



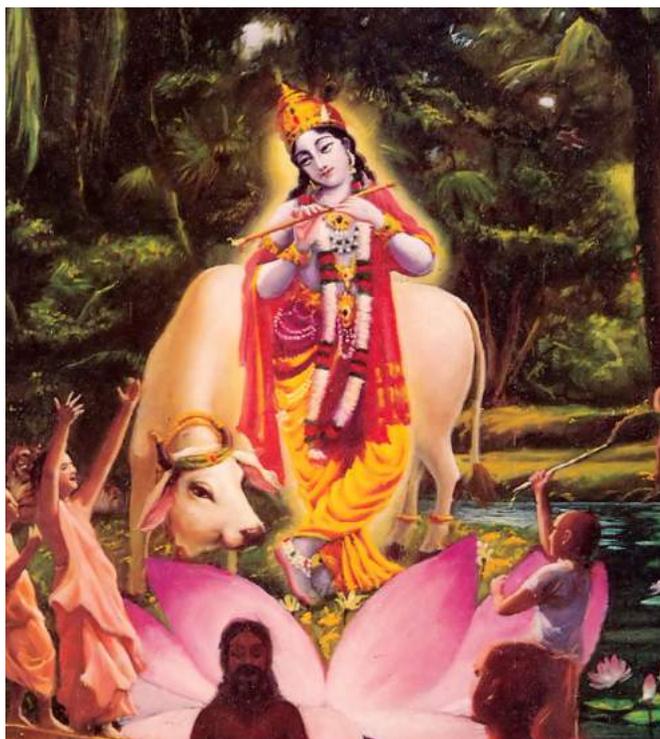
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### WHO ARE PRACETAS?

*Srila Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura*

Vijitasva, the eldest son of Maharaja Prithu, had a reputation like his father's, when he became the King, being affectionate to his brothers, he gave his younger brothers different regions of the world to rule. Vijitasva gave the eastern region to his brother Haryakṣa, the southern region to Dhumrakesha, the western region to Vrika and the northern region to Dravina. Having received the ability to disappear from Indra, Vijitasva was called also Antardhana (disappearance). In his wife Sikhandini, he begot three good sons. These three sons were named Pavaka, Pavamana and Suci. Formerly they were the *devatās* of fire, but due to the curse of Vasistha, they became the sons of Antardhana. Later they again they attained the powers of *devatās* of fire. Antardhana, was famous for not killing Indra while Indra was stealing his father's sacrificial horse, though he knew about it. In another wife, named Nabhasvatī, he obtained a son named Havirdhana. On the plea of performing a long sacrifice Antardhana gave up the duties of the King such as receiving taxes and imposing punishment and fines, since he thought felt that he was thus giving suffering to the people. Though engaged in sacrifice, because he saw *ātmā*, he worshipped the Supreme Lord, *Paramātmā*, in the form called Hamsa, and thus easily attained the planet of the Lord by that concentration. Havirdhana, the son of Antardhana, begot through his wife named Havirdhani six sons, named Barhisat, Gaya, Shukla, Krishna, Satya and Jitavrata.

The most fortunate Barhisat, a son of Havirdhana and a Prajapati, was absorbed in performing sacrifices and

yoga. Under Barhisat, who performed many excellent sacrifices, each of which was dedicated to all the *devatās*, the whole earth was covered with *kuśa* grass with tips pointing east (*prācīna*). Under the direction of Brahma he married the daughter of the ocean named Śatadruti. Agnideva, seeing Satadruti at the marriage ceremony with beautiful limbs, well decorated and in the prime of youth, became attracted to her as he had previously become attracted to Shuki. The *devatās*, demons, Gandharvas, Siddhas, Nagas and humans were captivated by the tinkling of her anklebells. Pracinarbarhi begot ten children in the womb of Shatadruti. They were all equally qualified in religiosity and the performance of austerities, and were called the Pracetas. When ordered by their father to beget offspring, they entered the ocean for austerities. During the ten thousand years of their austerities, they worshipped the Supreme Lord, the original master of austerity. On their way to the ocean, they had met Lord Shiva whom they pleased. He taught them a prayer which they they meditated on, chanted and worshipped with complete control of their minds. In this way they worshipped the Supreme Lord.

