



# PRINCETON BHAKTI VEDANTA INSTITUTE

## REPORT - NOV 21, 2015

Bhakti Vedanta Institute  
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### Gracious Benediction of Visiting Acharyas Srila Janardan Maharaja and Srila Ashram Maharaja

Sripad Bhakti Madhava Puri Maharaj, Ph.D (Sripad Puri Maharaj) on behalf of Princeton Bhakti Vedanta Institute (BVI) welcomed Srila Bhakti Pavan Janardan Maharaj (Srila Janardan Maharaj) and Srila Bhakti Kushum Ashram Maharaj (Srila Ashram Maharaj), Mexico's Acharya, to Princeton BVI office.



Sripad Puri Maharaj welcoming Srila Janardan Maharaj (center) and Srila Ashram Maharaj



Meeting and greeting each devotee personally

After greeting and discussing with each devotee, Srila Janardan Maharaj and Srila Ashram Maharaj led a very ecstatic kirtan. When it

ended our youngest *kartal* (hand cymbal) player was disappointed and asked why it had stopped.



Srila Janardan Maharaj and Srila Ashram Maharaj leading kirtan with Sripad Puri Maharaj



L-R: Ramananda das, Padmavati devi, Janardan das, and Janavi devi, Syamasundar das

Srila Janardan Maharaj began speaking briefly about his long standing association with Sripad Puri Maharaj and Srila Ashram Maharaj during their "ISKCON<sup>[1]</sup> days" under the guidance of Srila Prabhupada.<sup>[2]</sup> "We were together in ISKCON previously before coming to Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math (SCSMath) over forty years ago," Srila Janardan Maharaj said then spoke about being the GBC head in Guyana, Trinidad and Argentina, while María Eva Duarte de Perón<sup>[3]</sup> was in power. "Those were the years of dirty wars and where people would just disappear. We also almost disappeared. Srila Prabhupada was in Mayapur at the time. He called me and said 'I hear you are having problems in Argentina.' I said 'no, Srila

Prabhupda. No problem, they've closed us down.' He laughed and held his hand up in a spear like motion and said 'Yes, this is the ultimate threat of the demons. Now you are dead. After that they have nothing.' This is a little like what Socrates said 'First you will have to catch me' you have my physical body but not my actual soul."

"We are followers of SCS Math, headquartered in Nabadwip Dham, Bengal (India). "Some of our Indian friends noticed that our songs are in Bengali and a lot of them say 'speak Hindi' but we neither speak Hindi nor Bengali but we sing in Bengali," Srila Janardan Maharaj said as the attentive audience laughed heartily.



**Sringara Mataji putting new flowers on the BVI altar**

Srila Janardan Maharaj went on to speak about how fortunate we are to have the association of our Acharyas such as "Srila Prabhupada, Srila Sridhar Maharaj, Srila Govinda Maharaj, Srila Acharya Maharaj. I consider these beings as *parshad* (divine associates) of the Lord. They descended from the spiritual plane to come to this material world to benefit everyone. Now in their absence we have some responsibilities by serving the lotus feet of our gurus (spiritual masters). "*Vande ham sri-guroh.*"<sup>141</sup> *Sri Guruh* is plural, so one has one *diksha* (name giving) guru and there could be unlimited *siksha* (instruction giving) guru," Srila Janardan Maharaj continued. "While in Venezuela Srila Govinda Maharaj said, 'Srila Prabhupada came and blasted a tunnel in the mountain of the false ego of the West and we are entering through that tunnel. Everyone in this room has a connection to Srila Prabhupada. Were it not for him, nobody would have any association with Krishna consciousness, regardless of who your guru is. It was his teachings that opened everything up for Krishna consciousness, so we bow our heads there. We are getting mercy from that plane descending to us and we are experiencing that," Srila Janardan Maharaj said then asked, "How do we connect with that plane." In response he said, "Through the Vaisnav gurus. The mercy comes down to us through them. By our own endeavor we cannot find any devotion that is without material motivation and interruption because we are in a mundane plane. That plane of devotion does exist. It is the *Nitya Siddha/Nirguna* (transcendental) plane. Srila Sridhar Maharaj says, 'the word *OM* means that which you are looking for exists. *OM* means a positive yes and by the mercy of the Vaisnavs we can get that. It can come to us."

