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PRAYERS BY THE DEMI-GODS

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Lord Brahma prayed: My Lord, You are unlimited, and You possess unending potencies. No one can estimate or calculate Your prowess and wonderful influence, for Your actions are never polluted by the material energy. Through the material qualities, You very easily create the universe, maintain it and again annihilate it, yet You remain the same, without deterioration. I therefore offer my respectful obeisance unto You.

Lord Shiva said: The end of the millennium is the time for Your anger. Now that this insignificant demon Hiranyakashipu has been killed, O my Lord, who are naturally affectionate to Your devotees, kindly protect his son Prahlada Maharaja, who is standing nearby as Your fully surrendered devotee.

King Indra said: O Supreme Lord, You are our deliverer and protector. Our shares of sacrifices, which are in actuality Yours, have been recovered from the demon by You. Because the demoniac king Hiranyakashipu was most fearsome, our hearts, which are Your permanent abode, were all overtaken by him. Now, by Your

presence, the gloom and darkness in our hearts have been dissipated. O Lord, for those who always engage in Your service, which is more exalted than liberation, all material opulence is insignificant. They do not even care for liberation, not to speak of the benefits of *kāma*, *artha* and *dharma*, material religiosity, economic development and sensory pleasures.

All the saintly persons present offered their prayers in this way: O Lord, O supreme maintainer of those sheltered at Your lotus feet, O original Personality of Godhead, the process of austerity and penance, in which You previously instructed us, is the spiritual power of Your very self. It is by austerity that You create the material world, which lies dormant within You. This austerity was almost stopped by the activities of this demon, but now, by Your appearing in the form of Narsimhadeva, which is meant just to give us protection, and by killing this demon, You have reasserted the pre-eminence of the process of austerity.

The inhabitants of Pitrloka prayed: Let us offer our respectful obeisance unto Lord Narsimhadeva, the maintainer of the religious principles in the universe. He has killed Hiranyakashipu, the demon who by force enjoyed all the

offerings of the *śrāddha* ceremonies performed by our sons and grandsons on the anniversaries of our deaths. He also audaciously drank the water with sesame seeds offered in holy places of pilgrimage which is similarly meant for our consumption. By killing this demon, O Lord, You have taken back all this stolen property from his abdomen by piercing it with Your nails. We therefore wish to offer our respectful obeisance unto You.

The inhabitants of Siddha-loka prayed: O Lord Narsimhadeva, because we belong to Siddhaloka, we automatically achieve perfection in all eight kinds of mystic power. Yet Hiranyakashipu was so dishonest that by dint of his personal prowess and austerity, he took away all our powers. Thus he became overly proud of his mystic strength. Now, because this rogue has been killed by Your nails, we offer our respectful obeisance unto You.

The inhabitants of Vidyadhara-loka prayed: Our acquired power to appear and disappear in various ways according to varieties of meditation was banned by that foolish Hiranyakashipu because of his pride in his superior bodily strength and his ability to conquer others. Now the Supreme Personality of Godhead has killed him just as if the demon were an animal. Unto that supreme pastime form of Lord Narsimhadeva, we eternally offer our respectful obeisance.

The inhabitants of Nagaloka said: The most sinful Hiranyakashipu took away all the jewels on our hoods and all of our beautiful wives. Now, since his chest has been pierced by Your nails, You are the source of relief and all pleasure to our wives. Thus we together offer our respectful obeisance unto You.

All the Manus offered their prayers as follows: As Your order carriers, O Lord, we, the Manus, are the law-givers for human society. However, because of the temporary supremacy of this great demon, Hiranyakashipu, our laws for maintaining *varṇāśrama-dharma* were destroyed. O Lord, now that You have killed this great demon, we are re-instated in our normal position. Kindly order us, Your eternal servants, what to do now.

The prajapatis offered their prayers as follows: O Supreme Lord, Lord of even Brahma and Shiva, we, the prajapatis, were created by You to execute Your orders, but we were forbidden by Hiranyakashipu to create any more good progeny as you had decree. Now the demon is lying dead before us, his chest pierced by You. Let us therefore offer our respectful obeisance unto You, whose incarnation in this form of pure goodness is meant for the welfare of the entire universe.

The inhabitants of Gandharva-loka prayed: Your Lordship, we ever engage in Your service by dancing and singing in dramatic performances, but this Hiranyakashipu, by the influence of his bodily strength and valour, subjugated us. Now he has been brought to this low condition by Your Lordship. What benefit can result from the activities of such an upstart as Hiranyakashipu?