—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Sarartha Darsini » Canto 4: The Creation of the Fourth Order » SB 4.24: Chanting the Song Sung by Lord Shiva» Verse: 1-15.*

### LORD SHIVA INSTRUCTS PRACETAS

*Sri Maitreya Ṛṣi*

**Vidura Inquired:** My dear *brāhmaṇa*, please tell me how the Pracetas could meet Lord Shiva? Please tell me how the meeting happened, how Lord Shiva



became very pleased with them and how he instructed them. These topics are certainly important, and I request that you mercifully describe them to me. O best of the *brāhmaṇas*, it is very difficult for living entities engaged within the material body to have personal contact with Lord Shiva. Even great sages who have no material attachments cannot meet him, despite their always being absorbed in meditation for this purpose. Lord Shiva, the most powerful demigod, second only to Lord Vishnu, is self-sufficient. Although he has nothing to aspire for in the material world, he is always engaged himself in auspicious activities everywhere for the benefit of others. He is also accompanied by his dangerous energies like the goddesses Kālī and Durgā.

My dear Vidura, because of their pious nature, all the sons of Pracinabarhi very seriously accepted the words of their father. Keeping them in their hearts, they went toward the west to execute those instructions.

While traveling, the Pracetas came across a great reservoir of water which seemed as big as the ocean. The water of this reservoir was so calm and quiet like the mind of a great soul. The aquatics living in that lake appeared very peaceful and happy in the shelter of such a reservoir. In that great lake there were different types of lotus flowers. Some of them were bluish, some red; some bloomed at night, some in the day, and some, like the *indīvara* lotus flower, in the evening. Together, the lotus flowers filled the lake so full that it appeared to be a great ocean of lotus flowers. Consequently, on the shores there were swans and cranes, cakravakas, karandavas and other beautiful water birds. On all sides of the lake, there were various trees and creepers, and intoxicated bumblebees hummed all around them. The trees appeared to be very jolly due to the sweet humming of the bumblebees, and the saffron from the lotus flowers, was blown around by the wind. All of this created a festive atmosphere.

The Pracetas became amazed when they heard the sound of kettledrums and other drums along with other pleasant musical sounds. They were very fortunate to see Lord Shiva, the chief of the demigods, as he emerged from the water with his associates. His bodily luster was like molten gold, his throat was bluish, and he had three eyes, with which he looked very mercifully upon his followers. He was accompanied by many musicians, glorifying him. As soon as the Pracetas saw Lord Shiva, they immediately offered their obeisance in great amazement and prostrated at his lotus feet. Lord Shiva is known as the protector of gentle and pious persons. Pleased with the Pracetas, he began to speak as follows:

**Lord Shiva said:** I know that you are the sons of King Pracinabarhi, and I wish all good fortune unto you. I also know your purpose in coming here, and I have appeared before you to give blessings. Any person who is surrendered to the Supreme Personality of Godhead Krishna, the controller of everything - material nature as well as the living entity - is very dear to me.

*sva-dharma-niṣṭhaḥ śata-janmabhiḥ pumān  
viriṣatām eti tataḥ param hi mām  
avyākṛtam bhāgavato 'tha vaiṣṇavam  
padam yathāham vibudhāḥ kalātyaye*

A person who executes his occupational duty properly for one hundred births becomes qualified to occupy the post of Brahma; and if he becomes more qualified, he can approach Lord Shiva. A person who is surrendered to Lord Vishnu or Krishna and performs unalloyed devotional service to Him is immediately promoted to the spiritual planets unlike myself and other demigods who attain these planets only after the destruction of this material world. You are devotees of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and as such, I appreciate that you are as respectable as the Lord Himself. I know that the devotees also respect me in this way and that I too am dear to them. Thus no one can be as dear to the devotees as I am. Now I shall chant one which is not only, pure, auspicious and transcendental but is also the best prayer for someone who is aspiring to attain the ultimate goal of life. Please hear it carefully and attentively.

