guru Maharaja once explained that it's like a person who is married and has a paramour lover. Externally the wife engages in wifely duties with the husband but in her heart she is always thinking about her lover, so everything we do externally is like trying to pretend but internally its different," Rasaraja das Prabhu said. "We are living in the world but at the same time we know the things we need to do is because of our duty but actually our heart is different. We are not attached to this material world so much like other persons. It looks the same externally but internally it's different."

"It's like an act. This is very hard when you have family and certain expectations," Dr. Lina followed-up with. "Like Rasaraja was saying, we have to do our duties but with detachment," Sripad Puri Maharaja said. "We can do certain things with the attitude: It's my duty, I have to do it, but it's not what I really want."

"What if the soul has a purpose and you knew the purpose? Then does the duty become an act of *bhakti*?" Dr. Lina asked. "Yes, that is possible. It is called *raganuga sadhana bhakti*. The real purpose or function of the living entity, the spirit soul, is

explained by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, an incarnation of Radha-Krishna. Sanatan Goswami, a very learned man, came to Him and asked Him, 'What is the purpose of my life?' Mahaprabhu answered, *jīvera 'svarūpa' haya kṛṣṇera 'nitya-dāsa,'* The real form or substantial essence of the *jīva* (living entity) is to be the eternal servant of Krishna. When you realize that you are created for serving God and you act in that capacity then that is self realization," Sripad Puri Maharaja responded.

This is confirmed in the *Śrī Chaitanya Caritāmṛta Madhya* 20.108:

*jīvera 'svarūpa' haya — kṛṣṇera 'nitya-dāsa'
kṛṣṇera 'tatasthā-śakti' 'bhedābheda-prakāśa'*

"It is the living entity's constitutional position to be an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa because he is the marginal energy of Kṛṣṇa and a manifestation simultaneously one with and different from the Lord."

"*Bhakti Vedanta* means the conclusion of knowledge is bhakti - love. Love of God is the conclusion of knowledge," Sripad Puri Maharaja said. "It is the union with God. It's not a new age thing. Actually, it's the union of the soul with God. You just feel it and your body just carries that but we have a purpose," Dr. Lina said. "Yes. our purpose is to make that connection or union with God through loving service to Him and in that relationship, under superior guidance we can act in whatever way that higher Will requests of us through Guru. It is perfect life when the particular and universal are acting in harmony. If you can act in that consciousness all the time, you've got it," Sripad Puri Maharaja said. "It's hard to do," Dr. Linda countered. "At times, yes, but if we can take some time for things like coming here (BVI in Princeton), talking with the devotees, chanting, thinking of God and learning about Him, reading the scriptures – these are all part of the process of doing something, at least once in awhile, for

your spiritual advancement. The more you feed the lower plane, the more it will become stronger and have an influence over you. The more you feed the higher plane, the more that will become influential in your life. So, these activities of chanting, associating with the devotees, meditating are all part of *bhakti yoga*," Sripad Puri Maharaja said. The nine forms of *bhakti* (devotional service) are described in the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*: 7.5.23 – 24:

*śrī-prahrāda uvāca
śravaṇaṁ kīrtanaṁ viṣṇoḥ
smaraṇaṁ pāda-sevanam
arcanaṁ vandanam dāsyam
sakhyaṁ ātma-nivedanam
iti puṁsārpitā viṣṇau
bhaktiś cen nava-lakṣaṇā
kriyeta bhagavaty addhā
tan manye 'dhītam uttamam*

"Prahāda Mahārāja said: Hearing and chanting about the transcendental holy name, form, qualities, paraphernalia and pastimes of Lord Viṣṇu, remembering them, serving the lotus feet of the Lord, offering the Lord respectful worship with sixteen types of paraphernalia, offering prayers to the Lord, becoming His servant, considering the Lord one's best friend, and surrendering everything unto Him (in other words, serving Him with the body, mind and words), these nine processes are accepted as pure devotional service. One who has dedicated his life to the service of Krishna through these nine methods should be understood to be the most learned person, for he has acquired complete knowledge."

"Hearing, *śravaṇam*, is a very important process for developing the spiritual conception of self. Then you have *kīrtanam*, talking and singing about Krishna. Between the ear and the tongue, *śravaṇam*-

kīrtanaṁ, what happens? *Viṣṇoḥ smaraṇaṁ*, we being to remember Visnu or Krishna. Our memory becomes strong. Then comes *pāda-sevanam*, where we try to serve in some humble way. *Arcanaṁ* means worship. We engage in setting up an altar and worshipping the Lord; that also helps remembrance. *Vandanaṁ* means praying. *Dāsyarṇ* means serving and *Sakhyam* means serving in the mood of the Lord's friendship, then comes *ātma-nivedanam*, surrendering of one's whole self," Sripad Puri Maharaja explained. "The scriptures give guidance and direction from the Lord and His devotees who have already reached there to help us get to the spiritual platform and develop a relationship with Krishna. They can explain the process to us and we can follow their instructions to develop our consciousness of that world."

With this our very scientific *sanga* continued with mutual discussion as *prasadam* was served and honored by all. *Sadhu sanga ki jai.*



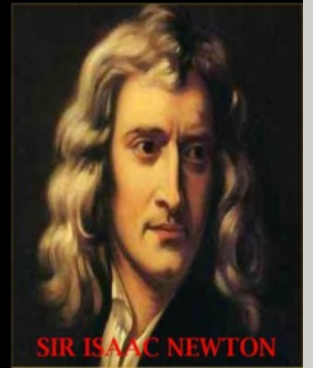
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**'Don't doubt the
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is inconceivable
that accidents
alone could be the
controller of this
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