



PRINCETON BHAKTI VEDANTA INSTITUTE

REPORT - OCT 31, 2015

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Warm Welcome for Visiting Cell Biologist Prof. Mohan Kharel of Tribhuvan University, Nepal

Sripad Bhakti Madhava Puri Maharaj, Ph.D (Sripad Puri Maharaj) explained to our guest, Dorothy that “the highest activity we can perform in this world is to serve God. By doing good things you get some good results by the laws of karma. By doing bad things you get some bad results. Service of God gives us the most important asset in our lives – *prema*, love of God, and liberation from this world of karmic action and reaction.”



Shyamasundara das Prabhu with Sripad Puri Maharaj and guest Dorothy

“We can easily think about Krishna, guru, devotees, service but when we are confronted with the blunt material forces of physical nature we realize we don’t have any say as to what it’s going to do or can’t do to us. Our will is completely nullified - it doesn’t mean anything

in the face of this blunt material situation that we find ourselves in,” Sripad Puri Maharaj said while recounting his recent week-long stay at the hospital. “What we want becomes meaningless when the environment is in control and we are helpless. At that point we can realize how much we have surrendered our will to Krishna or not. It’s a good test to understand how much we are not surrendered to Krishna and what complete surrender means. Complete surrender is a very very high goal. The material energy has its own directrix, Maya Devi, who is controlling everything in this material world. We are under her control. We are not the Lord of all we survey. So surrender means to submit your will to Sri Krishna’s will. “Thy will be done” not “my will be done,” Sripad Puri Maharaj continued. “The process of *bhakti yoga* (devotional service) is to cultivate that mood of surrendered loving service.”

At this point Professor of Genetics and Cell Biology at Tribhuvan University, Nepal, Prof. Mohan Kharel [pictured right] and family joined us.

“We are interested in forming an organization like the Princeton Bhakti Vedanta Institute in Nepal, and would like to do that in conjunction with your institute here in Princeton. We are working closely with Ram Mani Prabhu for that purpose,” Prof. Kharel began. “Yes, Spd. Bhakti Niskam Shanta Maharaja informed me about your plans.” Spd. Puri Maharaja replied and continued. “We are very happy to have you as our sister organization.” Prof. Kharel explained, “As a cell biologist, I have to teach my students to make cell cultures and if some cells die during that time I explain that something does go out of the cell but that we don’t see what is going out, and we conclude this because from what is left we know for sure



we cannot revive it after death. We have been experiencing and seeing these things (life and death) in practice everyday,” Prof. Kharel said. “Once the *pran* (life breath / consciousness) escapes the living entity, we cannot trap it because we are talking about a higher level substance when we speak of consciousness. But how can modern science explain consciousness? Today science is totally based on flesh, but something more is needed to explain life or we will only produce the wrong conception. That’s why there is need of a new conception of life.”

“This is the month of Damodar and during this month we offer lamps (lights), incense, flowers to Lord Damodar,” Sripad Puri Maharaj said as he explained that Damodar is the form of Lord Krishna who is bound by the rope of affection of His mother, Yasodha. “The supreme Lord cannot be bound by anything. He encompasses everything, what can bind Him? He is holding everyone in His hands then who can bind that Supreme Being? Sripad Puri Maharaj asked then responded, “Only His devotees can actually bind Him with the rope of affection. Krishna becomes controlled by that affection from His devotees, just like we become possessed by those who show much love for us. It’s a great fortune to develop even a little love for Krishna. The purpose of serving the Lord through His devotees is to draw Him closer to us as we become closer to Him. That is called Krishna consciousness. In that way consciousness of God will arise within us. That is the goal. People don’t know what is the purpose of their lives. They are living like animals - competing, fighting, killing – enviously trying to take even life from one another for their own self interest, but surely that cannot fulfill the purpose of life.”

Sripad Puri Maharaj continued, “The purpose of human life is to know and love God, to become conscious of God. That is the fulfillment of human life. If we don’t learn that then we have wasted this human form of life. People are becoming scientists but they are understanding things in an untrue, false way as you mentioned. Thus the scientists think that life is just chemical activity, but that is not a proper understanding. It is a contradiction to think that dead matter can ever be the same as life. If they combine some chemicals together they cannot make life, something will always be missing and that something is cognition or consciousness. We have to consider the proper knowledge of things in their full scientific sense. That is real science and that kind of science will help us to come closer to God, automatically. Of course, we also need the guidance of a teacher, Guru.”

Sripad Puri Maharaj continued. “Science is not different from religion in that both are trying to understand and establish the

truth, in the highest sense in which God, and only God is the Absolute Truth in and for Himself. Thus science and philosophy are also the service of God. The great philosopher Hegel wrote, ‘[O]ne’s occupation with - or rather in philosophy/science - is of itself the service of God.[Ger. *Gottesdienst* – worship or service of God]’ Religion is meant to bring Mankind closer to God and that is also the task of true science, if it is understood that the truth is ultimately personal, the Supreme Personality Sri Krishna. The proper understanding of science will lead scientists closer to that truth. This idea was also expressed by Einstein who once said, ‘I want to know the Mind of God, the rest are details.’”