The inhabitants of the Carana planet said: O Lord, because You have destroyed the demon Hiranyakashipu, who was always a stake in the hearts of all honest men, we are now relieved, and we eternally take shelter of Your lotus feet, which award the conditioned soul liberation from material contamination.

The inhabitants of Yaksa-loka prayed: O controller of the twenty-four elements, we are considered the best servants of Your Lordship because of rendering services pleasing to You, yet we engaged as palanquin carriers by the order of Hiranyakashipu, the son of Diti. O Lord in the form of Narsimhadeva, You know how this demon gave trouble to everyone, but now You have killed him, and his body is disintegrating and mixing with the five material elements.

The inhabitants of Kimpurusa-loka said: We are insignificant living entities, and You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the supreme controller. Therefore how can we offer suitable prayers unto You? When this demon was condemned by devotees because they were disgusted with him, he was then killed by You.

The inhabitants of Vaitalika-loka said: Dear Lord, because of chanting Your spotless glories in great assemblies and arenas of sacrifice, we were accustomed to receiving great respect from everyone. This demon, however, usurped that position. Now, to our great fortune, You have



killed this great demon, exactly as one cures a chronic disease.

The Kinnaras said: O supreme controller, we are ever-existing servants of Your Lordship, but instead of rendering service to You, we were engaged by this demon in his service, constantly and without remuneration. This sinful man has now been killed by You. Therefore, O Lord Narsimhadeva, our lord and master, we offer our respectful obeisance unto You. Please now resume your role as our patron and master.

The associates of Lord Visnu in Vaikuntha offered this prayer: O Lord, our supreme source of shelter, today we have seen Your wonderful form as Lord Narsimhadeva which is meant for the good fortune of the world. O Lord, we can understand that Hiranyakashipu was the same Jaya who engaged in Your service but was cursed by *brāhmaṇas* and who thus received the body of a demon. We understand that his having now been killed is Your special mercy upon him.

— *Srimad Bhagavatam (Bhagavata Purana) » Canto 7: The Science of God » Chapter Eight : Verses:40-56, Translation.*

WHO CAN UNDERSTAND THE SUPREME LORD?

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

The activities of the Lord are always extraordinary and wonderful. His personal servants Jaya and Vijaya were His confidential friends, yet they were cursed, and they accepted bodies of demons. Again, in the family of one such demon, Prahlada Maharaja was caused to take birth to exhibit the behavior of an exalted devotee. The Lord then accepted the body of Narsimhadeva to kill that same demon, who by the Lord's own will had taken birth in a demoniac family. Therefore, who can understand the Lord's transcendental activities?

What to speak of understanding the transcendental activities of the Lord, no one can even understand the activities of His servants. In *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Madhya 23.39) it is said, *tānra vākya, kriyā, mudrā vijñeha nā bujhaya*: no one can understand the actions and statements of the Lord's servants. Therefore, what can be said of understanding the activities of the Supreme Lord Himself? Who can understand how Krishna is benefiting the entire world? The Lord is

Bhāgavata Mahāvīdyālaya

nityaṁ bhāgavata-sevayā

addressed as *duranta-śakti* or one whose will is insurmountable because no one can understand His potencies and how He acts.

— *Srimad Bhagavatam (Bhagavata Purana) » Canto 7: The Science of God » Chapter Eight : Verse 41, Purport.*

HOW DOES THE ABSOLUTE TRUTH MANIFEST?

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura

The Absolute Truth manifests in five ways: as *parā tattva, vyūha, vaibhava, antaryāmī, and arcā*. Each of these is the worshipable Lord. Apart from these manifestations, everything and everyone else is in the category of servant. The Lord accepts offerings from His servants, and each of these five manifestations of the Lord reciprocates with Their respective servants. There is no meaning to being dominant if there is no servitor over whom one predominates. Therefore each manifestation of the Absolute Truth has His own servants.

When one begins to worship a Deity, they use particular ingredients. Then they worship the Supersoul in the mind. Next, they worship the Lord's *vaibhava* incarnations. This is the progression.