"Some of the things that destroy spiritual life are collecting more than what you need, over-endeavoring for something mundane, gossiping, fanatical following of rules and regulation like paying too much attention to detail and not understanding the spiritual aspect of it, associating with 'bad company,' greed." Mahaprabhu said, "don't dress too nicely, don't eat too much and don't listen to common gossip."



**Some of the twenty-seven devotees who participated in the transcendental sangha.**

"Srila Govinda Maharaj was asked what does he think about other religions and he responded, "All religions are trying to do good for the people. They are trying to elevate them from the plane of base materialism to a spiritual conception of life because life is spiritual, regardless if one is religious or not. One has to recognize that life is based on some spiritual presence whether you believe in God or not."

*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*: 1.2.6 confirms this:

*sa vai puṁsām paro dharmo  
yato bhaktir adhokṣaje  
ahaituky apratihātā  
yayātmā suprasīdati*

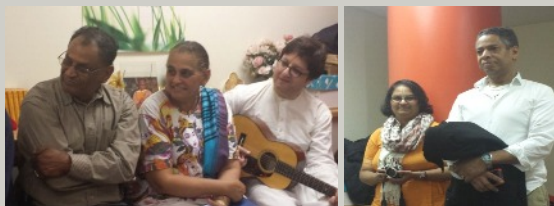
"The supreme occupation [*dharmā*] for all humanity is that by which men can attain to loving devotional service unto the transcendent Lord. Such devotional service must be unmotivated and uninterrupted to completely satisfy the self."



**L. Front. Nitai, Shyamasundar, Back. Sringara, Kushum, Rasaraja, Puri Maharaja R. Srila Ashram Maharaja and Srila Janardan Maharaja**

Srila Janardan Maharaj then reflects on the teachings of Srila Govinda Maharaj whom used to say he doesn't have any qualities and qualifications. "That was his modesty. He has many qualities and qualifications. But I can say in all truthfulness that 'I don't have quality and qualification but somehow or the other I made some connection with the hearts of some saints and they have some affection for me and that is the only thing that is important to my life. Nothing else has any importance to me," Srila Janardan Maharaj mentioned reminiscently that in school he was voted most likely to be a millionaire by age 27,

“By the time I was 27, I took *sannyas* from Srila Prabhupada. I didn't become a millionaire in a material sense. I lived in India with just a pair of flip flops. All I know is every day the sun is rising in the morning and was setting in the evening and I was happy. So in one sense, at 27 years old, I felt like a million dollars and I was happy with that.”



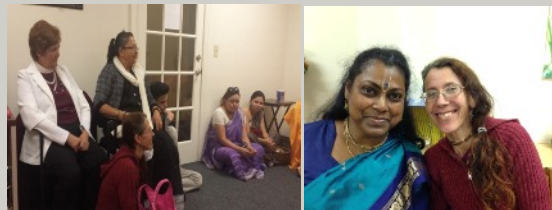
**L Surottam Pr, Bakula devi, Shyamsundar Pr. R Sringara devi, Jayantaram Pr.**

Emphasizing the importance of receiving the holy name from a Vaishnava, together Srila Janardan Maharaj and Srila Ashram Maharaj cited the historical events in giving and receiving Krishna's holy names of Narottama das Thakur, Lochan das, Srila Gaura Kishore das Babaji and Srila Bhaktisiddanta Saraswati Thankur. “The holy name has to be transmitted to us through a Vishnav. It says “*golokera prema dhan harinam sankirtan*” This means that the holy name is descending to us from a spiritual plane through the Vaishnavas,” Srila Janardan Maharaj continued. “Ultimately you have to receive the holy name from a vaisnav. You may not get it from a book, a record, a tape or a CD. Everything is based on the holy name. Śrī Caitanya Mahaprabhu<sup>[5]</sup> said “only by chanting the holy name one can attain some spiritual life.” This is confirmed in the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta - Ādi-līlā* 17:21:

*harer nāma harer nāma  
harer nāmaiva kevalam  
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva  
nāsty eva gatir anyathā*

“In this Age of Kali there is no other means, no other means, no other means for self-realization than chanting the holy name, chanting the holy name, chanting the holy name of Lord Hari.”

