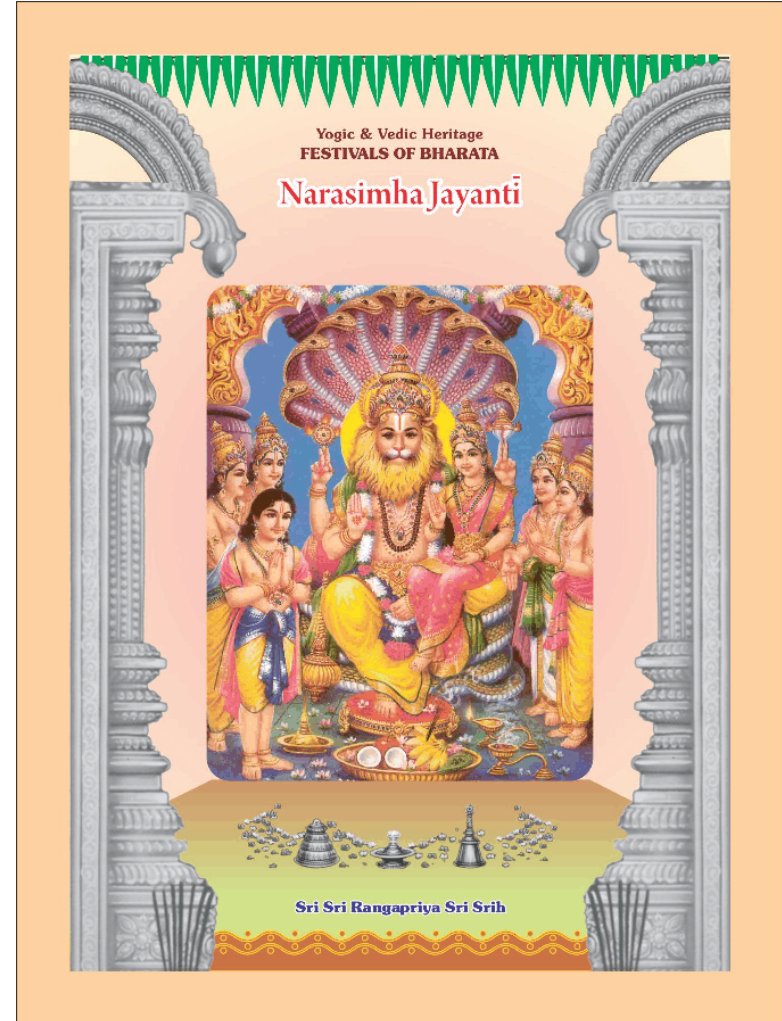




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We Dedicate this Sacred Treasure at the holy lotus feet of

Sriranga Mahaguru and SriMata

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अ	आ	इ	ई	उ	ऊ	ऋ	ॠ	ऌ	ॡ	ए	ऐ	ओ	औ	अं	अः
a	ā	i	ī	u	ū	ṛ	ṝ	ḷ	ḹ	e	ai	o	au	am	ah
क	ख	ख	ग	ङ											
ka	kha	ga	gha	ṅa											
च	छ	ज	झ	ञ											
ca	cha	ja	jha	ña											
ट	ठ	ड	ढ	ण											
ṭa	ṭha	ḍa	ḍha	ṇa											
त	थ	द	ध	न											
ta	tha	da	dha	na											
प	फ	ब	भ	म											
pa	pha	ba	bha	ma											
य	र	ल	व	श											ष
ya	ra	la	va	śa	sha	sa	ha								

Example:

क	का	कि	की	कु	कू	कृ	कृ	क्लृ	के	कै	को	कौ	कं	कः
ka	kā	ki	kī	ku	kū	kṛ	kṛ	klṛ	ke	kai	ko	kau	kam	kah



Narasimha Jayantī

Importance of this *Parva*:

Narasimha jayantī is a prominent *parva* that comes after *akshaya tṛtīya* in the month of *vaiśākha*. To facilitate the devotees to have the experience of the glory of one of the important incarnations of *Mahāviṣṇu*, the great sages of *Sanātana Arya Bhārata* who were *jnānavijnāna tṛptātmas* have marked this as a nodal day in the body (form) of the almighty in the form of time. It is a great day which is auspicious, holy and the day which reminds (us) of the all pervasiveness and unequalled *jnāna*, *bala*, *aiśvarya*, *śakti*, *vīrya*, *tejas* and the motherly affection and love of that God towards devotees. It is a day in which the rituals are performed with great devotion in all the places in India where the *Upāsana* of *Vishṇu* and especially of Lord *Narasimha* is in vogue in the homes of

devotees, who worship Lord *Narasimha* as either their family deity or a tutelary deity, and in *maṭhas*, *āshramas* and in temples. It is the day when his *upāsana* is taken up with austerity, both with the fear that any *apacāra* (an offence) to God may chance, and with devotion combined with great and full confidence that he will receive the *upacāras* with great affection. Some *Śaivas* also worship Lord *Narasimha* on that day.

2. Detailed description of the name of the festival

This festival is also called by the name *Nṛsimhacaturdaśī* or *Narasimha caturdaśī*. The term *Nṛsimha jayantī* (*Narasimha jayantī*) connotes that, being the day of the incarnation of Lord *Narasimha*, it is also a day of special potential which provides success and *punya* to the devotees.

“जयं पुण्यं च तनुते जयन्तीं तेन तां विदुः”

The second name (i.e. *Narasimhacaturdaśī*) like the name *Rāmanavamī*, indicates the *tithi* earmarked for the observation of this festival.

3. Various opinions on the reigning deity:

As done in the case of the other *parvas*, it is appropriate to discuss the time, modalities and science etc. pertaining to this festival. But, before that, we shall take up the discussion about Lord *Narasimha*, the (deity - in-worship) of this festival. The conclusions obtained by such a discussion will

help grasp other matters pertaining to the festival, in an easy and a satisfactory way.

Various views expressed by scholars belonging to different categories and levels being diverse and strange, invade our minds. They need to be examined with discernment. These opinions may be compiled as follows:

1. "We see a conjunct form two beings viz. the human being and the animal lion, in the *mūrti* of Lord *Narasimha*. This concept of man-lion deity occurred to Indians, by the study of an animal by name Griffin appearing in Greek mythology. Griffin is a bloodthirsty animal, with the body of a lion and the head and wings of an eagle. It's body became the upper part of the body above the neck of *Narasimha*. Its head and the wings became the eagle '*garuḍa*', the vehicle of lord *Narasimha*. The fearful features and natures are common to both Griffin and *Narasimha*.

"When did the Indians get this not so valuable concept from the Greeks? It was after the conquest of India by Alexander. During that period, exchange of ideas between Indians and Greeks took place in the fields of knowledge and arts. Then, Indians took the concept of Griffin from the Greeks and making some modifications, conceived the deity of *Narasimha*. In the imagery of the field of Arts,

Griffin and *Narasimha* are the antecedent and subsequent forms" – This is one opinion.

2. "Earlier, the word *Narasimha* meant just "The best of men". Though the word *Simha* means a distinguished animal, in usage it stands for the meaning 'best', at the end of a compound. (*Narah Simha Iva = Narasimhah - upamita Samāsa*) Even the lexicons say that words *Simha*, *śārdūla*, *Nāga*, *Vyāghra* etc. appearing at the latter part of a compound denoting a man, convey the meaning 'best' only.

(‘स्युत्तरपदे व्याघ्रपुङ्गवर्षभकुञ्जराः । सिंहशार्दूल नागाद्याः पुंसि श्रेष्ठार्थगोचराः’ अमरकोश III-59) “आश्रमं तु तयोः शून्यं प्रविश्य नरसिंहयोः” (वाल्मीकिरामायण, सुन्दर 21-31)

Thus, either overlooking the well known figurative meaning viz. 'the best' for the word *Simha*, or to introduce an element of poetic charm, the word (*Simha*) was made here to mean the animal lion, and conceiving a deity consisting of a man-animal form, Indians weaved a mythological story accordingly (see the book "The man-lion" by B. Narayana Iyengar). This change must have taken place in the post Christian era. There are several instances which go to show that Indians are experts in creating (such new godheads) (Please refer to *Śaivadharmā of Dr. Yaduvīra*.) The famous mythological word '*Śikhivāhana*' is a clear example

of this. *Shaṇmukha* is the son of *Rudra* i.e. the son of *Agni*. As *Agni* has flames, it is called *Śikhī*. Since the peacock has *sikha* (i.e. a plume on its head) it is also called *Śikhī* in *Sanskrit*. *Shaṇmukha* was called *Śikhivāhana* as he was being carried by *Śikhī* (*Agni*), his father. So, a new strange meaning for the word *Śikhivāhana* viz. the one whose vehicle is a peacock was fabricated subsequently. Later, this meaning itself became famous and the principal meaning, i.e. the son of *Agni*, faded out. The portrait of *Shaṇmukha* riding a peacock flourished widely in *Purāṇas*, literature and Arts, (and fine arts). Thus, by the power of double entendre, the peacock became the vehicle of *Shaṇmukha*, and similarly by the power of the association of the meaning of the word *Simha*, the animal *Simha* became the part of the body of the form of *Narasimha*.

3) There are some 'great' men who in their explanation of the concept of '*Daśāvatāra*' on the lines of the evolution theory propounded by modern scientists, interpret the incarnation of *Narasimha* also. According to them, fish, the aquatic animal is the earliest animal in evolution. So *matsyāvatāra* was declared as the first incarnation. The tortoise, an amphibian, being the animal of the second stage in the evolution, led to the imagination of '*Kūrma Avatāra*'. The *Varāhāvatāra* took place next, which has a face of a boar a ferocious animal, (which is)

more evolved. Thereafter, the *Narasimhāvatāra* took place, with the face of a lion which is the king of the forest and a superior animal vis-a-vis the boar. In these (*avatāras*) the features of both humans and animals are blended. The *Vāmanāvatāra* which has purely a human form, displays a much higher evolution. With the progress of evolution, many *avatāras* such as of *Paraśurāma*, *Śrī Rāma*, *Śrī Kṛṣṇa*, and at the end, the *Buddha*, the ultimate in evolution, took place. Among these, the middle state of the features of man-boar nature and *Vāmana*-man-nature is the origin for the concept of *Narasimhvatāra*. This is the argument of some scholars.

4) Some critics say "Earlier, the *Vaishnavas* used to worship only dieties with a pleasing form and who were merciful. Whereas, worshipping of dieties such as *Vīrabhadra*, *Bhairava* and others with frightful forms and acts, was in vogue among *Śaivas*, and such dieties became dear to a section of them (*Vaishnavas*). In order to attract such people, *Vaishnavas* also conceived a fierce looking god engaged in ferocious acts. That deity itself is *Narasimha*."

5. In the wordly parlance, the expression 'The *Narasimhāvatāra* has arrived' means someone is overcome with uncontrollable anger and is also in a spell of invincible and ferocious prowess. For

example several years ago, a person in our village used to chase during night time whomever he saw, with a loud cry.—“I am under the spell of *Māramma*,” and used to chase people and beat them up. Seeing this, when another person started chasing him with a stick in his hand and yelling—“I am under the spell of god *Narasimha*”, within no time, the person in the ‘spell’ of *Māramma* fled! But these were dramas! But this incident goes to show that the word *Narasimha* has come to mean only something very ferocious in the mind of people.

The worship of these terrifying forms is called ‘*Raudradhyāna*’. People who practice it are bound to meet with the evil fate of those who indulge in such ferocious acts. But those who meditate upon nonviolent and benign images, obtain peaceful nature and salvation as the result of that peace (full nature). This conforms to the axiom of the *Mīmamsakas* viz “*Tatkratu nyāya*” which states that “a person reaps the fruits there, which match his *upāsana* here.”