For example, one may worship Lord Rama. Sri Rama appeared with His servants, notably Hanuman and Sugriva. One should worship the *vaibhava* incarnations only as They appear before Their servants. After worshipping the *vaibhava* manifestation, one worships the *vyūhas*. There are four *vyūhas*, namely Vasudeva, Sankarsana, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha. Ultimately one comes to the worship of the Absolute Truth, *parā-tattva*, Sri Krishna. To climb from the bottom of a hill to the top, we must go uphill, step by step. In our journey toward the Absolute Truth (*parā-tattva*) Krishna, we will find that worshipping the *arcā* will help us. Therefore *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* states:

*yena janna-śataih pūrvan, vāsudevah samārcita
tan-mukhe hari-nāmāni, sadā tiṣṭhanti bhārata*

“O descendant of Bharata, the holy names of Lord Visnu are always vibrating in the mouth of one who has previously worshiped Vasudeva perfectly for hundreds of lifetimes.”

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Immanent (esoterically situated), pure, unalloyed conscience is called *antaryāmī* or *caitya-guru*, the Supersoul. The *antaryāmī* is an internal entity. Because we have forgotten Krishna, we have come to this material world, far from our eternal home. We are meant to return. The first aid on our journey is Deity worship, then awareness of and focus on the *antaryāmī*, then worship of the *vaibhava* (plenary) incarnations, then worship of the *vyūha* (expanded) forms, and finally, full consciousness of the *parā-tattva*, the Absolute Truth.

Even after worshiping the Supreme Lord for many births a materialistic person cannot make the kind of advancement made by those who associate directly with guru and the Vaisnavas, hearing *hari-kathā* from them. The fortune we receive by faithfully hearing about Krishna from the most merciful spiritual master and the Vaisnavas cannot be achieved even if the Deity form reveals Himself to us due to immense compassion.

The Supersoul does not always speak to us directly. *Sāstra* states:

*śikṣā-guru ke ta' jāni kṛṣṇera svarūpa,
antaryāmī, bhakta-śreṣṭha ei dui rūpa*

One should know the instructing spiritual master to be the Personality of Krishna. Lord Krishna manifests Himself as the Supersoul and as the greatest devotee of the Lord. (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, 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. (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta Ādi 1.58*)

*antaryāmūśvarera ei rīti haye,
bāhire nā kahe, vastu prakāṣe hṛdaye*

The Supersoul within everyone's heart speaks not externally but from within. He directs the devotees in all respects, and that is His way of instruction. (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya 6.83*)

The *vaibhava* incarnations like Sri Rama speak with, instruct, and guide the jivas, ascertaining what is for their benefit and what is not. The



vyūhas' activities are of a different nature - more recreational and less instructive.

The supreme Absolute Truth, *parā-tattva*, manifests in four ways, but one can only understand this science by the Lord's mercy. *Śāstra* states:

*īśvarera kṛpā-leśa haya ta' yāhāre
sei ta' īśvara-tattva jānibāre pare*

If one receives but a minuscule amount of the Lord's favour, by dint of devotional service, they can understand the nature of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya 6.83*)

We think that the Lord's Deity is inanimate; but He is not a product of matter. He is *sat-cit-ānanda* (eternal, blissful and fully cognisant. Sri Gaurāgādeva said:

*īśvarera śrī-vidyāha sac-cid-ānandākāra,
se-vidyāha kaha sattva-guṇera vikāra*

The transcendental form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is complete in eternity, cognizance, and bliss. However, you describe this transcendental form as a product of material goodness. (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya 6.166*)

*śrī-vidyāha ye nāmāne, sei ta' pāśanḍī,
adāśya aspāśya, sei haya yama-danḍī*

One who does not accept the transcendental form of the Lord is certainly an agnostic. Such a person should be neither seen nor touched. Indeed, he is subject to be punished by Yamaraja. (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya 6.167*)

Elsewhere in *Śāstra* it is stated:

*pratimā naha tumi sākṣāt vrajendra-nandana
vipra lāgi' kara tumi akārya-karaṇa*

My dear Lord, You are not a statue; You are directly the son of Maharaja Nanda. Now, for the sake of the old brāhmaṇa, please do something You have never done before. (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya 5.96*)

The spiritual master helps us as the intermediary so that there will be a guide between the Deity, the worship, and the worshiper. Otherwise, if

nityaṁ bhāgavata-sevayā

the worshiper is not self-realized or if he lacks knowledge of the Deity form, his worship will turn into the idol worship of children. We do not need idol worship; we have a great need to worship the Lord.