“Like Sripad Puri Maharaj, Sripad Muni Maharaj and Sripad Shanta Maharaj they are all PhD's in science preaching the simple idea that 'life comes from life' and because of their post graduate credentials they have some more openings in many of the elite universities. The universities cannot reject them. They have academic, modern scientific credentials but their hearts are captivated by the scientific explanation of the *Bhagavatam*. They are more following the Vaishnava explanation of life and the universe,” Srila Ashram Maharaj said.



**L. Dorothy, Yamuna devi (on chairs) R. Kushum devi, Rasamrita devi**

Srila Ashram Maharaj went on to give a brief history of the creation of the Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math in 1942 by Srila Sridhar Maharaj to propagate the teachings of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu while following the “life and precepts of his Gurudev, Srila Bhaktisiddanta Saraswati Thakur. We are known as the Gaudiya Vaishnavas. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu generated this concept of chanting the holy names of the Lord and very precisely distributed this knowledge of *bhakti* (devotion) to Krishna in a very new way all over the world. The idea of God is promoted as reverential of his majestic, supreme aspect but Mahaprabhu came and presented the life of that personality in a very simple way as it is presented in Sri Vrindavan Dham.”

“A little before him Srila Madhavendra Puri also came and explained this root principle of *madhurya rasa*, the various different loving aspects in which the soul can relate to the Lord. He explained that this is full-fledge theism,” Srila Ashram Maharaj said, and then explained that Lord Buddha preached against the Vedas because he did not want the “people to use Vedic knowledge for their sense gratification,” as laid out in the *Rig, Sama, Yajur* and *Atharva Veda*. “There are some sections like *Karma kanda*, where people with very poor fund of knowledge will think ‘Oh, this is all we seek, this is the aim of the Vedic literature.’ And what is that aim? Not so many people know. Of course the basic activities of human life are also explained in that knowledge,” Srila Ashram Maharaj continued. “But because of the animal sacrifices Lord Buddha wanted to take out that authority of the Vedas. He said to the people, ‘No, we don't need to live like that, doing these violent activities and killing these animals just for your own enjoyment.’”

“We have learned that Lord Shiva was instructed by Lord Vishnu, ‘You need to come to earth. You need to bring back the people's attention to Vedic wisdom,’ and He did it in a covered way by giving indirect meaning to the Vedic knowledge and concealing the truth. Personalities like Ramanuja Acharya and Madhava Acharya went against this idea. Their antithetic arguments demonstrated that Sankaracharya's philosophy was not true,” Srila Ashram Maharaj continued. “The original Vedic knowledge was compiled by Srila Vedavyas. It is meant to affirm the form, the personality of the Lord. It means God does have a form. These Acharyas like Ramanuja Acharya, Madhavacharya, Vishnu Swami and also Nimbarka came with the idea that Vedic knowledge is not wrong but rather it needs to be explained properly. Krishna said ‘*aham sarvasya prabhavo*.’ In Srila Sridhar Maharaj's *Srimad Bhagavat Gita - The Hidden Treasure of the Sweet Absolute*, 10:8 confirms this:



*aham sarvasya prabhavo  
mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate  
iti matvā bhajante mārṅ  
budhā bhāva-samanvitāḥ*

"I am Krishna, 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, *rāgamarga*, and adore Me forever."



**L. Dorothy, Rasamrita devi, R. Steve, Surottam, Bakula, Kushum, Shyamsundar**

In our present line, Madhavendra Puri appeared just before Mahaprabhu and presented this aspect of theism, which was never taught before of how the soul can relate to the Lord in a natural position as a servant, a parent, as a conjugal lover, as a friend or as a mentor. As a mentor that soul is taking a superior position to the Lord and will be taking care of the Lord," Srila Ashram Maharaj explained then asked how is that possible to take care of the Supreme when He has created all of us? "We have the *Krishna lila* aspect, not so much as in the Vaikuntha plane but this full fledged theism idea."

