

# Prahlada Stuti

Connect to the Divine  
with Swami Tejomayananda

Translation  
in English

## Prahlada Stuti, Talk 17

Swami Tejomayananda

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Prahladaji while singing the hymn in praise of the Lord, said that in the Vedas there were three kinds of forms of the Lord mentioned. The first is in the form of an effect (*kārya rūpa*) and the second is in the form of a cause (*kāraṇa rūpa*). When we see the world in the form of an effect, we reflect on its cause, and then we finally arrive at the third form of the Lord (Existence, *sat tattva*)- the ultimate root cause of the world.

Seekers endowed with knowledge and devotion (*yuktaḥ*) understand that the Lord is beyond the cause and effect and is ever liberated. They also recognise the Lord alone is in this effect and cause, as cause and effect will cease to exist without the Lord. In the next verse, Prahladaji further clarifies and elaborates this.

*tvaṁ vāyuragniravanirviyadambumātrāḥ  
prāṇendriyāṇi hṛdayaṁ cidanugrahaśca,  
sarvaṁ tvameva saguṇo viguṇaśca bhūman  
nānyat tvadastyapi manovacasā niruktam. (Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 7.9.48)*

**bhūman** – This name of the Lord has been previously mentioned. It means ‘O infinite Lord’ (*ananta svarūpa*).

**tvaṁ vāyuh agniḥ avani viyat ambu** – Prahladaji says, “O infinite Lord, You alone are the five great elements – air, fire, earth, space and water.”

**mātrāḥ** – Each of these five elements have their respective subtle properties (*tanmātrā*) of sound, touch, form, taste and smell, which are perceived and experienced by all of us. So, the Lord alone is the subtle as well as the gross elements and the properties of all these elements.

And what about these conditionings of the Self? Prahladaji says,

**prāṇa** – The vital airs because of which there is the power of activity within the body.

**indriyāṇi** – The five sense organs as well as the five organs of action.

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**hṛdayam cit** – It means the mind and the intellect, but actually it encompasses the four-fold inner equipment (*antaḥkaraṇa catuṣṭaya*) – *manas* (mind), *buddhi* (intellect), *citta* (memory) and *ahaṁkāra* (ego).

**anugraha** – It primarily means grace. In the Vedas, it is mentioned that all the sense organs as well as the mind and the intellect have presiding deities (*anugrahaka devatā*). For example, the *devatā* of the eyes is Lord Sun, the *devatā* of the hands is Indra (*hastayorindraḥ*), the *devatā* of speech is Agni and so on. Prahladaji is saying that the Lord Himself expresses as these presiding deities.

**sarvam tvameva** – “You alone are everything, O Lord!”

**saguṇa viguṇaśca** – *saguṇa* means along with attributes and *viguṇa* means without any properties. Those things which have all the five properties of sound, touch, form, taste and smell, are experienced in a gross form. And when, these properties, one by one keep reducing, then that thing becomes increasingly subtle. Now, earth has all the five properties and its special property is smell. And when we observe the space element, we see that it has only one property, which is that of sound. Thus that which is endowed with properties and is in a gross form is *saguṇa*. As the properties go on decreasing, that object continues to become more subtle – *viguṇa*.

We can take another example, that of the mind and the intellect. They are not directly experienced through our sense organs, but from the standpoint of the Supreme Self, they are gross. However, from the relative standpoint of objects, they are subtle. Therefore it is said that all that is gross (*saguṇa*) and all that is subtle (*viguṇa*) is the Lord alone.

**nānyat tvadasti** – Prahladaji says that nothing can possibly exist as separate and different from the Lord. We have seen previously that the Lord in essence is the pure Existence (*sat, astitva*) and nothing can exist other than this Existence. If one argues that there exists something other than Existence, then it can only be non-existence or absence or zero.

Therefore, whatever is seen, the entire gross form of creation, and everything that is subtle cannot be separate from this Existence principle. But this Existence principle remains ever independent of all these. Even though it pervades all, it is absolutely indifferent.

