Prahlada Stuti, Talk 10
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Yesterday, Prahladaji had said to the Lord that even though he was rājasika by nature and born into the asura clan, the Lord had showered His immense grace on him and placed His lotus-like hands on his head. Even Brahmaji, Shivaji and Lakshmiji did not have the good fortune of experiencing this compassionate gesture of the Lord. Now there is one more thing which Prahladaji wanted to express, which we will see in the next verse.

**evāṁ janāṁ nipatitaṁ prabhavāhikūpe**

kāmābhikāmamānu yaḥ prapatanprasāṅgāt,

krtyā“tmasātsurarsinā bhagavangṛhitāḥ

so’haṁ kathāṁ nu visṛje tava bhṛtyasevām. (Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 7.9.28)

**janaṁ nipatitaṁ prabhavāhikūpe** – “O Lord, my condition was no different from that of a common person who keeps falling in the well called saṁsāra, which is infested by a python representing kāla. Just as a python swallows the entire prey, this kāla is continuously swallowing the entire world.”

**prapatanprasāṅgāt** – “Being in the company of such people, I too kept falling in this snake-infested well called the world.”

**evāṁ** – “In this way, these ignorant people who think that they can enjoy all kinds of sense objects in this world, fail to understand that while doing so, they are actually falling into the trap of death.” And in what manner do they fall?

**kāmābhikāmamānu yaḥ** – “Without realising that they are falling into the trap, they continue desiring the sense objects and keep running after them. Being in the company of such people, I too kept falling repeatedly.” In Sanskrit, the word kāma denotes both, the desires as well as the sense objects of enjoyment (kāmyante iti kāmāḥ).

**krtyā”tmasātsurarsinā** – “But I have been saved now by Devarṣi Nārada - he held me to himself, as his own.”

**bhagavangṛhitāḥ** – “O Lord, Devarṣi Nārada took me in his arms (under his care) and has showered his grace on me from the time I was in my mother’s womb, where he gave me the entire knowledge. I received Your grace as well as the blessings of such a divine saint my Guru. This has saved me from falling and drowning in this worldly well, while others continue to fall in this well.”
Those who sing the glories of the Lord never fall into the well of prabhava or transmigration (te na parahi bhava kūpā).

so’haṁ kathāṁ nu viṣjē tava bhṛtyasevāṁ – “Thus, having been saved by my Guru who brought me to You, and then having been blessed by You, how can I want anything else other than to be in the service of those who serve You? And therefore, I had also previously requested that You take me to Your devotees and divine servants. I do not desire to go to heaven or to any other higher realms of sense enjoyments. My deep desire is to only serve my Guru and your devotees, and to never renounce that service.”

The heart of a saint is soft, like butter, (santa hrdaya navanīta samānā) and it is with this softness that Naradaji accepted Prahladaji, gave him the knowledge and also saved him from falling into the well of transmigration. Prahladaji says, “How can I stop serving him?”

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matprānaraṇaṁsanamantarapiturdhaśca
manyevabhṛtyaśivākyamṛtāmvidhātum,
khāḍgamṇaṣhrityaṇyavacadosadvīdhiṁśuh
tvāmīśvaromadaparo’vatukamharāmi. (Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 7.9.29)
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ananta – “O infinite Lord, who is not limited by time, space and object.”
matprānaraṇaṁpiturdhaśca – “The one who protected me during all the attempts of my father trying to kill me and then finally killed my father.”
manye – “I know there is no greatness or glory in me because of which You did this.”
svabhṛtyaśivākyamṛtamvidhātum – “O Lord, You did this to prove the words of Devarṣi Nārada right. It is the glory of my Guru alone, who gave me such devotion and wisdom, that brought the unshakeable faith in my heart, that the Lord’s devotee never gets destroyed and never perishes.”

We saw earlier how the Lord manifested from the pillar to prove right the words of his servant and devotee Prahladaji. (satyaṁ vidhātum nījabhṛtyaḥśītim). Here too, Prahladaji is saying to the Lord that, to prove the words of Naradaji right, the Lord protected Prahladaji on every occasion and finally killed Hiranyakashipu, too.