And there are some who, displaying their cleverness in wild conjectures, say - “But people were not ready to give up the worship of *Narasimha* (though identified) with the features of ferociousness and beastly culture, as the worship was in their tradition. So the words *Lakshmi*, *Bhoga*, *Yoga*, *Saumya*, *Śānta* etc were associated

(with *NaraSimha*) and accordingly, some changes were effected in the image of the deity, its form and retinue, and the custom of worshipping (*Narasimha* in the new form) came into vogue”.

6. “The episode of *Narasimhāvatāra* is not a vestige of any beastly culture. It is a divine story which proclaims how the extraordinary strength lying latent in people expresses itself at the right time. It is a beautiful metaphor. *Hiranyakaśipu* represents cruel tyranny and an unbearable autocracy. People somehow do put up with such a reign for some time. But, at the end, the lion-power, latent in the people, manifests all of a sudden and surely destroys that autocracy. The leader of the mass who instigates the lion power is *Prahlāda*.”—This is the explanation (interpretation) of the mystery of *Narasimhāvatāra* given by some scholars. (Please see the English poem ‘*Prahlāda*’ by Torudatt).

7. Some others provide a spiritual commentary as follows: “The story of the incarnation of *Narasimha* is not a metaphor to teach ethics to the world. It is an allegory woven by sages to teach spirituality. In that (allegory) *Hiranyakaśipu* means ignorance. *Narasimha* is indeed the *Mahāguru* who tears the knots of the (inner) heart, and here he has done it in the form of tearing open the chest of *Hiranyakaśipu*.”

Another commentary with the same view point is like this: "We see the seed of the story of incarnation of *Narasimha* in the vedic literature itself. A line in *Atharvaveda* says 'When there is conflict between *Dharma* and *adharma* a lightning strikes between them instantly. In this story *Prahlāda* stands for *Dharma* that is steady, and *Hiraṇyakaśipu* stands for *adharma* that does not move from its place. When a clash ensued between them, the lightning which instantly struck is the effulgent *Narasimha* which is the *paratattva*". This is a commentary which spells out a very lofty (philosophical) principle.

In these explanations we see the following purport—"The story of the incarnation of *Narasimha* is just a metaphor of symbols, and of ethics and principles, and not a narration of the actual events that occurred. Even the form of *Narasimha* is only an imagination."

8. There are some who interpret that the incarnation of *Narasimha* was an event that actually took place and there is no metaphor of any kind in it.

9. Many works such as the *Mahābhārata*, *Harivamśa*, *Vishṇupurāṇa*, *Narasimha purāṇa*, *Śrīmadbhāgavata*, *Śivapurāṇa* etc describe the incarnation of *Narasimha*. Though some

descriptions are common in (those works), there is no unanimity in all the topics. Which among them is reliable? And which is not?—These are the doubts that arise.

(These are some of the interpretations of critics pertaining to *Narasimhāvatāra*) Let us now study what is said about his form and incarnation in the *śāstras* of *Sanātana Aryabhārata Maharshis*.

Śrī *Narasimha* is an incarnation of Lord *Vishṇu*. All our spiritual texts, *Itihāsas* and *purāṇas* tell that his incarnation is the fifth among the famous ten *avatāras* of *Vishṇu*. The *Narasimhagāyatrīmantra* appearing in the Andhra version of the *Mahānārāyaṇopaniṣad* meditates upon him as a (god) with (diamond like) hard claws, sharp pointed teeth, and, as Lord *Narasimha* and prays to incite our intellect वज्रनाखाय विद्महे तीक्ष्णदग्गुष्ठाय धीमहि । तन्नो नारसिंहः प्रचोदयात्॥

Nṛsimhatāpini upaniṣad, which is categorized as belonging to *Atharvaveda*, has quoted *Nṛsimha mantra* along with the *R̥shi*, deity and metre and describes him as "*kshīrasāgaraśāyī*, the goal of *yogis*, *Parampada*, *ṛta*, *Satya*, *Parambrahma*, *Purusha*, *Kṛṣṇapiṅgala*, *Ūrdhvareta*, *Virūpāksha* etc.

(“क्षीरोदार्णवशायिनं नृकेसरिविग्रहं योगिध्येयं परम्पदम् ।” “ऋतं सत्यं परब्रह्म पुरुषं कृष्णपिङ्गलम् । ऊर्ध्वरेतं विरूपाक्षं शङ्करं नीललोहितम्

॥') It associates him with the *mantras* of *Vishṇusūkta*, *Mahānārāyaṇīya* and *Taittirīyopanishad* and proclaims his glory, and also states the *Phalaśruti* of this *Upanishad*.

The *StotraPūjakalpa* prescribing his *Divyamaṅgalavighraha* for meditation says "He is the Trinity and *Parabrahmasvarūpi*, He has the form of *Brahma* upto the navel, form of *Vishṇu* upto the neck, and form of *Rudra* upto the head. Above that, the form of *Śiva* (*Parabrahma*) on the whole.

आनाभि ब्रह्मणो रूपं आगलाद्वैष्णवं वपुः ।

आशीर्षं रुद्रमीशानं तदूर्ध्वं सर्वतः शिवः ॥''

Śrīmadbhāgavata is the most popular work among the ones which describe the incarnation of *Narasimha*. We briefly narrate here the story appearing in that. Having that at the centre, we may focus only on those parts (in the story) which appear differently in the famous *itihāsas* and *purāṇas*.

"*Jaya* and *Vijaya*, the gate keepers of *Vaikunṭha* who offended the sages *Sanaka* and others, on being cursed by them were born as demons. They were born as *Hiraṇyāksha* and *Hiraṇyakaśipu* in their first birth. *Mahāviṣṇu* in his *avatāra* of *Varāha* killed *Hiraṇyāksha*. Enraged by this, *Hiraṇyakaśipu* began hating *Mahāviṣṇu* and started cruelly torturing the devotees of God, pious people and *devas*. He performed severe

penance addressing Lord *Brahma*, and obtained a boon as follows: "Let there be no death to me either from humans, animals, gods, demons, serpents or any animal created by *Brahma*, either during night or day, either on earth or in the sky, either inside or outside a house. I should have suzerainty over everyone."

Puffed up with pride by the boon, he became a thorn to the world. Unable to bear his harassment, the *devas* beseeched the almighty (Lord *Vishṇu*). And he assured them protection by stating that he himself will kill the demon in course of time.

Prahlāda the son of *Hiraṇyakaśipu*, was a *Paramabhāgavatottama*, right from his birth. As per the orders of the king, the disciples of *Śukrācārya* taught him the philosophy of the demons. But he did not like those lessons. Once his father lovingly took him on his lap and asked –My child! Tell me the quintessence of what you have learnt'. The child naturally answered. 'Devotion to *Vishṇu* is the means of highest good". In the beginning this was taken as amusement by the father. Some time later also, *Prahlāda* said that worshipping of *Nārāyaṇa* through *Navavidhabhakti* is the supreme deed.

श्रवणं कीर्तनं विष्णोः स्मरणं पादसेवनम्
अर्चनं वन्दनं दास्यं सख्यमात्मनिवेदनम् ।

इति पुंसार्षिता विष्णौ भक्तिश्चेन्नवलक्षणा ॥ (भागवत-स्कन्ध VII-23)

And with this reply *Hiranyakaśipu* became enraged beyond bounds. He took the teachers of *Prahlāda* to task. But *Prahlāda* appealed that they did not teach him the above philosophy and that it has naturally occurred to him by the grace of the supreme entity. The anger of the demon king knew no bounds. He ordered his demon soldiers.—"Even though a limb happens to be a part of the body, it should be severed if daubed with poison. So, this rascal should be killed, even though he is my son." Accordingly, they subjected him to various atrocities such as piercing him with weapons like spear, poisoning by snakes, trampling by elephants, acts of black magic, dropping from mountain top etc. But the boy was unscathed by any of these as he was always immersed in meditation of God and was being protected by him. (Not just that). He started teaching his philosophy to the demon boys also, who were his classmates.

Now *Hiranyakaśipu* felt that he had no other option than to kill *Prahlāda* by his own hands. He summoned him to the assembly at the time of the evening twilight. Brandishing his sword in front of the boy he roared—"Where is your omnipresent

Vishṇu"? Why is he not seen in this pillar? If you do not show him here, I will decapitate you". And he banged a pillar nearby by his fist. Immediately a terrifying roar was heard from the pillar. A marvelous form that was neither completely human nor completely of an animal, but (a fusion of) both, came out of the pillar. A terrifying form it was, gigantic in shape, and reaching the heavens; with dreadful fangs, and a protruded tongue that was sharp like the edge of a sword, with dishevelled manes and with diamond hard claws. It manifested with a ferocious laughter.

सत्यं विधातुं निजभृत्यभाषितम् व्याप्तिं च भूतेष्वखिलेषु चात्मनः ।

अदृश्यतात्यद्भुतरूपमुद्रहन् स्तम्भे सभायां न मृगं न मानुषम् ॥

Hiranyakaśipu who went to attack him met with the fate of a moth rushing towards fire. Like a *Garuḍa* catching a snake, *Narasimha* effortlessly caught hold of *Hiranyakaśipu*, and sitting on the region of the entry door of the assembly, he tore open his chest, and garlanding himself with his intestines, furiously roared again and again. Other demons who came to attack him were also destroyed. Greatly rejoicing at this, gods showered flowers and danced. They praised the Lord in various ways. But no one dared to go near that fierce form to pacify him. Then at the instance of Lord *Brahma*, child *Prahlāda* the supreme devotee, fearlessly came near the Lord and prostrated. The

Lord took him on his lap with affection and placing his protecting right hand on the child's head, conferred supreme blessings. *Prahlāda* with his voice choked with devotion praised the Lord of Lords. Though lured by the Lord himself, the supreme devotee did not ask (for) any boons. When pressed further by the Lord, he only prayed "May the sins of my father be absolved. May he (obtain) deliverance" The Lord commanded "It has been already arranged. Seven generations of your lineage have been reemed. They are blessed with deliverance. (Now) You get crowned as the king in your father's place. In the framework of supreme devotion, perform deeds that propitiate me and in the end you may come to me". And then blessing *Brahma* and other deities he disappeared."

The story appering in *Vishṇupurāṇa* also is very much akin to this. There, *Hiraṇyakaśipu* embraces son *Prahlāda* with love combined with repentance, after he (*Prahlāda*) comes out safe from perils like the poisonous snake bite etc. *Prahlāda* also pleases his father by serving him. But there are no details which state under what circumstance *Hiraṇyakaśipu* was slain by Lord *Narasimha*.

According to *Harivamśa Purāṇa*, *Mahaviṣṇu* enters the (court) of *Hiraṇyakaśipu* taking the help of only *praṇava*. All the demons are astonished on seeing it and ask themselves "What is this strange

figure?" Only *Prahlāda* recognizes it with divine vision, that it is God. He tells the demons that the whole cosmos is hidden in that divine body. Then *Narasimha* kills *Hiraṇyakaśipu* and other demons who provoke him. After being praised by the *devas*, he proceeds to the northern shore of the ocean of milk and installs his man lion body there, and assuming his previous form of *Vishṇu*, returns to his abode.

“क्षीरोदस्योत्तरं कूलं जगाम प्रभुरीश्वरः ।

नारसिंहीं तनूं त्यक्त्वा स्थापयित्वा च तद्वपुः ।

पौराणं रूपमास्थाय ययौ स गरुडध्वजः ॥ (हरिवंश - 21)

Even though there are a few significant aspects in this *Purāṇa*, the incidents of *Hiraṇyakaśipu* tormenting *Prahlāda* in bizarre ways do not figure at all in this *Purāṇa*.

Śrīmanmahābhārata which is renowned as "*pañcamaveda*", "*Smṛti*", *Ithihāsottama* and "*purāṇapūrnacandra*" depicts the story of *Nrisihmāvatāra* briefly in the thirtyeighth chapter of the *sabhāparva*. But the story of *Prahlāda* does not appear there. The rest of the story is on the lines of the story in *Śrīmadbhāgavata*. In *NaraSimhapurāṇa*, a minor *purāṇa*, the story of *Narasimha* is expounded largely on the lines of *Śrīmadbhāgavata* and *Vishṇupurāṇa*. Now we shall observe a few significant points here.