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**manovacasā niruktam** – Prahladaji says, all that is perceived through the sense organs, inferred through the mind and expressed through speech is also a form of the Lord. But we should always remember that the Lord’s essential nature is beyond all these. The Lord is all-pervading (*sarvavyāpaka*) and transcendental (*sarvātīta*). Nothing can exist without the presence of the Lord, but the Lord can remain without any of these. And even while pervading everything, the Supreme Self (*puruṣa tattva*) remains untouched and untainted by any flaws or properties (*asaṅgo hi ayam puruṣaḥ*). This *paramātmā* alone is the Self of all and this is what a seeker has to realise.

Prahladaji elaborates further:

*naite guṇā na guṇino mahadādayo ye  
sarve manaḥ prabhṛtayaḥ sahadevamartyāḥ,  
ādyantavanta urugāya vidanti hi tvām  
evam vimṛśya sudhiyo viramanti śabdāt. (Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 7.9.49)*

**naite guṇāḥ** – Prahladaji says, “O Lord, all the properties of the *prakṛti* such as *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, all the other properties such as sound, touch, form, taste and smell, and any other possible properties that we can imagine...”

**guṇino mahadādayo ye sarve manaḥ prabhṛtayaḥ sahadevamartyāḥ** – The *mahadādayaḥ* are the beholders of the above mentioned properties. It is said that before the Creation, only the Lord was there and the *prakṛti* (*Māyā*) was unmanifest in Him. First manifested the macrocosmic subtle body (*mahat tattva* – the total mind and intellect) and *hiranyagarbha*, the possessor of this macrocosmic subtle body. Then, *ahamkāra*, *manas*, the five elements, various kinds of gross bodies and the possessors of these individual gross bodies, such as *devatās*, *ṛṣis*, *munis* and human beings manifested.

But Prahladaji is saying here, that none of these – be it *Māyā* or its properties, or *ahamkāra* or *manas*, or the various elements and their effects (subtle bodies, gross bodies) along with *devatās*, human beings (*devaiḥ saha*, *martyaiḥ saha*) etc., can ever comprehend and know the Lord (***na vidanti tvām***).

Why are they not able to comprehend the Lord?

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**ādyantavantaḥ** – Because all of the above have a beginning and an end as well. The Lord existed prior to their manifestation and will continue to exist even after everything has gone back or departed. So they can perceive all the objects that come in the purview of the sense organs, the mind, the intellect etc., but how can they know the Lord? They cannot know the Lord.

Earlier we had seen the example of when a seed has sprouted into a sapling, the seed can no more be seen separately. Similarly, it is not possible to know the Lord in essence, through any of these.

**urugāya** – Prahladaji says that the Lord has illustrious fame. Even though the Lord is essentially *saccidānanda* (Existence–Consciousness–Bliss) and from Him alone the infinite cosmoses have manifested, are sustained and are destroyed, yet He remains totally unmodified. This is His fame.

Even in relation to this creation which can be directly perceived by us, we are not able to understand a single thing in it's entirety. Stalwarts like *devatās, ṛṣis, munis* etc. have also failed to comprehend the nature of the Lord (*hāre ṛṣi muni kara dhyāna*). It finally dawns upon them that the Lord cannot be known in this way.

**sudhiyaḥ evaṁ vimṛśya viramanti śabdāt** – Thus those who are wise feel that they have done enough of talking, talking, talking (*viramanti śabdāt*); there is no point in saying anything more. Similarly if we think that by contemplating a lot and by continuous thinking we will get to know the Lord, we will only be disappointed. Finally, it dawns upon those people who are sensible and whose intellect is pure and subtle, that we cannot know the Lord in any form.

His attributeless form (*nirguṇa svarūpa*) is beyond the cognisance of the mind, intellect and the senses, and therefore there is no question of knowing this form. In *śivamahimnastotra* even with respect to the form of the Lord with attributes (*saguṇa*), it is said that – if Devi Saraswati keeps penning the qualities of the Lord for an infinite duration of time, she will still not be able to pen it down in its entirety (*likhati yadi gṛhitvā śāradā sarvakālam tadapi tava guṇānām īśa pāraṁ na yāti*). In SriRamcharitmanas, Tulsidasji also says *rāma ananta ananta guṇa amita kathā vistāra* (Shri Rama is Infinite, His divine attributes are boundless, endless is the expanse of His lore). So we cannot fully describe even the *saguṇa* form of the Lord, and we can never comprehend the *nirguṇa* form as an object of the senses.