Out of his causeless mercy, the exalted personality Lord Shiva, a great devotee of Lord Narayana, continued to speak to the King's sons, who were standing before him with folded hands.

Lord Shiva addressed the Supreme Personality of Godhead with the following prayer:

*śrī-rudra uvāca  
jitam ta ātma-vid-varya-  
svastaye svastir astu me  
bhavatārādhāsā rāddham  
sarvasmā ātmane namaḥ*

O Supreme Personality of Godhead, all glories unto You. You are the most exalted of all self-realized souls. Since You are always auspicious for even the self-realized, I wish that You bestow auspiciousness unto me. You are worshipable by virtue of the all-perfect instructions You give. You are the Supersoul; therefore I offer my obeisances unto You as the supreme living being.

My Lord, You are the origin of the creation by virtue of the lotus flower which sprouts from Your navel. You are the supreme controller of the senses and the sense objects, and You are also the all-pervading Vasudeva. You are most peaceful, and because of Your self-illuminated existence, You are not disturbed by the six bodily transformations. My dear Lord, You are the origin of the subtle material ingredients, the master of all integration as well as the master of all disintegration, the predominating Deity named Sankarsana, and the master of all intelligence, known as the Pradyumna. Therefore, I offer my respectful obeisances unto You. My Lord, as the



supreme directing Deity known as Aniruddha, You are the master of the senses and the mind. I therefore offer my obeisance unto You again and again. You are known as Ananta and Sankarsana because of Your ability to destroy the entire creation by the fire blazing from Your mouth.

My Lord, O Aniruddha, You are the authority by whom the doors to the higher planetary systems and liberation are opened. You are always within the pure heart of the living entity. Therefore, I offer my obeisance unto You. You are the possessor of semen which is like gold, and thus, in the form of fire, You help the Vedic sacrifices, beginning with *cātur-hotra*. Therefore, I offer my obeisance unto You. My Lord, You are the provider for the *Pitṛs* and all the demigods. You are the predominating deity of the moon and the master of all three Vedas. I offer my respectful obeisance unto You because You are the original source of satisfaction for all living entities. My dear Lord, You are the gigantic universal form which contains all the individual bodies of the living entities. You are the maintainer of the three worlds, and as such You maintain the mind, senses, body, and air of life within them. I therefore offer my respectful obeisance unto You. My dear Lord, by expanding Your transcendental vibrations, You reveal the actual meaning of everything. You are the all-pervading sky within and without, and You are the ultimate goal of pious activities executed both within this material world and beyond it. I therefore offer my respectful obeisance again and again unto You.

My dear Lord, You are the viewer of the results of pious activities. You are inclination, disinclination and their resultant activities. You are the cause of the miserable conditions of life caused by irreligion, and therefore You are death. I offer You my respectful obeisance. My dear Lord, You are the topmost bestower of all benedictions, the original and supreme enjoyer amongst all enjoyers. You are the master of all the worlds' metaphysical philosophy, for You are the supreme cause of all causes, Lord Sri Krishna. You are the greatest of all religious principles, the supreme mind, and You have a brain which is never limited by anything. Therefore, I repeatedly offer my obeisance unto You. My dear Lord, You are the supreme controller of the worker, sense activities and results of sense activities [*karma*]. Therefore, You are the controller of the body, mind and senses. You are also the supreme controller of ego, known as Rudra. You are the source of knowledge and the activities of the Vedic injunctions.