1. This *purāṇa* quotes here, a humorous and a strange incident when the Lord killed *Hiraṇyakaśipu*. When Lord *Narasimha* ripped open *Hiraṇyakaśipu's* heart in a maddening fury, the two halves of the body get embedded into the slits between the fingers and the claws of the Lord. The Lord was surprised when the dead body was not to be seen and got worried and said. "Where did this brute go?" Has he escaped? Then my exploit has gone in vain!" Then he shook his hands vigorously. Immediately the two halves of the body of *Hiraṇyakaśipu* fell off from the interstice of his claws like particles of dust" – This is the interesting description given there.

शकले द्वे तिरोभूते नखरन्ध्रे महात्मनः ।

ततः क्व यातो दुष्टोऽसाविति देवोऽतिविस्मितः ॥

निरीक्ष्य सर्वतो राजन् वृथैतत्कर्म मेऽभवत् ।

इति सञ्चिन्त्य राजेन्द्र नरसिंहो महाबलः ॥

व्यधूनयत्करावुच्चैस्तस्ते शकले नृप ।

नखरन्ध्रान्निपतिते भूमौ रेणुसमे हरेः'' ॥ (अध्याय 44, श्लो, 32-34)

2. After blessing *Prahlāda*, Lord *Narasimha*, being worshipped by gods, has gone to the summit of *Śrīśaila* and stays there to bless his devotees and to destroy those who are non-devotees.

श्रीशैलशिखरं प्राप्य विश्रुतः सुरपूजितः ।

स्थितो भक्तहितार्थाय अभक्तानां क्षयाय च ॥'' (अ. 44, श्लो. 39)

Though there are slight differences in the narration of the story, *Śrīmadbhāgavata*, *Vishṇupurāṇa*, *Harivamśa*, *Mahābhārata* and *Narasimha purāṇa* state the purport that Lord *Narasimha* is *Parātpara Parabrahman*, the remover of the perils of the world, the protector of the devotees, the unconquerable and the possessor of invincible prowess.

We also see some works in our tradition, which depict Lord *Narasimha* as an ordinary god, arrogant, haughty and the one subjugated by lord *Rudra*.

For example, in the recently available *Śātarudrasamhitā* of the *Śiva-purāṇa* version, we find the rendering as follows:- "After killing *Hiraṇyakaśipu*, *Narasimha* became very arrogant and went on destroying the world by his prowess and haughtiness. Then *Vīrabhadra*, on the orders of Lord *Śiva* approached him and tried to appease him but to no avail. *Narasimha* attacked that *Vīrabhadra* himself.

On the orders of *Śiva*, *Vīrabhadra* manifested himself the form of a ferocious *śarabha* (an eight legged animal stronger than a lion). The moment he saw that form, *Narasimha* became deprived of his effulgence and strength, like a glow worm in front of the sun. *Śarabha* did not leave him at that. He took

him captive, beat him up, lifted him to the sky, tore his body and presented the corpse to Śiva. Lord Śiva used *Narasimha's* skin as his garment, and added *Narasimha's* head to his garland of skulls. *Narasimha* punished *Hiranyakaśipu*, and in turn *Rudra* punished *Narasimha* himself!

“हरिस्तद्दर्शनादेव विनष्टबलविक्रमः ।

बिभ्रद्भ्राम सहस्रांशोरधः खद्योतविभ्रमम् ॥

अथ विभ्रम्य पक्षाभ्यां नाभिपादान्विदारयन् ।

पादान्बन्ध पुच्छेन बाहुभ्यां बाहुमण्डलम् ॥

भिन्दन्नुरसि बाहुभ्यां निजग्राह हरो हरिम् ।

ततो जगाम गगनं देवैस्सह महर्षिभिः॥

उड्डीयोड्डीय भगवान्पक्षघातविमोहितम् ।

हरिं हरस्तं वृषभं विवेशानन्त ईश्वरः ।

वीरभद्रोऽपि भगवान् गणाध्यक्षे महाबलः ।

नृसिंहकृत्तिं निष्कृष्य समादाय ययौ गिरिम् ॥

नृसिंहकृत्तिवसनस्तदाप्रभृति शङ्करः ।

तद्वक्त्रं मुण्डमालायां नायकत्वेन कल्पितम्” ॥ अध्याय 12, श्लो 12....36)

We come across some sentences in *Śarabhoṇishad*, a work of recent origin, which goes to state that Śiva not only killed *Narasimha* but also killed the other incarnations of *Vishṇu* as well i.e., *Matsya*, *Kūrma*, *Varāha* and *Trivikrama* and, wore their body parts on his body.

“यो घोरं वेषमास्थाय शरभाख्यं महेश्वरः ।

नृसिंहं लोकहन्तारं सञ्जघान महाबलः ॥

यो मत्स्यकूर्मादिवराहसिंहान् ।

विष्णुं क्रमन्तं वामनमादिविष्णुम्॥

विविक्लबं पीड्यमानं जघान”

There is a *mantra* by name *mṛthyusūkta* in the *Anuvāka* 315, of *Kṛṣṇayajurveda Taittirīyāranyaka prāśna*. Some *Raudravīras* (heroic devotees of *Rudra*) interpret it to mean that *Rudra* subdued *Vishṇu*.

हरिगुं हरन्तमनुयन्ति देवाः ।

विश्वस्येशानं वृषभं मतीनाम्

(The translation of the *mantra* according to these people is – “gods follow *Rudra* the lord of the universe, the ultimate of deities, and the one who slew *Narasimha*.”)

The *Vaiṣṇavavīras* reject the above story which is narrated by *Raudravīras*, as a statement of a *tāmasa purāṇa*. Also, they quote a sentence from a work called *Vishṇurahasya* which gives the meaning that *Vishṇu* incarnated as *Gaṇḍabheruṇḍa* (mythical bird with two heads) and killed the *Śarabha* incarnation of *Rudra*. Not just that. They interpret the above said first *Rk* from *mṛtyusūkta* to mean that gods follow *Hari* who is the lord of the universe, the supreme deity and the slayer of *Rudra*.

The *Raudravīras* continue the story—“Then *Kālī* who took birth from the forehead of *Śarabha*

devoured *Vishṇu* who had incarnated as *Gandabherunda*”.

We come across many poetic works and religious texts that are composed based on the purport of the above stories, by heroic devotees of recent times.

Leave alone the matter of real *Vishṇu* and *Rudra*! The gods *Vishṇu* and *Rudra* fancied in the minds of these *Vīrabhaktas*, forgetting their work of protecting the world and destruction of the wicked. (to the world) demons and *daityas*, have instead engaged themselves in destroying each other. A surprise indeed! If the statements of these two categories of *Vīrabhaktas* are true, then both *Vishṇu* and *Rudra* have already slain each other. That is why they are not to be found anywhere in the world! It is a tough thing to decide which statement of the above said scriptural works in the continued tradition is authentic and which is not? We do not opine that all that is ancient is correct and all that is new is erroneous. But, at a time when it was believed that all that is ancient is authentic, many have indulged in composing *ślokas* and prose pieces that serve their views and have inscribed and inserted them in the manuscripts of *Śruti*, *smṛti*, *purāṇas*, *itihāsas* etc. written either on palm leaves or birch leaves, and have tried to fetch respectability of ancientness to them. These parts of

texts that have been added like that are called interpolations. Ancient texts that are free from such interpolations have become rare now-a-days.

It may be easy to clearly filter such interpolations by observing a change in style in some places, contradictory opinions, and statements contradicting historical evidence etc. But there are some interpolated parts, that have been added with great cleverness, and beyond the above detectable differences. These can be separated only with the help of self-realized great souls who are *jnānavijnānatṛptātmās* and who have visualized the ultimate truth. Without that help, writings aimed at mutual mud-slinging caused by intellectual outery, and tumult of passion and enmity throwing dirt at each other have come up in large numbers in our country, and have tresspassed their way into all areas such as *Upanishads*, *smṛti*, *itihāsa*, *purāṇas* etc. If people read those works without filtering the interpolations (from the original) they may tend to think.—"All these religious texts are full of contradictions. All these are webs of imaginations. They are compositions written from time to time to advocate the importance of the gods imagined by them. None of these are trustworthy. Let us leave this Hindu religion which worships many gods and instead, resort to some modern religion, which advocates oneness of god, or else, let us cling to

atheism which states that there is no god or godmen" But it will be wise to give up these feelings, and take to the path of truth established by rationality and experience. We have to accept the truth in the matter of Lord *NaraSimha*, after examining on that touchstone the views of the moderns also.

"One text says that Rudra incarnated as Śarabha tore open Narasimha. Another says that Viṣṇu incarnated as Gaṇḍabheruṇḍa tore open Rudra. Which of the two is true? We cannot decide the truth by mere persistence. The truth has to be found out from those gods themselves. Books of truth adorn the hands of both Śrī Hayagrīva, the knowledge form of Mahāviṣṇu and Dakṣiṇāmūrtī the Sadaśiva. Truth emerges only when those books are read directly. The minds of the wise also takes that path"ṛThese are the guiding words of Śrī Raṅgamahāguru pertaining to this, which we respectfully wish to recall here, and we wish to continue the discussion on truth and myth.

No prejudice should be entertained when this discussion is taken up.

1. No blind belief such as "all the opinions in ancient texts are correct and all the opinions of moderns are wrong, should be entertained. (पुराणमित्येव न साधु सर्वम्)

2. The supersitition that all that is said by moderns is acceptable because they have a highly evolved intellect, the opinion of the ancient days have emerged when the intellect was not well evolved, and they are not fit for acceptance, has (also) to be given up“नवीनमित्येव न साधु सर्वम्”

3. Even if our wisdom tells us that the opinions of ancients are wrong, we should not give them up. Blind devotion born out of pride, as evident from the feelings like" This is the banyan tree planted by my father. Somehow it has to be protected," should also be given up.

4. When it occurs to our mind that some of the opinions of the moderns are not correct, or that they are still controversial, a thought may come to our mind viz." People may call us bigots. And may accuse us as persons with vested interests. Or our popularity may fade. So it is better to somehow substantiate the view of the moderns" - This fear—complex or hesitation has also to be shed.

Without being influenced by feelings, honor or fear, truth should be placed before the seekers of *satya* with honesty and boldness. With the intention of facilitating the entry of discernment in the minds of the readers, we shall present our opinions in the question-answer format hereby.

Question no 1. Some modern scholars argue that the Greeks had the concept of Griffin, a deity with the body of a lion and the head of an eagle. Influenced by this, *Bhāratīyas* conceived the image of *NaraSimha* who had the head of a lion and the body resembling humans. Which of these is true?

Answer: This question has two parts. One, that *NaraSimha* is a mere imagination. Two, that the concept is the gift of the Greeks.

To think that *Narasimha* is an imagination, is itself an imagination. In time honoured literature, no-where is he referred to by scholars as an imaginary form.

Secondly, There is no unambiguous evidence to draw this opinion that *Bhāratīyas* were inspired by Greeks. Some may say—"Greeks who came to *Bhārata* saw the idols of God *Narasimha*. They could not understand the mystery of the idol. Why can't it be that they happened to conceive the deity Griffin, by imitating a little, the external form of *Narasimha* and adding some imagination of their own to it?" Some people may question. In actuality, the similarity between the idols of *Narasimha* and the Greek deity Griffin is very little. It is not even necessary to guess that they have been inspired by each other. Both are independent subject matters which have manifested independently in their

respective intellectual realms. *Narasimha* is the form who can be truly experienced in the suprasensory state, and who was visualized by the (spiritually) refined souls who remained in the discipline of yogic science: (that form) is being visualized (even now) and can be visualized always (and in future also) by such souls. Presently, no records are available in Greek mythology to tell that deities like Griffin etc. happen to be universal truths perceived in the yogic state. If modern scholars interpolate *Ashṭāṅgayoga* in Greek works and try to establish that (Greek) deities are also the visions in the yogic state, they alone will be responsible for that. Akin to interpolations done in our ancient texts in the middle age, neoteric persons may interpolate Greek mythology also and fetch fame. But, that wont be a result of an honest enquiry.

