

# ŚRĪ MAHĀNET

PRINCETON BVISCS NEWSLETTER

Since the beginning of the Millennium

January 2022

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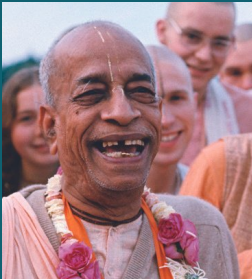
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Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda

The *pāñcarātrikī* formula for training persons in devotional service is temple worship, whereby the neophytes get the opportunity to learn devotional service to the Lord. Mahārāja Parīkṣit also used to play with Kṛṣṇa dolls in his childhood. In India the children in good families are still given dolls of the Lord like Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, or sometimes the demigods, so that they may develop the aptitude of service to the Lord. By the grace of the Lord we were given the same opportunity by our parents, and the beginning of our life was based on this principle.

(Prabhupāda Purport SB 3:2:2)

## ŚRĪ ŚRĪ PRAPANNA-JIVANAMRTAM

by Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣhaka Śrīdhara Deva Goswāmī Mahārāja

Verse 3.14

*tadīya-sevanam na hi tuchchham—*

*jñānāvalambakāḥ kechit kechit karmāvalambakāḥ  
vayam tu hari-dāsānām pādatrāṇāvalambakāḥ*

(Śrī-Deśikāchāryasya)

Service to the Lord's devotee is not a trifling matter—  
Some people take shelter in the path of action (*karma*)  
while others take shelter in the path of knowledge (*jñān*).  
But as far as we are concerned, we have chosen the  
sandals of the servants of Lord Hari as the only refuge.

—Śrī Deśika Āchārya



# WORDS OF OUR GUARDIANS

**Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣhaka Śrīdhara Deva Goswāmī Mahārāja**  
from *The Loving Search for the Lost Servant*, Chap. 4 Lord of the Cows



## God the beautiful

A part of the infinite is also infinite. The Govardhan-śilā represents Kṛṣṇa as the master and keeper of cows. Within Govardhan is that mild and soft conception of God the beautiful. We beg for His mercy, His affection, and His gracious glance upon us.

That may save us from the negative influence of this material environment. When we try to put a stop to our material form of life and take our course towards Godhead, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, neglecting the imperative duties that are upon us, so many difficulties may come to trouble us, to trap us in our

journey towards the ultimate truth. But if we stick to the order of Kṛṣṇa, He will protect us. Kṛṣṇa confirms this in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekam śaraṇam vraja  
aham tvām sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayisyāmi mā śucaḥ*

He says, “Abandon all other conceptions of duty and just surrender unto Me. Have no fear. I shall protect you and free you from all sinful reactions that might arise from neglecting your ordinary duties.”

Different material tendencies and mental impulses may attack us—even Indra himself, the king of heaven and the controller of all ordinary activities, may attack us—but if we are attentive towards our goal, if we are careful to read the order of Kṛṣṇa, He will protect us in the shade of His lotus feet. He will give us shelter under the shade of Govardhan Hill, where no Indra will be able to touch our heads. And with full faith that Kṛṣṇa will give us protection, we should try to take shelter under Govardhan Hill and pray: “O Kṛṣṇa, give me protection from all the difficulties that may come to attack me

because of my leaving behind my ordinary obligations.” Although many anomalies may try to catch us, Kṛṣṇa will protect us. And in His representation as Govardhan Hill, that wonderful master of the cows will save us from all sorts of difficulties. How is this possible? God works wonders. His ways are unknown and inconceivable.

## Chapter 5: Brahmā’s Illusion

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the ultimate cause of all harmony, is so wonderful that simply by approaching Him, we will be charmed by His ways. He is known as Urukrama, for His strides are wonderful, unthinkable, unknown, and unknowable. There is no end to His wonders. *Āścharyavat paśyati kaśchid enam āścharyavad vadati tathaiva chānyaḥ*: at every step towards Him, one feels wonder. We find no end to that feeling. Kṛṣṇa is infinite; He is the wonderful wonder of wonders. As much as we search Him out, we will find no end to His wonders.

Even Lord Brahmā, the creator of this universe and the original Guru of our sampradāya, was astonished by the wonders of Kṛṣṇa. Once when Kṛṣṇa was living in Dvārakā, He heard that Lord Brahmā, the creator of the universe, had come to see Him. Kṛṣṇa asked His messenger, “Which Brahmā?”

When the messenger put this question to Brahmā, Brahmā thought, “Are there other Brahmās also? How is it possible?” He told the messenger, “You just inform Kṛṣṇa that I am the father of the four Kumāras: the four-headed Brahmā.” The messenger went to Kṛṣṇa with the news.