The Deity is defined as that form that is offered worship. The Deity is non-different from the Lord. For our benefit the Supreme Lord manifests in the Deity. Ordinary people think the Deity only an idol because He cannot walk or take initiative. This is their illusion. If they learn to associate with pure devotees, their illusion can be removed.

Cultivation of the Absolute Truth depends heavily on hearing and chanting. That is why the *śāstra* states:

*brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavān jīva,
guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja
māli hañā kare sei bīja āropana,
śravaṇa-kīrtana-jale karaye secana*

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

When a person receives the seed of devotional service, he should take care of it by becoming a gardener and sowing the seed in his heart. If he systematically waters the seed by the process of *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana* [hearing and chanting], it will begin to sprout. (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya 19.151-152*)

It used to be that when the spiritual master glorified Krishna everyone listened. Nowadays it is just the opposite. Professional reciters sit on their guru's raised dais (*āsana*) to glorify Krishna without ever having become disciples themselves. A real disciple should first learn what understanding his spiritual master has and in which spirit he worships Krishna. It is stated:

*onī ajñāna-timirāndhasya, jñānāñjana-salākayā
caksūri unmīlitaṁ yenam tasmāi śrī-gurave namaḥ*

I was born in the darkest ignorance, and my spiritual master opened my eyes with the torch of knowledge. I offer my respectful obeisance unto him.



When the material cataract on our spiritual vision is removed, we will be from all misconceptions. Don't think that pretentious behaviour when approaching a spiritual master will grant one perfection. It would be foolish to think that you have gained a coconut just because you are standing under a coconut tree. One must climb the tree, pick the coconut from the treetop, and break its shell. Then only can you take advantage of the coconut and drink its nourishing and tasty water.

You should also not think that performing devotional practices (*bhajana*) under the guidance of guru and the Vaisnavas and practicing mystic yoga are the same. If devotion is absent from a process, it is useless. If we simply live comfortably while studying *Vedānta* and logic, we will not make tangible spiritual advancement. Even if we become geniuses in logic and *Vedānta*, we will not go to Vaikuntha. The only path to spiritual fortune is to perform worship of the Lord (*hari-bhajana*) under the expert direction of a bona fide guru.

— *Amṛtavani* » *Nectar of Instructions of Immortality* » *Compiled instructions of His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura* » *Touchstone Media.*

ALIGN ONESELF WITH GOOD

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura

“Without developing faith in the eternal and absolute truth of this world, a living entity can never achieve any benefit. If everything here is accepted as ‘good’, then what is the meaning of ‘bad’? If, whatever anyone does is good, then where

is the distinction between good and bad? Then puffed rice and candied sugar become one and the same. If there is no need for a living entity to perform any spiritual practices (*sādhana*), then what is the difference between a debauchee who is attached to prostitutes, and a *paramahansa* who is completely free from material desire? Then truth and illusion become one. Therefore, faith in the absolute and eternal truth is supremely beneficial - whereas attachment for temporary object is abominable. Maintaining neutrality for everything cannot be called good. Rather one should take side of the good and reject neutrality.”

(Sajjana Toṣaṇī 2/6)

WHO CAN REALIZE THE ABSOLUTE TRUTH ?