Question 2: Some have explained the ten *avatāras* of *Vishṇu* on the lines of the evolution theory.

The first incarnation is a creature which lives only in water i.e. the fish. The second one is the incarnation of the tortoise which lives both on land and in water, i.e. the *Kūrmāvatāra*. The third is *Varāhāvatāra* which is a much stronger one than the tortoise and a fusion of the head of a boar (wild boar) and the human body. Then comes the

Narasimhāvatāra, that has the head of a lion which is stronger than the boar and the body of a man. The fifth one is *Vāmanāvatāra* a form of a dwarf. Then come the progressive and superiorly evolved incarnations in the human form. As per the evolution theory, the *Narasimhāvatāra*, appearing between *Varāha* and *Vāmana* in the incarnation series, brings out the animal-man culture that appears between a cruel animal and a human being, represented by the boar-man nature and the bare-man nature. Is this argument correct? This is the question.

Answer: This line of argument is not correct. Because, there is a state called *Parāprakṛti* which is beyond the meritorious nature of the deities, which, in turn, is beyond human nature which is an admixture of *punya* and *pāpa*, and (the *Parāprakṛti*) is above the beastly and demoniacal dispositions. As is evident from the statement ‘प्रकृतिं विद्धि मे पराम्’ of the Lord in the *Bhagavadgīta*, Lord *Narasimha* is related to the *parā prakṛti*.

He possesses a form which surpasses the universe and can be visualized only in the state of *Parāprakṛti* which is described as supreme in the statement—‘स्थूलं परं चेति त्रिविधं ब्रह्मणो वपुः’ Those who describe him, who is a form of *Parāprakṛiti*, as a representative of the fusion of the dispositions of a great animal and a human being, do so as per their

own nature and (obviously) have not described it after climbing to the state of *Parāprakṛti* which is natural to *Narasimha*. Their commentary may touch only the *Prākṛta Narasimha* of their own imagination, and does not at all touch the form of the true *Narasimha* who is *Aprākṛta* or the Lord of *ParāPrakṛti*, as expounded by *jnānis*.

Question 3. The argument that the story of *Narasimha* is an allegory which tells a worldly truth that, humanity indeed exists and it destroys autocracy and oppression after tolerating it for a long time, and the argument that it is again an allegory which proclaims the spiritual truth that a *jnāni* tears apart the core of *ajñāna*. Do these arguments stand to reason?

Answer: We do appreciate this moral and the spiritual truth. But it is not necessary to whimsically drag the story of *Narasimha* to those areas, to drive home the intended moral or principles, as it is done either literally or suggestively by many *upākhyānas* such as *Vena's* story, *purañjanopākhyāna* etc. in our *itihāsas* and *purāṇas*. Looking into these (substories) one can satisfy for himself the thirst for literary aesthetic experience. There is no internal or external evidence to show that Lord *Narasimha's* story is didactic allegory.

Question 4: "Earlier the word *Narasimha* was used only in the sense of the best among men. After sometime, the main meaning 'king of animals' for the word '*simha*' there, was wrongly imposed and the story of *Narasimha* was woven by the ancients"—Is not this argument beautiful?

Answer: The flower of this argument looks attractive from a distance, but when approached and seen, it will be found out that there is neither the fragrance nor the tenderness nor the sweet nectar. It does also not develop into a fruit. It is true that these *Vādisimhas* (lion like debators) possess the knowledge of the literal meaning and the figurative meaning of the word *simha* in Sanskrit. But we wish to state that these debators have only woven an imagined story out of false prestige, and also with the impression that the great writers of *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa* didn't have as much knowledge of *Sanskrit* as they (the debators) possess, and so have woven a story by mistaking the word *simha* in the word *Narasimha*, to stand for a distinct animal. Why should they (the debators) fancy that the great sages didn't have the elegance and poetic talent to suitably use the word *simha* in the sense of either a distinct animal or the best of men?

Question 5: How can one get peace by meditating on the ferocious form of *Narasimha*? Worship of god is performed mainly for peace, isn't

it? Instead of meditating upon a benign beautiful form, why should one meditate upon this terrifying form?

Answer: It is not proper to think or swear that whatever appears terrifying for the mere eyes remains in the same terrifying form, in the state of *Samādhi* also. Only *jnānis* who have the experience of both the external vision and the inner vision during the state of deep meditation, will be (able to give) an honest explanation. *Jnānis* state that some forms of gods who may appear ferocious for the external eyes, appear extraordinarily beautiful when seen with the pure vision of *Dhyānasamādhi* in the backdrop of worship performed with devotion. It may be kindly noted that devotees who are *jnānasiddhas* have called Lord *Narasimha* as *Alahiya Śingar* (*Celuva Narasimha*) (handsome *Narasimha*) based on their experience.

This is a statement borne out of inner experience. In the external world also, when things are to be viewed aesthetically, the unique truth can be known only when it is done with discernment. Artists call either a person or an animal beautiful, only when they are in the natural state. Real beauty lies in being natural. A lion looks beautiful only if it is ferocious with thick manes. At the same time, a deer with fickle eye movements and with a face of a gentle animal, looks beautiful. This applies to

humans also. So, if we expect human beauty in an animal or some other beauty of our liking, we become a laughing stock in aesthetics.

Question 6: What you say is indeed true in aesthetics. But all generally agree that the lion is a ferocious animal. A lion may appear beautiful to an other lion. But is it not a ferocious animal in the eyes of the humans? Isn't it that something which looks ferocious to the external eyes, should be ferocious in the inner meditation also?

Answer: There is no such rule. Even in the physical world there will be no such fear or shyness during some attractions. When it is so, it won't be correct to guess that there will always be fear even while one is happily roaming in the suprasensory world, which is beyond the worldly activities. After advancing a few steps in the spiritual path, there will be no room even for an iota of fear for a *Sādhaka*.

Question 7: How far does fear bother in meditation? After which point the grip of fear ceases?

Answer: **Śrī Raṅgamahāguru, the supreme Yogi, has stated that fear vanishes after one crosses the Mahattattva and moves upwards.** If there were to be fear even in *Dhyāna samādhi* how could child *Prahlāda* go near *Narasimha* fearlessly

and prostrate before him, praise him and enjoy the supreme bliss?

Question 8: In that case, why did even gods get scared when they first saw *Narasimha*?

Answer: Even gods will be gripped by fear, if they do not get immersed in deep meditation in like *Prahlāda*.

Question 9: Have the sages stated anywhere that there will be no fear in *Dhyāna samādhi*?

Answer: The teachings of our Gurumahāraj who was a Samādhisiddha by experience, have been already narrated by us. If one is established in the blissful paramātmā, there will be no fear at all. *Taittirīya upanishad* clearly proclaims that even if a small deviation takes place in the continuous blissful experience of god, fear occurs.

अभयं प्रतिष्ठां विन्दते । अथ सोऽभयं गतो भवति ।

यदा ह्येवैष एतस्मिन् उदरमन्तरं कुरुते अथ तस्य भयं भवति ॥

If Lord *Narasimha* were to appear ferocious to devotees, then even in *Dhyānasamādhi*, alarmed by visualizing Him directly, *Sādhakas* would flee to the streams of senses, giving up meditation.

One more thing has to be noted here. Śrī Raṅgamahāguru who knew the mystery of Māna and Meva used to say - "If at all the yardstick that is used to measure the objects in the world of senses (i.e. the worldly objects) is taken to measure (the

experience etc. of) spirituality, it (the yardstick) will be shattered into pieces at the entry point itself." This has to be always remembered.

Question no 10: Then, should we accept all that is stated in spiritual science without subjecting them to discernment?

Answer: We have not said so. They have to be necessarily examined. We have only stated that mere intelligence cannot be the yardstick for all the experiences of the spiritual field. But, even though the intellect of the physical world cannot be a full fledged measuring stick for the spiritual world, it can be useful as an *upamādaṇḍa* in many aspects. It has to be used appropriately for that work. Otherwise superstition will grow. The interpolations that have crept into the *śāstras* may become authentic!

That is why *jnānis* insist that discernment should be in the parameters of *satya*, and what is arrived by that should be taken as a proven truth by experience and experiments.

2. In the description of Lord *Narasimha*, we come across statements such as "He is 'death to the death", "one who helps us pass over death", "the ordainer of the wheel of time." etc.. We also see quotations in *śāstras*, that he is a divine incarnation of god who is described as "The one who makes the

god of death run away on seeing him," "the one who uses *brahmakshatras* as food and death as curry", and, the one who swallows everything".

“मृत्युमृत्युं नमाम्यहम्” “मृत्युभीतिविनाशकः” “यदायत्तं जगच्चक्रं कालचक्रं च शाश्वतम्” “मृत्युर्धावति पञ्चम इति”

“यस्य ब्रह्म च क्षत्रं च उभे भवत ओदनः।

मृत्युर्यस्योपसेचनं क इत्या वेद कुत्र सः ॥”

To state that such a god ‘met with death’ or ‘passed away’ amounts to an awful offence against truth indeed.

3. *Brahma*, *Vishṇu* and *Rudra* are authorized to carry out the duties of creation, sustenance and destruction (of universe) respectively. *Vishṇu* provides sustenance. The killing of demons who are thorns to the world, is also his regular work, as he is ‘*Daityāri*’ (enemy of demons). It is the work of *Rudra* to control the perilous demons at times, and to destroy the world during the great deluge. When such is the case, to state that, *Rudra* violating his limits, vanquished the sustaining god himself, is against the code of the Almighty. Again, to say—“*Śiva* probably endorsed the killing of *Hiraṇyakaśipu* by *Narasimha*. But after vanquishing him, *Narasimha* began to destroy the world itself. And therefore he was punished for that”—is also against truth. Because, it is the work of *Rudra* to destroy the world and he does it at the

time of deluge. So, either *Vishṇu* doing *Śiva*'s work or carrying it out in the improper time, is an impossibility in the reign of God who is a *Satyakāma* and a *Satyasaṅkalpa*.

4. The *raudravīras* continue their story saying that *Rudra* not only destroyed *Nārāyaṇa*'s *Narasimhāvatāra*, but also tore open his other incarnations viz *matsya*, *kūrma*, *varāha* and *trivikramamūrti*. (We have to note that) all these incarnations are *upākhyānas* which are full of divine principles. *Matsyamūrti* is the savior of the *vedas*. Even though he descends to the ocean of the world to liberate souls, he not only returns to his original form, but also takes the devotees along with him. He is a *Yogapurusha* who travels across both the banks of the ocean. *Kūrma* provided great help to *devas* during the great churning for ambrosia. He stabilized the movement of *Meru* the Mountain used as a churning staff, by making it rest firmly on his back. He is the king of *samyamis* (those who control their (passions)), He makes the *Merudaṇḍa* to get steady by controlling its movements caused during the meditation of *Yogis*. *Yajnavarāha* (the boar incarnation) carried the earth to the *pātāla* (nether worlds) and saved the earth by slaying *Hiraṇyāksha*. Saving the earth from the rule of demon, he made it stand firm on his mountain top of (*Dharma*). *Trivikrama* put an end to *Bali*'s

arrogance and restored to *Indra* his kingdom. He vanquished the demonic nature of *Bali* who was a *Paramabhāgavatottama* and bestowed a divine post upon him. He made known to the world the principle that he is the progenitor of *jnānagaṅga*, and that he is omnipresent and beyond the universe. The work and function of *Śiva* also convey the same yogic principles but in a different way. Annihilation of the demons, guarding of the *Dharmasetu*, and the position of *Yogācārya* are natural to him also.

