



PRINCETON BHAKTI VEDANTA INSTITUTE

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Celebration of Sri Govardhana Puja

“Who is Brahma? He is God, not human, right?” guest and friend, Dorothy asked. “He is considered a demigod who has the task of creating the world, so he is not an ordinary human like us,” Sripad Bhakti Madhava Puri Maharaja. PhD, (Sripad Puri Maharaja) responded. “He is born from a lotus growing from the navel of Garbodhaksayi Vishnu, Who is an expansion of Maha Vishnu.”

“So where did the first man in this world come from?” Dorothy further inquired. “Some details are given in the scriptures about the progenitors of all creatures called Prajapatis and Manu who come from Lord Brahma. Svayambhuva Manu is described as the first of 14 Manvantars who rule over the different periods in a *kalpa* or day of Brahma. The *Manusyas* or humanity is associated with Manu,” Sripad Puri Maharaja responded.

“In my religion (Christian), it would be Adam and Eve. So Manu would be Adam in my religion. So how did he create the population? Who is his wife?” Dorothy continued. “Brahma created both male and female, Manu and Satarupa are considered the first man and woman. They both belong to the human species,” Sripad Puri Maharaja replied. “I have read different descriptions about Satarupa as Brahma’s daughter, or Manu’s daughter, or Manu as a united form that split into male and female.”

“Can we trace humanity’s origin back to Manu?” Dorothy further inquired. “That would be difficult to do empirically. Just as Krishna has many expansions, it is impossible to count how many times He expands Himself to appear in different ways. He not only comes in a human form but also as animals - Varaha (boar), Matsya (fish), Kurma (turtle). He comes in all different sizes and shapes. He is not prejudiced,” Sripad Puri Maharaja said laughingly.



Various Avatars of Sri Krishna (Visnu)

Pointing to the picture of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu above the altar of the Bhakti Vedanta Institute (BVI), Dorothy said, “So, many past incarnations came before Him?”

“Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Narasimha, Vamana, Parasurama, Rama, Krishna, were all before Chaitanya Mahaprabhu came and yet to come is Kalki,” Sripad Puri Maharaja responded. “But just because Krishna came after Rama, we should not think that Rama is the original source of Krishna. The order of appearance in this world does not represent the ontological order of the spiritual plane. Krishna is first or *adi purusha*, and Svayam Bhagavan – Who is self originated, then all the other avatars (incarnations) come as His expansions. It is just for our experience of time that it looks like Rama came before Krishna but for Krishna’s time, Krishna is first.”

“Who is Nityananda?” Dorothy asked. “He is the expansion of Balarama, the *older* brother of Krishna in Krishna *lila*, Chaitanya and Nityananda in Their pastimes are thus related to Krishna *lila*. In Rama’s pastimes, which represents a more regal incarnation, it is His *younger* brother who was Lakshman,” Sripad Puri Maharaja responded.

At this point, Nila Madhava Prabhu began kirtan and the devotees offered lamps to Sri Damodar after which Sripad Puri Maharaja led the *Sri Damodarastakam*,^[1] followed by the devotees reading the English translation. During the month of Kartik, devotees offer ghee lamps to the Deities daily while singing the *Damodarastakam* prayers.



Prabhus: Nila Madhava, Jayadeva with Sripad Puri Maharaja and Rasaraja das Prabhu

Divining right into our weekly *sadhu sangha* Sripad Puri Maharaja said, "Today we are celebrating Krishna's lifting of the Govardhan Hill (Govardhan Puja) during this month of Damodar (Kartik), which is considered the holiest month in the Vaisnava calendar."



Sri Krishna lifting Govardhan Hill with the smallest finger of His left hand.

"The picture of Krishna lifting Govardhana Hill depicts His *lila* (pastime) with all His associates (cowherd boys and cowherd girls), and His parents, Nanda Maharaja and Mother Yasoda, as well as the cows. Krishna is known as Gopal because He is the friend of the cows," Sripad Puri Maharaja said. "He performed many miraculous pastimes, but the residents of Vrindavan only understood Him to be like an ordinary boy. This is called *aprakrita lila* (non-material) spiritual pastimes. 'Greatness couched in humility,' as Srila Sridhara Maharaja once expressed it. He appeared to be ordinary but He was extraordinary. He performed so many activities there that indicated that although He looked like an ordinary boy, who was very beautiful and charming, He was the Supreme Godhead. He was exhibiting so many extraordinary symptoms like when the gigantic demoness (Putana) came and wanted to poison baby Krishna (Bal Gopal) by feeding Him the milk from her breast smeared with poison. She appeared as an ordinary beautiful woman, so Mother Yasoda gave Krishna to her to hold in her arms.