“Yes, show him in.” Kṛṣṇa said, knowing Brahmā’s temperament. Brahmā went in, but he was astounded to see that so many Brahmās had gathered there from all of the universes in the creation. There were hundred-headed, thousand-headed, million-headed Brahmās—all present there. Because the whole creation is based on Kṛṣṇa’s hypnotism, the four-headed Brahmā could see Kṛṣṇa and all those other Brahmās, but the other Brahmās could not see each other. Each one of them saw only Kṛṣṇa. Each one of them thought, “Kṛṣṇa has come in my universe and called for me out of some necessity.” But the Brahmā of this universe could see everything because he had enquired, “Which Brahmā? What is the meaning of ‘Which Brahmā?’ Are there any other Brahmās? I wonder...” In this way, Lord Brahmā, the creator of the universe, was baffled by the wonderful ways of Kṛṣṇa.





# DIVINE INSTRUCTION

**Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj**  
from *Revealed Truth*, Chap. 19 The Next Edition of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's Pastimes



Mahāprabhu was so satisfied to hear this, and after Rāmānanda described many things about Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's madhura-rasa-līlā, He said, "Yes. What you are describing is supreme, but is there anything more?"

Rāmānanda replied, "I cannot conceive that anyone could ask about anything more than this. I cannot find any verses from the scriptures that go beyond this, but if You like, You can hear something from me that may be satisfying to You." Then Rāmānanda began to recite one of his own compositions:

*pahilehi rāga nayana-bhaṅge bhela  
anudina bāḍhala, avadhi nā gela  
nā so ramaṇa, nā hāma ramaṇī  
dūhu-mana manobhava peśala jānī'*

(Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta: Madhya-līlā, 8.193)

This is the most extreme expression of madhura-rasa, and Mahāprabhu finally covered Rāmānanda's mouth with His own hand when He heard this expression. In this way, lastly, Rāmānanda surrendered to Mahāprabhu, and Mahāprabhu surrendered to Rāmānanda.

## Bewildered by love

**Student:** Can you explain a little bit about Rāmānanda Rāy's poem? Is it impossible for us to understand?

**Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj:** It is not for public discussion actually. That poem is Rāmānanda Rāy's highest answer to Mahāprabhu's question about the goal of life. Chaṇḍī Dās also gave us one of Rādhārāṇī's songs:

*kebā śunāila śyāma-nāma  
kānera bhitarā diyā, marame paśila go,  
ākula karila mama prāṇa*

*nā jāni kateka madhu, śyāma-nāme āchhe go,  
parāṇa chhāḍite nāhi pāre  
japite, japite nāma, avaśa karila go,  
kemane pāiba sai, tāre*

*nāma-paratāpe yāra, aichhana karila go,  
aṅgera paraśe kibā haya  
yekhāne vasati tāra, nayane heriyā go  
yuvatī dharama kaichhe raya*

*pāsarite kari mane, pāsarā na yāya go,  
ki kārībe ki habe upāya  
kahe dvija chaṇḍī-dāse, kulavatī kula-nāśe,  
āpanāra yauvana yāchāya*

After hearing Kṛṣṇa's Name Rādhārāṇī is moved. Inspiration to dedicate oneself comes through Kṛṣṇa's Name. That is the meaning of this song.

In Rāmānanda Rāy's song Rādhārāṇī says, "When Kṛṣṇa and I first saw each other, We became attracted to each other." Kṛṣṇa is naturally attracted to Rādhārāṇī, and Rādhārāṇī is naturally attracted to Kṛṣṇa. The Powerful and Powerful cannot be differentiated, yet

Kṛṣṇa is the Powerful, and Rādhārāṇī is the Power. They exist eternally in two forms, but They can become so attracted to one another that They cannot differentiate Themselves from one another. This song explains that this situation comes to Them. Rādhārāṇī wonders, "How is it that Kṛṣṇa is in Mathurā and I am here?" She tells a friend, "Today this situation has come: I cannot differentiate Myself from Kṛṣṇa. So, I am sending you as an ambassador to Kṛṣṇa to ask Him, 'What is this? Is this real love? Real attachment?'"

Many things are inside this song of Rāmānanda Rāy. Rādhārāṇī wonders, "I do not know if I am woman and Kṛṣṇa is man, or I am man and Kṛṣṇa is woman. What is the truth? I have forgotten everything because such strong love, beauty, and charm have taken possession of Me."

**Student:** Are you saying the conclusion is that Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's identities merge?

**Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj:** So many things are inside this song, but they are not for public discussion. Here māyāvādīs take the opportunity to say, "That is our situation", but it is not. Simply we can say that strong love and affection can make a person blind and unable to see anything except some positive light, just as very bright light blinds the eye.



# SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE

Śrīla Bhakti Nirmal Āchārya Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj  
from *Guidance* - Volume 1



## Sincere Surrender

18 December 2010

Gurudev told one time that somebody may have one foot already in the door of Vaikuṅṭha, inside, and the other foot outside, but still that person may not enter Vaikuṅṭha—he may still go to the illusory environment...

*tad viddhi praṇipātena,  
paripraśnena sevayā  
upadekṣyanti te jñānam,  
jñānīnas tattva-darśinaḥ*

“You will be able to attain knowledge by satisfying the divine master with submission, relevant inquiry, and sincere service. The enlightened souls who are

learned in scriptural knowledge and endowed with direct realisation of the Supreme Absolute Truth will impart divine knowledge to you.” (Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā, 4.34)

Surrender, honest enquiry, and service temper, sevā vidhi, are necessary...

*bhajība baliyā ese samsāra-bhitare  
bhuliyā rahile tumi avidyāra bhare*

“You came into this world saying, ‘O Lord, I will serve You’, but, having forgotten this promise, you have remained in ignorance.” (Gitāvalī, Aruṇodaya kīrtan, 2.2, by Śrīla Bhakti Vinod Ṭhākura)

You promised that you would serve the Lord, but you have forgotten it. That is called the illusory environment. How is it possible to come out? Only by surrender to the Lord. If you can surrender to the Lord, it becomes easy.

Surrender means not pretending that we surrender fully (“dīkṣā-kāle bhakta kare ātma-samarpaṇa”), but when Gurudev tells us to do something, we say, “Oh,

Gurudev, I am tired...” What is the surrendered mood? It means you surrender fully, you give a full obeisance, *sāṣṭāṅga praṇāma*, to your Guru. A full obeisance means the disciple tells their Guru.

“I am giving you a sword—you can cut my head, you can cut my legs, you can cut my body, that is your matter because I cannot see anything. I am surrendering my everything to you.” You think like this, but when you get up, you immediately forget everything... Is what I am saying correct or not? Surrender must be sincere.

Mahāprabhu said to Sanātan Goswāmī, “Are you not shy? You want to use My property, want to spoil My property?! This is My property, not yours! You have surrendered to Me, it means you have given this body to Me and I told you to keep it safe, not to spoil it.”

When a devotee surrenders, they cannot spoil anything — they cannot use their mind, intelligence, ego, eyes, nose, mouth, tongue, ears for any other purpose — they must use everything for the service to the Lord, to their

Guru. Do you understand? It is easy to say it, but very hard to do, still it is necessary to practise it. Without practicing you will not get anything.







## DISAPPEARANCE OF HIS DIVINE GRACE OM VISHNUPAD SRILA BHAKTI NIRMAL ACHARYA DEV-GOSWAMI MAHARAJA



On May 10, 2021, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Nirmal Āchārya Mahārāj exhibited his divine disappearance pastime. Physically, His Divine Grace's body shut down after a heart attack during a hospitalized treatment for COVID-19. Since Śrīla Āchārya Mahārāj's disappearance, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Niškām Śhānta Mahārāj (on left) has been appointed as the Sevaite-President-Acharya of the Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math.

**Question:** It seems that we have one type of fear that having got some connection with yourself we may lose that at death. I do not want to have a connection with anyone else, I want to stay with you. So, I feel some type of fear...

**Srila B.S. Govinda Dev-Goswami Maharaj:** Fear? But why have fear? I cannot understand it.

**Devotee:** Because if we do not finish our sadhana nicely, then next life we do not know where we will go—we may not find Govinda Maharaj there.

**Srila Govinda Maharaj:** What do you think about Govinda Maharaj?

**Devotee:** We think that we want to serve you.

**Srila Govinda Maharaj:** No, it is okay that you want to serve Govinda Maharaj, but what do you think about Govinda Maharaj? He is your guru, but in which form do you think about him? Do you think that Govinda Maharaj is a mundane man or an incarnation of the Lord coming in front of you to give you connection with Him? If you think he is an incarnation of the Lord, then he cannot leave your heart and you cannot leave your Lord. Even if you die, you will get that connection in another form, perhaps, but you will not be able to leave your Lord. When you have faith that the Lord always lives with you, then there will



be no fear. That is the main thing. By the mercy of Vaishnavas I also always feel that my Srila Guru Maharaj (Srila B.R. Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj) is present with us. By the mercy of Vaishnavs and the supremacy of Srila Guru Maharaj, such feeling always comes to us that Srila Guru Maharaj has not left us, that he is with us. I have the service of Srila Guru Maharaj, and I must do that. Service to Srila Guru Maharaj is my only goal of life, and whichever way that service comes to me, I will try to serve.