The *Raudravīras*, mistaking the stories which are full of principles for mundane episodes, have woven elaborate stories. For example, *Śiva* is also called '*Kūrmeśvara*'. Instead of describing him as the king of *Samyamis* (people who can withdraw their senses like a tortoise), and a *Yogācārya*, they have regrettably chosen to describe him as the one who killed *Vishṇu* in his *Kūrmāvatāra*.

5. *Śāstras* state that during the meditation of the *divya maṅgala vighraha* of Lord *Narasimha*, He appears to the *Sādhakas* as *Brahma* upto the navel, *Vishṇu* upto the neck, *Rudra* from that point upto the head, and in the form of *Parabrahman* beyond.

आनाभिं ब्रह्मणो रूपं आगलाद्वैष्णवं वपुः ।

आशीर्षं रुद्रमीशानं तदूर्ध्वं सर्वतः शिवम् ॥

Thus, *Rudra* is a part of the divine sacred form of god *Narasimha* himself. To say that *Rudra* tore open *Narasimha*, it amounts to say that *Rudra* tore open himself. Only *Śiva* knows what made him to committ suicide to escape suffering! These stupids, having woven the story with some obsession have brought calamity to their own worshipful god! They have indeed become a good example for the adage— "Devotees are a curse to god and disciples are a curse to the *guru*!"

5. Again the story of *Vishṇu* in the form of *Gaṇḍabheruṇḍa* slaying *Śiva* in the form of *Śarabha*, is equally absurd. If *Vishṇu* happens to kill *Śiva* who is assigned with the task of destruction of the universe at the time of deluge well before that time, it will be against divine principles. How can *Vishṇu*, who has *Śiva* as the right part of his body, as evident in the saying "*valattanan tirupura merittavan*" of the *Ālvārs*, and who is united with him in the heart, kill him, and for what purpose?

Question: Some people interpret that the *Āranyakasruti* '*harigm harantam*' means that *Śiva* slew *Barsimha*. Is not that *Sruti* an authority?

Answer: Some have explained this *Śrutivikya* as—"gods follow *Rudra* who has slain *Vishṇu*." But we wish to keep away both, on the lines of the

adage—"That also is a broken argument, this is also a broken argument. Throw both of them out" And, this line appears in '*mṛtyu sūkta*.' Why should either *śarabha* or *Gaṇḍabheruṇḍa* intrude there all of a sudden ? Neither of the two great commentators *Bhatta Bhāskara* or *Śāyaṇa* have commented in that sense. According to *Śāyaṇa*, the meaning is -"O almighty! gods, like servants, follow you who happen to be *Mahāvishṇurūpi*, a redeemer of sins of the devotees, and the Lord of the universe. And being supreme, you inspire the intellect of all the beings." *Bhattabhāskara* also considers this *mantra* as one addressed to *Prāṇadevata*.

Question: An *Upanishad* by name '*śarabhopenishat*' states that *Rudra* slew *Vishṇu* who was in the form of *Śarabha*. And *Vishṇu rahasya* proclaims that *Vishṇu* in the form of *Gaṇḍabheruṇḍa* slew *Rudra*! What is all this?

Answer: The *raudravīras* continue the story claiming that *Rudra* subjugated *Vishṇu* again, who came in the form of *gaṇḍabheruṇḍa* to slay him. *Vaishṇavavīras* may further continue the story stating that, later, *Vishṇu* in another form slew that *Rudra*. Persistence of untruth should be kept away, even if it makes an appearance in the guise of any text, be it *Upanishads*, *Purāṇas*, *Āgamas* or any such book. None of the *Ācāryas* in the Vedic tradition have quoted *Śarabhopenishad* as an

authority. But we do not have to reject any parts of that *Upanishad* if they contain truthful aspects. Only the parts that are against truth should be ignored.

Question: How to detect interpolations in the books?

Answer: Interpolations can be detected by standards such as the difference of styles that may be in the book, contradictions, comparison with other authoritative books, historical happenings, review etc. But the inner experience of *jnānis* is the strongest proof. Because it is a universal truth that has been tested practically and can be done so for all the times.

Question: Why did our ancestors insert these interpolations in the religious literature?

Answer: It is because of false pride, hatred and also because of the evil desire to somehow defend their own side and gain fame.

Question: Who among *Śaivas* and *Vaishnavas* spoke first with contempt for the other God? Who provoked first?

Answer: It is not possible to tell that. Somehow, both have the abundance of *Rāga* and *Dvesha*.

Vīravaishnavas may boast - "*Rāvaṇa* is a devotee of *Śiva*. *Mahāvishṇu* in the form of *Śrīrāma* slew him. *Hiranyakaśipu* is also a devotee of *Śiva*.

Vishṇu in the form of *Narasimha* tore him apart." To this, the *Raudravīras* may reply "Why a mere a devotee of *Vishṇu*? Our god *Rudra* tore apart *Vishṇu* himself", and may have kept on extending the story. The disputants who argue inconsistently like this, seem to have failed to note the following:

1) The divine forms of *Śiva* and *Vishṇu* are indeed adorable to both *Śaivas* and *Vaishnavas*. Because, according to *Vaishṇava Purāṇas*, *Vishṇu* is revered as '*para devatā*' (supreme deity) and *Śiva* is respected as '*parama Bhāgavata*. And according to *Śaiva Purāṇas*, *Śiva* is '*paradevatā*' and *Vishṇu* is his '*parama bhakta*' (supreme devotee) A devotee honestly worshipping either of them, can attain *parañjyoti*.

2) *Rāma* killed *Rāvaṇa*, not for the reason that he worshipped *Śiva*. Because *Rāvaṇa* grew arrogant by the boon given by *Śiva* and became a bane to the world. Slaying of *Rāvaṇa* was acceptable to *Śiva* also. The reason why *Narasimha* killed *Hiranyakaśipu* was that he was a bane to the world. And he misused the *siddhis* (boons) he obtained from Lord *Brahma*. To establish his philosophy viz. "The body is the soul, *Artha* and *Kāma* are the only values of life, I *Hiranyakaśipu* am the Lord of everything, "ईश्वरोऽहमहं भोगी सिद्धोऽहं बलवान् सुखी" etc, he began to torture deities, *sādhus* (pious people) and devotees of god. And not because he worshipped

either *Brahma* or *Śiva* was he subjugated. Even *Brahma* and *Rudra* felt happy that he was killed.

Question: Then, is the episode of *Śarabha* and *Gaṇḍabheruṇḍa* which appear in the *purāṇas* completely unfounded? Are all the parts of that episode interpolations?

Answer: Not that all the parts are interpolations. The basic form and figure do have credibility. The *Vīrabhaktas* have spiced it up and enhanced the "*Līlās*"!

Question: Which are then the credible parts?

Answer: *Ugranarasimha*, *Śarabha* and *Gaṇḍabheruṇḍa* are all divine forms. All the three are ferocious in their form. We see them in a group in the *yogabhūmi*. For a short period a friction of pretence ensues there and soon their peaceful, benign forms manifest to the *sādhaka*. Their acts become complimentary to each other.

Question: How does it happen?

Answer: When the *yoga* occurs between *Vishṇu* in the ferocious form of *Narasimha* and *Rudra* in the *Śarabha* form, *Śarabha* draws the ferocious part in *Narasimha*. His divine consort '*Narasimha nāyaki*' becomes '*saumyanāyaki*'. Then the form of *Lakshmī Narasimha* is visualized. And when he places *Lakshmi* on his bosom and sits in deep meditation,

we become blessed on visualizing HIS form of *Yogānarasimha*.

When *śarabha* is united with *Gaṇḍabheruṇḍa*, *Gaṇḍabheruṇḍa* attracts the power of *Mahāraudra* (great terror) from *śarabha*. Then *śarabha* becomes benign, peaceful and grants vision as *ŚāntasadāŚiva*. When *Uma*, (his divine consort) manifests and adores his left lap, he grants the blessed vision as '*Umāmaheśvara*'. When she merges as divine power in the left half of his body, he becomes a feast to the eyes as he grants inner vision as *Yogarūḍha Dakṣiṇāmūrti* immersed in deep meditation. *Gaṇḍabheruṇḍa* grants the vision of *Paramahamsayoga* with even wings and flies away to the supreme divine abode.

This story of the sacred *yoga* has been magnified by the handiwork of "*Vīrabhaktas*" and thus, the mutual "killing" has taken this distorted form.

Question: Can *Narasimha*, *śarabha* and *Gaṇḍabheruṇḍa* be worshipped in their ferocious forms also?

Answer: Yes, it can be done. We see such idols in temples too. In temples of *Śiva*, *Śarabha* is also called *Jvaraharamūrti*. As is evident from the line "भावशुद्धाय साध्याय सिद्धाय शरभाय च" in *Śrī Narasimha Sahasranāma stotra*, *Narasimha* is called also by

the name *Śarabha*. As all the three are known to remove the three kinds of fever namely *Ādhyātmika*, *Ādhidaivika* and *Ādhibhautika*, all the three are called "jvaraharamūrti".

Question: Is *Narasimhavātāra* an incarnation in the inner realms or an event that (actually) took place in the external world?

This has been suggested already. This is a hapening of the glory of the eternal truth that took place, taking place now, and continues to take place in future also, in the realm of the internal world.

Hiraṇyakaśipu is the Lord of astonishing demoniacal powers endeavouring to establish the evil philosophy that wealth itself is food, clothing and everything in life. He is a marvellously accomplished person. But he uses the occult powers gifted by gods in the path of wickedness. Encroaching upon the positions and honor of *devatās*, he employs them in his service and harasses them. He tortures people who live a virtuous life. His glorious son *Prahlāda* is a crest jewel among the devotees of god who lead a life full of *Brahmānanda*. As evidenced from the line “प्रह्लादो जन्मवैष्णवः” he was a great devotee (of *viṣṇu*) since birth. This *Hiraṇyakaśipu*, his retinue of demons and *Prahlāda* the *Bhāgavataśiromaṇi*, will manifest in their forms to the *sādhakas* in their inner world in a distinct time.

Demons can do no harm to *Prahlāda* who is steadfast in devotion. But they cause unbearable distress to the travellers in the *Brahma mārga*. They have to invariably suffer this tyranny for some time. But god will protect them in due course of time. For this to happen, the companionship of *Prahlāda* provides help for that. In *yoga śāstra* ‘*merustambha*’ means the spinal column. That itself is the pillar in the court hall of *Hiraṇyakaśipu*. Light emanates all of a sudden from the hole of the central *sushumnā nādi* which is at the centre of that (*Merustambha*). *Ugranarasimha* jumps out instantly with a boisterous laughter, clapping of hands, the sound of *Praṇava*, roar of a lion and his red tongue emitting fire, with flashes of lightning, and with the terrifying roar that frightens the demons. He possesses the human form below the neck. He wields the conch, the discus, the mace, the bow *pinaka*, and a bell in his hands. Even though frightened, the king of demons *Hiraṇyakaśipu*, pretending boldness, rushes to attack him, but is grasped with ease by *Narasimha*. *Narasimha* swallows many *astras* (missiles) shot at him by the demon who had escaped from his hands. Then hundreds of *Narasimhas* spring up from his body. They take care of the other demons who come to attack the Lord. As a last weapon, *Hiraṇyakaśipu* spits masses of *tamas* (darkness) at the Lord.

Swallowing even them, the effulgent Lord *Narasimha* pulls *Hiraṇyakaśipu* with his long arms and placing him on his lap and positioning himself on the pedestal of the door, tears open his breast with his diamond hard claws (easily), like splitting a blade of grass. HE Removes his intestines, and wearing them as a garland, roars again and again. Then gods (from heaven) rain ambrosia and sound the musical instruments loudly and praise him with divine hymns.

