

CHAPTER 20

विंशोऽध्यायः

(श्रीभगवत आविर्भावः, हिरण्यकशिपुवधश्च)

पराशर उवाच

एवं सञ्चिन्तयन् विष्णुमभेदेनात्मनो द्विज।
 तन्मयत्वमवाप्याश्रयं मेने चात्मानमच्युतम्॥ १॥
 विसस्मार तथात्मानं नान्यत् किञ्चिदजानत।
 अहमेवाव्ययोऽनन्तः परमात्मेत्यचिन्तयत्॥ २॥
 तस्य तद्भावनायोगात् क्षीणपापस्य वै क्रमात्।
 शुद्धेऽन्तःकरणे विष्णुस्तस्थौ ज्ञानमयेऽच्युतः॥ ३॥
 योगप्रभावात् प्रह्लादे जाते विष्णुमयेऽसुरे।
 चलत्युरगबन्धैस्तैर्मैत्रेय त्रुटितं क्षणात्॥ ४॥
 भ्रान्तग्राहगणः सोर्मिर्ययौ क्षोभं महार्णवः।
 चचाल च मही सर्वा सशैलवनकानना॥ ५॥
 स च तं शैलसम्पातं दैत्यैर्न्यस्तमथोपरि।

प्रक्षिप्य तस्मात् सलिलान्नश्चक्राम महामतिः॥६॥

दृष्ट्वा च स जगद् भूयो गगनाद्युपलक्षणम्।

प्रह्लादोऽस्मीति सस्मार पुनरात्मानमात्मना॥७॥

तुष्ट्वा च पुनर्धीमाननादिं पुरुषोत्तमम्।

एकाग्रमतिरव्यग्रो यतवाक्कायमानसः॥८॥

Parāśara said—Thus meditating upon Viṣṇu, as identical with his own spirit, Prahlāda became as one with him, and finally regarded himself as the divinity : he forgot entirely his own individuality, and was conscious of nothing else than his being the inexhaustible, eternal, supreme soul; and in consequence of the efficacy of this conviction of identity, the imperishable Viṣṇu, whose essence is wisdom, became present in his heart, which was wholly purified from sin. As soon as, through the force of his contemplation, Prahlāda had become one with Viṣṇu, the bonds with which he was bound burst instantly asunder; the ocean was violently uplifted; and the monsters of the deep were alarmed; earth with all her forests and mountains trembled; and the prince, putting aside the rocks which the demons had piled upon him, came forth from out the main. When he beheld the outer world again, and contemplated earth and heaven, he remembered who he was, and recognised himself to be Prahlāda; and again he hymned Puruṣottama, who is without beginning or end; his mind being steadily and undeviatingly addressed to the object of his prayers, and his speech, thoughts, and acts being firmly under control.

प्रह्लाद उवाच

ॐ नमः परमार्थार्थं स्थूलसूक्ष्मक्षराक्षरा।

व्यक्ताव्यक्त कलातीत सकलेश निरञ्जन॥९॥

गुणाञ्जन गुणाधार निर्गुणात्मन् गुणस्थिर।

मूर्त्तामूर्त महामूर्ते सूक्ष्ममूर्ते स्फूटास्फुटा॥१०॥

करालसौम्यरूपात्मन् विद्याविद्यालयाच्युत।

सदसद्रूप सद्भाव सदसद्भावभावन॥११॥

नित्यानित्यप्रपञ्चात्मन् निष्प्रपञ्चामलाश्रित।

एकानेक नमस्तुभ्यं वासुदेवादिकारण॥१२॥

यः स्थूलसूक्ष्मः प्रकटः प्रकाशो

यः सर्वभूतो न च सर्वभूतः

विश्वं यतश्चैतदविश्वहेतो-

र्नमोऽस्तु तस्मै पुरुषोत्तमाय॥१३॥

"Om glory to the end of all: to you, lord, who are subtle and substantial; mutable and immutable; perceptible and imperceptible; divisible and indivisible; indefinable and definable; the subject of attributes, and void of attributes; abiding in qualities, though they abide not in you; morpious, and amorphous; minute and vast; visible and invisible; hideousness and beauty; ignorance and wisdom; cause and effect: existence and non-existence; comprehending all that is good and evil; essence of perishable and imperishable elements; asylum of undeveloped rudiments. Oh you who are both one and many, Vāsudeva, first cause of all; glory be unto you. Oh you who are large and small, manifest and hidden; who are all beings, and are not all beings; and from whom, although distinct from universal cause, the universe proceeds; to you, Puruṣottama, be all glory."