**Devotee:** In my next life, I want to forever be a blade of grass wherever you walk...

**Srila Govinda Maharaj:** I do not want to wait for the next life. Actually, we must finish all our jobs here this life, then we shall all go to Goloka!"







## NOURISHING BODY & SOUL FREE SANCTIFIED VEGETARIAN PRASADAM DISTRIBUTIONS

Since March 2021, the Princeton BVISCS has been offering monthly free sanctified vegetarian prasadam to the public. During the last Sunday of each month, we have been distributing prasadam from the Princeton Family YMCA. Kindly contact us at [princeton@bviscs.org](mailto:princeton@bviscs.org) for more information.

Prasadam is specially prepared foodstuff which has been offered to the Lord, and then consumed for spiritual purification. Not only is prasadam vegetarian, i.e. does not include meat, fish, or eggs, but it also excludes onion and garlic. The method for honoring prasadam has been described in the Vedic scriptures of ancient India.

Honoring prasadam is for nourishing the soul by purifying the heart and mind, not merely for filling the belly and nourishing the body. Prasadam is karma-free, thus it does not further entangle us in the plane of fruitive exploitive action.

Prasadam is not limited to Indian style dishes. Just as the Supreme Lord is present everywhere, dishes of any culture may be prepared and offered for the pleasure of the Lord.



The Bhakti Vedanta Institute of Spiritual Culture and Science has been featured in the new iteration of the Nonprofit Aid Visualizer™: NAVi for Hunger & Homelessness, by Vanguard Charitable.

NAVi inspires donors to take their giving further by providing access to best-in-class data that simplifies and empowers their charitable research and decision-making.

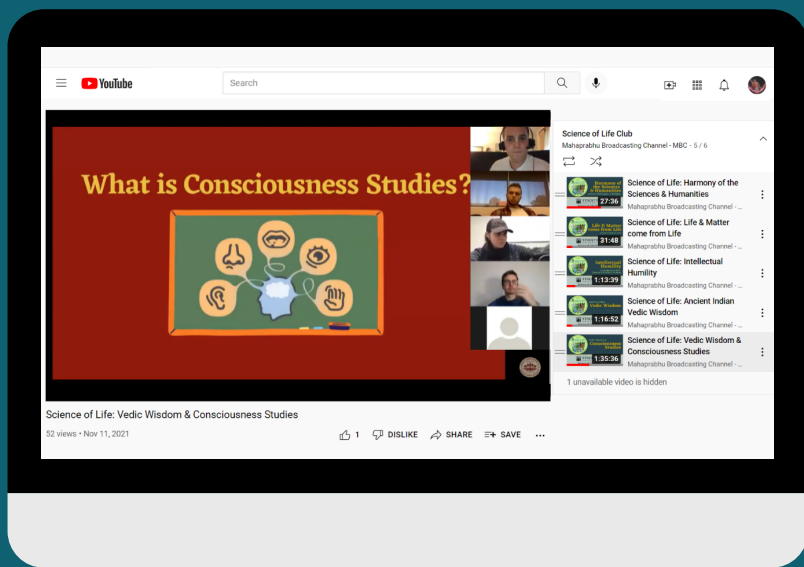
NAVi's focus on hunger and homelessness aims to provide donors with the information needed to understand where and how they can make a difference in response to these persistent challenges.

With NAVi's wide-ranging information at their fingertips, donors are ready to act and make a meaningful impact on the lives of others.

<https://hunger.navi.vanguardcharitable.org/>







<b>Science of Life: Harmony of the Sciences &amp; Humanities</b> Mahaprabhu Broadcasting Chan... 83 views • 9 months ago	<b>Science of Life: Life &amp; Matter come from Life</b> Mahaprabhu Broadcasting Chan... 52 views • 3 months ago	<b>Science of Life: Intellectual Humility</b> Mahaprabhu Broadcasting Chan... 42 views • 2 months ago	<b>Science of Life: Ancient Indian Vedic Wisdom</b> Mahaprabhu Broadcasting Chan... 28 views • 2 months ago	<b>Science of Life: Vedic Wisdom &amp; Consciousness...</b> Mahaprabhu Broadcasting Chan... 51 views • 1 month ago

# SCIENCE OF LIFE CLUB AT STOCKTON UNIVERSITY

The Stockton Science of Life Club was established as a university recognized student organization, at Stockton University in Galloway, New Jersey, in March 2021. The purpose of the Science of Life Club is to consider, promote, and contribute to the synthesis of the sciences and humanities, with a focus on the role that life plays within these diverse fields of study. This includes consideration of the emerging multidisciplinary field of consciousness studies. Various engaging educational activities are organized in line with this purpose.

