

## Previous Life of Prahlada

Q: Who was Prahlada in his previous life?

Answer: For the day of Brahma in which Prahlada described within SB, we are provided with a very clear description from SB 7.10.3, both in Srila Prabhupada's verse and purport, that this particular Prahlada is a nitya-siddha devotee descended from Vaikuntha.

However, let us remember that the forms of the Lord appear in different days of Brahma, with slightly different details of their lila.

The holy life of Prahlada is described in **Harivamśa**, **Bṛihaṇ Nāradya Purāṇa**, **Nārada Purāṇa**, **Nṛsimha Purāṇa**, **Īśa Purāṇa**'s **Uttara Khanda** (Lord Śiva narrates to Parvatī) and **Hari-bhakti-vilāsa** (which is considered the Vaiṣṇava *smṛti*). All these scriptures explain how Prahlada attained devotion to the lotus feet of Lord Nṛsimha Deva. [Please note: The narrations below are from a different yuga cycle's appearance of Prahlada than the appearance narrated in SB Canto 7.]

After Lord Nṛsimha had slain Hiranyakāśipu, Prahlada offered prayers of heartfelt devotion and then inquired from the Lord, "How was I able to achieve this rarest position of pure devotional service unto You?"

Nṛsimha Deva told Prahlada:

"In ancient times, in the place known as Avanti Nagar, lived a brāhmaṇa, expert in the Vedas, whose name was Vasu Sharma. His wife, Suhila, had all the qualities of a sādhu, a peaceful nature and natural devotion to her husband and, due to possessing all these qualities, she had become famous in the three worlds. Vasu Sharma begot five sons in the womb of Suhila, four of whom were very good and well behaved. They were full of many desirable qualities and were respectful to their father. However, the eldest son (who was, in fact, you in a previous life) was attracted to prostitutes and, as a result, lost his character. In that life, your name was Vāsudeva. By the association of a prostitute, you lost all your good qualities. On the day of Nṛsimha caturdaśī, because of a quarrel with that prostitute, you both fasted and passed the night without sleeping and, in this way, you unknowingly obtained the result of observing the Nṛsimha caturdaśī-vrata. The prostitute ascended to heaven and, in the form of an Apsara, enjoyed many pleasures but, in the end, she became My beloved devotee. In the same way, you also took birth as the son of Hiranyakāśipu and became My beloved devotee. By observing Nṛsimha caturdaśī-vrata, Brahmā obtains the power of creation and Śiva obtains the power of destruction. By observance of this vow, everyone can obtain any kind of power and all their desires will be fulfilled."

Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.2.186 

In a discourse about fasting on Nṛsimha-*caturdaśī*, the **Bṛhan-nṛsimha Purāṇa** relates how a fallen brāhmaṇa and a prostitute merged into the Supreme and then again took birth as Prahlāda Mahārāja and his wife. Many histories like these serve as evidence that the jīva continues its individual existence after liberation. Only as a concession does the current verse use the word *prāyaḥ* (“as a general rule”) to indicate that in certain cases the Lord may, by His sweet will, allow someone to attain *sāyujya*, the *nirvāṇa* of entering His body.