

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

Chanting the Song Sung by Lord Śiva

Text 1:

The great sage Maitreya continued: Vijitāśva, the eldest son of Mahārāja Pṛthu, who had a reputation like his father's, became emperor and gave his younger brothers different directions of the world to govern, for he was very affectionate toward his brothers.

Text 2:

Mahārāja Vijitāśva offered the eastern part of the world to his brother Haryakṣa, the southern part to Dhūmrakeśa, the western part to Vṛka and the northern part to Draviṇa.

Text 3:

Formerly, Mahārāja Vijitāśva pleased the King of heaven, Indra, and from him received the title Antardhāna. His wife's name was Śikhaṇḍinī, and by her he begot three good sons.

Text 4:

The three sons of Mahārāja Antardhāna were named Pāvaka, Pavamāna and Śuci. Formerly these three personalities were the demigods of fire, but due to the curse of the great sage Vasiṣṭha, they became the sons of Mahārāja Antardhāna. As such, they were as powerful as the fire-gods, and they attained the destination of mystic yoga power, being again situated as the demigods of fire.

Text 5:

Mahārāja Antardhāna had another wife, named Nabhasvatī, and by her he was happy to beget another son, named Havirdhāna. Since Mahārāja Antardhāna was very liberal, he did not kill Indra while the demigod was stealing his father's horse at the sacrifice.

Text 6:

Whenever Antardhāna, the supreme royal power, had to exact taxes, punish his citizens or fine them severely, he was not willing to do so. Consequently he retired from the execution of such duties and engaged himself in the performance of different sacrifices.

Text 7:

Although Mahārāja Antardhāna was engaged in performing sacrifices, because he was a self-realized soul he very intelligently rendered devotional service to the Lord, who eradicates all the fears of His devotees. By thus worshiping the Supreme Lord, Mahārāja Antardhāna, rapt in ecstasy, attained His planet very easily.

Text 8:

Havirdhāna, the son of Mahārāja Antardhāna, had a wife named Havirdhānī, who gave birth to six sons, named Barhiṣat, Gaya, Śukla, Kṛṣṇa, Satya and Jitavrata.

Text 9:

The great sage Maitreya continued: My dear Vidura, Havirdhāna's very powerful son named Barhiṣat was very expert in performing various kinds of fruitive sacrifices, and he was also expert in the practice of mystic yoga. By his great qualifications, he became known as Prajāpati.

Text 10:

Mahārāja Barhiṣat executed many sacrifices all over the world. He scattered kuśa grasses and kept the tops of the grasses pointed eastward.

Text 11:

Mahārāja Barhiṣat — henceforward known as Prācīnabarhi — was ordered by the supreme demigod Brahmā to marry the daughter of the ocean named Śatadruti. Her bodily features were completely beautiful, and she was very young. She was decorated with the proper garments, and when she came into the marriage arena and began circumambulating it, the fire-god Agni became so attracted to her that he desired her company, exactly as he had formerly desired to enjoy Śukī.

Text 12:

While Śatadruti was thus being married, the demons, the denizens of Gandharvaloka, the great sages, and the denizens of Siddhaloka, the earthly planets and Nāgaloka, although highly exalted, were all captivated by the tinkling of her ankle bells.

Text 13:

King Prācīnabarhi begot ten children in the womb of Śatadruti. All of them were equally endowed with religiosity, and all of them were known as the Pracetās.

Text 14:

When all these Pracetās were ordered by their father to marry and beget children, they all entered the ocean and practiced austerities and penances for ten thousand years. Thus they worshiped the master of all austerity, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Text 15:

When all the sons of Prācīnabarhi left home to execute austerities, they met Lord Śiva, who, out of great mercy, instructed them about the Absolute Truth. All the sons of Prācīnabarhi meditated upon the instructions, chanting and worshiping them with great care and attention.

Text 16:

Vidura asked Maitreya: My dear brāhmaṇa, why did the Pracetās meet Lord Śiva on the way? Please tell me how the meeting happened, how Lord Śiva became very pleased with them and how he instructed them. Certainly such talks are important, and I wish that you please be merciful upon me and describe them.