"Then Mahaprabhu appeared and initiated through his life and precepts the teachings of *Bhagavatam* in a very particular way by manifesting them Himself. He did not come as the Lord, like Krishna did but a little covered as a devotee of the Lord. As we saw in the case of some of His follows, like Ramananda Rai and His other eternal associates, He couldn't maintain His hidden form and out of their devotion they could identify that 'Yes, you are the same Lord. You are coming here to teach us, to redeem us from this material condition and You are presenting this very intimate knowledge of the Lord,'" Srila Ashram Maharaj continued. "Naturally these things for us Westerners are being taught to us by the grace and compassion of His devotee through the *parampara* (disciplic succession) system. We are very happy that these teachings are being presented in these prestigious places of knowledge (like Princeton). These preaching activities give very good satisfaction to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Sridhar Maharaj."

Referring to Srila Prabhupada's style of preaching and presenting Krishna Consciousness to the West, Srila Ashram Maharaj said,

"Coming from a Catholic religious background I was not so acquainted with *bhakti* and Krishna consciousness but what I could distinguish is that this personality is not of a young man. He was already a senior personality, what he is saying cannot be wrong. He is chastising and criticizing so much this modern society of civilization. I was thinking he can do that. He is saying the same thing we young people are feeling so I took that as my connection with him. Very simple and straightforward presentation that naturally captivated so many souls from so many statuses in life all over the world because he was representing something very pure and in a very direct way."



**L Front Dayal Chand, Anatha bandhu, Back Shyamasundar, Nitai, Jayantaram R. Dayal chand das, Anatha bandhu das**

In presenting his views of Srila Sridhar Maharaj and Srila Prabhupada, Srila Ashram Maharaj said, "They were loved by that superior plane, by their Gurudev and by the Lord Himself and they could distribute this message of the Lord everywhere. Srila Prabhupada always wanted to revive this fact that universities also need some department which will deal with these values of life. Unfortunately universities today sometimes are a little disassociated from this valuable knowledge," Srila Ashram Maharaj continued. "In the *Bhagavat Gita*, through our Gurudeva, we have learned that all these good instructions are also meant for us, not only Arjuna. We are also in the confused position like Arjuna. Many times we are confused with what to do or how to act in a particular situation. At that time when you don't know what to do, you will be very much happy if you can have some good advice or a person who can advise you properly. '*Raja vidya rajah guhyam pavitram idam uttamam.*' Here in *Bhagavat Gita* [9.2], Krishna is telling Arjuna, 'This is the king of all knowledge and it is making that person very joyful just by cultivating this knowledge.'"

I was thinking, certainly we need to hear this knowledge from some proper person. It is very important because it is unknown and can be difficult to understand because our idea of the Lord in the Western world, at least for the Catholic, is a little different. It is more connected with His majestic form. We know about God, the son in the form of Lord Jesus Christ but God, the father and God as the Holy Ghost are still a mystery but in the ancient revelations coming from the Vedas, God, the father is not presented as a mystery. He is presented as a person with a form and that is what Mahaprabhu came to teach us."

"In the *Bhagavat Gita* [4.9], Krishna says, '*janma karma ca me divyam*' if someone knows my birth and activities, then that soul will not be born again in this world. He will finish its natural cyclic life after life of birth and

death but the characteristics mentioned by Krishna to Arjuna is that 'my activities are not so easy to understand, not because they are not well known but because the knowledge will be misunderstood,'" Srila Ashram Maharaj continued. This is confirmed in Srila Sridhar Maharaja's *Srimad Bhagavat Gita - The Hidden Treasure of the Sweet Absolute*, 4:9

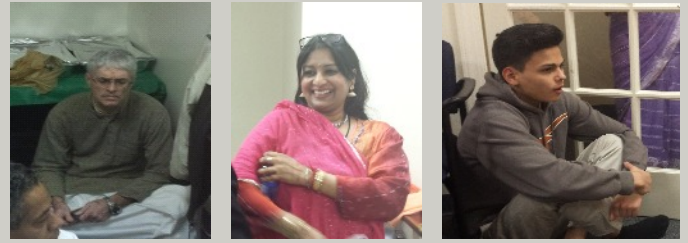
*janma karma ca me divyam  
evam yo vetti tattvatah  
tyaktva deham punar janma  
naiti mam eti so 'rjuna*

"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 shakti*. His heart is melted in divine love and he attains My eternal devotional service.)



