

TEXT 22

प्रचेतस ऊचुः
नमो नमः चो शविनाशनाय
निरूपितोदारगुणाह्वयाय ।
मनोवचोवेगपुरोजवाय
सर्वाक्षमार्गेरगताध्वने नमः ॥ २२ ॥

*pracetasa ūcuḥ
namo namaḥ kleśa-vināśanāya
nirūpitodāra-guṇāhvayāya
mano-vaco-vega-ṭuro-javāya
sarvākṣa-mārgair agatādhvane namaḥ*

pracetasah ūcuḥ—the Pracetās said; *namaḥ*—obeisances; *namaḥ*—obeisances; *kleśa*—material distress; *vināśanāya*—unto one who destroys; *nirūpita*—settled; *udāra*—magnanimous; *guṇa*—qualities; *āhvayāya*—whose name; *manaḥ*—of the mind; *vacaḥ*—of speech; *vega*—the speed; *ṭuraḥ*—before; *javāya*—whose speed; *sarva-akṣa*—of all material senses; *mārgaiḥ*—by the paths; *agata*—not perceivable; *adhvane*—whose course; *namaḥ*—we offer our respects.

The Pracetās spoke as follows: Dear Lord, You relieve all kinds of material distress. Your magnanimous transcendental qualities and holy name are all-auspicious. This conclusion is already settled. You can go faster than the speed of mind and words. You cannot be perceived by material senses. We therefore offer You respectful obeisances again and again.

The word *nirūpita*, meaning "concluded," is very significant in this verse. No one has to conduct research work to find God or make progress in spiritual knowledge. Everything is conclusively there in the *Vedas*. Therefore the Lord says in *Bhagavad-gītā* (15.15), *vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyah*: understanding the Supreme Personality of Godhead through the process of the *Vedas* is perfect and conclusive. The *Vedas* state, *ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ*: [Cc. Madhya 17.136] the transcendental names, forms, qualities, paraphernalia and pastimes of

the Lord cannot be understood by our blunt material senses. *Sevonmukhe hi jihvādau svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ*: when a devotee engages his senses favorably in devotional service, the Lord, through His causeless mercy, reveals Himself to the devotee. This is the conclusive Vedic process. The *Vedas* also indicate that simply by chanting the holy names of the Lord one can without a doubt become spiritually advanced. We cannot approach the Supreme Personality of Godhead by the speed of mind or words, but if we stick to devotional service we can easily and quickly approach Him. In other words, the Supreme Lord is attracted by devotional service, and He can approach us more swiftly than we can approach Him with our mental speculation. The Lord has stated that He is beyond the range of mental speculation and the speed of thought, yet He can be approached easily by His causeless mercy. Thus only by His causeless mercy can He be attained. Other methods will not be effective.

TEXT 23

शुद्धाय शान्ताय नमः स्वनिष्ठया
मनस्यपार्थं विलसद्द्वयाय ।
नमो जगत्स्थानलयोदयेषु
गृहीतमायागुणविग्रहाय ॥ २३ ॥

*śuddhāya śāntāya namaḥ sva-niṣṭhayā
manasy apārtham vilasad-dvayāya
namo jagat-sthāna-layodayeṣu
grhīta-māyā-guṇa-vigrahāya*

śuddhāya—unto the unadulterated; *śāntāya*—unto the most peaceful; *namaḥ*—we offer our obeisances; *sva-niṣṭhayā*—by being situated in one's position; *manasi*—in the mind; *apārtham*—without any meaning; *vilasat*—appearing; *dvayāya*—in whom the dual world; *namaḥ*—obeisances; *jagat*—of the cosmic manifestation; *sthāna*—maintenance; *laya*—annihilation; *udayeṣu*—and for creation; *grhīta*—accepted; *māyā*—material; *guṇa*—of the modes of nature; *vigrahāya*—the forms.

Dear Lord, we beg to offer our obeisances unto You. When the mind is fixed upon You, the world of duality, although a place for material enjoyment, appears meaningless. Your transcendental form is full of

transcendental bliss. We therefore offer our respects unto You. Your appearances as Lord Brahmā, Lord Viṣṇu and Lord Śiva are meant for the purpose of creating, maintaining and annihilating this cosmic manifestation.

A pure devotee, whose mind is always engaged in the service of the Lord, can certainly appreciate the impermanence of this material world. Although such a devotee may be engaged in executing material activities, this stage is called *anāsakti*. As explained by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, *anāsaktasya viṣayān yathārham upayuñjataḥ*. A devotee is always unattached to material activities because in the liberated stage his mind is always fixed on the lotus feet of the Lord.

This material world is called *dvaita*, the world of duality. A devotee knows very well that everything within this material world is but a manifestation of the Supreme Lord's energy. To maintain the three modes of material nature, the Supreme Lord takes on different forms as Lord Brahmā, Lord Viṣṇu and Lord Śiva. Unaffected by the modes of material nature, the Lord takes on different forms to create, maintain and annihilate this cosmic manifestation. The conclusion is that although the pure devotee appears to engage in material activities in the service of the Lord, he knows very well that material enjoyment for sense gratification has no use whatsoever.

TEXT 24

नमो विशुद्धसत्त्वाय हरये हरिमेधसे ।
वासुदेवाय कृष्णाय प्रभवे सर्वसात्वताम् ॥ २४ ॥

*namo viśuddha-sattvāya
haraye hari-medhase
vāsudevāya kṛṣṇāya
prabhava sarva-sātvatām*

namaḥ—obeisances; *viśuddha-sattvāya*—unto You, whose existence is free from all material influence; *haraye*—who takes away all miserable conditions of devotees; *hari-medhase*—whose brain works only for the deliverance of the conditioned soul; *vāsudevāya*—the all-pervading Supreme Personality of Godhead; *kṛṣṇāya*—unto Kṛṣṇa; *prabhava*—who increases the influence; *sarva-sātvatām*—of all kinds of devotees.

Dear Lord, we offer our respectful obeisances unto You because Your existence is completely independent of all material influences. Your Lordship always takes away the devotee's miserable conditions, for Your brain plans how to do so. You live everywhere as Paramātmā; therefore You are known as Vāsudeva. You also accept Vasudeva as Your father, and You are celebrated by the name Kṛṣṇa. You are so kind that You always increase the influence of all kinds of devotees.

In the previous verse it has been said (*gr̥hīta-māyā-guṇa-vigrahāya*) that the Lord accepts three kinds of bodies (Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Śiva) for the purposes of creating, maintaining and annihilating the cosmic manifestation. The three predominating deities of the material universe (Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva) are called *guṇa-avatāras*. There are many kinds of incarnations of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and the first incarnations within this material world are Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara (Śiva). Out of these three, Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva accept material bodies, but Lord Viṣṇu does not accept a material body. Lord Viṣṇu is therefore known as *viśuddha-sattva*. His existence is completely free from the contamination of the material modes of nature. One should therefore not think that Lord Viṣṇu is in the same category with Lord Brahmā and Śiva. The *śāstras* forbid us to think in this way.