ॐ नमो भगवते नरसिंहाय नमस्तेजस्तेजसे आविराविर्भव

वज्रनख वज्रदंष्ट्र

कर्माशयान् रन्ध्रय रन्ध्रय तमो ग्रस ग्रस ओं स्वाहा

अभयमभयमात्मनि भूयिष्ठा ओं क्षमौम्”

Even as *Śarabha* attracts his ferocious element, *Narasimha* becomes a *śāntamūrti* (a benign form). He proceeds to the throne and sits on it, in the benign form and gives *darshan* along with *Śrī* (*Lakshmi*). Only then *Pahlāda* becomes blessed. This is not a poetic story. These are scenes clearly seen in the yogic field.

In the upper right hand he weilds the *cakra* which represents the principle of the upward *manastattva*, in the left upper hand he has the conch, which represents the principle of ego, in the lower right hand, he sports the *jñānamudrā* and the *abhayamudrā* alternately. He has embraced *prakṛti*

ie (*Lakshmi*) with his left arm firmly so that she may not slide down from the *Brahmabhāva*.

एकेन चक्रमपरेण करेण शङ्खम् अन्येन सिन्धुतनयामवलम्ब्य तिष्ठन् ।

वामे करेण वरदाभयपद्मचिह्नम् लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥

The white complexioned *Ādiśeṣha*, who is *prāṇasavarūpa*, is holding all his enlarged seven hooks like an umbrella above the head of *Narasimha*, offering him the service of embellishment. On the right side, boy *Prahlāda* joining his hands together in the form a cup stands blissfully, gazing at the face of the Lord.

In a short time *Narasimha* transforms himself into *Yogānarasimha* and becomes a feast to the eyes.

Though this form of *Narasimha* has his tongue stretched out with visible fangs, his countenance is highly benign; the gaze is pointing upwards, crossing the level of the brows; the broad forehead is shining with a line pointing upwards; He sports the divine crown, and the *Jālandhara bandha* in the throat, The upward pointing disc and the conch are representing the principles of mind and *ahankāra* held in the two upper hands, the region of the heart has the *Prāṇa* and *Āpana* regulated, *Yogamahālakshmi* is shining in the subtle form, in the right part of the chest. He shows the *Uḍyāṇabandha* and has swirly (haired) navel and

shows the *Bhūsparsāmudrā* in the lower hands. Salutations again and again to this auspicious form of *Yogānarasimha* who is teaching this very *yogavidyā* to those (devotees) who keep looking at him from foot to head, being completely absorbed in him.

“योगारूढमतिप्रसन्नवदनं योगानृसिंह भजे”

Let us become fulfilled in this sacred evening worship of *Narasimha Jayantī* by worshipping, praising and meditating upon the forms of both *Bhogaśrisameta* and *Yogaśrīsameta* *Narasimha* who grants a pleasant darshan immediately after (the withdrawal of) his ferocious form.

चेतोभृङ्गा भ्रमसि वृथा भवमरुभूमौ विरसायाम् ।

भज भज लक्ष्मीनरसिहानघपदसरसिजमकरन्दम् ॥

"Lord *Narasimha* is divine truth incarnate. He is experienced (by devotees) in the suprasensory *Yogasamādhi* and blesses (devotees) with divine knowledge, eternal bliss, prosperity and peace. He fulfills the wants of the devotees who have desires. He is the inner incarnation of lord *Nārāyaṇa Parañjyothi*." These points have been brought to our mind by the abovesaid discussions in the question answer format. Now we shall have an insight to the other aspects of *Narasimhajayantī* which is to be observed in a special way.

i) The Importance and specialty of this *Parva*:

1. This is one of the religious festivals celebrated with devotion and awe in all parts of *Bhārata*.

2. People of all *varṇas* have the right and eligibility to celebrate this festival.

“सर्वेषामेव वर्णानामधिकारोऽस्ति मद्दिने ।

मद्भक्तैस्तु विशेषेण कर्तव्यं मत्परायणैः ॥

3. All devotees of *Vishṇu*, and especially those who worship *Narasimha* as their family deity or a chosen deity, celebrate this *parva*. Even some *Śaivas* celebrate this *jayantī*.

4. As *śāstras* state that one would incur sin if this *vrata* is not observed, this festival can be considered a ‘*nitya*’ *Vrata* also. And also, as it is stated that sins will be removed and *punya* and *purushārthas* are obtained by observing this *vrata* this, can be termed a *kāmyavrata* also.

“अन्यथा नरकं याति यावच्चन्द्रदिवाकरौ”

“मज्जन्मसम्भवं पुण्यं व्रतं पापप्रणाशनम्”

“वर्षे वर्षे तु कर्तव्यं मम सन्तुष्टिकारणम्”

“हत्याकोटिविनाशनम्”

5. Though the number of people who observe this *Vrata* is small, *śāstras* state that this festival is equally significant and great as *Rāmanavamī* or *Kṛṣṇa jayantī* and other great festivals. As in the case of other great *parvas*, laudatory stories are

narrated, associated with this *parva* also. For example: "At the beginning of the creation (of universe) lord Brahma observed this *vrata* and acquired the power to create this world comprising of the movable and the immovable. Only by observing this *vrata*, *Rudradeva* got the ability to kill the demon *tripurāsura*. *Bhakta prahlāda* was deeply immersed and devoted towards a prostitute in his previous life. Once, on the day of *Narasimha jayantī* either unknowingly or for some reason, he and his harlot maintained a vow of silence and fasted. As a result of this, the prostitute obtained a place among the nymphs. And this person who was passionate in that harlot was born as the supreme devotee *Prahlāda* in his next birth. This *vrata* is like a wish yielding cow *kāmadhenu*, which grants male issues to the childless, and power, kingdom, wifehood and wealth and fortunes to people who seek them. It grants all wealth, enjoyments and fortunes in this world, and also emancipation in the other world. Either *Brahma* or *Śiva* or even god *Narasimha* for that matter, cannot describe the complete greatness of this *vrata*". We see in *Vratakalpas* that stories carrying this purport were told by *Narasimha* himself to *Prahlāda*. Stories of this kind are called as '*Ārthavāda*'. Their intention is only to describe the greatness of this *vrata* to people and to create an interest in them. They need not be considered as historical truths.

6) This *Vrata* demands a high level of *Ācāraśuddhi* (Purity)

ii) When to perform this (*vrata*) and at what time?

There is no difference of opinion regarding the observance of this *vrata* which falls on on *vaiśākha śukla caturdaśī*.

नरसिंहश्चतुर्दश्यां वैशाखे शुक्लपक्षके''

“वैशाखे शुक्लपक्षे तु चतुर्दश्यां निशामुखे ।

मज्जन्मसम्भवं पुण्यं व्रतं पापप्रणाशनम्’’॥

Should this *parva* be celebrated as per as per *sauramāna* or *cāndramāna*? We should note that both these are in practice. But as is evident from "*vrathe cāndramasam śastam*", it is best to observe this *vrata* according to the lunar calendar. If any (unforeseen) problems or obstacles occur in the *Narasimha jayantī* of *cāndramāna*, then it may be observed according to the *sauramāna*. But it may be remembered that the observance according to *cāndramāna* is more in vogue.

It is clear that *Narasimha jayantī* should be observed on *vaiśākha śuddha caturdaśī*. But, what should be the extent of *caturdaśī* on that day? Should the star, *yoga* and *Karaṇa* of the day also be given importance along with *caturdaśī*? This needs to be discussed now.

Caturdaśī tithi is the most important factor in deciding the day of *Narasimha Jayanti*. *Caturdaśī* must prevail at sun-set on that day. "If the *pradosha* of *caturdaśī* extends on both the days, when should the *vrata* is to be observed?"—In such a case it should be observed on the second day. Even if the *Pradosha* does not extend to both the days, celebration of the *vrata* should be done on the second day only. Even if it extends to both the days partly and evenly, then the observation will be the same (i.e. on the second day). "What should be the day of observance if *Caturdaśī* happens to extend unevenly on both the days?" *Nirṇayasindhu* says that the day of observance is the day on which the *Vyāpti* of *Caturdaśī* is more.

“दिनद्वयेऽपि तद् व्याप्तौ, अंशतः समव्याप्तौ च परा, विषमव्याप्तौ त्वधिकव्याप्तिमती, दिनद्वयेऽपि अव्याप्तौ परा”

The special worship of *Narasimha jayantī* should be performed on the day when *caturdaśī tithi* is beyond the *vedhā* of *trayodaśī* for a period of three *muhūrtas* (one *muhūrta* is equal to 48 minutes). If such a *vedhā* occurs, that day should be omitted, and observance should be on the day when there is no *vedhā* i.e. on the next day. Even if that (next) day happens to be a full moon day *Narasimha Jayanti* should be observed on that day only.

त्रिमुहूर्तत्रयोर्दशीवेधरहितायाम्
वैशाखशुद्धत्रयोदश्यां प्रदोषकाले
श्रीनरसिंहजयन्ती विशेषाराधनं कृत्वा....
न च पौर्णमास्यां नृसिंहजयन्ती सम्भवे” (दशनिर्णयी अनुबन्ध)

Some *śāstras* state that *Narasimhajayantī* should not be observed when there is the *vedhā* of *Trayodaśī*, and some other *Śāstras* state that if *caturdaśī* prevails during *Pradosha*, the *vrata* should be observed on that day. To clear this contradiction, some people say that *Vaishṇavas* should observe the *vrata* on the first day, and *Smārtas* on the second day. Here the word *Vaishṇava* means those who follow *āgamas* like *Pāñcarātra*, *Vaikhānasa* etc. But these attributes viz *Smārta*, *Śrīvaishṇava* and *Vaishṇava* are of recent origin. These differences were not known to ancient religious scholars who laid down religious rules and regulations. So this elucidation does not appear satisfactory.

However, *Śrī Raṅgamahāguru* had in this regard, commanded as follows:

"Paramaikāntis and paramahamsas who have not an iota of attachment towards wordly benefits, should observe this *vrata* on a clear day which does not have the *vedhā*. Others i.e. those who desire both Moksha and Purushārthas, should observe it on the day of *Caturdaśī* even if there is *vedhā*" We

humbly remember this and beg to state that this elucidation is objective.

Just as the Śuklapaksha caturdaśī is dear to Lord *Narasimha*, star *svāti*, Monday, Saturday, *Siddhayoga* and *Vaṇijakaraṇa* are dear to him. So, if the above happen to occur on the day of *Narasimhajayantī* that day will be most commendable.

वैशाखस्य चतुर्दश्यां सोमवारेऽनिलक्ष्यके,
अवतारो नृसिंहस्य” (टोडरानन्द-स्कान्दवचन)

“स्वातीनक्षत्रयोगे च शनिवारे तु मद्रव्रतम्
सिद्धयोगस्य संयोगे वणिजे करणे तथा ।
पुंसां सौभाग्ययोगेन लभ्यते दैवयोगतः,
सर्वैरितैस्तु संयुक्तं हत्याकोटिविनाशनम् ।
एतदन्यतरे योगे मद्दिनं पापनाशनम् ॥

Although the above said *tithi*, *vāra*, *nakshatra*, *yoga* and *karaṇa* are all most commendable for the observance of *narsimha jayantī*, the most important is the *caturdaśī tithi*.

“केवलेऽपि प्रकर्तव्यं तद्दिनं व्रतमुत्तमम्”

Even if the above said *vara*, *Nakshatra*, *yoga* and *Karaṇas* do not eventuate, the *vrata* should be observed if it is *caturdaśī*. If the other ones (such as *Vāra*, *nakshatra* etc) happen to occur, it is fine and if all of the happen to occur on that day, it will be best.

As per the above, the day of observance of *Narasimhajayantī*, may be decided.

But, at what time on that day the special worship of God has to be performed, remains a controversy.