“Those who claim to be scientists, I believe are themselves missing the true science. I think the real science of nature is not taught in the schools and colleges, and students are missing out on the opportunity to learn that,” Prof. Kharel said. “That’s why we are here at the university,” Sripad Puri Maharaja responded. “We know these students are not being given the proper education. It’s really a crime that they have no knowledge of the true wisdom of the world, especially from India - they are not being taught that.” In referring to his own education Sripad Puri Maharaj said. “After I learned about Krishna, yoga, and the Vedic culture I realized how much my own education was truncated, cut off. Now at least here (Bhakti Vedanta Institute at Princeton University) students have the opportunity to learn about this knowledge so they can decide if they want to pursue it further or not. But if you never even get the chance to hear about such knowledge then it can only be half of an education. What we want to do is give everyone a chance to have full knowledge about the material and spiritual conceptions of life, then they can make a decision as to which is more scientific. While materialists say life comes from matter, we say life comes from life - then which one is true, which one is scientific? One is based on the faith that life comes from matter, because we have never seen anyone produce life from chemicals in their sophisticated laboratories. But every day in the Laboratory of Nature we see that life comes from life. Then which one is based on the scientific method of observation and conclusion? Next the question arises if life comes from life, then what is the original life?” Sripad Puri Maharaj asked then responded, “The *Adi Purusha* (the original person), is logically necessary thus we are systematically led to inquire about God. In this way, with observable scientific evidence, we can draw our conclusion whether there is God or not. The *Adi Purusha* must be there otherwise how can we be consistent with the law of biogenesis of life from life?”

“As we mentioned before Damodar is the name of Krishna when he was a little boy. Sri Krishna appears in this world as an Avatar (the descent of God to this world). Krishna came many times in different forms because He doesn’t only expect us to have faith, which is essential, but also to have evidence otherwise anyone can say God is only an idea or imagination,” Sripad Puri Maharaj said. “Jesus

Christ is the son of God, but unless he appeared in the world there would be no Christianity. The Lord has to appear to show He is real. The truth is not so impotent that it can only be ideal. The absolute Ideal is also Real. Thus God descends to this world. He is not born like we are born when semen is mixed with the egg of the mother, He comes by His own sweet will. Although He has a mother and father, He does not appear through an ordinary birth. He simply appeared in the womb of Devaki and thus manifest as Sri Krishna. In fact, the Lord is already present in everyone's heart waiting to manifest Himself to his pure devotee.



Mother Yasodha preparing the rope of affection to bind Lord Krishna.

As a boy Krishna lived in Vrindavan where He performed His pastime (*lila*). He used to be called *makhan chor* (butter thief) because He would go to the different house of the gopis (cowherd ladies) and steal the butter, eat it and when he was full He would feed the monkeys. In that way the ladies in Vrindavan were very unhappy [but secretly blissful] that Krishna was so naughty by taking away the butter they were working so hard all day to churn. They would complain to mother Yasodha, 'Look at what Krishna is doing. Your son is doing like this. Why don't you control Him more? You are His mother, why don't you teach him better.' Mother Yasodha loves Krishna so much, but she has to teach Him a lesson," Sripad Puri Maharaj said laughingly. "Krishna is the Supreme but appearing as a child, so she has to teach Him. She scolded Him, 'Krishna you are being very naughty so you have to stay here next to me and if you run away then I am going to tie you with a rope.' Again He would run when she was not looking and again she took Him and said 'now I have to tie you.' So she got a rope and puts it around His waist. That rope when she tried to put it around His waist was always too small by two fingers length. Each time she tried to tie Him with a bigger rope it was always two fingers short. Like that her hairs were coming down, she was sweating, her dress was disheveled. She was trying so hard to tie Krishna. Finally Krishna looked at her face and saw how tired she was in trying to tie Him, showing how much affection she has for Him. Finally He let her tie Him, conquered by her love. Only then could she tie that rope around Him and then she tied that rope to the grinding mortar. Like that Krishna couldn't run away."

The form of Krishna by which mother Yasodha was able to bind Him by a rope is called Damodar, because He was bound around the belly, by the rope of affection of mother Yasodha. Because Krishna is the Totality of all existence no one in the world can encompass Him because the Totality is bigger than anything within it. A rope of this world cannot be used to measure the totality of things and if Krishna is that totality, then how did that rope go around His waist?" Sripad Puri Maharaj asked then said, "It is by His grace only because He saw the love of His devotee for Him. He was bound by the affection of His devotee. No rope can bind Him. Only the affection of His devotees can bind Him, control Him or hold His attention. A *bhakta* (devotee) tries to develop that love for Krishna. In this way He may become attentive to us also and give us His mercy so we can become absorbed in remembrance of Him all the time. We call this Krishna consciousness. As *bhaktas*, we are trying to develop our love for Krishna and in that way our lives may become perfect by this process."

Following the talk we chanted *Sri Damodarastakam*^[1] Rasaraj Prabhu led *kirtan* and then *prasdam* [lovingly prepared and offered by Kushum Devi] was served and honored by all.



L to R: Rasaraja das Prabhu, guests: Dorothy, Prasant, Prajwal and Professor & Mrs. Kharel with Sripad Puri Maharaj and Shyamasundara das Prabhu (sitting)

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