Text 17:

The great sage Vidura continued: O best of the brāhmaṇas, it is very difficult for living entities encaged within this material body to have personal contact with Lord Śiva. Even great sages who have no material attachments do not contact him, despite their always being absorbed in meditation to attain his personal contact.

Text 18:

Lord Śiva, the most powerful demigod, second only to Lord Viṣṇu, is self-sufficient. Although he has nothing to aspire for in the material world, for the benefit of those in the material world he is always busily engaged everywhere and is accompanied by his dangerous energies like the goddess Kālī and the goddess Durgā.

Text 19:

The great sage Maitreya continued: My dear Vidura, because of their pious nature, all the sons of Prācīnabarhi very seriously accepted the words of their father with heart and soul, and with these words on their heads, they went toward the west to execute their father's order.

Text 20:

While traveling, the Pracetās happened to see a great reservoir of water which seemed almost as big as the ocean. The water of this lake was so calm and quiet that it seemed like the mind of a great soul, and its inhabitants, the aquatics, appeared very peaceful and happy to be under the protection of such a watery reservoir.

Text 21:

In that great lake there were different types of lotus flowers. Some of them were bluish, and some of them were red. Some of them grew at night, some in the day and some, like the indīvara lotus flower, in the evening. Combined together, the lotus flowers filled the lake so full that the lake appeared to be a great mine of such flowers. Consequently, on the shores there were swans and cranes, cakravākas, kāraṇḍavas and other beautiful water birds standing about.

Text 22:

There were various trees and creepers on all sides of the lake, and there were mad bumblebees humming all about them. The trees appeared to be very jolly due to the sweet humming of the bumblebees, and the saffron, which was contained in the lotus flowers, was being thrown into the air. These all created such an atmosphere that it appeared as though a festival were taking place there.

Text 23:

The sons of the King became very much amazed when they heard vibrations from various drums and kettledrums along with other orderly musical sounds pleasing to the ear.

Texts 24-25:

The Pracetās were fortunate to see Lord Śiva, the chief of the demigods, emerging from the water with his associates. His bodily luster was just like molten gold, his throat was bluish, and he had three eyes, which looked very mercifully upon his devotees. He was accompanied by many

musicians, who were glorifying him. As soon as the Pracetās saw Lord Śiva, they immediately offered their obeisances in great amazement and fell down at the lotus feet of the lord.

Text 26:

Lord Śiva became very pleased with the Pracetās because generally Lord Śiva is the protector of pious persons and persons of gentle behavior. Being very much pleased with the princes, he began to speak as follows.

Text 27:

Lord Śiva said: You are all the sons of King Prācīnabarhi, and I wish all good fortune to you. I also know what you are going to do, and therefore I am visible to you just to show my mercy upon you.

Text 28:

Lord Śiva continued: Any person who is surrendered to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, the controller of everything — material nature as well as the living entity — is actually very dear to me.

Text 29:

A person who executes his occupational duty properly for one hundred births becomes qualified to occupy the post of Brahmā, and if he becomes more qualified, he can approach Lord Śiva. A person who is directly surrendered to Lord Kṛṣṇa, or Viṣṇu, in unalloyed devotional service is immediately promoted to the spiritual planets. Lord Śiva and other demigods attain these planets after the destruction of this material world.

Text 30:

You are all devotees of the Lord, and as such I appreciate that you are as respectable as the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself. I know in this way that the devotees also respect me and that I am dear to them. Thus no one can be as dear to the devotees as I am.

Text 31:

Now I shall chant one mantra which is not only transcendental, pure and auspicious, but is the best prayer for anyone who is aspiring to attain the ultimate goal of life. When I chant this mantra, please hear it carefully and attentively.

Text 32:

The great sage Maitreya continued: Out of his causeless mercy, the exalted personality Lord Śiva, a great devotee of Lord Nārāyaṇa, continued to speak to the King's sons, who were standing with folded hands.

Text 33:

Lord Śiva addressed the Supreme Personality of Godhead with the following prayer: 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 the self-realized, I wish that You be auspicious for 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.