My dear Lord, I wish to see Your form that Your very dear devotees worship. You have many other forms, but I especially wish to see this form. Please be merciful upon me and show me that form, for only that form which is worshiped by the devotees can perfectly satisfy the senses. The Lord's beauty resembles a dark cloud during the rainy season. As the rainfall glistens, His bodily features also glisten. Indeed, He is the sum

total of all beauty. The Lord has four arms and an exquisitely beautiful face with eyes like lotus petals, a highly raised nose, an enchanting smile, an attractive forehead and fully ornamented ears. The Lord is super excellently beautiful on account of His wide, benevolent smile and His sidelong glances upon His devotees. His hair is dark and curly, and His yellow garments, swaying in the breeze, appear like saffron pollen wafting from lotus flowers. His glittering earrings, shining helmet, bangles, garland, ankle bells, waist belt and various other ornaments together with the conchshell, disc, club and lotus flower increase the natural beauty of the Kaustubha pearl on His chest. The Lord has shoulders like a lion. On His shoulders are glittering garlands, necklaces and epaulets. Besides these, there is the beauty of the *Kaustubha-maṇi*, and on the dark chest of the Lord there are streaks named *Śrīvatsa*, which are the insignia of the goddess of fortune. The glittering of these streaks excels the beauty of the golden lines on a gold-testing stone. Round shaped like a Banyan leaf, the Lord's abdomen is beautiful due to its three ripples. When He inhales and exhales, the movement of those ripples appears very, very beautiful. The coiled navel of the Lord is so deep that it appears as if the entire universe sprouted from it and yet wishes to go back. The lower part of the Lord's dark waist is covered with yellow garments and a golden embroidered belt. His symmetrical lotus feet and the calves, thighs and knees of His legs are extraordinarily beautiful. Indeed, the Lord's entire body is exquisitely proportioned.

My dear Lord, Your lotus feet are so beautiful that they are like the petals of a lotus flower blossoming in autumn. From the nails of Your lotus feet emanate a great effulgence which immediately dissipates the darkness in the heart of a conditioned soul. My dear Lord, kindly show me that form of Yours which always eradicates all darkness in the heart of Your devotee. You are the supreme spiritual master of everyone; therefore all conditioned souls covered with the darkness of ignorance are enlightened by You as the spiritual master.

My dear Lord, those who desire to purify their existence must always meditate on these lotus feet of Yours. Those who are serious about executing their occupational duties and who want freedom from fear must take to this process of *bhakti-yoga*. My dear Lord, the king of the heaven is also desirous of obtaining the ultimate goal of life - devotional service. Similarly, You are the ultimate destination of those who identify themselves with You [*ahaṁ brahmāsmi*]. However, it is very difficult for them to attain You, whereas a devotee can very easily attain Your Lordship. My dear Lord, pure devotional service is even difficult for liberated persons to discharge, but devotional service alone can satisfy You. Which person, serious about the perfection of life, will take to other processes of self-realization? Simply by expansion of His eyebrows, invincible time personified can immediately vanquish the entire

universe. However, formidable time himself does not approach the devotee who has completely taken shelter at Your lotus feet. If one by chance associates with a devotee, even for a fraction of a moment, he no longer attracted by the results of *karma* or *jñāna*. What interest then can he have in the benedictions of the demigods, who are themselves subject to the laws of birth and death? My dear Lord, Your lotus feet are the cause of everything auspicious and the destroyer of all the contamination of sin. I therefore beg Your Lordship to bless me by the association of Your devotees, who are completely purified by worshiping Your lotus feet and who naturally show mercy to the conditioned souls. I think that Your real benediction will be to allow me to associate with such devotees. The devotee whose heart has been completely cleansed by the process of devotional service, who is favored by Bhaktidevi, does not become bewildered by the external energy, which is like a dark well. Being completely cleansed of all material contamination in this way, a devotee is able to joyfully understand Your name, fame, form, activities, etc. My dear Lord, the impersonal Brahman spreads everywhere, like the sunshine or the sky. And that impersonal Brahman, which spreads throughout the universe and in which the entire universe is manifested, is You.

