

# The Advaitic spirit of Prahlāda in the Vishnu Purana

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## The Advaitic Spirit of Prahlāda

Today is the auspicious day of Nṛsinhajayanti, the day Bhagavan Shri Lakshminrsinha saved Prahlāda. This is the perfect time to contemplate and enquire about the advaitic realization of Prahlāda. We will see how it is explained in the *Yōgavāsīṣṭha* and *Viṣṇupurāṇa*.

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As a foremost disciple, Prahlāda swiftly uttered:

Aham̐tvam̐tvamaham̐dēvadiṣṭyābhēdōstināvayōhō ||  
 Diṣṭyāmattāmasiprāptōdiṣṭyātattāmahamgataḥ ||  
 Mahyam̐tubhyamanantāyatubhyam̐mahyam̐śivātmanē ||  
 Namōdēvādhidēvāyaparāyaparamātmanē ||

[*Yōgavāsīṣṭha* - 5<sup>th</sup> Upaśama prakaraṇa - 36<sup>th</sup> Sarga - [24<sup>th</sup> shloka onwards]

[Oh God! I am You and You are me. Fortunately there is no difference between us. Fortunately You have attained my true nature. Fortunately I have attained Your true nature! Obeisance to Me, who are verily You, the Infinite, and to You who are verily me, the Auspicious. Obeisance to the God of all deities, who is the Supreme beyond everything, who is the Paramātma.]

Some people may say, “Yōgavāsīṣṭha is an Advaitic scripture. Whatever it says cannot be a testimony for us. So we don’t believe in it.” What if the same is told in the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*?

The *Viṣṇupurāṇa* is a vital testimony for everyone. The above is mentioned in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> chapters of the 1<sup>st</sup> Amśa of the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*. All those interested can refer to the original *Viṣṇupurāṇa* itself.

It is mentioned from the 47<sup>th</sup> verse onwards in the 19<sup>th</sup> chapter as below.

Having instructed Prahlāda many times to not meditate on Bhagavan Narayana, Hiraṇyakaśipu could not tolerate Prahlāda meditating on Narayana and tortured him in various ways. When Prahlāda did not bow down to this even after all these forms of torture, Hiraṇyakaśipu bound Prahlāda with the Nāgapāśa and ordered that he be thrown into the ocean. That is the moment when Prahlāda tethered by the Nāgapāśa deeply contemplated “I am Bhagavan” [Ahaṁ brahmāsmi] to get liberated from the Nāgapāśa. Some more details about this are given below.

Namōstuviṣṇavētasmaiyasyābhinnamidamjagat |  
 Dhyēyaḥsajagatāmādyahsaprasīdatumē'vyayaḥ || 1-19-82 ||  
 Yatrōtametatprotam ca viśvamakśaramavyayam |  
 Ādhārabhūtaṁsarvasyasaprasīdatumēhariḥ || 1-19-83 ||  
 Ōmnamōviṣṇavētasmainamastasmaipunaḥpunaḥ |  
 Yatrasarvaṁyataḥsarvaṁyaḥsarvaṁsarvasamśrayaḥ || 1-19-84 ||  
 Sarvagatvādanantasyasaevāhamavasthitah |  
 Mattaḥsarvamahaṁsarvaṁmayisarvaṁsanātanē || 1-19-85 ||  
 Ahamēvākṣayōnityaḥparamātmātmāsamśrayaḥ |  
 Brahmasanjn'yohamevāgretathānte ca paraḥpumān || 1-19-86 ||

Śrīparāśarauvāca ||  
 Ēvaṁsañcintāyanviṣṇuṁabhedenātmanōdvija |  
 Tanmayatvamavāpyagryammēnēcātmānamacyutam || 1-20-1 ||  
 Visasmāratāthātmanāmnān'yatkiñcidajānāta |  
 Ahamēvāvyayōnantaḥparamātmētyacintayat || 1-20-2 ||  
 Tasyatadbhāvanāyōgātkṣīṇapāpasyavaikramāt |  
 Śuddhe'ntaḥkaraṇevīṣṇustasthaujñānamāyōcyutaḥ || 1-20-3 ||  
 Yōgaprabhāvātprahlādējātēviṣṇumayē'sure |  
 Calatyuragabandhaistairmaitrēyatṛṭitamkṣaṇāt || 1-20-4 ||  
 Bhrāntagrāhagaṇaḥsormīryayaukṣōbhaṁmahārṇavaḥ |  
 Cācāla ca mahīsarvāsaśailavanakānanā || 1-20-5 ||  
 Sa ca taṁśailasaṅghātaṁdaityairnyastamathopari |  
 Utkṣipyatasmātsalilātniścakāmamahāmatih || 1-20-6 ||

[Translation: Prahlāda was eulogizing, “Of Whom this world is certainly an integral part, I bow to that Viṣṇu. One who is the primary cause, One who is to be meditated upon, One

who is imperishable, One who is called Śrīhari, let Him be benevolent to me. May the One in whom this world is present as woof and warp, that Imperishable and the Substratum for everything, who is called Hari, be pleased with me. Obeisance to that Viṣṇu again and again. He who is the Substratum in which everything else rests, who is everything, from whom everything has existence, One who is omnipresent, to that Viṣṇu my obeisance! Since He is all pervading, I am He. O Ancient One! Everything is born out of me, I am everything and in me everything resides. The Imperishable, Eternal and who is the Substratum of the self, that Paramātmā is me! One who resides in everything in the world who is called by the name 'Brahman' who is the absolute Self, is me!" [This shows that he was contemplating as "Ahaṁ brahmāsmi"].

For which Parāśara uttered,

"Prahlāda meditated on Viṣṇu as non-different from himself, attaining the zenith of such absorption and realized himself as Achyuta by shedding his own identity. [This actually reveals that when one sheds his own (false) identity and meditates on the self as Viṣṇu, one gets released from bondage]. Nothing else was visible to him. He just meditated on "I am the Imperishable eternal Paramātmā". With this thoughtfulness on Paramātmā, he promptly got rid of all his sins. [We can see that, all sins committed will be destroyed in no time by meditating as "AhaṁBrahmasmi" alone]. In such a pure mind of Prahlada, Viṣṇu who is Achyuta established Himself as pure Consciousness. When Prahlāda, the son of an Asura, moved about verily as Viṣṇu by the impact of his meditation, all his past sins and bondage were destroyed in no time. The ocean agitated with huge waves. Crocodiles and many other creatures were in a panic. The earth, including mountains and forests, was shaken. Prahlāda emerged from the ocean, freeing himself of the mountains that the demons had placed on top of him."

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Until Prahlāda had the feeling "I am not Brahman", he could not be liberated from the Nāgapāśa [illusion]. When he started meditating as "I am Viṣṇu" who is the divine Truth, at that moment, within a trice, his bondage was destroyed.

There are a lot of benefits in reading the *Viṣṇupurana*. The Advaitic concepts are taught in a simple and beautiful manner at every step. Hence I request all Advaitins to not just read this *Purāṇa* but also reflect on it.

(Translated to English by Sri Ajay Majumdar)

Original Kannada article by G.R.Patil  
[Hooli] Dharwad, 25-05-2021 (see here:  
<https://adbhutam.files.wordpress.com/2021/05/prahlada-advaita-grp.pdf> )