*yas tu nārāyaṇam devam
brahma-rudrādi-daivataiḥ
samatvenaiva vīkṣeta
sa pāṣaṇḍī bhaved dhruvam
[Cc. Madhya 18.116]*

One who considers Lord Viṣṇu to be in the same category with *devas* like Lord Brahmā or Lord Śiva or who thinks Lord Brahmā and Śiva to be equal to Lord Viṣṇu is to be considered as *pāṣaṇḍī* (a faithless nonbeliever). Therefore in this verse Lord Viṣṇu is distinguished in the words *namo viśuddha-sattvāya*. Although a living entity like us, Lord Brahmā is exalted due to his pious activities; therefore he is given the high post of Brahmā. Lord Śiva is not actually like a living entity, but he is not the Supreme Personality of Godhead. His position is somewhere between Viṣṇu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and Brahmā, the

living entity. Lord Śiva is therefore explained in *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.45) in this way:

*kṣīraṁ yathā dadhi vikāra-viśeṣa-yogāt
sañjāyate na hi tataḥ pṛthag asti hetoḥ
yaḥ śambhutām api tathā samupaiti kāryād
govindam ādi-ṭuruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

Lord Śiva is considered to be like yogurt (*dadhi*). Yogurt is nothing but transformed milk; nonetheless, yogurt cannot be accepted as milk. Similarly, Lord Śiva holds almost all the powers of Lord Viṣṇu, and he is also above the qualities of the living entity, but he is not exactly like Viṣṇu, just as yogurt, although transformed milk, is not exactly like milk.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead is also described herein as *vāsudevāya kṛṣṇāya*. Kṛṣṇa is the original Supreme Personality of Godhead, and all Viṣṇu expansions are His plenary portions or portions of His plenary portions (known as *svāmśa* and *kalā*). The *svāmśa*, or direct expansion, is also called *aṁśa*. All *viṣṇu-tattvas* are *svāmśa*, direct parts and parcels of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is known as Vāsudeva because He appeared in this material world as the son of Vasudeva. Similarly, He is known as Devakī-nandana, Yaśodā-nandana, Nanda-nandana and so on.

Again and again the Lord is very much interested in increasing the influence of His devotees. Therefore He is described herein as *prabhava sarva-sātvatām*. The *sātvata* community is a community of Vaiṣṇavas, pure devotees of the Lord. The Supreme Personality of Godhead has unlimited powers, and He wants to see that His devotees are also entrusted with unlimited powers. A devotee of the Lord is always, therefore, distinguished from all other living entities.

The word *hari* means "one who takes away all miserable conditions," and *hari-medhase* means that the Lord is always planning ways to deliver the conditioned soul from the clutches of *māyā*. The Lord is so kind that He personally incarnates to deliver the conditioned souls, and whenever He comes, He makes His plans.

paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām

*vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām
dharma-saṁsthāpanārthāya
sambhavāmi yuge yuge*

"To deliver the pious and to annihilate the miscreants, as well as to reestablish the principles of religion, I advent Myself millennium after millennium." (Bg. 4.8)

Since the Lord delivers all conditioned souls from the clutches of *māyā*, He is known as *hari-medhas*. In the list of incarnations, Kṛṣṇa is described as the supreme and original Personality of Godhead.

*ete cāṁśa-kalāḥ puṁsaḥ
kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam
indrāri-vyākulaṁ lokaṁ
mṛḍayanti yuge yuge
(SB 1.3.28)*

Kṛṣṇa, the original Personality of Godhead, appears in this material world when the demigods, who are devotees of the Lord, are disturbed by the demons.

TEXT 25

**नमः कमलनाभाय नमः कमलमालिने ।
नमः कमलपादाय नमस्ते कमलेक्षण ॥ २५ ॥**

*namaḥ kamala-nābhāya
namaḥ kamala-māline
namaḥ kamala-pādāya
namas te kamalekṣaṇa*

namaḥ—we offer our respectful obeisances; *kamala-nābhāya*—unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead, from whose abdomen the original lotus flower originated; *namaḥ*—obeisances; *kamala-māline*—who is always decorated with a garland of lotus flowers; *namaḥ*—obeisances; *kamala-pādāya*—whose feet are as beautiful and fragrant as the lotus flower; *namaḥ te*—obeisances unto You; *kamala-īkṣaṇa*—whose eyes are exactly like the petals of the lotus flower.

Dear Lord, we offer our respectful obeisances unto You because from Your abdomen sprouts the lotus flower, the origin of all living entities. You are always decorated with a lotus garland, and Your feet resemble the lotus flower with all its fragrance. Your eyes are also like the petals of a lotus flower. Therefore we always offer our respectful obeisances unto You.

The word *kamala-nābhāya* indicates that Lord Viṣṇu is the origin of the material creation. From the abdomen of Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, a lotus flower sprouts. Lord Brahmā, the first creature of the universe, is born from this lotus flower, and subsequently, Lord Brahmā creates the whole universe. The origin of all creation is therefore Lord Viṣṇu, and the origin of all the *viṣṇu-tattvas* is Lord Kṛṣṇa. Consequently, Kṛṣṇa is the origin of everything. This is also confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.8):

*aham sarvasya prabhavo
mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate
iti matvā bhajante mām
budhā bhāva-samanvitāḥ*

"I am the source of all spiritual and material worlds. Everything emanates from Me. The wise who perfectly know this engage in My devotional service and worship Me with all their hearts." Lord Kṛṣṇa says: "I am the origin of everything." Therefore whatever we see emanates from Him. This is also confirmed in the *Vedānta-sūtra*. *Janmādy asya yataḥ*: [SB 1.1.1] "The Absolute Truth is He from whom everything emanates."

TEXT 26

नमः कमलकिञ्जल्कपिश्रामलवाससे ।
सर्वभूतनिवासाय नमोऽयुंक्षमहि साक्षिणे ॥ २६ ॥

*namaḥ kamala-kiñjalka-
piśaṅgāmala-vāsase
sarva-bhūta-nivāsāya
namo 'yukṣmahi sākṣiṇe*

namaḥ—obeisances; *kamala-kiñjalka*—like the saffron in a lotus flower;

piśaṅga—yellowish; *amala*—spotless; *vāsase*—unto Him whose garment; *sarva-bhūta*—of all living entities; *nivāsāya*—the shelter; *namaḥ*—obeisances; *ayunḅsmahi*—let us offer; *sākṣiṇe*—unto the supreme witness.

Dear Lord, the garment You have put on is yellowish in color, like the saffron of a lotus flower, but it is not made of anything material. Since You live in everyone's heart, You are the direct witness of all the activities of all living entities. We offer our respectful obeisances unto You again and again.

In this verse the dress of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and His all-pervasive nature are described. The Lord puts on a dress that is yellow, but such a garment is never to be considered material. The garments of the Lord are also the Lord. They are nondifferent from the Lord because they are spiritual in nature.

The word *sarva-bhūta-nivāsāya* further clarifies how Lord Viṣṇu lives in everyone's heart and acts as the direct witness of all the activities of the conditioned soul. Within this material world the conditioned soul has desires and acts in accordance with these desires. All these acts are observed by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is also confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā* (15.15):

*sarvasya cāham hṛdi sanniviṣṭo
mattaḥ smṛtir jñānam apohanam ca*

"I am seated in everyone's heart, and from Me come remembrance, knowledge and forgetfulness." The Lord is present in everyone's heart, and He gives the living entity intelligence. According to the desires of the living entity, the Lord makes him remember or forget. If the living entity is demoniac and wants to forget the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Lord gives him the intelligence to be able to forget the Supreme Lord forever. Similarly, when a devotee wants to serve the Supreme Lord, the Lord, as Paramātmā, gives the devotee the intelligence to make progress in devotional service. The Lord directly witnesses our activities and experiences our desires. The Supreme Lord gives us the facilities to act in the way we wish.

TEXT 27

रूपं भगवता त्वेतदशेष्चो शसङ्क्षयम् ।
आविष्कृतं नः चिा दानां किमन्यदनुकम्पितम् ॥ २७ ॥

*rūpaṁ bhagavatā tv etad
aśeṣa-kleśa-saṅkṣayam
āviṣkṛtaṁ naḥ kliṣṭānām
kim anyad anukampitam*

rūpaṁ—form; *bhagavatā*—by Your Lordship; *tv*—but; *etat*—this; *aśeṣa*—unlimited; *kleśa*—miseries; *saṅkṣayam*—which dissipates; *āviṣkṛtam*—revealed; *naḥ*—of us; *kliṣṭānām*—who are suffering from material conditions; *kim anyat*—what to speak of; *anukampitam*—those to whom You are always favorably disposed.