अवतारो नृसिंहस्य प्रदोषसमये द्विजाः”

“महाप्रदोषसमयो नृहरेः समुपागतः”

सम्भृताश्चैव सम्भाराः कल्पितान्यासनान्यपि

“कूर्मस्सिंहो बौद्धकल्की च सायम्”

“चतुर्दश्यां निशामुखे । मज्जन्मसम्भवं पुण्यम्”

When it is clear from the above *ślokas* that the incarnation of Lord *Narasimha* happened in the *Pradosha* only, why should there be any doubt at all? The above *ślokas* are not considered trustworthy. A work on *Dharmaśāstra Mīmāṃsa* makes a strong comment as follows: "The abovesaid *ślokas* are not to be taken as authentic. There is no proof that the incarnation happened in the evening time. Instead, there are authentic *ślokas* which state that the festival should be observed in the afternoon, and especially in the latter part of *caturdaśī tithi*, when there is the pervasion of *Vaṇija Karaṇa*.

ततो मध्याह्नवेलायां नद्यादौ विमले जले ।

परिधाय ततो वासः व्रतकर्म समाचरेत् ॥

So, it should be observed in the afternoon only, as per this authentic verse. It is foolish to worship in the evening".

But it has to be noted that the above *śloka*s which state that *Narasimhavatāra* took place in the evening are not unauthentic. The first *śloka* appearing there, is quoted in the *vrata-mālā*. (p.415 *Narasimhajayantī Vratam*) The other *śloka*s too are found in *Nṛshmapurāṇa* and *Nṛshima pūjakalpas*. Texts such as *Śrīmadbhāgavatam* indicate that *Narasimha* incarnated in the evening only. It is because *Hiranyakaśipu* sought a boon from *Brahma* that he should not meet with death either in the night or during day time or either on earth or in the sky. *Śrīmadbhāgavatam skandha* 7, chapter 4). If that has to be honoured, the incarnation of the Lord must have happened in the evening only. So, the opinion that the worship on *Narasimha jayantī* should be done in the evening is correct.

Those who cannot fast till the evening because of physical weakness or due to the pressure and burden of other worldly occupations, can perform it at least in the afternoon. Generally, such people worship god during *Śrī Kṛṣṇajayantī* and *Śivaratri*, in the afternoon itself. If it is not possible to do it in the stipulated time, it can be performed in the nearest possible time.

Then, why is afternoon stipulated for the *vrata*, as per the statement "Bath should be had in the afternoon itself in the pure waters of river etc, and *vrata* should be begun with the wearing of clean clothes"? The purport is, the parts of the *Vrata* such as bath, vow, worship, *Pārāyaṇa* etc., should be begun in the afternoon itself. The main worship should be done in the evening only. Nowhere has it been stated that the main worship should be done in the afternoon. And also, no statement of authority is found enjoining that worship should not be done in the evening. But there are statements of authority which stipulate that the main worship should be performed in the evening. Customarily also, we see that the worship is being performed in the evening only, by and large.

Even in everyday worship, the evening time has been specially commended for the *darshan* of Lord *Nṛsimha*. Idols of *Vishṇu* should not be seen (for *darśana*) at *pradosha*.

“न प्रदोषे हरिं पश्येत् ऋते नृहरिगघवौ” ।

Thus, when *Pradosha* is recommended for *Narasimha* even in daily worship, it is not justifiable to argue that the main worship on the day of *Narasimhajayanti* should not be performed in the evening. In an authentic text by name *kālamādhaviya*, the evening *pūja* itself is enjoined

conclusively, in the chapter *caturdaśī vrataṁmāmsa*.

“नैतत्सारं यथा विनायकव्रतं मध्याह्ने पूजयेन्नुपाः” इतिमध्याह्नः कर्मकालत्वेन विहितः नात्र तथा विधिरस्ति, उदाहृतं तु लिङ्गं अर्थवादवत् न स्वातन्त्र्येण कस्यचित् अर्थस्य प्रापकं, किन्तु सति प्रमाणान्तरे तस्य उपोद्बलकं भवति। न चात्र प्रमाणान्तरं पश्यामः अतः मध्याह्नः कर्माङ्गकालः न विहितः (page 153 Kannada script edition)

"Which is the right time for observing *Nṛsimha jayanti*"? ŚrīRaṅgamahāguru had commanded as follows in this regard: "Any time for that matter, at which the darśana of Lord *Narasimha* in the *Merustambha* in us is being had, will be the time for the observance of *Nṛsimha jayanthi*. *Śāstra* texts state that the time at which the souls are taken naturally towards such a yoga, is the time of *Nṛsimha Jayantī*." Remembering these words which throw light on the truth and which provide inspiration, we wish to conclude as follows: "*pradosha samaya* of *Vaiśākha Śuddha Caturdaśi* is excellent for the special worship of *Narasimha Jayanti*. If star *Svātī*, Monday or Saturday, *siddha yoga* and the *vanijakaraṇa* also happen to occur on (that day) it will be more precious."

Next, we will take up for discussion, the modalities of the worship of *Śrīnṛsimha jayanti* and the reasons for that.

***Madivanti*ke (ritualistic purity) :**

Narasimhajayanthi is a day when God in the form of *Narasimha* should be worshipped specially. *Pūjā kalpas* have stipulated special purity to facilitate that special worship. Here '*madi*' means purity of all kinds and virtuous conduct. Only if purity is accomplished in the five sense organs, the body, intellect, mind, materials, place and deeds, it can be termed as *Śāstrīya* purity.

पञ्चेन्द्रियस्य देहस्य बुद्धेश्च मनसस्तथा ।

द्रव्यदेशक्रियाणां च शुद्धिराचार इष्यते ॥

Some say—"madi (purity) is the opposite of '*mailige*' (impurity). A (cloth or a) thing which is cleansed at the time of *madi* (purity) and which is not touched while in *mailige* is *madi*" Ordinary people think that even unclean clothes satisfying the above description will be '*madi*'. But dirty clothes will be treated as *mailige* only in the eyes of the *śāstras*, even if they happen to be *madi* of *madis*.

Incidentally we may remember the words "अश्रीकरमसौम्यं च मलिनं नैव धारयेत्"

a) Special reason for this *madivanti*ke

"Purity conforming to the *śāstras* should be observed in all the rituals, *śubha* or *pūṇya*. But in the worship of *Śrī Narasimha*, *Śrī Hayagrīva* and *Śrī Mr̥tyuñjaya* etc, there is a tradition of observing extraordinary *madivanti*ke. The reason attributed

by ordinary people is that these gods are prone to anger and so even if there is a small slip in the procedures during worship, they get angry and cause torment to the worshipper. But this is not correct. Because, these gods also have benign pleasant forms and not just the ferocious forms. Even there, the ferocious actions are directed only against evil people, and not towards devotees who are immersed in god. We see words in the composition of devotees such as "*Cheluva Narasimha*" "*Śānta Narasimha*" "*Alahiya Śingar*" etc.,

Though these deities are divine evolutions of the almighty who is beyond the three *guṇas* (viz *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*), at times and at their own will, they put on the coats of *rajas* or *tāmas*. If they are worshipped in such forms, the devotees can obtain fulfillments related to those virtues. Some worship them for relief from slow poison administered with food, blackmagic, downfall from legitimate position, loss of money etc. Some devotees may aspire for wealth and desires also. *Paramaikāntis* may pray for *Moksha* only. Some others may pray for other *Purushārthas* along with *Moksha*, but not opposed to it. So, keeping in mind their wishes, the devotees worship the *Sāttvic*, *Rājasic* or *Tāmasic* forms of this God, or the ones

beyond them. Whatever may be the forms, they do not cause fear, but cause love only.

The following incident, described vividly in *Śrīmadbhāgavata* makes it clear that *Narasimha* even in the ferocious form does not terrify his devotees who are unique.

प्रह्लादं प्रेषयामास ब्रह्मावस्थितमन्तिके ।

तात प्रशमयोपेहि स्वपित्रे कुपितं प्रभुम् ॥ (भागवत VII-9-2)

Lord *Ugranarasimha* started roaring, after tearing open *Hiraṇyakaśipu* and making a garland of his intestines and wearing it. *Hiraṇyakaśipu* was terribly tormenting *Prahlāda* the great devotee. Even though *Brahma* and other devotees praised the Lord, no one would dare to go near him. Then God *Brahma* went near *Prahlāda* and said, "My child! Lord *Narasimha* is angry with your father. Please pacify him", and sent him near *Narasimha*. That supreme child-devotee fearlessly went near the Lord and prostrated at his lotus feet. Lord *Narasimha* lifted the child devotee with affection and made him sit on his lap, placed his ambrosial hand which was a destroyer of the fear of death, on *Prahlāda's* head. Immediately *Prahlāda* had the vision of the supreme deity and praised the Lord with a voice choked with devotion.

The enigmatic question here is, why *Prahlāda* did not fear even a little when great gods such as

Brahma and others were afraid with terror, on seeing the terrible form of *Narasimha*? It won't be correct to say that *Prahlāda* was just a child and so did not have fear. We can see that many things which are just a matter of fun for elders can cause fear in children.

If someone merely says—"Prahāda is a devotee. And so he was not afraid," a question arises whether *Brahma* did not have devotion towards the almighty.

"The cause of fear is said to be from something which is different from oneself. 'द्वितीयस्माद्वै खलु भयं भवति'. But *Prahlāda* was a *Paripūrṇa* with the experience that there existed nothing different from him and everything was *paramātmamaya*, and so he felt no fear" - some say. Pertaining to this incident some people quote a statement from *Taittirīya Upanishad* 'उदरमन्तरं कुरुते, अथ तस्य भयं भवति' and explain it as follows:- Even if a very slight difference is felt between oneself and the supreme entity, there will be a cause for fear. As *Prahlāda* felt that there was no difference between himself and Lord *Narasimha*, he was least afraid.

Some try to explain - "This is a matter related to *Dhyāna*. Sometimes a break called *Antara* happens during meditation. Only in the event of such an *Antara*, fear is felt. Since *Prahlāda* was in a

state of unbroken meditation without any *Antara*, he experienced no fear.

So, a question arises whether even a devotee could be disturbed by a vega (A kind of an agitational impulse) of fear during meditation till a particular level and, if so, does that vega cease after that level. Here, we would like to quote the explanation provided by Śrī Raṅgamahāguru who was a *Dhyānasiddha*. He said—

"There will be no vega of fear during *dhyāna* after one crosses the *Mahattattva*. Even gods many experience fear when they are below that. As *Prahlāda* had crossed even the *Mahattattva* during *Dhyāna*, he felt no fear even on seeing the exceedingly ferocious form of Lord Śrī *Narasimha*. The other gods were below that level of *Mahattattva* at the time of seeing the Lord, and so were frightened. There would be no fetters like fear or shyness, when the *Mahattattva* is crossed."

Thus, even the form of *Ugranarasimha* is indeed dear to the devotees. So, the insisting of a higher level of *madi* in his worship is not because of the ferocious form and dispositions of *Narasimha*. The real reason is that a state of complete purity in the devotee is a must to ascend to the *Samādhi* state in the meditation of that deity. As even a trace of impurity may bring about a disturbance in the

meditation, that (much of a high) level of purity is insisted. This rule applies in the worship of Śrī Hayagrīva, Śrī Mr̥tyuñjaya and such other deities.

c) Materials and the condition of the body and the mind needed for the worship. *Brahmacarya*, restraint of the mind, speech and actions, compassion towards all living beings etc are the inner accomplishments required for the worship on that day. Sandal Paste, flowers, incense, *Dīpa* and *Naivedya* etc are the materials needed externally, which the devotees should arrange for, depending on the means.

d) Rules and precepts of worship

After taking bath early in the morning and completing the daily religious rituals, a vow should be made for the worship, and a prayer should be made to God to grace an obstacle free accomplishment of the same. Special worship should be offered in the evening. Fasting should be observed at least till the time of worship. Those who cannot afford to fast, may have some light food, allowed by the *śāstras*.

e) Naivedya and leaves and flowers

Which are the special things that are to be offered for the worship of lord *Narasimha*? Laymen may say that the food dear to a lion should be offered, as Lord *Narasimha* is lion faced! Such

people should note here that the 'lion' described as the face of the lord is not a physical material (as animal lion) seen in the external world.