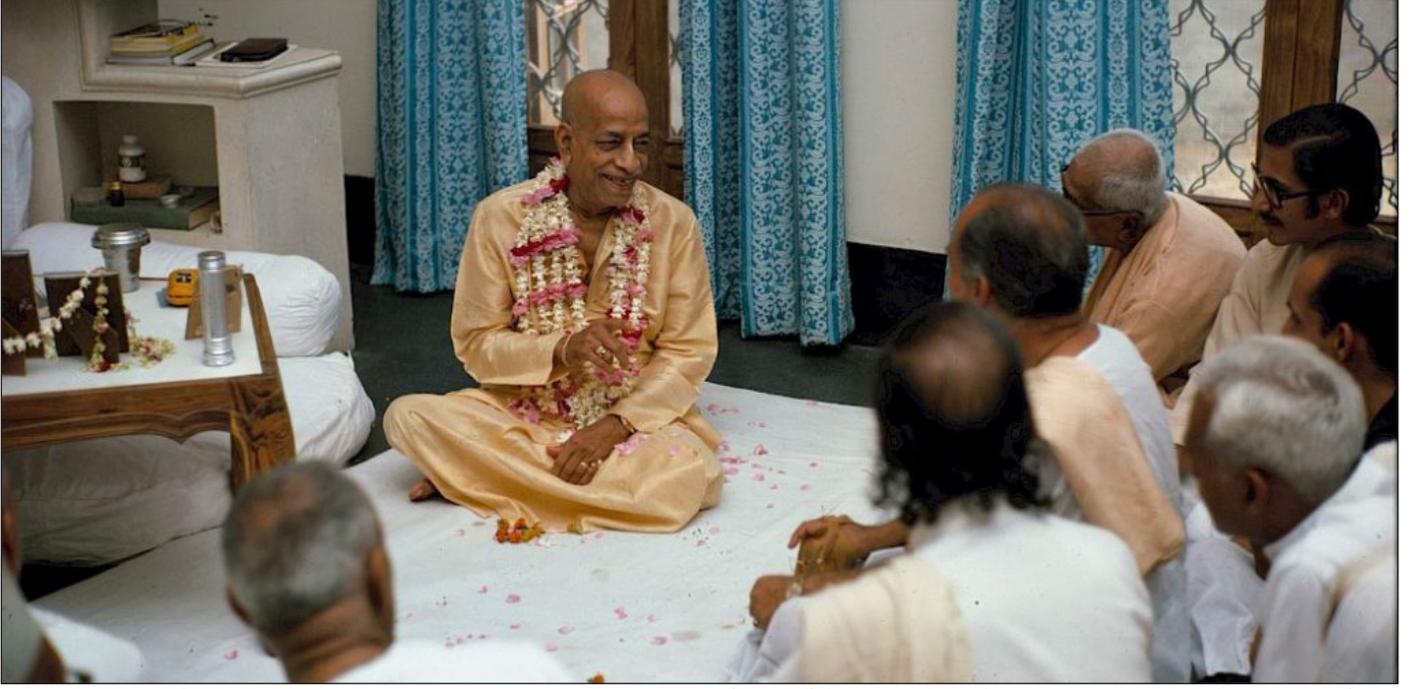
Srila Vrindavan Das Thakura

*hena 'bhakti' vine bhakta sevilenā haya
ataeva bhakta-sevāsarva-śāstre kaya*

The devotional service by which one perfectly understands the activities of the Supreme Lord here in this world cannot be attained without diligently serving His devotees. Therefore all the scriptures glorify the service of the devotees.

There is no alternative for a living entity to become liberated from the conditioned state other than to exclusively follow and serve the pure devotees of the Lord. This is the ultimate word in all education.

One who wishes to realise this fact should consider the following verses of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* verses.



*rahūgaṇaitat tapasā na yāti
na cejyayā nīrvapaṇād gṛhād vā
na cchandāsā naiva jalāgni-sūryair
vinā mahat-pāda-rajo-'bhīṣekam,*

“My dear King Rahugana, unless one takes the opportunity to smear his entire body with the dust of the lotus feet of great devotees, they cannot realize the Absolute Truth. Endeavours made by observing spiritual celibacy (*brahmacarya*), strictly following the rules and regulations of householder life, leaving home as a *vānaprastha*, accepting *sannyāsa*, or undergoing severe penances in the cold of winter or the heat of summer cannot yield this result. There are many other processes meant to make one understand the Absolute, but in truth, He is only revealed to one who has attained the mercy of a great devotee.” (*Bhāg.* 5.12.12)

*naīśāṁ matīś tāvād urukramāṅghrīm
spṛśaty anarthāpagamo yad-arīhaḥ
mahīyasāṁ pāda-rajo-'bhīṣekam
niṣkiñcanāmāṁ na vṛṇīta yāvāt*

“Unless they smear upon their bodies the dust of the lotus feet of a thoroughly purified Vaiṣṇava, materially minded persons cannot become attached to the lotus feet of the Lord, whose activities are always extraordinary. Only by becoming Krishna conscious and taking shelter at the lotus

feet of the Lord in this way can one become free from material contamination.” (*Bhāg.* 7.5.32).

— Śrī Caitanya Bhāgavata; Madhya-lhaṇḍa; 23.516, ŚrīlaVṛndāva-nadāsaṬhākura, Gauḍīya-bhāṣya Commentary of His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Maharaja.



!! Sri Sri Nitai Gaurchandra Jayati !!

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