Dear Lord, we conditioned souls are always covered by ignorance in the bodily conception of life. We therefore always prefer the miserable conditions of material existence. To deliver us from these miserable conditions, You have advented Yourself in this transcendental form. This is evidence of Your unlimited causeless mercy upon those of us who are suffering in this way. What, then, to speak of the devotees to whom You are always so favorably disposed?

When the Lord appears in His original form, He acts to deliver the pious and annihilate the miscreants (Bg. 4.8). Although He annihilates the demons, He nonetheless benefits them. It is said that all the living entities who died on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra attained their original constitutional position (*svarūpa*) because they had the chance to see Kṛṣṇa face to face riding in the chariot of Arjuna. On the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra, superficially two things were going on—the demons were being killed, and the devotee, Arjuna, was being protected. However, the results were the same for everyone. Thus it is said that the appearance of the Lord diminishes all kinds of miserable conditions caused by material existence.

It is clearly stated in this verse that this form (*aśeṣa-kleśa-saṅkṣayam*) is meant to diminish all the miserable conditions experienced in life not only by the devotees but by all others. *Āviṣkṛtaṁ naḥ kliṣṭānām*. The

Pracetās identified themselves as common men. *Kim anyad anukampitam*. The devotees are always favorably accepted by the Lord. The Lord shows all mercy not only to conditioned souls but also to the devotees, who are already liberated due to their devotional service. The form of the Lord as worshiped in the temples is called *arca-vigraha* or *arcāvatāra*, the worshipable form, the Deity incarnation. This facility is offered to neophyte devotees so that they can see the real form of the Lord face to face and offer their respectful obeisances and sacrifices in the form of *arcā*. Through such facilities the neophytes gradually invoke their original Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Deity worship in the form of temple worship is the most valuable benediction given by the Lord to beginners. All neophytes must therefore engage in the worship of the Lord by keeping the *arcā-vigraha* (*arcāvatāra*) at home or in the temple.

TEXT 28

एतावत्त्वं हि विभुभिर्भाव्यं दीनेषु वत्सलैः ।
यदनुस्मर्यते काले स्वबुद्ध्याभद्ररन्धन ॥ २८ ॥

*etāvat tvam hi vibhubhir
bhāvyaṁ dīneṣu vatsalaiḥ
yat anusmaryate kāle
sva-buddhyābhadra-randhana*

etāvat—thus; *tvam*—Your Lordship; *hi*—certainly; *vibhubhiḥ*—by expansions; *bhāvyaṁ*—to be conceived; *dīneṣu*—unto the humble devotees; *vatsalaiḥ*—compassionate; *yat*—which; *anusmaryate*—is always remembered; *kāle*—in due course of time; *sva-buddhyā*—by one's devotional service; *abhadra-randhana*—O killer of all inauspiciousness.

Dear Lord, You are the killer of all inauspicious things. You are compassionate upon Your poor devotees through the expansion of Your arcā-vigraha. You should certainly think of us as Your eternal servants.

The form of the Lord known as *arcā-vigraha* is an expansion of His unlimited potencies. When the Lord is gradually satisfied with the service of a devotee, in due course of time He accepts the devotee as one of His many unalloyed servants. By nature, the Lord is very compassionate; therefore the service of neophyte devotees is accepted by

the Lord. As confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.26):

*patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyam
yo me bhaktyā prayacchati
tad ahaṁ bhakty-upahṛtam
aśnāmi prayatātmanah*

"If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, fruit or water, I will accept it." The devotee offers eatables in the form of vegetables, fruits, leaves and water to the *arcā-vigraha*. The Lord, being *bhakta-vatsala*, compassionate upon His devotees, accepts these offerings. Atheists may think that the devotees are engaged in idol worship, but the fact is different. Janārdana, the Supreme Lord, accepts *bhāva*, the attitude of service. The neophyte devotee engaged in the worship of the Lord may not understand the value of such worship, but the Supreme Lord, being *bhakta-vatsala*, accepts His devotee and in due course of time takes him home.

In this connection there is a story about a *brāhmaṇa* who was offering sweet rice to the Lord within his mind. The *brāhmaṇa* had no money nor any means of worshiping the Deity, but within his mind he arranged everything nicely. He had gold pots to bring water from the sacred rivers to wash the Deity, and he offered the Deity very sumptuous food, including sweet rice. Once, before he offered the sweet rice, he thought that it was too hot, and he thought, "Oh, let me test it. My, it is very hot." When he put his finger in the sweet rice to test it, his finger was burned and his meditation broken. Although he was offering food to the Lord within his mind, the Lord accepted it nonetheless. Consequently, the Lord in Vaikuṅṭha immediately sent a chariot to bring the *brāhmaṇa* back home, back to Godhead. Thus it is the duty of every sincere devotee to accept the *arcā-vigraha* at home or in the temple and worship the form of the Lord as advised in authorized scriptures and directed by the spiritual master.

TEXT 29

येनोपशान्तिर्भूतानां क्षुलुकानामपीहताम् ।
अन्तर्हितोऽन्तर्हृदये कस्मान्नो वेद नाशिषः ॥ २९ ॥

yenopaśāntir bhūtānām
kṣullakānām apīhatām
antarhito 'ntar-hṛdaye
kasmān no veda nāśiṣaḥ

yena—by which process; upaśāntiḥ—satisfaction of all desires; bhūtānām—of the living entities; kṣullakānām—very much fallen; api—although; īhatām—desiring many things; antarhitaḥ—hidden; antaḥ-hṛdaye—in the core of the heart; kasmāt—why; naḥ—our; veda—He knows; na—not; āśiṣaḥ—desires.

When the Lord, out of His natural compassion, thinks of His devotee, by that process only are all desires of the neophyte devotee fulfilled. The Lord is situated in every living entity's heart, although the living entity may be very insignificant. The Lord knows everything about the living entity, including all his desires. Although we are very insignificant, why should the Lord not know our desires?

A very advanced devotee does not think himself advanced. He is always very humble. The Supreme Personality of Godhead in His plenary expansion as the Paramātmā, or Supersoul, sits in everyone's heart and can understand the attitudes and desires of His devotees. The Lord also gives opportunity to the nondevotees to fulfill their desires, as confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā* (*mattaḥ smṛtir jñānam apohanam ca* [Bg. 15.15]).

Whatever a living entity desires, however insignificant he may be, is noted by the Lord, who gives him a chance to fulfill his desires. If the desires of the nondevotees are fulfilled, why not those of the devotee? A pure devotee simply wants to engage in the service of the Lord without material desire, and if he wants this within the core of his heart, where the Lord is situated, and if he is without ulterior motive, why should the Lord not understand? If a sincere devotee renders service to the Lord or to the *arcā-vigraha*, the form of the Lord, all his activities prove successful because the Lord is present within his heart and understands his sincerity. Thus if a devotee, with all confidence, goes on discharging the prescribed duties of devotional service, he will ultimately attain success.

TEXT 30

असावेव वरोऽस्माकमीप्सितो जगतः पते ।

प्रसन्नो भगवान् येषामपवर्गगुरुर्गतिः ॥ ३० ॥

*asāv eva varo 'smākam
īpsito jagataḥ pate
prasanno bhagavān yeṣām
apavarga-gurur gatiḥ*

asau—that; *eva*—certainly; *varaḥ*—benediction; *asmākam*—our; *īpsitaḥ*—desired; *jagataḥ*—of the universe; *pate*—O Lord; *prasannaḥ*—satisfied; *bhagavān*—the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *yeṣām*—with whom; *apavarga*—of transcendental loving service; *guruḥ*—the teacher; *gatiḥ*—the ultimate goal of life.

O Lord of the universe, You are the actual teacher of the science of devotional service. We are satisfied that Your Lordship is the ultimate goal of our lives, and we pray that You will be satisfied with us. That is our benediction. We do not desire anything other than Your full satisfaction.