My dear Lord, You have manifold energies, and these energies are manifested in manifold forms. With such energies You have also created this cosmic manifestation, and although You maintain it as if it were permanent, You ultimately annihilate it. Although You are never bewildered by such changes and alterations, the living entities become bewildered, and therefore they find the cosmic manifestation to be different to or separated from You. My Lord, You are always independent; I can clearly see this fact. My dear Lord, Your universal form consists of the five elements, the senses, mind, intelligence, false ego (which is material) and the *Paramātmā*, Your partial expansion, who is the director of everything. Yogis other than Your devotees, namely the *karma-yogī* and *jñāna-yogī* worship You by their respective actions in their respective positions. It is stated both in the Vedas and in the Vedic corollary *śāstras*, and indeed everywhere, that it is only You who are to be worshiped. That is the expert version of all the Vedas.

My dear Lord, You are the only Supreme Person, the cause of all causes. Before the creation of this material world, Your material energy remains in a dormant condition. When Your material energy is agitated, the three qualities - namely goodness, passion and ignorance become active. As a result the total material energy - egotism, ether, air, fire, water, earth and all the various demigods and saintly persons - becomes manifest. Thus the material world is created. My dear Lord, after creating by Your own potencies, You enter within the creation in four kinds of forms. Situating Yourself in the hearts of the living entities, You know them and know how they are utilising their senses. The so called happiness in this

material creation is like the bees' enjoyment of honey after it has been collected in the honeycomb.

My dear Lord, Your absolute authority cannot be directly experienced, but one can guess by seeing the activities of the world that everything is being destroyed in due course of time. The force of time is very strong, and everything is being destroyed by something else as one animal is eaten by another animal. Time scatters everything, as the wind scatters clouds in the sky. My dear Lord, all living entities within this material world are mad after planning for things, and they are always blindly busy with their desires to do something or other. This is due to an uncontrollable greed for material enjoyment which is always existing in the heart of a living entity. However Your Lordship is always alert, and in due course of time You grab them, as a snake very easily seizes a mouse and swallows him. My dear Lord, any learned person knows that unless he worships You, his entire life is spoiled. Knowing this, how could anyone give up worshiping Your lotus feet? Even our father and spiritual master, Lord Brahma, unhesitatingly worshiped You. The fourteen Manus followed in his footsteps. My dear Lord, all actually learned persons know You as the Supreme Brahman and the Supersoul. Although the entire universe is afraid of Lord Rudra, who ultimately annihilates everything, the learned devotees become free from fear by accepting Your lotus feet as the final destination.

My dear sons of the King, please execute your occupational duty as kings with a pure heart. Fixing your mind on the lotus feet of the Lord, recite this prayer. The Lord will be very much pleased, and that will bring you all good fortune. O sons of the King, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Hari, is situated in everyone's heart. He is also within your hearts. Therefore, chant the glories of the Lord and always meditate upon Him continuously. My dear princes, in the form of a prayer I have delineated the yoga system of chanting the holy name. All of you should keep this important *stotra* within your minds and thus become great sages. Maintaining silence like a sage and giving it great attention and reverence you should practice this method. This prayer was first spoken to us by Lord Brahma, the master of all creators. The subsequent creators, headed by Bhṛigu, were instructed in these prayers prior to their executing their duties. When all the Prajapatis were ordered to create by Lord Brahma, we chanted these prayers in praise of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and became completely free from all ignorance. Thus we were able to create different types of living entities.

A devotee of Lord Krishna whose mind is always absorbed in Him, who with great attention and reverence chants this *stotra* [prayer], will achieve the greatest perfection of life without delay. In this material world there are different types of achievement, but of all of them the achievement of knowledge is considered to be the highest. This is because one can cross only the



insuperable ocean of nescience on the boat of knowledge.. Although rendering devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead and worshipping Him are very difficult, if one vibrates or simply reads this *stotra* [prayer] composed and sung by me, he will very easily be able to invoke His mercy. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the dearest objective of all auspicious benedictions. A human being who sings this song sung by me will certainly please Him. Such a devotee, being fixed in the Lord's devotional service, can acquire whatever he wants.