Her plan was to trick Mother Yasoda and take baby Krishna and kill Him by poisoning Him. She then began to suckle Krishna on her breast. Anyhow, Krishna took hold of her and He began sucking on her breast and did not let go. Suddenly Putana could not tolerate the pain anymore and couldn't maintain her form as a beautiful lady and turned back into the demoness she was as a gigantic witch and fell dead onto the ground. By the force of the Supreme Lord Putana's very life was withdrawn from her body. Like that, many pastimes of Krishna with the demons took place when He was just a small boy.



Prabhus: Nila Madhava, Jayadeva, Sripad Puri Maharaja, Dorothy and Rasaraja Prabhu

"When Krishna saw his father (Nanda Maharaja) and the Brajwasis (residents of Vrindavan) preparing for a festival, the worship of Lord Indra (the lord of the weather), He asked Nanda Maharaja 'what are all the *bhog* preparations for?' Nanda Maharaja explained that 'This is our traditional duty in which sacrifice is made to honor Lord Indra, the king of heaven, so we may get rain for our fields.' After his explanation, Krishna told His father, 'There is no need to sacrifice to Indra to get good results. Your pious activities are already providing you with a beneficial destiny. Indra cannot interfere with that. The worship of Govardhan hill is more important than fulfilling your duty to Indra. Govardhana is providing all the necessary food, water and nourishment for you and the cows,'" Sripad Puri Maharaja explained. "Indra became very angry when he heard what Krishna, whom he considered as an ordinary little boy, said and ordered the rain and thunder to punish the Brajavasis so that no one would make such an offense again."

"Indra carries the thunderbolt (*Vajra*), so when he gets angry at anyone, he throws his thunderbolt at them. So with severe rain and lighting the people of Vrindavan were getting frightened. They all loved Krishna very much but they were afraid of Indra. Frightened, the *gopis* and *gopas* said, 'What are we going to do?' So Krishna said, 'Let's go to Govardhan, He will protect us.' Krishna went over to Govardhan hill and picked it up and held it with His left pinky finger as easily as a mushroom in His hands. He asked the Brajavasis to take shelter under the mountain assuring everyone that Giriraj (Krishna as Govardhan Hill) will give them protection from Lord Indra's wrath," Sripad Puri Maharaja continued.

"At first they were afraid how Krishna, being such a young child, could hold this gigantic hill up alone so the cowherd boys put their sticks up

to help. Of course Krishna is the Supreme Godhead, He didn't need any help but the cowherd boys were so affectionate to Krishna they could only think of Him as their little friend, 'We can help you' and they all used their cow prods to help Krishna hold up the mountain. After seven days of torrential rain and thunderbolts Indra realized 'I can't defeat Krishna. This Krishna is not an ordinary boy. He is the Supreme Lord Himself.' Immediately he understood his mistake and humbly appeared before Krishna with folded hands, reciting the *Indra Krutha Krishna stotram*[2] (*Aksharam parambrahma jothi rupam sanathanam*)' begging for forgiveness. Krishna accepted his sincere prayers and forgave Indra."



Altar for Govardhana Puja at Princeton Bhakti Vedanta Institute

"This pastime has an important relation to Krishna's later revolutionary teachings in the *Bhagavad-gita* (18.66) wherein He explains that the system of dutiful sacrifice for fruitive results (*karma kanda*) is to be renounced because worship of the Supreme Lord and surrender unto Him is the path of highest perfection (*sarva-dharman parityajya mam ekam saranam vraja*)..." Sripad Puri Maharaja concluded, "It also shows that even though there may be some fear in adopting that mood, one should not be afraid because Krishna is there to protect you (*aham tvam sarva-papebhyo moksaisyami ma sucah*."



Prabhu: Jayadeva das, Nila Madhava, Dorothy, Sripad Puri Maharaja and Rasaraja das Prabhu;



Sri Giri Govardhan (pineapple halva), and Mahaprasadam

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
Sri 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 http://bviscs.org/ donation</p>
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[1] <http://scsmathinternational.com/library/GaudiyaGitanjali/SriSriDamodarastakam.php>

[2] <http://www.iskcondesiretree.com/profiles/blogs/indra-krutha-krishna-stotram>



Peacock at the Entrance to the Aksardham Mandir in New Jersey