In this verse the words *apavarga-gurur gatiḥ* are very significant. According to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.11), the Supreme Lord is the ultimate fact of the Absolute Truth. *Brahmeti paramātmēti bhagavān iti śabdyate*. The Absolute Truth is realized in three features—impersonal Brahman, localized Paramātmā and ultimately the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Bhagavān. The word *apavarga* means "liberation." *pavarga* means "material existence." In material existence, one always works very hard but is ultimately baffled. One then dies and has to accept another body to work very hard again. This is the cycle of material existence. *Apavarga* means just the opposite. Instead of working hard like cats and dogs, one returns home, back to Godhead. Liberation begins with merging into the Brahman effulgence of the Supreme Lord. This conception is held by the *jñānī-sampradāya*, philosophical speculators, but realization of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is higher. When a devotee understands that the Lord is satisfied, liberation, or merging into the effulgence of the Lord, is not very difficult. One has to approach the Supreme Personality of Godhead through the impersonal Brahman effulgence just as one has to approach the sun through the sunshine. It is not very difficult to merge into the impersonal effulgence

of the Lord, Brahman, if one has satisfied the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

TEXT 31

वरं वृणीमहेऽथापि नाथ त्वत्परतः परात् ।
न ह्यन्तस्त्वद्विभूतीनां सोऽनन्त इति गीयसे ॥ ३१ ॥

varam vṛṇīmahe 'thāpi
nātha tvat parataḥ parāt
na hy antas tvad-vibhūtīnām
so 'nanta iti gīyase

varam—benediction; *vṛṇīmahe*—we shall pray for; *atha api*—therefore; *nātha*—O Lord; *tvat*—from You; *parataḥ parāt*—beyond the transcendence; *na*—not; *hi*—certainly; *antaḥ*—end; *tvat*—Your; *vibhūtīnām*—of opulences; *saḥ*—You; *anantaḥ*—unlimited; *iti*—thus; *gīyase*—are celebrated.

Dear Lord, we shall therefore pray for Your benediction because You are the Supreme, beyond all transcendence, and because there is no end to Your opulences. Consequently, You are celebrated by the name Ananta.

There was no need for the Pracetās to ask any benediction from the Supreme Lord because the devotees are simply satisfied by the presence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Dhruva Mahārāja practiced severe austerities and penances to see the Supreme Lord, and his intention was to receive benediction from the Lord. He wanted to acquire the throne of his father—or attain an even better position—but when he was actually in the presence of the Supreme Lord, he forgot everything. He said, "My dear Lord, I do not wish to ask any benediction." This is the actual position of the devotee. The devotee simply wants to be in the presence of the Supreme Lord—either in this world or in the next—and engage in His service. That is the ultimate goal and benediction for the devotees.

The Lord asked the Pracetās to pray for some benediction, and they said, "What kind of benediction should we pray for? The Lord is unlimited, and there are unlimited benedictions." The purport is that if one must ask for benediction, he must ask for unlimited benediction. The words

tvat parataḥ are very significant in this verse. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is *parataḥ parāt*. The word *para* means "transcendental, beyond this material world." The impersonal Brahman effulgence is beyond this material world, and this is called *param padam*. *Āruhya kṛcchreṇa param padam* (SB 10.2.32). Merging into the impersonal effulgence of the Lord is called *param padam*, but there is a higher transcendental position, which is the association of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. *Brahmeti paramātmēti bhagavān iti śabdyate* (SB 1.2.11). The Absolute Truth is realized first as impersonal Brahman, then as Paramātmā, and finally as Bhagavān. Thus the Personality of Godhead, Bhagavān, is *parataḥ parāt*, beyond Brahman and Paramātmā realization. In this connection, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī points out that *parataḥ parāt* means "better than the best." The best is the spiritual world, and it is known as Brahman. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, however, is known as Parabrahman. Therefore *parataḥ parāt* means "better than Brahman realization."

As will be explained in the next verses, the Pracetās planned to ask the Lord for something that has no limit. The Lord's pastimes, qualities, forms and names are all unlimited. There is no limit to His name, forms, pastimes, creation and paraphernalia. The living entity cannot conceive of the unlimitedness of the unlimited. However, if living entities are engaged in hearing about the unlimited potencies of the Supreme Lord, they are factually connected directly to the unlimited. Such understanding of the unlimited becomes unlimited by hearing and chanting.

TEXT 32

पारिजातेऽञ्जसा लब्धे साररोऽन्यन्न सेवते ।
त्वदङ्घ्रिमूलमासाद्य साक्षात्किं किं वृणीमहि ॥ ३२ ॥

pārijāte 'ñjasā labdhe
sāraṅgo 'nyan na sevate
tvad-aṅghri-mūlam āsādya
sākṣāt kiṁ kiṁ vṛṇīmahi

pārijāte—the celestial tree known as *pārijāta*; *añjasā*—completely;
labdhe—having achieved; *sāraṅgaḥ*—a bee; *anyat*—other; *na sevate*—

does not resort to; *tvat-aṅghri*—Your lotus feet; *mūlam*—the root of everything; *āsādyā*—having approached; *sākṣāt*—directly; *kim*—what; *kim*—what; *vṛṇīmahi*—may we ask.

Dear Lord, when the bee approaches the celestial tree called the *pārijāta*, it certainly does not leave the tree, because there is no need for such action. Similarly, when we have approached Your lotus feet and taken shelter of them, what further benediction may we ask of You?

When a devotee is actually engaged in the service of the lotus feet of the Lord, his engagement in itself is so perfect that there is no need to ask for further benediction. When a bee approaches the *pārijāta* tree, it gets unlimited supplies of honey. There is no need to go to another tree. If one is fixed in the service of the lotus feet of the Lord, there is unlimited transcendental bliss, and as such there is no need to ask for further benediction. The *pārijāta* tree is not commonly found within this material world. The *pārijāta* tree is also known as *kalpa-vṛkṣa*, or the wish-fulfilling tree. One can get anything he desires from such a tree. In the material world, one can get oranges from an orange tree or mangoes from a mango tree, but there is no possibility of getting oranges from a mango tree or vice versa. However, one can get whatever he wants from the *pārijāta* tree—oranges, mangoes, bananas and so on. This tree is found in the spiritual world. *Cintāmaṇi-prakara-sadmasu kalpa-vṛkṣa-lakṣāvṛteṣu* [Bs. 5.29]. The spiritual world, *cintāmaṇi-dhāma*, is surrounded by these *kalpa-vṛkṣa* trees, but the *pārijāta* tree is also found in the kingdom of Indra, that is, on Indra's heavenly planet. This *pārijāta* tree was brought by Kṛṣṇa to please Satyabhāmā, one of His queens, and this tree was implanted in the Dvārakā mansions constructed for the queens. The lotus feet of the Lord are exactly like the *pārijāta* trees, or wish-fulfilling trees, and the devotees are like bumblebees. They are always attracted by the lotus feet of the Lord.

TEXT 33

**यावत्ते मायया स्पृष्टा भ्रमाम इह कर्मभिः ।
तावद्भवत्प्रसरानां सराः स्यान्नो भवे भवे ॥ ३३ ॥**

yāvat te māyayā sprṣṭā

*bhramāma iha karmabhiḥ
tāvad bhavat-prasaṅgānām
saṅgaḥ syān no bhava bhava*

yāvat—as long as; *te*—Your; *māyayā*—by the illusory energy; *spṛṣṭāḥ*—contaminated; *bhramāmaḥ*—we wander; *iha*—in this material world; *karmabhiḥ*—by the reaction of fruitive activities; *tāvad*—so long; *bhavat-prasaṅgānām*—of Your loving devotees; *saṅgaḥ*—association; *syāt*—let there be; *naḥ*—our; *bhava bhava*—in every species of life.