A devotee who rises early in the morning and with folded hands chants these prayers sung by Lord Shiva, or one who facilitates others hearing them, certainly becomes free from all bondage to fruitive activities. My dear sons of the King, the prayers I have recited to you are meant for pleasing the the Supersoul , the Supreme Personality of Godhead. I advise you to recite these prayers, which are as effective as great austerities. In this way, when you are mature, your life will be successful, and you will certainly achieve all your desired objectives without fail.

—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 4: The Creation of the Fourth Order » SB 4.24: Chanting the Song Sung by Lord Shiva » Verse: 16-72.*

### SIMPLY BY OFFERING PRAYERS

#### ONE CAN BECOME PERFECT

*His Divine Grace*

*A.C.Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*

The prayers offered by Lord Shiva are very authoritative and significant. Simply by offering prayers to the Supreme Lord one can become perfect, even though engaged in his occupational duty. The real purpose of life is to become a devotee of the Lord. It does not matter where one is situated. Whether one is a *brāhmaṇa*, *ksatriya*, *vaiśya*, *sūdra*, American, Englishman, Indian, etc., one can execute devotional service anywhere and everywhere in the material existence simply by offering prayers unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Hare Krishna *mahā-mantra* is also a prayer, for a prayer addresses the Supreme Personality of Godhead by His name and invokes good fortune by petitioning the Lord to allow one to engage in His devotional service. The Hare Krishna *mahā-mantra* also says, "My dear Lord Krishna, my dear Lord Rama, O energy of the Lord, Hare, kindly engage me in Your service." Although one may be situated in a lowly position, he can execute devotional service under any circumstance, as stated, *ahaituky apratihātā*: "Devotional service cannot be checked by any material condition." (SB 1.2.6) Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu also recommended this process:

*jñāne prayāsam udapāsyā namanta eva  
jīvanti san-mukharitām bhavadīya-vārtām  
sthāne sthitāḥ śruti-gatām tanu-vān-manobhir  
ye prāyaśo 'jita jito 'py asi tais tri-lokyām*

nityaṁ bhāgavata-sevayā

One may remain situated in his own place or his own occupational duty and still lend his ear to receive the message of the Lord from realized souls. The Krishna conscious movement is based on this principle, and we are opening centers all over the world to give everyone a chance to hear the message of Lord Krishna in order to go back home, back to Godhead.(SB 10.14.3)

—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 4: The Creation of the Fourth Order » SB 4.24: Chanting the Song Sung by Lord Shiva » Verse: 69, Purport.*

### Prayers

*Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura*

#### How do we find a genuine spiritual master?

The first step in attaining perfection is to take shelter of a bona fide spiritual master. By the Lord's will, everyone receives a spiritual master according to his qualification, just as the Christians received Jesus Christ and the Muslims Prophet Mohammad. Moreover, according to their misfortune, materialists remain attached to material life by accepting family priests as their spiritual masters. But if we are fortunate and search sincerely for a bona fide spiritual master, and if we humbly pray to the Lord to attain the mercy of such a *guru*, then by the Lord's mercy we will certainly receive a bona fide *guru* in this lifetime. Then by taking shelter at his lotus feet our life will become successful. The *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* states:

*brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavān jīva,  
guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja*

Out of many millions of wandering living entities, one who is very fortunate, by the grace of Krishna, gets an opportunity to associate with a bona fide spiritual master. By the mercy of both Krishna and the spiritual master, such a person receives the seed of the creeper of devotional service. (Madhya 19.151)

*kṛṣṇa yadi kṛpā kare kona bhāgyavāne,  
guru-antaryāmi-rūpe śikhāya āpane*

Krishna is situated in everyone's heart as the caitya-guru, the spiritual master within. When He is kind to some fortunate conditioned soul, He personally gives him lessons so he can progress in devotional service, instructing the person internally as the Supersoul and externally as the spiritual master. (Madhya 22.47)

*guru kṛṣṇa-rūpa hana śāstrera pramāṇe,  
guru-rūpe kṛṣṇa kṛpā karena bhakta-gaṇe*