**L-R Sitaram devi, Rasaraja das, Sripad Puri Maharaj, Janaki devi, Ramendra Sundar das, and little Janardan das**

"Sometimes one may wonder how is it that the Lord is a thief and what type of Lord are you worshipping? How can the Lord do these kinds of activities of stealing things and being naughty, how?" Srila Ashram Maharaj asked his captivated audience. "We heard that the Lord is a thief which means that He will enter into our hearts. Generally our hearts are protected by a very nice wall of selfishness and indifference to Him and we don't want to open that door. So to make our heart His, He has this capacity because a thief doesn't need an invitation. He will come and open those protective walls that you have covering your heart and He will land there. He will enter your heart and make that which you don't want to give Him, His," Srila Ashram Maharaj continued as the devotees all laughed. "When we hear that explanation from Gurudeva then we understand the whole stealing has some very nice and proper quality in the divine pastimes of the Lord. It is not that we are projecting some mundane aspect of His divine lila (pastimes). No, but He's doing these things in order for us to prepare ourselves and for us to understand that He's trying to give us some message. 'I need to come to Him, but not in the way I want.' He's trying to tell me that 'I need to approach Him in the way He wants.'"



**L-R. Rasaraja das, Sitaram devi and Nandanandana das**

"Two important points being presented are the difference between personalism and impersonalism. Most of the time people will think God can not be known. He cannot have a form because form is material but the persons who say that the Vedas says God has no form, no qualities, then he is saying that God has no mundane or material quality," Srila Janardan Maharaj emphasized. "The other point is that there are two general conceptions that God is unknown, unknowable, He's majestic and must be approached in a reverential way but that is not what Mahaprabhu has taught and that is not the concept of Krishna *bhakti* (devotion). Krishna *bhakti* is based on a personal and intimate relationship with the Lord. Guru Maharaj said, 'Beauty, mercy, love, charm, all of that is above the conception of 'God is all powerful' where we only see Him majestically with awe and reverence rather than with His sweetness."

In closing, both Srila Bhakti Pavan Janardan Maharaj and Srila Bhakti Kushum Ashram Maharaj said about their visit to Princeton University's Bhakti Vedanta Institute (BVI), "We are very happy to come here to this mission that Sripad Puri Maharaj has been cultivating and to know that you are meeting frequently and discussing these subject matters and trying also to present it in a scientific way to a circle of educated people so that they also can benefit."

With the discussion winding down *Ekadashi prasadam* was served and honored by all.






**Srila Ashram Maharaj, Sripad Puri Maharaj and Srila Janardan Maharaj**

Srila Bhakti Nirmal Acharya Maharaja ki jai  
 Srila Bhakti Pavan Janardan Maharaj ki jai  
 Srila Bhakti Kushum Ashram Maharaj ki jai  
 Sripad Bhakti Madhava Puri Maharaj ki jai

All glories to all the devotees

Your humble servant, Kushum devi (New York)		<b>Service Donations</b> <a href="https://ipn.intuit.com/pay/Bhaktivedantainstitute">https://ipn.intuit.com/pay/Bhaktivedantainstitute</a>
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<sup>[1]</sup> International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)

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

<sup>[3]</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eva\\_Per%C3%B3n](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eva_Per%C3%B3n)

<sup>[4]</sup> <http://vaishnavsongs.iskcondesiretree.com/mangalacarana/>

<sup>[5]</sup> 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.

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of  
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Life comes from Life  
Matter comes from Life

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**All the science and all the scientists  
in the world together cannot make a  
single blade of grass.**

"One who is humbler than a blade of grass, more forbearing than a tree, giving due honor to others without clearing it for himself, can truly glorify the Holy Name of the Lord."  
Sikhashtakam 3 ~ Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

**LINKS**

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math, Nabadwip, W. Bengal, India

[scsmath.com](http://scsmath.com), [scsmathinternational.com](http://scsmathinternational.com)

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Ashram., Soquel, CA

[sevaashram.com](http://sevaashram.com)

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