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Therefore, the intelligent people become silent, putting an end to all words and focusing only on meditating upon the Lord. When we meditate upon Him, then the Lord Himself reveals His essential nature to us and we gain the knowledge. But this experience cannot be an object of perception of one's mind, intellect or speech. We do not fully understand even those things which have been objects of perception of our senses. But the irony is that we come to realise this only after a lot of thinking and contemplation. Therefore, we should continue to think about this.

We should also do *śravaṇam*, but by mere listening knowledge does not take place. Yet, this knowledge takes place only by listening! This means that everything has its own limitations, and it is absolutely fine to operate within these boundaries. Overstepping that line is called *ati prasaṅga*. One should not overdo anything and cross that limit.

Now, in this *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* itself a point has been interestingly made that all the *devatās*, *ṛṣis* and *munis* cannot know the infinite nature of the Lord because they do not have the capacity for the same. Then, the question arises that if the Lord is all-knowing and omnipotent, does He know His own infinite nature? It is said that even the Lord does not know His infinitude. It is not because of His incapacity to do so, but because infinitude cannot have any boundaries. If the Lord says that He knows the boundaries of infinitude, then it becomes finite and ceases to be infinite.

So, the implication here is that after doing everything, we should become calm and pray to the Lord: *pūṣan ekarṣe yama sūrya prājāpatya vyūha raśmīn samūha tejaḥ*. "O Lord, now You only reveal Yourself to me!" The Lord will reveal His true nature. Through devotion everything is possible.

We will now see the last verse of the hymn sung by Prahladaji:

*tat te'rhattama namaḥ stutikarmapūjāḥ  
karma smṛtiścaraṇayoḥ śravaṇam kathāyām,  
saṁsevayā tvayi vineti ṣaḍaṅgayā kim  
bhaktim janaḥ paramahamsagatau labheta. (Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 7.9.50)*

**arhattama** – Prahladaji says, "O Lord, amongst all the deserving recipients of reverence, faith and worship in this world, You are the most venerable."

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**tat te** – “That venerable one You are,”

**ṣaḍaṅgayā samsevayā tvayi** – “Without that devotion which has these six aspects (limbs) and is of the nature of service (*sevā*), how can anyone attain You, O Lord!”

**bhaktiṁ janaḥ paramahaṁsagatau labheta** – The word *paramahaṁsa* denotes devotees who have transcended all the injunctions of the Vedas in terms of do’s and don’t’s. And being established in the Self, they have no sense of doership or enjoyership. The entire *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* is a compilation dedicated to the *paramahaṁsa* renunciates such as Shukadevaji, Vamadevaji – who are the most dear to the Lord.

Such devotion, along with its six limbs, by which these devotees become most dear to the Lord, has been elaborated in this verse. Earlier, we had seen that Prahladaji had described the ninefold devotion, in response to his father, Hiranyakashipu, on being asked what he would like to do.

*śravaṇaṁ kīrtanaṁ viṣṇoḥ smaraṇaṁ pādasevanam,  
arcanaṁ vandanaṁ dāsyam sakhyam ātmanivedanam.*

Prahladaji had previously mentioned the nine aspects of devotion and in this verse, only six have been mentioned. But the interesting fact is that seven out of those nine aspects have been covered in these six! And without this kind of devotion, no one will ever be able to attain the Lord.

**namaḥ** – To offer salutations (*namaskāra*) to the Lord.

**stuti** – To sing hymns in praise of the Lord, singing His glories.

**karmaṇā pūjāḥ** – Doing worship (*pūjā*) as well as doing all actions as an offering unto the lotus feet of the Lord.

The word *karma* has been mentioned twice, but the second instance is to be associated with the word *caraṇayoḥ*, which makes it **caraṇayoḥ karma** and it means the action of serving the lotus feet of the Lord.