According to the deliberate opinion of all revealed scriptures, the spiritual master is non-different from



Krishna. Lord Krishna in the form of the spiritual master delivers His devotees. (Ādi 1.45)

*yadyapi āmāra guru—caitanyaera dāsa,  
tathāpi jāniye āmi tānhāra prakāśa*

Although I know that my spiritual master is a servitor of Sri Caitanya, I also understand him to be a plenary manifestation of the Lord. (Ādi 1.44)

*śikṣā-guruke ta'jāni kṛṣṇera svarūpa,  
antaryāmī, bhakta-śreṣṭha,—ei dui rūpa*

One should know the instructing spiritual master to be the Supreme Personality Krishna. Lord Krishna manifests Himself as the Supersoul and as the greatest devotee of the Lord. (Ādi 1.47)

*jīve sākṣāt nāhi tāte guru caitya-rūpe,  
śikṣā-guru haya kṛṣṇa-mahānta-svarūpe*

Since one cannot visually experience the presence of the Supersoul, He appears before us as a liberated devotee. Such a spiritual master is none other than Krishna Himself. (Ādi 1.58)

“O Krishnacandra, please accept me as your servant. I will not continue to serve this temporary material world while thinking of myself as an enjoyer.” When a living entity sincerely and humbly prays in this way, then the most merciful Lord appears before him in the form of a liberated devotee. Unless we are fortunate enough to receive transcendental knowledge from a bona fide spiritual master, we cannot become qualified to engage in the Lord's service. Since no human being or demigod is capable of awarding such transcendental knowledge, we must find shelter under a bona fide spiritual master.

**Can we attain auspiciousness if we reject our benevolent well-wisher, the bona fide spiritual master?**

The spiritual master comes from Vaikuntha. The Lord has sent him. How can we go back to Godhead if we renounce his shelter and association? The spiritual master's mercy is the root of all auspiciousness. What have we actually done to receive his mercy? We should renounce our false ego and offer our respectful obeisance at his feet. To give up the false ego that “I am the seer” or “I am the enjoyer,” is called offering obeisance. That is why the word “*namaḥ*,” obeisance, is added to *mantras*.

The spiritual master's mercy destroys the sinful mentality that “I am the doer.” His mercy awakens the pride that “I am the Lord's servant.” Material pride, false ego, and all sinful mentalities are removed simply by his influence. “I was not accustomed to worshiping my

spiritual master every day, but by his mercy I came to know that my only duty was to serve his lotus feet.” It is everyone's duty to worship the self-realized spiritual master and follow in his footsteps. We should not follow the blind. The spiritual master is our only well-wisher; our only relative, and our only protector. Only by his mercy are we fortunate enough to know this.

After attaining the lotus feet of my spiritual master, I no longer maintained the mentality that aside of his service I have important things to do. My spiritual master, who is the Lord's dear-most servant, mercifully imparted to me knowledge of Nandanandana's service to protect me from false ego. Thus, I realized that the living entities have no duty other than to gratify Krishna's senses. Nandanandana is the only worshipable Lord, the life, soul and ornament of all living entities. The spiritual master is extremely dear to that Nandanandana.

An unqualified person such as myself cannot serve such a spiritual master with body, mind, and speech. Yet my spiritual master, who is an ocean of mercy and affection, empowered me out of his causeless mercy and treated me with an abundance of love. He is so merciful! If I can attain his mercy, if I can realize that beside him I have no other well-wisher in this world. Then, simply by his causeless mercy, I will be able to attain the qualification to serve him who is pleased by sincere service. On the day he bestows his causeless mercy on me and becomes pleased with me I will properly understand *hari-kathā*. Then nothing other than the service of *guru* and Krishna will remain important to me.

We should always pray to the spiritual master to become qualified to accept his causeless mercy and empowerment. The spiritual master's mercy incomparable. Due to misfortune I cannot realise the greatness of my spiritual master. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna, is controlled by devotion, still, I am unable to show gratitude for the causeless mercy He has bestowed by appearing before me as *guru*.