Text 34:

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 Vāsudeva. You are most peaceful, and because of Your self-illuminated existence, You are not disturbed by the six kinds of transformations.

Text 35:

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 Saṅkarṣaṇa, and the master of all intelligence, known as the predominating Deity Pradyumna. Therefore, I offer my respectful obeisances unto You.

Text 36:

My Lord, as the supreme directing Deity known as Aniruddha, You are the master of the senses and the mind. I therefore offer my obeisances unto You again and again. You are known as Ananta as well as Saṅkarṣaṇa because of Your ability to destroy the whole creation by the blazing fire from Your mouth.

Text 37:

My Lord, O Aniruddha, You are the authority by which the doors of the higher planetary systems and liberation are opened. You are always within

the pure heart of the living entity. Therefore I offer my obeisances 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 obeisances unto You.

Text 38:

My Lord, You are the provider of the Pitṛloka as well as all the demigods. You are the predominating deity of the moon and the master of all three Vedas. I offer my respectful obeisances unto You because You are the original source of satisfaction for all living entities.

Text 39:

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 obeisances unto You.

Text 40:

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 obeisances again and again unto You.

Text 41:

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 obeisances.

Text 42:

My dear Lord, You are the topmost of all bestowers of all benediction, the oldest 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 Kṛṣṇa. You are the greatest of all religious principles, the supreme mind, and You have a brain which is never checked by any condition. Therefore I repeatedly offer my obeisances unto You.

Text 43:

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 egotism, known as Rudra. You are the source of knowledge and the activities of the Vedic injunctions.

Text 44:

My dear Lord, I wish to see You exactly in the form that Your very dear devotees worship. You have many other forms, but I wish to see Your form that is especially liked by the devotees. Please be merciful upon me and show me that form, for only that form worshiped by the devotees can perfectly satisfy all the demands of the senses.

Texts 45-46:

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 beautiful highly raised nose, a mind-attracting smile, a beautiful forehead and equally beautiful and fully decorated ears.

Texts 47-48:

The Lord is superexcellently beautiful on account of His open and merciful smile and His sidelong glance upon His devotees. His black hair is curly, and His garments, waving in the wind, appear like flying saffron pollen from lotus flowers. His glittering earrings, shining helmet, bangles, garland, ankle bells, waist belt and various other bodily ornaments combine with conchshell, disc, club and lotus flower to increase the natural beauty of the Kaustubha pearl on His chest.

Text 49:

The Lord has shoulders just like a lion's. Upon these shoulders are garlands, necklaces and epaulets, and all of these are always glittering. Besides these, there is the beauty of the Kaustubha-maṇi pearl, and on the dark chest of the Lord there are streaks named Śrīvatsa, which are signs of the goddess of fortune. The glittering of these streaks excels the beauty of the golden streaks on a gold-testing stone. Indeed, such beauty defeats a gold-testing stone.

Text 50:

The Lord's abdomen is beautiful due to three ripples in the flesh. Being so round, His abdomen resembles the leaf of a banyan tree, and when He exhales and inhales, the movement of the ripples appears very, very beautiful. The coils within the navel of the Lord are so deep that it appears that the entire universe sprouted out of it and yet again wishes to go back.

Text 51:

The lower part of the Lord's waist is dark and covered with yellow garments and a belt bedecked with golden embroidery work. His symmetrical lotus feet and the calves, thighs and joints of His legs are extraordinarily beautiful. Indeed, the Lord's entire body appears to be well built.

Text 52:

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

Text 53:

My dear Lord, those who desire to purify their existence must always engage in meditation upon Your lotus feet, as described above. Those who are serious about executing their occupational duties and who want freedom from fear must take to this process of bhakti-yoga.

Text 54:

My dear Lord, the king in charge of the heavenly kingdom 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 [aham brahmāsmi]. However, it is very difficult for them to attain You, whereas a devotee can very easily attain Your Lordship.

Text 55:

My dear Lord, pure devotional service is even difficult for liberated persons to discharge, but devotional service alone can satisfy You. Who will take to other processes of self-realization if he is actually serious about the perfection of life?