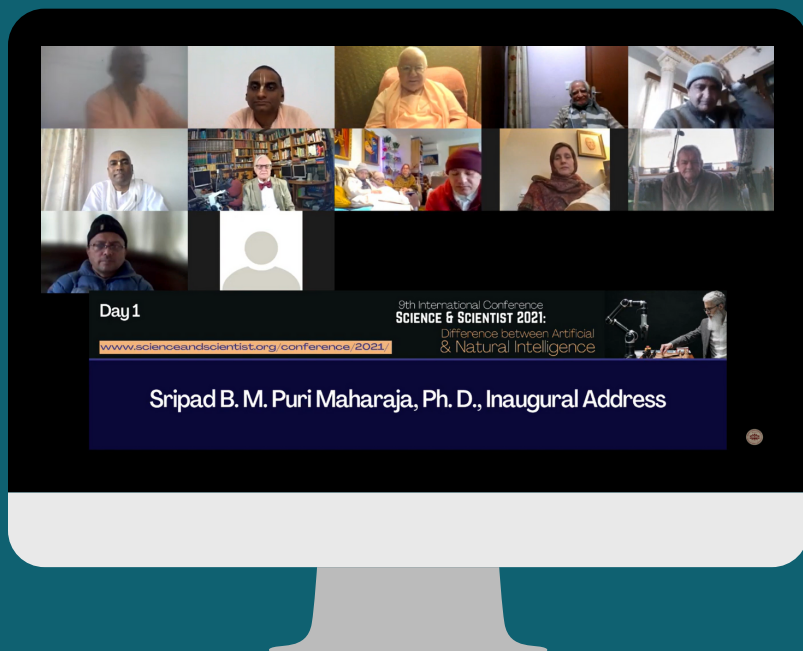
With specific focus on the dynamic between the natural sciences, philosophy, and religion, we actively discuss and consider the modern reductionist and strictly material approach (abiogenesis) to perceiving and studying the world and reality, along with a more holistic approach which is inclusive of consciousness and the fundamental role of life (biogenesis).

We promote an intellectual approach which emphasizes humility, tolerance, and giving respect to others. The Stockton Science of Life Club is a branch of the Princeton BVISCS's Circles of Life community initiative. More information available at:

[www.bviscs.org/circles-of-life/](http://www.bviscs.org/circles-of-life/)



# FULL CONFERENCE RECORDING AVAILABLE ON MAHAPRABHU BROADCASTING CHANNEL - MBC



9th International Conference  
**SCIENCE & SCIENTIST 2021:**  
Difference between Artificial & Natural Intelligence

Organizers: IGNA

Register: [www.scienceandscientist.org/conference/2021/](http://www.scienceandscientist.org/conference/2021/)

**DAY 1**

MC: Krishna Kinkar Das  
3:30 PM IST Invocation and Celebration of Sripad Bhakti Madhava Puri Maharaja's Appearance Day - His Holiness is the visionary of the Science and Scientist annual conference series  
4:00-4:30 Sripad B. M. Puri, Ph. D., Inaugural Address

Venue: Online / Livestream  
Date: December 30, 2021  
Time: 10:00 AM - 3:45 PM UK  
5:00 - 10:45 AM ET USA  
3:30 - 9:15 AM EST (ICT)

**SESSION 1 Introduction to Conference Theme**  
MC: Krishna Keshava Das  
Chair: Prof. Sangeetha Menon

4:30-5:10 Sripad B. M. Puri, Ph. D., Princeton Bhakti Vedanta Institute  
Topic: Natural Intelligence & Artificial Intelligence

5:10-5:50 Prof. Brian Ford, Cambridge University  
Topic: Artificial Intelligence

5:50-6:10 Q & A

MC: Krishna Kinkar Das  
Topic: Understanding Life: Beyond d

**SESSION 2 Sci**  
MC: Kanu Priya  
Chair: Prof. Priya

6:10-6:25 Sri Chai  
Topic:

6:50-7:25 Indian G  
Topic:

7:30-8:15 Essential

8:10-8:40 Q & A

MC: Krishna Kinkar Das  
Topic: Understanding Life: Beyond d

**SESSION 1 A Realistic Assessment of Intelligence**  
MC: Sumangala Devi Dasi, Ph. D.  
Chair: Dr. M. V. Jagannadham

3:00-3:30 IST Sripad B. V. Muni, Ph. D., Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Institute  
Topic: Intelligence, Thinking & Reality