**What mentality should a sincere disciple have?**

Sincere disciples should be completely devoted to their *guru*. They should know their spiritual master to be as good as God, the only object of their love and devotion. “The spiritual master is my eternal master and I am his eternal servant”: this is how a disciple thinks. Service to the spiritual master is a disciple's life, ornament, and means of survival. Disciples do not know anything except their spiritual master. They always think of their spiritual master while eating, sleeping, dreaming, and serving. They are fully convinced that the spiritual master is the completely independent Personality of Godhead.

A sincere disciple has the following mentality: “Even if my spiritual master does not accept service from such an unqualified person as myself, I will always be prepared to render unalloyed service at his feet with body, mind, and words. If he kicks me, I will think it is because of

my incompetence; his kick will come because of my faults. He is always right. May temporary sense desires not distract me from his service even for a moment. My only prayer is that my spiritual master mercifully accepts my service. I pray to never fall into bad association or to fall away from his lotus feet. My only solace is that my spiritual master is more merciful to unqualified persons. With a desire to achieve his causeless mercy, I will become greedier for his service.”

### Whose offering does Lord Krishna accept?

“O Krishna! I do not want from You any happiness for myself. Whatever You want from me, I will obey without fail. Even if I have to suffer in executing Your will, that suffering will be my pleasure. You are the all-auspicious Lord, and as such, Your arrangements can never be inauspicious.” If a servant of Krishna feelingly prays to Him with such faith, the Lord will certainly accept his offering. Without these feelings and faith, the Lord will not accept that which is offered.

### How should a devotee pray?

A devotee prays, “O Radha-Ramana, enjoyer of Radha, please protect me. May I not bring about my own ruination by ever leaving Your service.” Those who have entered family life should pray, “O Lord! May I not become overly attached to family life. May my desire for material life be exhausted. May my attention remain always fixed on Your service. Please protect me.”

### How should we call the Supreme Lord?

Sri Gaurasundara taught us that in order to chant the Lord’s holy names, we must become lower than the straw in the street. Unless we consider ourselves insignificant, we cannot call upon another for help. Only when we pray for another’s help do we consider ourselves helpless. In such a state of mind we think that without another’s help we will be unable to do anything. We will understand that it is impossible to do alone that which is meant to be done by five people.

Sri Gaurasundara has instructed us to chant the Lord’s names. We get this information from our spiritual master. To chant the Lord’s names means to take His help. But while chanting, if we consider Him our servant or expect Him to do our work, then there is no question of our living in the conception, “I am lower than the straw in the street.”

An external display of humility is not necessarily genuine humility. More likely it is cheating. Our call will not reach the Lord if we call Him as a master calls his servants. He is supremely independent and not under anyone’s control. Unless we transform our false ego and become sincerely humble, our prayers will not reach the supreme, independent Lord.

One more point: We have to remember that while humbly chanting the Lord’s name, if we do not become

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tolerant, our chanting will remain imperfect. If we display our intolerance by being greedy for particular objects, then we are opposing the principle of humility. If we have complete faith that the Supreme Lord is the Absolute Truth and that by simply chanting His names we will not experience any deficiency, we will have no lack of tolerance. As soon as we become greedy and try to exhibit our impatience or our own skill, we cannot call the Supreme Lord properly.

We often think we are doing the Lord a favor by offering Him prayers; that we could have engaged in some other activity instead. Such a mentality is an example of a lack of tolerance. We need someone to protect us from such a mentality, someone to help us become lower than the straw in the street. We certainly need to take shelter of a person who will deliver us from sinful motives. Srila Narottama Thakura says, “Lord Krishna does not reject those who worship Him under the shelter of the spiritual master. Others who do not do this simply live and die uselessly.”

### What should be the object of our praying?

The object of our constant prayer should be to beg the Lord for His causeless mercy. The final goal of every living entity is to attain *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

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