Scriptures prescribe a sweet rice cake called *ereyappa* as a special *naivedya* to Śrī *Narasimha*. “गुडापूपं नृसिंहाय”. By offering this *sāttvik* food to God and taking the *prasāda*, the tranquility of the *dhātus* is brought about, and the centers pertaining to the visualization of Lord *Narasimha* open up, and so the *śāstras* prescribe these *dravyas* (materials/preparations) for the worship.

Other than this, greengram and bengalgram preparations, and juices of wood apple and lemon are offered in the special worship of the Lord. ŚrīRaṅgamahāguru used to explain—"When one reaches the Samādhi state, upheavels take place (in the body). These things (materials and offerings for worship) help in bringing (the upheavel in the devotee) back to the normal state."

It should be noted that the above said items prescribed as *Naivedya* to Lord *Narasimha* are not meant to relieve him of thirst and hunger. But they are prescribed to help the *Sādhakas* to easily ascend to the *Bhāva* of *Narasimha*, and to keep their body and mind in good shape. We come across *śāstravacanas* like “यदन्नः पुरुषो भवति तदन्नास्तस्य देवताः” When such is the case, why should a special

naivedya be prescribed? The above rule is a general one. But when one cannot afford the special items stated above (for *naivedya*), the general rule (i.e. the food of the person can be offered as *naivedya*) itself, can be followed with full devotion.

As *Narasimha* possesses a dual form of both *Vishṇu* and *Rudra*, *tulasi* and lotus recommended for the worship of *Nārāyaṇa*, and *Bilva* and red hibiscus etc prescribed for the worship of *Śiva*, can be offered for the special worship on that day.

Medium of worship

Lord *Narasimha* can be worshipped in the forms of *sāligrāma yantra*, idols or through sacrificial fire. Special worship should be offered by way of chanting *Śrī Narasimha mantra*, *upanishads* and *vedas*.

Fasting and breaking the fast

The practice of *Pāraṇa* after the offering of special worship in the evening is also there. “उत्सवान्ते च पारणम्”

The custom of fasting for the whole day (on the day of *Narasimhajayanti*) and doing *Pāraṇa* the next morning is also prevalent. *ŚrīRaṅgamahāguru* had explained that both these customs are approved by the scriptures. The first custom is to be followed by those who are *Paramaikāntis* who seek only *moksha*, and the second one is for *sādhakas* who

observe the *vrata* seeking the four fold *purushārthas*.

It will be most proper to spend the night of that festival by listening to stories related to *Śrī Narasima*, and in singing his glories. There is also a tradition in some devotees who fast on that day and, after performing *Uttarārādhana* the next day, gift the idol of *ŚrīNarasimha* to the deserving ones.

Those who fast for the whole day on the day of *Narsimhajayantī*, should perform the concluding worship early in the morning on the next day. As part of worship, some people do ‘*Śrī Nṛsimhajapa*, chant the *mantra*, invoke him in the holy fire and perform worship through *homa*. After the *Pārāyaṇa* of the *Nrsimhatāpinī Upanishad*, cooked rice and ghee should be offered as *Havis* in the *Homa* by chanting *Purushasūkta* and the *Narasimha Gāyatri mantra*. (ॐ वज्रनखाय विद्महे । तीक्ष्णदृग्ग्राय धीमहि । तन्नो नारसिंहः प्रचोदयात् ॥) There is also a custom of performing *Jalatarpaṇapūja* with *Nrsimhagāyatrī* itself. The custom of performing this *Homa* after doing *Shoḍaśopacāra* and gifting the idol of god which was worshipped, to the deserving ones is also there.

There upon, *tīrtha* and *prasāda* should be had, and after *Bhāgavata samārādhana*, *pāraṇa prasada* should be taken. Those who complete the worship

on the day of *Narasimhajayanti* itself, can do *paraṇa* after the *Shoḍaśopacārapūja*, *Japa* and *homa* and *Bhāgavatārādhana* in the same night.

If affordable, devotees can perform *shoḍaśopacāra pūja*, *Homa*, *Tarpaṇa* etc. Those who cannot afford in terms of money, time and health, should meditate upon god, do the *japa* and chant the *stotras*. If any materials needed for worship happen to be unavailable, their presense should be sentimentally felt and worship should be offered to God.

There is no need of (the regular) external materials at all to perform *hṛdyāga* or *Mānasārādhana*. If one can offer his dispositions of the mind, the conscience, and the *Jīva* to the *paramātmā* who is at their summit in the form of fire, it also amounts to a *Homa*. (“प्रत्यग्रूपे हविषि युवयोरेकशेषित्वयोगात्” श्रीस्तुति वेदान्त देशिक, “आत्मनि स्वप्रकाशाग्नौ चित्तमेकाहुतिं क्षिपेत्” श्रीशङ्करभगवत्पाद) Let us give the holy bath to Lord *Narasimha* with the stream of the mind which is absorbed in god. Let us offer all services to God like *Arghya*, *Pādya*, *Āchamanīya*, *Snāna* and *Pāna* from the water viz the pure mind taken from the river viz *śraddhā* (pure devotion). Let us offer the *Mānasa Pushpañjali* to God from the flowers of *Bhāva* (feelings) and *Samādhi*. Let us offer as *Naivedya* our very pure souls, to the God of Gods.

श्रद्धानदीविमलचित्तजलाभिषेकै-

नित्यं समाधिकुसुमैरपुनर्भवाय”

शेषभूतं स्वमात्मानं शेषिणे परमात्मने ।

अर्पयेत्परया भक्त्या महानैवेद्यमेव तत् ॥

Even those who are financially poor can perform the spiritual *pūja* using their own senses, mind, soul etc which are not dependant on others. If this spiritual worship is not done, the benefit obtained from external worship will be meagre. If the spiritual worship is done well, no blemish can be there even if the external worship cannot be performed for some reasons. Those who can afford should perform the external worship also. Because, the things used for external worship, should also be offered to God in the form of a *Yajna* and they can become fruitful. Ordinary people too are rendered holy by taking that *prasāda* (of the worship). For this very reason, this *śloka* is included in the *Pūja Kalpa*:

भगवन् पुण्डरीकाक्ष हृद्यागं तु मया कृतम् ।

आत्मसात्कुरु देवेश बाह्ये त्वां सम्यगर्चये ॥

(O lotus eyed Lord residing in my lotus heart! I have (just now)done the *Hṛdyāga*. (Please accept this!) Now I am going to worship you externally. O Lord of Gods!

As per the words ‘न प्रदोषे हरिं प्रश्येत्’ the worship of *Mahāviṣṇu* is prohibited during *Pradosha*. Then

how come Lord *Narasimha* who is an *avatāra* of *Vishṇu* is worshipped in the twilight only? It is because the *purāṇas* state that the incarnation time of *Śrīnarasimhasvāmi* is the evening itself. If one turns his vision inwards and meditates, even the external nature becomes helpful and takes him to the experience of the glory of the natural manifestation of *Narasimha*. *Yogaśāstras* call our backbone "*maha merustambha*".

“आस्फालयेन्महामेरुं कम्पन्ते तत्र देवताः”

When our inner self is invaded by demoniacal forces, it becomes the pillar of the court of *Hiraṇyakaśipu*. By the influence of the highest devotion of a pure soul in the form of *Prahlāda*, Lord *Narasimha* roars the *Praṇava* and manifests with a form which terrifies the demons, after breaking asunder that pillar. He sits on the threshold which is the middle region of the abode of the interior.

लयविक्षेपयोस्सन्धिः मनस्तत्र निरामयम् ।

स सन्धिस्साधितो येन स मुक्तो नात्र संशयः ॥ (सदाचारस्तुति)

Our Gurudeva had expounded this as follows:-
"At the evening time which is the meeting moment of Laya and Vikshepa (the Lord) tears open the chest of the demon king who is the embodiment of Avidyā and sits on his throne, mounting it. In reality it is the throne of meditation of god. Liberating it from the invasion of the demons, and

purifying it, he sits on it and reestablishes the kingdom of devatās". Thus, the sandhyākāla is indeed the most commendable time for the worship of the inner Lord.

In the divine form of *Narasimha*, the part above his neck is the region of Lord *Rudra*. “आशीर्ष रुद्रमीशानम्” So, it is indeed highly proper to worship him in the *Pradosha*. The *Āgamas* state that the *darśan* of *Śiva* during the evening twilight redeems all sins.

Which form of *Narasimha* should be worshipped on *Narasimhajayanti*? Is it his ferocious form? Or is the benign pleasing form? The answer to this is as follows:—The ferocious form should be worshipped in *Sandhyākāla*. He, the eight armed Lord of Lords, who holds the conch, the disc, the mace, the bow, the goad and the bell in six hands, and he who tears open the chest of the demon king in the remaining two hands, should be worshipped. He should be worshipped as *Narasimha parañjyoti*. He (The Lord) who holds upwards the conch, the disc, the bow, the mace and the goad which represent the *tattvas* viz *manas*, *buddhi*, *ahankāra*, *mahattatva*, and *sukshmajñāna*; he whose vitality is upwards, as is evident from the words “ऊर्ध्वरेतं विरूपाक्षं विश्वरूपाय वै नमः” and he who sounds loudly the *omkāra* with the divine bell; he the *yogācārya* who terrifies the demons and tears open the chest of

the demon the epitome of *Avidyā*, and He who contains the three *guṇas* (viz *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*) and yet beyond them, should be meditated upon.

One should meditate upon *Prahlāda* who appears with joined cupped hands and who is endowed with child-like nature. (The *Upanishads* state that a great *Yogi* should be child like) “बाल्येन तिष्ठासेत्” Also *Brahma* and other gods who are hailing victory with joined cupped hands, the attendants of *Vishṇu* and *Garuḍa* who are his retinue, should be meditated upon.

At the latter part or the concluding part of the worship, one should meditate upon *Saumyalakshmīnarasimha* as (the Lord) who has *Lakshmī* as his *Parāprakṛti* (supreme nature) sitting on his lap and who has embraced her. *Prahlāda* in the posture with joined cupped hands, should also be worshipped along with this form of *Narasimha*. The five vital airs, unidirectional and proceeding upwards even beyond the head and in the form of *Kuṇḍaliniśeshanāga* serving the Lord as an umbrella, should be meditated upon. Those who have a special desire for *Yogasiddhi* should later meditate upon the form of *Yogānarasimha* and worship him.

"Lord *Yogānarasimha*, is adorned with the conch and the disc both facing upwards in the two upper hands. Though his two lower hands are pointing downwards because of the *Bhūsparśamudrā*, he holds them in such a way that the *vrittis* move upwards. He is bound by *Yogapatta* at the knees. He looks graceful in the *Mūlabandha*, *Uddyāṇabandha* and the *Jālandharbandha* in the region of *Mulādhāra*, *udara* and *kanṭha*. His sight has gone above and beyond the pair of eyebrows. The tongue displaying the *Lambikāyoga* is protruding outside. He is the *Paramapurusha* whose *Prakṛti* is not exhibited but has been made to merge within. He is a form of pure white complexion" – with this comprehension, Lord *Yogānṛsimha* should be meditated upon.

We hereby (wish to) offer this service (i.e. the discussion regarding *Narasimhajayanti*) along with a *mantravarṇa* which is stated in *Śrīmadbhāgavatam* as a *Mahāmantra* which, *Prahlādarāyaru* keeps chanting and praising.

“ॐ नमो भगवते नरसिंहाय नमस्तेजस्तेजसे आविराविर्भव वज्रनख वज्रदंष्ट्र
कर्माशयान् रन्ध्रय रन्ध्रय तमो ग्रस ग्रस ओं स्वाहा, अभयमभयमात्मनि भूयिष्ठा
ओं क्षमौम् ॥