In fact, Hiranyakashipu died the moment he had uttered the following statement:
khaḍgaṁ pragṛhya yadavocat – “Whilst holding the sword in his hand, my father said...”
asadvidhitsuḥ – “...that which was totally false and unjust,”
karīn harāmi – “Today I will cut asunder your head, Prahlada!”
tvāmiśvaro madaparo’vatu – “Who is your Lord, the one that you are continuously worshipping? Other than me there is no other Lord. Today, let me see how your Lord saves you.” Prahladaji says that by uttering these words Hiranyakashipu had insulted the Lord and committed a grave sin. And that, the moment he spoke these words, he died! When someone insults a saint or the Lord, that instant that person is destroyed.

Through these last two verses, Prahladaji is saying two important things. Though the Lord protected him and also killed Hiranyakashipu, these are not great feats, and this is not the ultimate grace of the Lord. The true grace of the Lord is that Prahladaji was able to have the vision of a saint like Devarṣi Nārada who gave him this knowledge, and also have the experience of the Lord keeping His lotus-hand on his head.

Through this we should understand what our biggest gain in life is. We think that getting food when hungry, getting water when thirsty, being protected from death and getting what we desire from the Lord, we feel blessed and happy. These are actually fairly ordinary things. Real gain is in finding a Guru, which only comes with the grace of the Lord. And with the grace of the Guru, gaining divine knowledge and devotion. These are the real great gains in our life. This is something we should further contemplate upon.

In this world, when a person gains great wealth, people believe it is because of the grace of the Lord. But when a person loses this wealth, or develops dispassion in his heart, people wonder if something has gone wrong and if the Lord is displeased with this person. Ironically, most people are not able to understand what true grace and fortune in this world is.

Moving ahead now, we see that Prahladaji’s devotion is not mere emotionalism. His faith and unwavering love for the Lord has the foundation of knowledge of the Self. When devotion has the foundation of knowledge of the Self, then that devotion is unshakeable. And when such devotion is accompanied by knowledge, then that knowledge gains beauty, nectar, sweetness etc.
Prahladaji was given this knowledge by Naradaji while he was still in his mother’s womb and he believed that this was the true grace that he received from the Lord. Prahladaji will now be revealing this knowledge in the following verses. These verses are on the pure knowledge of the Self, explaining the essence of the Lord.

\textit{ekastvameva jagadetadamusya yattvam ādyantayoḥ prthagavasyasi madhyātaśca, srṣtvā gunavyatikaram nijamāyayedām}
\textit{nāneva tairavasitastadanupraviṣṭah}. (Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 7.9.30)

\textit{ekastvameva jagadetat}— “O Lord, I have understood through this knowledge, that in this whole creation there is only one Truth and that Truth is none other than You. You alone are the One without a second (ekam eva advitiyam). You alone are the absolute essence of everything. And therefore, this whole world cannot be anything else but You.”

\textit{amusya yattvamādyantayoḥ}— “O Lord, before the manifestation of this world (amusya), there was nothing else other than You. All the Upanishads also echo the same thing - \textit{sadeva somya idamagra āsīt, ātmā vā idamekamagra āsīt}, the one Truth alone was there, even when this creation of names and forms was not there. Before the creation, at the beginning of the creation as well as after the creation goes into dissolution, You alone remain as the absolute Truth. You are present before the beginning, and you are present after the end, as well. Whatever is before would be the cause; then there are effects, and when these get dissolved, only the cause remains. Therefore, You, the absolute Truth, are the cause of this world. You are there before its creation and You alone remain after its dissolution.”

\textit{prthagavasyasi}— “Yet, You are untouched and distinct from the world.”

\textit{madhyātaśca}— “You are not just the beginning and the end of creation, you are also the middle, as the substratum for all the effects.” Just as, when before a gold ornament is made, gold is present; after the ornament is melted gold alone remains; and even when the gold ornament existed, it was gold alone that was the substratum of the name and form called ornament.

Thus, the Lord alone is at the beginning, at the end and in the middle of all of creation.