**smṛti** – Remembering the Lord.

**śravaṇaṁ kathāyām** – Listening to the stories of the Lord.

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Now, what we see here is that:

*śravaṇam kathāyām* corresponds to *śravaṇam* from the ninefold devotion.

*stuti* corresponds to *kīrtanam*.

*smṛti* corresponds to *smaraṇam*.

*caraṇayoḥ karma* corresponds to *pāda sevnam*.

*karmapūjā* corresponds to *arcanam*.

*namaḥ* corresponds to *vaṁdanam*.

Now see, when one worships the Lord in so many different ways, and serves the lotus feet of the Lord, then the feeling that I am a servant of the Lord (*dāsya bhāva*) is implied. So *dāsya* is also covered here. I was wondering where have *sakhyam* and *ātmanivedanam* gone? But both these can also be included here in the six aspects.

*sakhyam* – Don't we notice that wherever there is friendship, dearness is also present? And if anyone serves the Lord so much, it is obvious that the Lord is very dear to him. If you do not like the Lord, then why would you do all these?

*ātmanivedanam* – In the act of doing all actions as an offering unto the Lord (*karmapūjā*), *ātmanivedanam* is implied.

Thus, all nine aspects are covered in the six aspects of devotion mentioned in this verse. Another interesting thought which dawned upon me on further thinking is that the first seven aspects of the ninefold devotion have been encompassed in this verse. Now, while the *dāsya bhāva* is expressed for the Lord by the devotee, the *sakhyam* emotion flows from the Lord towards the devotee. Even as the devotee says that he is only a servant of the Lord, the Lord considers the devotee a friend. In the Bhagavad Gita the Lord tells Arjuna - *bhakto'si me sakhā ceti*. And in the Ramayana Lord Rama considered Sugriva and Vibhishana as his friends. In Gokul, Lord Krishna used to play with so many friends.

Further, one thing to note here is that a devotee offers himself entirely (*ātmanivedanam*) to the Lord. But this also means that the Lord gives Himself to His devotees. *aham bhaktaḥ parādhīnaḥ* – The Lord says, "I am under the control of my devotees," and it was for this reason that He gave Himself to Arjuna and became his charioteer.

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Therefore, in this verse, the six aspects of devotion that have been mentioned, encompass all the aspects of the nine-fold devotion (*navadhā bhakti*).

Now, who is dear to the Lord? For the devotees, the Lord is the most dear, and such devotees are most dear to the Lord. We should therefore not only practice this nine-fold devotion towards the Lord, but also listen to and sing the glories of His devotees, worship and serve His devotees because there is no difference between the Lord and such devotees of Him – *tasmin tajjane bheda abhāvāt*.

One more point to note here is that one should do all this for one's Guru also. That is, one should listen to the glories of one's Guru, as well sing and remember His glories and serve his lotus feet. Actually, the import of *pādasevanam* in the nine-fold devotion is serving the lotus feet of the Guru. When a seeker does all this for the Lord, for the devotees of the Lord and to one's Guru, there is no doubt that he or she will evolve into a *paramahansa*.

Now, we have seen the hymn sung by Prahladaji in its entirety, but if we think back, Prahladaji initially had a doubt that if the Lord would be pleased with his hymn. Therefore, what happens next and the entire culmination of this story, we will see tomorrow. Tomorrow's portion is very important. Very important!

Now, we will see the expression of today's Sanskrit verses in Hindi (verse 41 to 43 in Prahlada Stuti Bhāvānuvāda):

- *sthūla sūkṣma hrasva dīrgha rūpa bhūpa deva indra  
nīla pīta śveta sarva sūrya anila anala candra.*
- *rūpa dhareṃ āpa sabhī āpa pare inake bhī  
vedavāṇī mauna huī mauna hue muni sabhī.*
- *namana stuti karma smṛti kathana śruti sevārati  
bina sādhana milata nahīm bhakti paramahansa gati.*

Let us reiterate what Prahladaji has said – *hariḥ śaraṇam!*

OM Tat Sat