3:30-4:00 Prof. Govindaraj Ithiyarjan  
Topic: A Scientific Understanding of Life beyond the Mechanistic Thinking used in Programmed Machines

4:00-4:30 Prof. Sangeetha Menon, National Institute of Advanced Studies  
Topic: Being & Becoming: Consciousness & the Intelligent Brain

4:30-5:00 Q & A

**SESSION 2 Assessing AI in Modern Medicine**  
MC: Kanu Priya Devi Dasi  
Chair: Sripad B. V. Muni, Ph. D.

5:00-5:30 Dr. Sandeep Mishra, All India Institute of Medical Science  
Topic: Limitations of Artificial Intelligence in Human Medicine

5:30-6:00 Dr. D. P. Dash, Gopabandha Ayurveda College  
Topic: Difference Between Machine Care & Human Care in Medical Sciences

6:00-6:30 Dr. M. V. Jagannadham, Centre for Cellular & Molecular Biology  
Topic: Is it Possible to Mimic Intelligence of Living Systems?

6:30-7:00 Sumangala Devi Dasi, Ph. D., Indian Institute of Technology  
Topic: Artificial Intelligence vs. Natural Intelligence

7:00-7:30 Q & A

8:00-8:15 Prof. Partha Bera  
Topic: Comparing Artificial Intelligence from General Intelligence

8:15-8:30 Badi Mishra  
Topic: Beyond Logic: Artificial Intelligence, Reality, Art, & Empathy

8:30-8:45 Ranjan Panda & Abhishek Yadav  
Topic: Science on Intelligent Food

8:45-9:00 Ranjan Panda & Anika  
Topic: The Challenge of Being Content: A Reflection on Learning with Intelligent Machine

MC: Krishna Keshava Das  
Topic: Applications of a Refined Concept of Intelligence

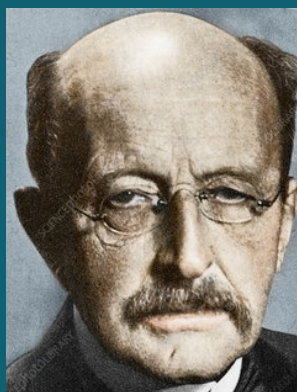
9:00-9:30 PM IST  
Panel Discussion (Sripad B. V. Muni, Ph. D., Prof. Govindaraj Ithiyarjan, & Dr. Sandeep Mishra)

# 9TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE SCIENCE & SCIENTIST 2021: DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ARTIFICIAL AND NATURAL INTELLIGENCE

Indic traditions are rich in their philosophical foundations, and their ancient culmination in Vedanta has produced and preserved the deepest thoughts of our forefathers among whom lived great sages. They considered questions of intelligence and consciousness, causality, epistemology and their relevance in practical applications. The changes in scientific thinking in the 21st century has aligned the frontier developments more favorably towards Vedanta. Intelligence and consciousness have themselves become very important dimensions of study. Natural intelligence is an inherent function of cognition. All living organisms naturally display intelligence at cellular, behavioral and community level. However, no perfect ontological definition of intelligence exists within the realm of molecular chemistry and physics. On the other hand, computers and machines are being programmed intelligently to execute important tasks. Its applications are found in Robotics, Aerospace Engineering, Computers, Medical Aids, etc. Some robots have even been programmed to make songs and poems, and imitate intelligent human activities. It is very important to take up a comparative study to examine the difference between two forms of intelligence. This will help us to understand the deeper questions about life and its deeper meaning. The Vedantic traditions clearly guide the thoughtful human being to search in the direction of

Spirit (Brahman) for finding true solutions to problems of life. However, oftentimes in the conventional approach of science, man's focus is more or less in the domain of matter to solve the problem of consciousness and life, in which he fails to find any rational and concrete understanding. In this conference, the organizers take up the task of posing these questions to the participants and contributors of papers from various backgrounds.

[www.scienceandscientist.org/conference/2021/](http://www.scienceandscientist.org/conference/2021/)



"I regard consciousness as fundamental. I regard matter as derivative from consciousness. We cannot get behind consciousness. Everything that we talk about, everything that we regard as existing, postulates consciousness."

**:: Max Planck (Where is Science Going?: 1932)**





# STUDENT BOOK REVIEW

by Alice Letts

Staff of *Dialectic* Undergraduate Journal  
University of York, England

'Idols of the Mind vs. True Reality', by Bhakti Madhava Puri Ph. D., Bhakti Vedanta Institute in Princeton, New Jersey, 2020.