Dear Lord, as long as we have to remain within this material world due to our material contamination and wander from one type of body to another and from one planet to another, we pray that we may associate with those who are engaged in discussing Your pastimes. We pray for this benediction life after life, in different bodily forms and on different planets.

This is the best benediction that a devotee can ask of the Supreme Lord. This is also confirmed by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu: *sthāne sthitāḥ śrutigatām tanu-vān-manobhiḥ* (SB 10.14.3). One may be in one position or another according to destiny, but in any case one must continue to hear about the activities and pastimes of the Supreme Lord, regardless of circumstances. A pure devotee does not pray for liberation or for cessation of the cycle of birth and death because he does not consider that important. The most important thing for a devotee is getting a chance to hear about the pastimes and glories of the Lord. The devotees who engage in the service of the Lord in this world will have the same opportunity in the spiritual world also. Thus for a devotee, everything is in the spiritual world, for as long as he can hear about the pastimes of the Lord, or wherever he can chant, the Lord is personally present.

Tatra tiṣṭhāmi nārada yatra gāyanti mad-bhaktāḥ. When the pure devotees assemble to chant, hear and talk about the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the place where they assemble becomes Vaikuṅṭha. For the devotee there is no need to pray to the Lord for transferal to the Vaikuṅṭha world. A pure devotee can create Vaikuṅṭha or Vṛndāvana anywhere simply by chanting the glories of the Lord without offense. The Pracetās pray for an opportunity to hear of the glories of the Lord in every form of life (*bhava bhava*). A living entity transmigrates from

one body to another. The devotee is not particularly eager to stop this process. Caitanya Mahāprabhu prays, *mama janmani janmaniśvare bhavatād bhaktir ahaitukī tvayi*: "My dear Lord, life after life may I be fixed in Your pure devotional service." Out of humility, a devotee considers himself unfit to be transferred to the spiritual world. He always thinks himself contaminated by the modes of material nature. Nor is there any need for a devotee to ask to be freed from the modes of material nature. Devotional service itself is in the transcendental position; therefore there is no question of asking for this special facility. The conclusion is that a pure devotee is not anxious to stop the repetition of birth and death, but is always eager to associate with other devotees who are engaged in chanting and hearing about the glories of the Lord.

TEXT 34

तुल्याम लवेनापि न स्वर्गं नापुनर्भवम् ।
भगवत्सरिस्रास्य मर्त्यानां किमुताशिषः ॥ ३४ ॥

*tulayāma lavenāpi
na svargam nāpunar-bhavam
bhagavat-saṅgi-saṅgasya
martyānām kim utāśiṣaḥ*

tulayāma—we compare; *lavena*—with a moment; *api*—even; *na*—not; *svargam*—attainment of the heavenly planets; *na*—not; *apunaḥ-bhavam*—merging into the Brahman effulgence; *bhagavat*—of the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *saṅgi*—with associates; *saṅgasya*—of association; *martyānām*—of persons who are destined to die; *kim uta*—how much less; *āśiṣaḥ*—benedictions.

Even a moment's association with a pure devotee cannot be compared to being transferred to heavenly planets or even merging into the Brahman effulgence in complete liberation. For living entities who are destined to give up the body and die, association with pure devotees is the highest benediction.

The great saint Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, a devotee of Lord Caitanya, has stated: *kaivalyaṁ narakāyate tridaśa-pūr ākāśa-puṣpāyate*. For a pure

devotee, *kaivalya*, merging into the existence of Brahman, the Brahman effulgence, is no better than living in hell. Similarly, he considers promotion to heavenly planets (*tridaśa-pūr*) just another kind of phantasmagoria. In other words, a pure devotee does not place much value in the destination of the *karmīs* (the heavenly planets) or in the destination of the *jñānīs* (merging into the Brahman effulgence). A pure devotee considers a moment's association with another pure devotee to be far superior to residing in a heavenly planet or merging in the Brahman effulgence. The topmost benediction for those who are living in this material world and are subjected to the repetition of birth and death (transmigration) is association with pure devotees. One should search out such pure devotees and remain with them. That will make one completely happy, even though living within the material world. This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is started for that purpose. A person who is overly affected materially may take advantage of this movement and become intimately associated with it. In this way the confused and frustrated inhabitants of this material world may find the highest happiness in association with devotees.

TEXT 35

यत्रेड्यन्ते कथा मृष्टास्तृष्णायाः प्रशमो यतः ।
निर्वैरं यत्र भूतेषु नोद्वेगो यत्र कश्चन ॥ ३५ ॥

yatreḍyante kathā mṛṣṭās
trṣṇāyāḥ praśamo yataḥ
nirvairam yatra bhūteṣu
nodvego yatra kaścana

yatra—where; *īḍyante*—are worshiped or discussed; *kathāḥ*—words; *mṛṣṭāḥ*—pure; *trṣṇāyāḥ*—of material hankerings; *praśamaḥ*—satisfaction; *yataḥ*—by which; *nirvairam*—nonenviousness; *yatra*—where; *bhūteṣu*—among living entities; *na*—not; *udvegaḥ*—fear; *yatra*—where; *kaścana*—any.

Whenever pure topics of the transcendental world are discussed, the members of the audience forget all kinds of material hankerings, at least for the time being. Not only that, but they are no longer envious of one

another, nor do they suffer from anxiety or fear.

Vaikuṅṭha means "without anxiety," and the material world means full of anxiety. As stated by Prahlāda Mahārāja: *sadā samudvigna-dhiyām asad-grahāt* [SB 7.5.5]. The living entities who have accepted this material world as a residence are full of anxiety. A place immediately becomes *Vaikuṅṭha* whenever the holy topics of the Personality of Godhead are discussed by pure devotees. This is the process of *śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ* [SB 7.5.23], chanting and hearing about the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu. As the Supreme Lord Himself confirms:

*nāham tiṣṭhāmi vaikuṅṭhe
yoginām hṛdayeṣu vā
tatra tiṣṭhāmi nārada
yatra gāyanti mad-bhaktāḥ*

"My dear Nārada, actually I do not reside in My abode, *Vaikuṅṭha*, nor do I reside within the hearts of the *yogīs*, but I reside in that place where My pure devotees chant My holy name and discuss My form, pastimes and qualities." Because of the presence of the Lord in the form of the transcendental vibration, the *Vaikuṅṭha* atmosphere is evoked. This atmosphere is without fear and anxiety. One living entity does not fear another. By hearing the holy names and glories of the Lord, a person executes pious activities. *Śṛṅvatām sva-kathāḥ kṛṣṇaḥ puṇya-śravaṇa-kīrtanaḥ* (SB 1.2.17). Thus his material hankerings immediately stop. This *saṅkīrtana* movement started by the Society for Krishna Consciousness is meant for creating *Vaikuṅṭha*, the transcendental world that is without anxiety, even in this material world. The method is the propagation of the *śravaṇam kīrtanam* [SB 7.5.23] process throughout the world. In the material world everyone is envious of his fellow man. Animalistic envy exists in human society as long as there is no performance of *saṅkīrtana-yajña*, the chanting of the holy names—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. The *Pracetās* therefore decided to remain always in the society of devotees, and they considered that to be the highest benediction possible in human life.

TEXT 36

यत्र नारायणः साक्षाद्भगवान्स्यासिनां गतिः ।
संस्तूयते सत्कथासु मुक्तस्रौः पुनः पुनः ॥ ३६ ॥

*yatra nārāyaṇaḥ sākṣād
bhagavān nyāsinām gatiḥ
saṁstūyate sat-kathāsu
mukta-saṅgaiḥ punaḥ punaḥ*

yatra—where; *nārāyaṇaḥ*—Lord Nārāyaṇa; *sākṣāt*—directly; *bhagavān*—the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *nyāsinām*—of persons in the renounced order of life; *gatiḥ*—the ultimate goal; *saṁstūyate*—is worshiped; *sat-kathāsu*—by discussing the transcendental vibration; *mukta-saṅgaiḥ*—by those who are liberated from material contamination; *punaḥ punaḥ*—again and again.