पराशर उवाच।

तस्य तद्येतसो देवः स्तुतिमित्थं प्रकुर्वतः।

आविर्बभूव भगवान् पीताम्बरधरो हरिः॥१४॥

ससम्भ्रमस्तमालोक्य समुत्थायाकुलाक्षरम्।

नमोऽस्तु विष्णवेत्येतद् व्याजहारासकृद् द्विज॥१५॥

Whilst with mind intent on Viṣṇu, he thus pronounced his praises, the divinity, clad in yellow robes, suddenly appeared before him. Startled at the sight, with hesitating speech Prahlāda pronounced repeated salutations to Viṣṇu, and said,

प्रह्लाद उवाच

देव प्रपन्नार्तिहर प्रसादं कुरु केशव।

अवलोकनदानेन भूयो मां पावयाच्युत॥१६॥

Prahlāda said— "Oh you who removest all worldly grief, Keśava, be propitious unto me; again sanctify me, Acyuta, by your sight."

श्रीभगवानुवाच

कुर्वतस्ते प्रसन्नोऽहं भक्तिमव्यभिचारिणीम्।

यथाभिलषितो मत्तः प्रह्लादं त्रियतां वरः॥ १७॥

The deity replied— "I am pleased with the faithful attachment you have shown to me: demand from me, Prahlāda. whatever you desire."

प्रह्लाद उवाच

नाथ योनिसहस्रेषु येषु येषु व्रजाम्यहम्।

तेषु तेष्वच्युता भक्तिरच्युतास्तु सदा त्वयि॥ १८॥

या प्रीतिरविवेकानां विषयेष्वनपायिनी।

त्वामनुस्मरतः सा मे हृदयान्माऽपसर्पतु॥ १९॥

श्रीभगवानुवाच

मयि भक्तिस्तवास्त्येव भूयोऽप्येवं भविष्यति।

वरस्तु मत्तः प्रह्लादं त्रियतां यस्तवेप्सितः॥ २०॥

Prahlāda replied, "In all the thousand births through which I may be doomed to pass, may my faith in you, Acyuta, never know decay; may passion, as fixed as that which the worldly-minded feel for sensual pleasures, ever animate my heart, always devoted unto you." Bhagavān answered, "You have already devotion unto me, and ever shall have it: now choose some boon, whatever is in your wish."

प्रह्लाद उवाच

मयि द्वेषानुबन्धोऽभूत् संस्तूताबुद्धते तव।

मत्पितुस्तत्कृतं पापं देव तस्य प्रणश्यतु॥ २१॥

शास्त्राणि पातितान्यङ्गे क्षिप्तो यद्याग्निसंहतौ।

दंशितश्चोरगैर्दत्तं यद्विषं मम भोजने॥ २२॥

बद्धा समुद्रे यत् क्षिप्तो यद्यितोऽस्मि शिलोच्चयैः।

अन्यानि चाप्यसाधूति यानि यानि कृतानि मे॥ २३॥

त्वयि भक्तिमतो द्वेषादयं तत्सम्भवञ्च यत्।

त्वत्प्रसादात् प्रभो सद्यस्तेन मुच्येत मे पिता॥ २४॥

Prahlāda then said, "I have been hated, for that I assiduously proclaimed your praise: do you, oh lord, pardon in my father this sin that he has committed. Weapons have been hurled against me; I have been thrown into the flames; I have been bitten by venomous,

snakes; and poison has been mixed with my food; I have been bound and cast into the sea; and heavy rocks have been heaped upon me: but all this. .and whatever ill beside has been wrought against me; whatever wickedness has been done to me, because I put my faith in you; all, through your mercy, has been suffered by me unharmed: and do, you therefore free my father from this iniquity."

श्रीभगवानुवाच

प्रह्लाद सर्वमेतत् ते मत्प्रसादाद भविष्यति।

अन्यञ्च ते वरं दद्वि त्रियतामसुरात्मजा॥ २५॥

To this application Viṣṇu replied, "All this shall be unto you. through my favour: but I give you another boon: demand it, son of the Asura."

प्रह्लाद उवाच

कृतकृत्योऽस्मि भगवन् वरेणानेन यत् त्वयि।

भवित्री त्वत्प्रसादेन भक्तिरव्यभिचारिणी॥ २६॥

धर्मार्थकामैः किं तस्य मुक्तिस्तस्य करे स्थिता।

समस्तजगतां मूले यस्य भक्तिः स्थिरा त्वयि॥ २७॥

Prahlāda answered and said, "All my desires, oh lord, have been fulfilled by the boon that you have granted, that my faith in you shall never know decay. Wealth, virtue, love, are as nothing; for even liberation is in his reach whose faith is firm in you, root of the universal world."

श्रीभगवानुवाच

यथा ते निश्चलं चेतो मयि भक्तिसमन्वितम्।

तथा त्वं मत्प्रसादेन निर्वाणं परमाप्स्यसि॥ २८॥

Viṣṇu said. "Since your heart is filled immovably with trust in me, you shalt, through my blessing, attain freedom from existence."