\textit{nijamāyayedām}— “Your power called Māyā, doesn’t have any separate existence other than You and is always vested in You, as it cannot exist without You.” As the Lord is \textit{sat} (Existence) anything other than Him will be \textit{asat} (non-existence). \textit{Māyā} is an inexplicable power of the Lord.
gunavyatikaram srṣṭvā—“This Māyā along with its three attributes sattva, rajas and tamas, stays in the unmanifest form.” We have seen earlier that when prompted by kāla, Māyā manifests from the unmanifest and starts the creation.

Let us take an example to understand gunavyatikaram. There is an artist who has a box of colours, be it oil paints or water colours. In that box, the many colours are individually packed, each in a small bottle. When the painter gets inspired to paint, he opens that colour’s box (whether oil or water colours) and readies himself with the paint brushes and other paint accessories. He then takes the different colours of paint and starts to mix them; may be red and yellow together or green and blue together, etc. and finally, with the paintbrushes, makes various strokes on the canvas to create an artwork. This mixing of colours, which were previously unmixed and steady in their separate state, is called gunavyatikaram.

Similarly, in relation to the creation, the three qualities of sattva, rajas and tamas were unmixed in the total unmanifest Māyā. As Māyā manifested, the gunavyatikaram, that is the mixing of these gunas took place and from that, infinite names and forms have manifested. It is as if the Lord thought, “I have this box of colours called Māyā with the colours of the three gunas, so what can I do with this now?” In the above example, the painter, the painting and colours are all different entities. But in the case of the world, the Lord alone is everything – the artist, all the equipment for the art, and the artwork. There was a nice (Hindi) song in a movie: Who is the painter? Who has made this entire painting? He himself is the artist. He himself is the art. He is all the equipment. Whatever has been made – he is all that too.

idam nāneva tairavasitastadanupraviśṭah – Māyā created various conditionings like devas, gandharvas, human beings, animals, birds, etc. and then the Lord Himself entered them all. Here, ‘entering’ is not like when one enters a house that one has just built. Here, ‘entering’ means that even while all the conditions were manifesting from Māyā, the Lord as the essence and Existence in all, was already there. Just as when a pot is being made, the mud need not enter it separately after the pot is complete, as the mud is already present when the pot is being made.

The Upanishads say, tat sṛṣṭvā tadevānuprāviśat – The Consciousness that was already there ‘created’ and ‘entered’ - started to appear as many (nānā iva), being identified with various components of the creation (taih avasitah). Here, the word
‘iva’ is very important. It indicates that Brahman is one, yet with the different conditionings, It started to ‘appear’ as many but did not ‘become’ the many.

The same Pure Consciousness started appearing as many (bohu syām – may I become many) – the creator Brahma, the sustainer Vishnu and the destroyer Shiva, the devatās (Indra, Varuṇa, Agni etc.), human beings, animals, birds, trees and its branches. “But even after assuming many possible and different forms, there is no modification in You, O Lord.” Just as in a dream, I alone become everything (the dreamer and the dream world), without modifying anything in me; similarly, the Supreme Brahman is also ever non-modifying. “This supreme knowledge was given to me by Naradaji and this alone is the greatest wealth and fortune.”

By now we would have understood clearly that devotion is not just being emotional and crying out for the Lord. Here, a great devotee like Prahladaji also had the knowledge of the Self. He knew the essence of the Lord, and also his relationship with the Lord.

We will see more interesting and amazing aspects relating to the knowledge of the Self tomorrow.

Now we will see the expression of today’s Sanskrit verses in Hindi (verses 26 to 28 in Prahlada Stuti Bhāvānuvāda):

- karuṇa ṛṣi nāradane mukta kiyā bhavakūpase śaraṇā āpakā maiṁ ā kara choḍūṁ dāsyā aba maiṁ kaise.
- vacana bhakta nārada ke satya karane , prāṇa hare garvabhare matpitā ke , mere prāṇa bhī bacāye.
- paṅgāpata āpakā nahīṁ hai yaha svarūpataḥ māyākārya yaha to āpa nirvikāra tattvataḥ.

OM Tat Sat