The Supreme Lord, Nārāyaṇa, is present among devotees who are engaged in hearing and chanting the holy name of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Lord Nārāyaṇa is the ultimate goal of sannyāsīs, those in the renounced order of life, and Nārāyaṇa is worshiped through this saṅkīrtana movement by those who are liberated from material contamination. Indeed, they recite the holy name again and again.

The Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs* are missing the real presence of Nārāyaṇa. This is because they falsely claim to be Nārāyaṇa Himself. According to the customary etiquette of Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs*, they address one another as Nārāyaṇa. To say that everyone is a temple of Nārāyaṇa is correct, but to accept another human being as Nārāyaṇa is a great offense. The conception of *daridra-nārāyaṇa* (poor Nārāyaṇa), an attempt to identify the poor with Nārāyaṇa, is also a great offense. Even to identify Nārāyaṇa with demigods like Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva is an offense.

*yas tu nārāyaṇam devam
brahma-rudrādi-daivataiḥ
samatvenaiva vīkṣeta
sa pāṣaṇḍī bhaved dhruvam
[Cc. Madhya 18.116]*

"One who considers Lord Nārāyaṇa on a level with great demigods like

Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva is immediately listed among nonbelievers." The fact is that by performing *saṅkīrtana-yajña* one can immediately please the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Then Nārāyaṇa Himself descends and immediately is present. In this age of Kali, Nārāyaṇa is immediately present in the form of Lord Caitanya. Concerning Lord Caitanya, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.5.32) states:

*kṛṣṇa-varṇam tviṣākṛṣṇam
sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārśadam
yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair
yajanti hi sumedhasaḥ*

"In the age of Kali, intelligent persons perform congregational chanting to worship the incarnation of Godhead who constantly sings the name of Kṛṣṇa. Although His complexion is not blackish, He is Kṛṣṇa Himself. He is accompanied by His associates, servants, weapons and confidential companions." After all, human life is meant for pleasing Nārāyaṇa, and this can easily be done by performing *saṅkīrtana-yajña*. Whenever there is congregational chanting of the holy names of the Lord, Gaura Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His incarnation as Lord Caitanya, immediately appears and is worshiped by *saṅkīrtana-yajña*.

In this verse it is said that Nārāyaṇa is *nyāsinām gatiḥ*, the ultimate goal of the *sannyāsīs*. The goal of those who have renounced the material world is the attainment of Nārāyaṇa. A Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsī* therefore dedicates his life to serving Nārāyaṇa; he does not falsely claim to be Nārāyaṇa. Instead of becoming *nirvaira* (nonenvious of other living entities), one who tries to become Nārāyaṇa becomes envious of the Supreme Lord. Therefore the attempt to become Nārāyaṇa constitutes the greatest offense. Actually, when one chants or discusses the transcendental activities of the Lord, he immediately becomes nonenvious. In this material world everyone is envious of everyone else, but by vibrating or discussing the holy name of the Lord, one becomes nonenvious and devoid of material hankering. Because of our envy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, we have become envious of all other living entities. When we are no longer envious of the Supreme

Personality of Godhead, there will be real peace, unity and fraternity in human society. Without Nārāyaṇa or *saṅkīrtana-yajña* there cannot be peace in this material world.

TEXT 37

तेषां विचरतां पद्भ्यां तीर्थानां पावनेच्छया ।
भीतस्य किं न रोचेत तावकानां समागमः ॥ ३७ ॥

*teṣām vicaratām padbhyām
tīrthānām pāvanecchayā
bhītasya kiṁ na roceta
tāvakānām samāgamaḥ*

teṣām—of them; *vicaratām*—who travel; *padbhyām*—by their feet; *tīrthānām*—the holy places; *pāvana-icchayā*—with a desire to purify; *bhītasya*—to the materialistic person who is always fearful; *kiṁ*—why; *na*—not; *roceta*—becomes pleasing; *tāvakānām*—of Your devotees; *samāgamaḥ*—meeting.

Dear Lord, Your personal associates, devotees, wander all over the world to purify even the holy places of pilgrimage. Is not such activity pleasing to those who are actually afraid of material existence?

There are two kinds of devotees. One is called *goṣṭhānandī* and the other *bhajanānandī*. The word *bhajanānandī* refers to the devotee who does not move, but remains in one place. Such a devotee is always engaged in the devotional service of the Lord. He chants the *mahā-mantra* as taught by many *ācāryas* and sometimes goes out for preaching work. The *goṣṭhānandī* is one who desires to increase the number of devotees all over the world. He travels all over the world just to purify the world and the people residing in it. Caitanya Mahāprabhu advised:

*ṛthivīte āche yata nagarādi grāma
sarvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma*

Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu wanted His followers to move all over the world to preach in every town and village. In the Caitanya-sampradāya those who strictly follow the principles of Lord Caitanya must travel all over the world to preach the message of Lord Caitanya, which is the

same as preaching the words of Kṛṣṇa—*Bhagavad-gītā*—and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The more the devotees preach the principles of *kṛṣṇa-kathā*, the more people throughout the world will benefit.

Devotees like the great sage Nārada, who travel all over to preach, are called *goṣṭhānandī*. Nārada Muni is always wandering throughout the universe just to create different types of devotees. Nārada even made a hunter a devotee. He also made Dhruva Mahārāja and Prahlāda devotees. Actually, all devotees are indebted to the great sage Nārada, for he has wandered both in heaven and in hell. A devotee of the Lord is not even afraid of hell. He goes to preach the glories of the Lord everywhere—even in hell—because there is no distinction between heaven and hell for a devotee.

*nārāyaṇa-ṣarāḥ sarve
na kutaścana bibhyati
svargāpavarga-narakeṣv
aṇi tulyārtha-darśinaḥ*

"A pure devotee of Nārāyaṇa is never afraid of going anywhere and everywhere. For him heaven and hell are one and the same." (SB 6.17.28) Such devotees, wandering all over the world, deliver those who are actually afraid of this material existence. Some people are already disgusted with material existence, being confused and frustrated by material enjoyment, and some people, who are intelligent, are interested in understanding the Supreme Lord. Both may take advantage of the pure devotee who wanders throughout the world.

When a pure devotee goes to a place of pilgrimage, he desires to purify that holy place of pilgrimage. Many sinful men bathe in the holy waters of the places of pilgrimage. They take their baths in the waters of the Ganges and Yamunā at places such as Prayāga, Vṛndāvana and Mathurā. In this way the sinful men are purified, but their sinful actions and reactions remain at the holy places of pilgrimage. When a devotee comes to take his bath at those places of pilgrimage, the sinful reactions left by the sinful men are neutralized by the devotee. *Tīrthī-kurvanti tīrthāni svāntaḥ-sthena gadā-bhṛtā* (SB 1.13.10). Because the devotee always carries the Supreme Personality of Godhead within his heart, wherever

he goes becomes a place of pilgrimage, a holy place for understanding the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is therefore the duty of everyone to associate with a pure devotee and thus attain freedom from material contamination. Everyone should take advantage of the wandering devotees, whose only business is to deliver conditioned souls from the clutches of *māyā*.

TEXT 38

वयं तु साक्षाद्भगवन् भवस्य
 प्रियस्य सख्युः क्षणस्रामेन ।
 सुदुश्चिकित्स्यस्य भवस्य मृत्यो-
 र्भिषक्तमं त्वाद्य गतिं गताः स्म ॥ ३८ ॥

*vayaṁ tu sākṣād bhagavan bhavasya
 priyasya sakhyuḥ kṣaṇa-saṅgamena
 suduścikitsyasya bhavasya mṛtyor
 bhiṣaktamaṁ tvādya gatiṁ gatāḥ sma*

vayam—we; *tu*—then; *sākṣāt*—directly; *bhagavan*—O Lord; *bhavasya*—of Lord Śiva; *priyasya*—very dear; *sakhyuḥ*—Your friend; *kṣaṇa*—for a moment; *saṅgamena*—by association; *suduścikitsyasya*—very difficult to cure; *bhavasya*—of material existence; *mṛtyoḥ*—of death; *bhiṣak-tamam*—the most expert physician; *tvā*—You; *adya*—today; *gatiṁ*—destination; *gatāḥ*—have achieved; *sma*—certainly.

