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odev108@gmail.com

www.shriradharaman.com



Vishnu Sahasranama Part 34: Prabhav - He Who Gives His Form by Shri Chandan Goswami Maharaj

The 34th Name in the Shri Vishnu Sahasranama Stotram is "Prabhav".

Adi Shankaracharya gives two meanings for this Name:

1. प्रकर्षेण महाभूतानि अस्मात् जायन्ते, *prakarṣena mahābhūtāni asmāt jāyante*: Because all the primordial elements (*mahabhutas*)¹ come from him, he is called "Prabhav".

The five *mahabhutas* are the traditional building blocks of all matter, namely space (*akash*), air (*vaayu*), fire (*agni*), water (*jal*) and Earth (*prithvi*).

2. प्रकृष्टो भवो जन्म अस्य इति, *prakṛṣṭo bhavo janma asya iti*: Because his birth (*bhava*) is divine (*prakrishta*), he is called "Prabhav".

Expanding upon one of Shankaracharya's meanings, Shri Parashar Bhatt explains it in this way:

देवादिजनवैजात्यात् प्रकृष्टोत्पत्तिमत्वतः।
अविद्यादोष वैदूर्यात् प्रभवः परिकीर्तिः॥

*devādijanavaijātyāt
prakṛṣṭotpattimativataḥ।
avidyādoṣa vaidūryāt prabhavaḥ
parikīrtitah॥*

Prabhav means he whose birth is unique and different from the birth of other gods and goddesses, and who is beyond illusion (*maya*).

Shri Baldev Vidyabhushan says:

प्रकृष्टः स्वभक्तानां स्वेन रूपेणाभिव्यक्तिलक्षणो
भवो यस्मात् स प्रभवः:

*prakṛṣṭah svabhaktānām svena
rūpenābhivyakyatilakṣaṇo bhavo yasmāt
sa prabhavaḥ:*

एवमेवैष सम्प्रसादोऽस्माच्छरीरात्समुत्थाय परं
ज्योतिरूपसम्पद्य स्वेन रूपेणाभिनिष्पद्यते ॥

*evameva īsa
samprasādo'smāccharīrātsamutthāya
param jyotirupasampadya svena*

rūpenābhiniṣpadyate ॥

"The one who gives his devotees his own divine form is called Prabhav."

"In this way, by his grace, one's soul leaves this body and attains the supreme light in the form of the soul's eternal identity (*swaroop*)."
(*Chaandogya Upanishad*, 8.12.3)

When one performs selfless devotion to Bhagwan and attains sacred love, Bhagwan gives them a perfect divine body (*siddh deh*). In Adwait Vedant, merging with Brahman is the highest state. But conversely, according to Bhakti Yog, merging with Brahman is not what a selfless devotee needs to do. Instead, as the fruit of his selfless devotion, Bhagwan bestows his grace upon him and makes him a servant in his divine realm.

सत्सेवयादीर्घ्यापि जाता मयि दृढा मतिः ।
हित्वावद्यमिमं लोकं गन्ता मज्जनतामसि ॥

*satsevyādīrghayāpi jātā mayi dr̥ḍhā
matih ।
hitvāvadyamimāṁ lokam gantā
majjanatām asi ॥*

In the *Shrimad Bhagwatam* (1.6.24), Shri Krishn tells Narad: "Even though you have only served the sages for a short time, still, your mind has become firmly focused on me. Hence, you will leave this human body and become my eternal associate (*parshad*)."

The story of Gajendra Moksh reiterates this concept:

यं धर्मकामार्थविमुक्तिकामा भजन्त इष्टां गतिमाप्नुवन्ति । किं चाशिषो रात्यपि देहमव्ययं करोतु
मेऽदभ्रदयो विमोक्षणम् ॥

यं धर्मकामार्थविमुक्तिकामा भजन्त इष्टां गतिमाप्नुवन्ति ।
किं चाशिषो रात्यपि देहमव्ययं करोतु मेऽदभ्रदयो विमोक्षणम् ॥

*yaṁ dharmakāmārthavimuktikāmā
bhajanta iṣṭāṁ gatimāpnvanti |
kim cāśiṣo rātyapi dehamavyayam
karotu me'dabhradyo vimokṣaṇam ||*

"Those who seek righteousness (*dharma*), wealth (*arth*), pleasure (*kaam*), or liberation (*moksh*) worship Bhagwan and therefore achieve their goals. He grants them happiness of all kind and bestows upon them the body of a *parshad*, which is eternal and divine like his own form. May the supremely compassionate Lord deliver me." (*Shrimad Bhagwatam*, 8.3.19)

Shridhar Swami's commentary on this verse says, देहमप्यव्ययं राति, *dehamapyavyayam rāti*, "He grants an eternal divine body, like his, to his devotees."

