

# PERFECT QUESTION - PERFECT ANSWER



After some time, the teachers Ṣaṇḍa and Amarka thought that Prahlāda Mahārāja was sufficiently educated in the diplomatic affairs of pacifying public leaders, appeasing them by giving them lucrative posts, dividing and ruling over them, and punishing them in cases of disobedience. Then, one day, after

Prahlāda's mother had personally washed the boy and dressed him nicely with sufficient ornaments, they presented him before his father.

When Hiraṇyakaśipu saw that his child had fallen at his feet and was offering obeisances, as an affectionate father he immediately began showering blessings upon the child and embraced him with both arms. A father naturally feels happy to embrace his son, and Hiraṇyakaśipu became very happy in this way.

Hiraṇyakaśipu seated Prahlāda Mahārāja on his lap and began smelling his head. With

affectionate tears gliding down from his eyes and moistening the child's smiling face, he spoke to his son as follows.

*My dear Prahlāda, my dear son, O long-lived one, for so much time you have heard many things from your teachers. Now please repeat to me whatever you think is the best of that knowledge.*

Prahlāda Mahārāja said: *Hearing and chanting about the transcendental holy name, form, qualities, paraphernalia and pastimes of Lord Viṣṇu, remembering them, serving the lotus feet of the Lord, offering the Lord respectful worship with sixteen types of*

*paraphernalia, offering prayers to the Lord, becoming His servant, considering the Lord one's best friend, and surrendering everything unto Him (in other words, serving Him with the body, mind and words) — these nine processes are accepted as pure devotional service. One who has dedicated his life to the service of Kṛṣṇa through these nine methods should be understood to be the most learned person, for he has acquired complete knowledge.*

After hearing these words of devotional service from the mouth of his son Prahlāda, Hiraṇyakaśipu was extremely angry. His lips

trembling, he spoke as follows to Ṣaṇḍa, the son of his guru, Śukrācārya.

*O unqualified, most heinous son of a brāhmaṇa, you have disobeyed my order and taken shelter of the party of my enemies. You have taught this poor boy about devotional service! What is this nonsense?*

The son of Śukrācārya, Hiraṇyakaśipu's spiritual master, said: O enemy of King Indra, O King! Whatever your son Prahlāda has said was not taught to him by me or anyone else. His spontaneous devotional service has naturally developed in him. Therefore, please give up your anger and do not unnecessarily

accuse us. It is not good to insult a brāhmaṇa in this way.

When Hiraṇyakaśipu received this reply from the teacher, he again addressed his son Prahlāda. Hiraṇyakaśipu said: You rascal, most fallen of our family, if you have not received this education from your teachers, where have you gotten it?

Prahlāda Mahārāja replied: Because of their uncontrolled senses, persons too addicted to materialistic life make progress toward hellish conditions and repeatedly chew that which has already been chewed. Their inclinations toward Kṛṣṇa are never aroused,

either by the instructions of others, by their own efforts, or by a combination of both.

Persons who are strongly entrapped by the consciousness of enjoying material life, and who have therefore accepted as their leader or guru a similar blind man attached to external sense objects, cannot understand that the goal of life is to return home, back to Godhead, and engage in the service of Lord Viṣṇu. As blind men guided by another blind man miss the right path and fall into a ditch, materially attached men led by another materially attached man are bound by the ropes of fruitive labor, which are made of very strong

ords, and they continue again and again in materialistic life, suffering the threefold miseries.

Unless they smear upon their bodies the dust of the lotus feet of a Vaiṣṇava completely freed from material contamination, persons very much inclined toward materialistic life cannot be attached to the lotus feet of the Lord, who is glorified for His uncommon activities. Only by becoming Kṛṣṇa conscious and taking shelter at the lotus feet of the Lord in this way can one be freed from material contamination.