Dear Lord, by virtue of a moment's association with Lord Śiva, who is very dear to You and who is Your most intimate friend, we were fortunate to attain You. You are the most expert physician, capable of treating the incurable disease of material existence. On account of our great fortune, we have been able to take shelter at Your lotus feet.

It has been said: *harim vinā na mṛtim taranti*. Without taking shelter of the lotus feet of the Personality of Godhead, one cannot attain relief from the clutches of *māyā*, the repetition of birth, old age, disease and death. The Pracetās received the shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead by the grace of Lord Śiva. Lord Śiva is the supreme devotee of Lord Viṣṇu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. *Vaiṣṇavānām yathā śambhuḥ*: the most exalted Vaiṣṇava is Lord Śiva, and those who are

actually devotees of Lord Śiva follow Lord Śiva's advice and take shelter at the lotus feet of Lord Viṣṇu. The so-called devotees of Lord Śiva, who are simply after material prosperity, are in a way deceived by Lord Śiva. He does not actually deceive them, because Lord Śiva has no business deceiving people, but because the so-called devotees of Lord Śiva want to be deceived, Lord Śiva, who is very easily pleased, allows them all kinds of material benedictions. These benedictions might ironically result in the destruction of the so-called devotees. For instance, Rāvaṇa took all material benediction from Lord Śiva, but the result was that he was ultimately destroyed with his family, kingdom and everything else because he misused Lord Śiva's benediction. Because of his material power, he became very proud and puffed up so that he dared kidnap the wife of Lord Rāmacandra. In this way he was ruined. To get material benedictions from Lord Śiva is not difficult, but actually these are not benedictions. The Pracetās received benediction from Lord Śiva, and as a result they attained the shelter of the lotus feet of Lord Viṣṇu. This is real benediction. The *gopīs* also worshiped Lord Śiva in Vṛndāvana, and the lord is still staying there as Gopīśvara. The *gopīs*, however, prayed that Lord Śiva bless them by giving them Lord Kṛṣṇa as their husband. There is no harm in worshiping the demigods, provided that one's aim is to return home, back to Godhead. Generally people go to the demigods for material benefit, as indicated in *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.20):

*kāmais tais tair hṛta-jñānāḥ
prapadyante 'nya-devatāḥ
taṁ taṁ niyamam āsthāya
prakṛtyā niyatāḥ svayā*

"Those whose minds are distorted by material desires surrender unto demigods and follow the particular rules and regulations of worship according to their own natures." One enamored by material benefits is called *hṛta jñāna* ("one who has lost his intelligence"). In this connection it is to be noted that sometimes in revealed scriptures Lord Śiva is described as being nondifferent from the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The point is that Lord Śiva and Lord Viṣṇu are so intimately connected that there is no difference in opinion. The actual fact is,

ekale īśvara kṛṣṇa, āra saba bhṛtya: "The only supreme master is Kṛṣṇa, and all others are His devotees or servants." (Cc. Ādi 5.142) This is the real fact, and there is no difference of opinion between Lord Śiva and Lord Viṣṇu in this connection. Nowhere in revealed scripture does Lord Śiva claim to be equal to Lord Viṣṇu. This is simply the creation of the so-called devotees of Lord Śiva, who claim that Lord Śiva and Lord Viṣṇu are one. This is strictly forbidden in the *Vaiṣṇava-tantra*: *yas tu nārāyaṇam devam* [Cc. *Madhya* 18.116]. Lord Viṣṇu, Lord Śiva and Lord Brahmā are intimately connected as master and servants. *Śiva-viriñcīnutam* [SB 11.5.33]. Viṣṇu is honored and offered obeisances by Lord Śiva and Lord Brahmā. To consider that they are all equal is a great offense. They are all equal in the sense that Lord Viṣṇu is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and all others are His eternal servants.

TEXTS 39-40

यन्नः स्वधीतं गुरवः प्रसादिता
 विप्राश्च वृद्धाश्च सदानुवृत्त्या ।
 आर्या नताः सुहृदो भ्रातरश्च
 सर्वाणि भूतान्यनसूययैव ॥ ३९ ॥
 यन्नः सुतप्तं तप एतदीश
 निरन्धसां कालमदभ्रमप्सु ।
 सर्वं तदेतत्पुरुषस्य भूमो
 वृणीमहे ते परितोषणाय ॥ ४० ॥

*yan naḥ svadhītam guravaḥ prasādītā
 viprāś ca vṛddhāś ca sad-ānuvṛttyā
 āryā natāḥ suhṛdo bhrātaraś ca
 sarvāṇi bhūtāny anasūyayaiva*

*yan naḥ sutaptaṁ tapa etad īśa
 nirandhasām kālam adabhram apsu
 sarvaṁ tad etat puruṣasya bhūmno
 vṛṇīmahe te paritoṣaṇāya*

yat—what; *naḥ*—by us; *svadhītam*—studied; *guravaḥ*—superior persons, spiritual masters; *prasādītāḥ*—satisfied; *viprāḥ*—the *brāhmaṇas*; *ca*—

and; *vṛddhāḥ*—those who are elderly; *ca*—and; *sat-ānuvṛtṭyā*—by our gentle behavior; *āryāḥ*—those who are advanced in spiritual knowledge; *natāḥ*—were offered obeisances; *su-hṛdaḥ*—friends; *bhrātarāḥ*—brothers; *ca*—and; *sarvāṇi*—all; *bhūtāni*—living entities; *anasūyayā*—without envy; *eva*—certainly; *yat*—what; *naḥ*—of us; *su-taptam*—severe; *tapāḥ*—penance; *etat*—this; *īśa*—O Lord; *nirandhasām*—without taking any food; *kālam*—time; *adabhram*—for a long duration; *apsu*—within the water; *sarvam*—all; *tat*—that; *etat*—this; *puruṣasya*—of the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *bhūmnaḥ*—the most exalted; *vṛṇīmahe*—we want this benediction; *te*—of You; *paritoṣaṇāya*—for the satisfaction.

Dear Lord, we have studied the Vedas, accepted a spiritual master and offered respect to brāhmaṇas, advanced devotees and aged personalities who are spiritually very advanced. We have offered our respects to them, and we have not been envious of any brother, friends or anyone else. We have also undergone severe austerities within the water and have not taken food for a long time. All these spiritual assets of ours are simply offered for Your satisfaction. We pray for this benediction only, and nothing more.

As stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *saṁsiddhir hari-toṣaṇam*: [SB 1.2.13] the real perfection of life is pleasing the Supreme Personality of Godhead. *Vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyaḥ*: [Bg. 15.15] in understanding the Vedas, one has to understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One who has actually understood Him surrenders unto Him after many, many births. We find all these qualifications in the Pracetās. They underwent severe austerities and penances within the water, and they did not take any food for a very long time. They practiced these austerities not for material benediction but for the satisfaction of the Supreme Lord. One may engage in any business—material or spiritual—but the purpose should be the satisfaction of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This verse presents a perfect picture of Vedic civilization. People training to become devotees should be respectful not only to the Supreme Personality of Godhead but also to those who are elderly in knowledge, who are Āryans and actual devotees of the Lord. An Āryan is one who does not boast, but is an actual devotee of the Lord. Āryan

means "advanced." Formerly, those who claimed to be Āryans had to be devotees of the Lord. For instance, in *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.2) Kṛṣṇa chastised Arjuna by saying that he was speaking like a non-Āryan.