Text 56:

Simply by expansion of His eyebrows, invincible time personified can immediately vanquish the entire universe. However, formidable time does not approach the devotee who has taken complete shelter at Your lotus feet.

Text 57:

If one by chance associates with a devotee, even for a fraction of a moment, he no longer is subject to attraction by the results of karma or jñāna. What interest then can he have in the benedictions of the demigods, who are subject to the laws of birth and death?

Text 58:

My dear Lord, Your lotus feet are the cause of all auspicious things 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 worshipping Your lotus feet and who are so merciful upon the conditioned souls. I think that Your real benediction will be to allow me to associate with such devotees.

Text 59:

The devotee whose heart has been completely cleansed by the process of devotional service and who is favored by Bhaktidevī does not become bewildered by the external energy, which is just like a dark well. Being completely cleansed of all material contamination in this way, a devotee is able to understand very happily Your name, fame, form, activities, etc.

Text 60:

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.

Text 61:

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 disturbed by such changes and alterations, the living entities are disturbed by them, and therefore they find the cosmic manifestation to be different or separated from You. My Lord, You are always independent, and I can clearly see this fact.

Text 62:

My dear Lord, Your universal form consists of all five elements, the senses, mind, intelligence, false ego (which is material) and the Paramātmā, Your partial expansion, who is the director of everything. Yogīs other than the 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 śāstras that are corollaries of the Vedas, and indeed everywhere, that it is only You who are to be worshiped. That is the expert version of all the Vedas.

Text 63:

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 — act, and 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.

Text 64:

My dear Lord, after creating by Your own potencies, You enter within the creation in four kinds of forms. Being within the hearts of the living entities, You know them and know how they are enjoying their senses. The so-called happiness of this material creation is exactly like the bees' enjoyment of honey after it has been collected in the honeycomb.

Text 65:

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 — just as one animal is being eaten by another animal. Time scatters everything, exactly as the wind scatters clouds in the sky.

Text 66:

My dear Lord, all living entities within this material world are mad after planning for things, and they are always busy with a desire to do this or that. This is due to uncontrollable greed. The greed for material enjoyment is always existing in the living entity, but Your Lordship is always alert, and in due course of time You strike him, just as a snake seizes a mouse and very easily swallows him.

Text 67:

My dear Lord, any learned person knows that unless he worships You, his entire life is spoiled. Knowing this, how could he give up worshiping Your lotus feet? Even our father and spiritual master, Lord Brahmā, unhesitatingly worshiped You, and the fourteen Manus followed in his footsteps.

Text 68:

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, for the learned devotees You are the fearless destination of all.

Text 69:

My dear sons of the King, just execute your occupational duty as kings with a pure heart. Just chant this prayer fixing your mind on the lotus feet of the Lord. That will bring you all good fortune, for the Lord will be very much pleased with you.

Text 70:

Therefore, 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.

Text 71:

My dear princes, in the form of a prayer I have delineated the yoga system of chanting the holy name. All of you should take this important stotra within your minds and promise to keep it in order to become great sages. By acting silently like a great sage and by giving attention and reverence, you should practice this method.

Text 72:

This prayer was first spoken to us by Lord Brahmā, the master of all creators. The creators, headed by Bhṛgu, were instructed in these prayers because they wanted to create.

Text 73:

When all the Prajāpatis were ordered to create by Lord Brahmā, 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.

Text 74:

A devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa 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.

Text 75:

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 because one can cross the ocean of nescience only on the boat of knowledge. Otherwise the ocean is impassable.

Text 76:

Although rendering devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead and worshiping 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 the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Text 77:

The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the dearest objective of all auspicious benedictions. A human being who sings this song sung by me can please the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Such a devotee, being

fixed in the Lord's devotional service, can acquire whatever he wants from the Supreme Lord.

Text 78:

A devotee who rises early in the morning and with folded hands chants these prayers sung by Lord Śiva, and gives facility to others to hear them, certainly becomes free from all bondage to fruitive activities.

Text 79:

My dear sons of the King, the prayers I have recited to you are meant for pleasing the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Supersoul. 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.