This book aims to synthesize science and religion in order to distinguish mere 'idols' from true reality. It argues that modern science has overlooked important elements of reality such as consciousness, God as a self-conscious being, and the interaction of the subjective and objective. It is successful in showing how damaging a purely mechanistic paradigm has been for the development of science. The author draws on multiple facets of philosophy, religion, and science throughout time in order to orchestrate a glimpse into the true nature of Reality. The weakness in one facet is balanced by merging it with its opposite; the author manages to connect different points of view that generate the whole picture. One could argue this book helps provide the answers we need to satisfy our tireless hearts and minds. I believe this book does an excellent job of correcting an over-commitment to one kind of doctrine, whether that be a purely scientific or religious

attention to the humble revelation that True Reality is not something that is truly knowable. This has been remarked by the spiritual sages and masters that have come before us, as well as scientists such as Newton and Einstein.

I knew this book was something unique once I realized how it easily drew connections between drastically different times and places where ideas were born, and found a common ground between them. This book demonstrated a true understanding of what common thought processes of humanity led us to be where we are today. A picture of the world which is able to encapsulate seemingly opposing views intuitively strikes me as the correct way to view the world. It was also not missed that the author seemed to think that the way in which we can understand this union of science and religion is through careful study of their respective philosophy.

I would like to draw attention to the fact that once they have successfully dismantled modern science, they start developing their own ideas on true reality. It is clear their convictions are a result of their own impressions of reality and their relationship with God. For example they explained that the ultimate purpose of life is to return to this True Reality

doctrine. Overall I was thoroughly impressed with the ideas expressed in this book but also how easily such groundbreaking and complex ideas are conveyed in a comprehensive way. I like how concepts are described in terms that are far removed from any science or religious doctrine, therefore the explanations are untainted by context and conveyed in their most simplistic terms, such as subjectivity being referred to as 'being-for-self'.

The general theme of this book is to account for the subjective and objective aspects of reality, and how they combine to form True Reality. The subjective evolution of our consciousness is a particular individual thing but also inseparable from the whole in which it is a part. Subjectively constructed theory/ideas/idols try to explain the original objects of true reality, but are unsuccessful.

Whilst this book does an excellent job of capturing True Reality in the way we are best able to understand it, by drawing on knowledge that goes back as far as the ancients Aristotle and Plato, they also draw our

through surrendering the ego-centric mentality, and that the soul is something that leaves the body after death. They also argue that God has a personality, and that True Reality in its highest sense is love. I would have really loved to hear more about what brought them to draw these conclusions in the same way they explain their convictions about modern science, as I do not disagree with their views, rather I'd just like to know more. Perhaps this is something that is left out of the book because it is intentionally explained elsewhere.

I liked how this book was unbiased in that it also gave science its due credence, but also emphasizes where modern science goes wrong. Reason is something divine and godly, and also a personal feature that is found in man. Modern science has turned away from and failed to comprehend this reason. Without developing the reason which God bestowed unto us, we would have never developed science. This insight is enlightening and impressive; the author has drawn such a simple and obvious connection between two seemingly polar sides of the spectrum of knowledge.

There is talk of mechanical/chemical models which are strictly impersonal, which interestingly means that they are incompatible with any reason in the world. According to the author, God's personality is intelligence and it is life. Therefore modern science, in an attempt to be more rational, becomes further



removed from its original reason.

I especially liked how they spoke of God as something self-conscious, I found it to be a fresh perspective that immediately personalizes God without being anthropomorphic. I also found it helpful that they broke down consciousness into three parts that made it so that consciousness was less mysterious in its nature than it's normally made out to be, and it helped to gain a better grasp of how consciousness fits into our conceptual framework of reality. It is fascinating that modern science has ignored the internal processes that govern our relationship with knowledge.

I particularly liked the example of ancients who would chase away the moon dog from eating the sun god by beating their gongs. Every time they did it, it worked, therefore they concluded that their result correlated to truth. Clearly this is a hint to what the author's view of science is. Natural science does not describe nature itself, rather it describes the interplay between nature and ourselves. I thought this was a particularly beautiful

point that doesn't dismiss science as something that is unbeneficial; rather our misconception of what science is has hindered its development.

It goes without saying that some questions will be left unanswered, such as what the ultimate purpose of the process of finding one's true identity is. In the book we learn how to do so; it is done through giving up the egocentric mentality to return to True reality. It could be argued such questions can only be answered by God himself. On a similar line, I would have been interested to know what their views are on allowing that it is actually a part of our purpose to experience the ego rather than turn away from it once we learn it's there.


In conclusion I would recommend this book, it makes for a very interesting read and it is largely insightful; it deepened and challenged my world view. The successful synthesis of science and religion opened my mind to thinking outside of the boxes that previously regimented my thoughts about the world.