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca
kutas tvā kaśmalam idam
viṣame samuṣasthitam
anārya-juṣtam asvargyam
akīrti-karam arjuna*

"The Supreme Person [Bhagavān] said: My dear Arjuna, how have these impurities come upon you? They are not at all befitting a man who knows the progressive values of life. They do not lead to higher planets, but to infamy." Arjuna, the *kṣatriya*, was refusing to fight despite being directly ordered by the Supreme Lord. He was thus chastised by the Lord as belonging to a non-Āryan family. Anyone who is advanced in the devotional service of the Lord certainly knows his duty. It does not matter whether his duty is violent or nonviolent. If it is sanctioned and ordered by the Supreme Lord, it must be performed. An Āryan performs his duty. It is not that the Āryans are unnecessarily inimical to living entities. The Āryans never maintain slaughterhouses, and they are never enemies of poor animals. The Pracetās underwent severe austerities for many, many years, even within the water. Accepting austerities and penances is the avowed business of those interested in advanced civilization.

The word *nirandhasām* means "without food." Eating voraciously and unnecessarily is not the business of an Āryan. Rather, the eating process should be restricted as far as possible. When Āryans eat, they eat only prescribed eatables. Regarding this, the Lord says in *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.26):

*patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyam
yo me bhaktyā prayacchati
tad ahaṁ bhakty-upahṛtam
aśnāmi prayatātmanaḥ*

"If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, fruit or water, I

will accept it." Thus there are restrictions for the advanced Āryans. Although the Lord Himself can eat anything and everything, He restricts Himself to vegetables, fruits, milk and so on. This verse thus describes the activities of those who claim to be Āryans.

TEXT 41

मनुः स्वयम्भूर्भगवान् भवश्च
येऽन्ये तपोज्ञानविशुद्धसत्त्वाः ।
अदृष्टपारा अपि यन्महिम्नः
स्तुवन्त्यथो त्वात्मसमं गृणीमः ॥ ४१ ॥

*manuḥ svayambhūr bhagavān bhavaś ca
ye 'nye tapo-jñāna-viśuddha-sattvāḥ
adr̥ṣṭa-pārā api yan-mahimnaḥ
stuvanty atho tvātma-samaṁ gṛṇīmaḥ*

manuḥ—Svāyambhuva Manu; *svayambhūḥ*—Lord Brahmā; *bhagavān*—the most powerful; *bhavaḥ*—Lord Śiva; *ca*—also; *ye*—who; *anye*—others; *tapāḥ*—by austerity; *jñāna*—by knowledge; *viśuddha*—pure; *sattvāḥ*—whose existence; *adr̥ṣṭa-pārāḥ*—who cannot see the end; *api*—although; *yat*—Your; *mahimnaḥ*—of glories; *stuvanti*—they offer prayers; *atho*—therefore; *tvā*—unto You; *ātma-samam*—according to capacity; *gṛṇīmaḥ*—we offered prayers.

Dear Lord, even great yogīs and mystics who are very much advanced by virtue of austerities and knowledge and who have completely situated themselves in pure existence, as well as great personalities like Manu, Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva, cannot fully understand Your glories and potencies. Nonetheless they have offered their prayers according to their own capacities. In the same way, we, although much lower than these personalities, also offer our prayers according to our own capability.

Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, Manu (the father of mankind), great saintly persons and also great sages who have elevated themselves to the transcendental platform through austerities and penance, as well as devotional service, are imperfect in knowledge compared to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is the case with anyone within

this material world. No one can be equal to the Supreme Lord in anything, certainly not in knowledge. Consequently, anyone's prayer to the Supreme Personality of Godhead is never complete. It is not possible to measure the complete glories of the Supreme Lord, who is unlimited. Even the Lord Himself in His incarnation as Ananta, or Śeṣa, cannot describe His own glories. Although Ananta has many thousands of faces and has been glorifying the Lord for many, many years, He could not find the limit of the glories of the Lord. Thus it is not possible to estimate the complete potencies and glories of the Supreme Lord. Nonetheless, everyone in devotional service can offer essential prayers to the Lord. Everyone is situated in a relative position, and no one is perfect in glorifying the Lord. Beginning with Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva down to ourselves, everyone is the servant of the Supreme Lord. We are all situated in relative positions according to our own *karma*. Yet every one of us can offer prayers with heart and soul as far as we can appreciate the Lord's glories. That is our perfection. Even when one is in the darkest region of existence, he is allowed to offer prayers to the Lord according to his own capacity. The Lord therefore says in *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.32):

*mām hi pāṛtha vyapāśritya
ye 'pi syuḥ pāpa-yonayaḥ
striyo vaiśyās tathā śūdrās
te 'pi yānti parām gatim*

"O son of Pṛthā, those who take shelter in Me, though they be of lower birth—women, *vaiśyas* [merchants], as well as *śūdras* [workers]—can approach the supreme destination."

If one seriously accepts the lotus feet of the Lord, he is purified by the grace of the Lord and by the grace of the Lord's servant. This is confirmed by Śukadeva Gosvāmī: *ye 'nye ca pāpā yad-apāśrayāśrayāḥ śudhyanti tasmai prabhaviṣṇave namaḥ* (SB 2.4.18). One who is brought under the lotus feet of the Lord by the endeavor of the Lord's servant, the spiritual master, is certainly immediately purified, however lowborn he may be. He becomes eligible to return home, back to Godhead.

TEXT 42

नमः समाय शुद्धाय पुरुषाय पराय च ।
वासुदेवाय सत्त्वाय तुभ्यं भगवते नमः ॥ ४२ ॥

*namaḥ samāya śuddhāya
puruṣāya parāya ca
vāsudevāya sattvāya
tubhyaṁ bhagavate namaḥ*

namaḥ—we offer our respectful obeisances; *samāya*—who is equal to everyone; *śuddhāya*—who is never contaminated by sinful activities; *puruṣāya*—unto the Supreme Person; *parāya*—transcendental; *ca*—also; *vāsudevāya*—living everywhere; *sattvāya*—who is in the transcendental position; *tubhyaṁ*—unto You; *bhagavate*—the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *namaḥ*—obeisances.

Dear Lord, You have no enemies or friends. Therefore You are equal to everyone. You cannot be contaminated by sinful activities, and Your transcendental form is always beyond the material creation. You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead because You remain everywhere within all existence. You are consequently known as Vāsudeva. We offer You our respectful obeisances.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead is known as Vāsudeva because He lives everywhere. The word *vas* means "to live." As stated in *Brahma-saṁhitā*, *eko 'py asau racayitum jagad-aṅḍa-koṭim*: [Bs. 5.35] the Lord, through His plenary portion, enters into each and every universe to create the material manifestation. He also enters into each and every heart in all living entities and into each and every atom also (*paramāṅu-cayāntara-stham*). Because the Supreme Lord lives everywhere, He is known as Vāsudeva. Although He lives everywhere within the material world, He is not contaminated by the modes of nature. The Lord is therefore described in *Īśopaniṣad* as *apāpa-viddham*. He is never contaminated by the modes of material nature. When the Lord descends on this planet, He acts in many ways. He kills demons and performs acts not sanctioned by the Vedic principles, that is, acts considered sinful. Even though He acts in such a way, He is never contaminated by His action. He is therefore described herein as *śuddha*, meaning "always free

from contamination." The Lord is also *sama*, equal to everyone. In this regard, He states in *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.29), *samo'ham sarva-bhūteṣu na me dveṣyo 'sti na priyaḥ*: the Lord has no one as His friend or enemy, and He is equal to everyone.

The word *sattvāya* indicates that the form of the Lord is not material. It is *sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ*. *Īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ* [Bs. 5.1]. His body is different from our material bodies. One should not think that the Supreme Personality of Godhead has a material body, like ours.