पराशर उवाच

इत्युक्त्वान्तर्दधे विष्णुस्तस्य मैत्रेय! पश्यतः।

स चापि पुनरागम्य ववन्दे चरणौ पितुः॥ २९॥

तं पिता मूर्धन्युपाग्राय परिष्वज्य च पीडितम्।

जीवसीत्याह वत्सेति बाष्पाद्रनयनो द्विजः॥ ३०॥

प्रीतिमांश्चाभवत् तस्मिन्नुतापी महासुरः।
 गुरुपित्रोश्चकारैवं शुश्रूषां सोऽपि धर्मवित्॥ ३१॥
 पितर्युपरतिं नीते नरसिंहस्वरूपिणा।
 विष्णुना सोऽपि दैत्यानां मैत्रेयाभूत पतिस्ततः॥ ३२॥
 ततो राज्यद्युतिं प्राप्य कर्मशुद्धिकरीं द्विज।
 पुत्रपौत्रांश्च सुबहून्वाप्यैश्वर्यमेव च॥ ३३॥
 क्षीणाधिकारः स यदा पुण्यपापविवर्जितः।
 तदासौ भगददध्यानात् परे निर्वाणमाप्तवान्॥ ३४॥

Thus saying, Viṣṇu vanished from his sight, and Prahlaḍa repaired to his father, and bowed down before him. His father kissed him on the forehead¹, and embraced him, and shed tears, and said, "Dost you live, my son?" And the great Asura repented of his former cruelty, and treated him with kindness: and Prahlaḍa, fulfilling his duties like any other youth, continued diligent in the service of his preceptor and his father. After his father had been put to death by Viṣṇu in the form of the man-lion², Prahlaḍa became the sovereign of the Daityas; and possessing the splendours of royalty consequent upon his piety, exercised extensive sway, and was blessed with a numerous progeny. At the expiration of an authority which was the reward of his meritorious acts, he was freed-from the consequences of moral merit or demerit, and obtained, through meditation on the deity, final exemption from existence.

एवमप्रभावो दैत्योऽसौ मैत्रेयासीन्महामतिः।
 प्रह्लादो भगवद्भक्तो यं त्वं मामनुपृच्छसि॥ ३५॥
 यस्त्वेतच्चरितं तस्य प्रह्लादस्य महात्मनः।
 शृणोति तस्य पापानि सद्यो गच्छन्ति संक्षयम्॥ ३६॥
 अहोरात्रकृतं पापं प्रह्लादचरितं नरः।
 शृण्वन् पठंश्च मैत्रेय व्यपोहति न संशयः॥ ३७॥
 पौर्णमास्याममावस्यामष्टम्यामथवा पठन्।
 द्वादश्यां वा तदान्नोति गोप्रदानफलं द्विज॥ ३८॥
 प्रह्लादं सकलापत्सु यथा रक्षितवान् हरिः।
 तथा रक्षित यस्तस्य शृणोति चरितं सदा॥ ३९॥
 इति श्रीविष्णुपुराणे प्रथमांशे विशोऽध्यायः

Such, Maitreya, was the Daitya Prahlaḍa, the wise and faithful worshipper of Viṣṇu, of whom you wished to hear; and such was his miraculous power. Whoever listens to the history of Prahlaḍa is immediately cleansed from his sins: the iniquities that he commits, by night or by day, shall be expiated by once hearing, or once reading, the history of Prahlaḍa, The perusal of this history on the day of full moon, of new moon, or on the eighth or twelfth day of the lunation, shall yield fruit equal to the donation of a cow⁴. As Viṣṇu protected Prahlaḍa in all the calamities to which he was exposed, so shall the deity protect him who listens constantly to The tale⁵.

NOTES

1. Literally, 'having smelt his forehead.' I have elsewhere had had occasion to observe this practice : Hindu Theatre. 11. 45.

2. Here is another instance of that brief reference to popular and prior legends, which is frequent in this Purāṇa. The man-lion Avatāra is referred to in several of the Purāṇas, but I have met with the story in detail only in the Bhāgavata. It is there said that Hiraṇyakaśipu asks his son, why if Viṣṇu is every where, he is not visible in a pillar in the hall, where they are assembled. He then rises, and strikes the column with his fist: on which Viṣṇu, in a form which is neither wholly a lion nor a man, issues from it, and a conflict ensues, which ends in Hiraṇyakaśipu's being torn to pieces. Even this account, therefore, is not in all particulars the same as the popular version of the story.

3. The days of full and new moon are sacred with all sects of Hindus : the eighth and twelfth days of the lunar half month were considered holy by the Vaiṣṇavas, as appears from the text. The eighth maintains its character in a great degree from the eighth of Bhādra being the birthday of Kṛṣṇa; but the eleventh, in more recent Vaiṣṇava works, as the Brahma Vaivartta Purāṇa, has taken the place of the twelfth, and is even more sacred than the eighth.

4. Or any solemn gift: that of a cow is held particularly sacred; but it implies accompaniments of a more costly character, ornaments and gold.

5. The legend of Prahlāda is inserted in detail in the Bhāgavata and Nāradiya Purāṇas, and in the Uttara Khaṇḍa of the Pādma: it is adverted to more briefly' in the Vāyu, Liṅga, Kūrma, etc . in the Mokṣa Dharma of the Mahābhārata, and in the Hari Varṇsa.