Science / Religion

"I first became aware of the Princeton Bhakti Vedanta Institute in 2016, when I was invited to be a main speaker at their fourth international conference Science and Scientist. I had, prior to that, been engaged in an on-line dialogue with Sripad Bhakti Madhava Puri Maharaja, Ph.D. and other interested scientists and intellectuals, about the nature of consciousness. The mechanistic Newtonian worldview that matter was primary, and that consciousness was merely a byproduct of the brain with all our rich inner experiences being only an illusion, had never made sense to me. Conversely, the idea of a universal consciousness, responsible for the creation of our universe, resonated far more with my own experience. So I was delighted to be in dialogue with a group of people who were exploring these kinds of issues.

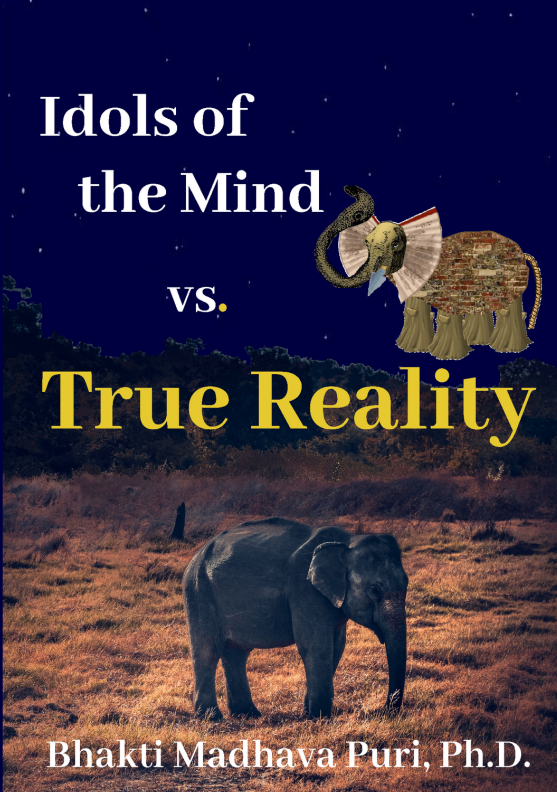
In this book, Sripad Bhakti Madhava Puri Maharaja, Ph.D. has presented a coherent, logical and well researched argument to elucidate the Vedantic philosophy on consciousness and life, which is a coherent response to the question: 'The scientist can explain science; but can science explain the scientist?'. It is an informative and enjoyable read, which I would recommend to anyone interested."

- Dr. Joan Walton, York St. John University, UK




**Dr. B. M. Puri** received his Ph.D. in Theoretical Chemistry from Georgetown University in 1970. After completing postdoc work with the National Bureau of Standards in Washington D.C., Dr. Puri moved on to rigorous study and practice of the Bhagavat Vedanta philosophy and Bhakti yoga.

He was one of the five founding charter members of the original Bhaktivedanta Institute in 1976, and became the Regional Director of the office in Juhu, Mumbai, India for a number of years. After diving deeper into the study of the philosophical relation between Vedanta and Hegel's Conceptual Realism Dr. Puri returned to the United States in the 1990's. He opened the Princeton Bhakti Vedanta Institute in 2012.




**Idols of the Mind**  
vs.  
**True Reality**

**Bhakti Madhava Puri, Ph.D.**



ISBN 978-1-7349089-5-4  
50495>



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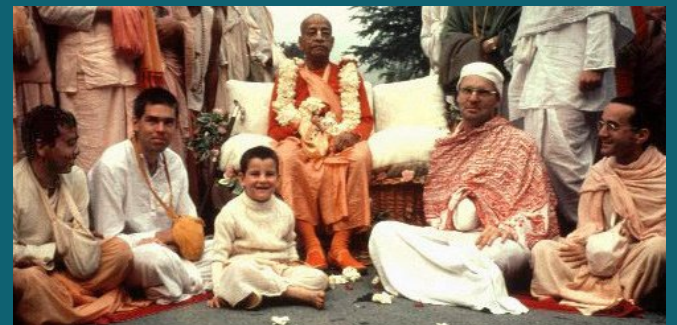


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Śrīpād B. M. Purī Mahārāja, Ph. D., earned his undergraduate degree at Rutgers University and completed a Masters and Ph. D. in Theoretical Chemistry from Georgetown University in 1970. After completing postdoc work with the National Bureau of Standards in Washington D.C., Dr. Purī moved on to rigorous study and practice of the Bhagavat Vedantic philosophy and Bhakti yoga.

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(above) Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda with 4/5 founding charter members of the original Bhaktivedanta Institute

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