Shri Nityanand Prabhu – Part 7: The Garland of Kadamb Flowers

In the previous issue, Raghav Pandit and his associates did Nityanand Prabhu's shrining and abhishek amidst a sankirtan festival. The event served as an auspicious inauguration ceremony for Nityanand's new mission of uplifting the fallen souls of Kali whilst Mahaprabhu remained in Puri, lost in the ocean of Shri Radharani's mahabhav.

During the *abhishek*, Nityanand had made a point of looking at each devotee individually. His eyes pierced their hearts so deeply that they forgot the world around them. In the great flood of his love, they fell like trees and floated away in a trance of ecstasy.

जे-दिके देखेन नित्यानन्द महाशय ।
शेइ दिके महा प्रेम भक्ति वृष्टि हय ॥

*je dike dekhen nityaananda mahaashay ।
shei dike mahaa prem bhakti vrishti hoy ॥*

"Wherever Nityanand looked, there was a heavy rainstorm of sacred love." (*Chaitanya Bhagwat*, 3.5.13)

Everyone had gone mad! They were all his associates from eternal Vrindavan, in reality bringing out their real selves (*swaroop*) under Nityanand's influence. Even the environment around them began to change so that the rules of time and space no longer applied. For example, one of Nityanand's associates climbed a tree and walked on the leaves without falling. (*Chaitanya Bhagwat*, 3.3.305)

Shri Vrindavan Das Thakur says it would be impossible to describe even half an hour's worth of the *lilas* that happened at Raghav Pandit's house, so what he described in *Shri Chaitanya Bhagwat* is only a brief sketch of the reality.

Nityanand's associates were endlessly beautiful, all-powerful and omniscient. From that day forward, whatever they said came true. What to speak of Nityanand himself; just by the touch of his associates' hands, normal souls attained a similar state of ecstasy. Here, Shri Vrindavan Das Thakur comments:

ये भक्ति गोपिका गणेर कहे भागवते ।
नित्यानन्द हैते ताहा पाइल जगते ॥

*je bhakti gopikaa ganer kohe bhaagavate ।
nityaananda hoite taahaa paailo jagate ॥*

"The devotion of the *gopis*, which is described in the *Shrimad Bhagwatam* was attained in this world through Nityanand." (*Chaitanya Bhagwat*, 3.5.303)

In this way, Nityanand performed his *lilas* in Panihati for three months (*Chaitanya Bhagwat*, 3.5.319).

The Garland of Kadamb Flowers

Nityanand's associates always followed his instructions, and as they did so, they found all their dreams coming true. One day, Nityanand Prabhu said to Raghav Pandit:

"Go quickly and bring me a garland of *kadamb* flowers. I love *kadamb* flowers so much, and I always live in the *kadamb* forest."

To which Raghav Pandit humbly replied, palms together, "But this is not the season for *kadamb* flowers."

Nityanand replied with a smile, "Go into your courtyard and look carefully . . . you may just find some there!"

Following Nityanand's instructions, Raghav Pandit entered his house, and what he saw there filled him with joy. In the courtyard stood a lemon tree; but instead of lemons, it was covered with the most beautiful *kadamb* flowers. They were the most gorgeous

golden colour, and their fragrance was out of this world.

Raghav Pandit quickly plucked the *kadamb* flowers and strung a beautiful garland, and Nityanand wore it blissfully.

Suddenly, the fragrance of *kadamb* mixed with the perfume of *damanak* flowers. Nityanand smiled and said, "O my brothers! Do you smell that? Now I will tell you a secret.

Mahaprabhu came here today to hear your *kirtan*. In an invisible form, he came wearing a *damanak* garland and leaned on that tree throughout the *kirtan*. So please do *kirtan* always, and be forever filled with the sweetness of his love. Haribol!"

References

Shri Chaitanya Bhagwat by Vrindavan Das Thakur



Mahaprabhu listens to *kirtan*



Braj Animal Care



Many monkeys in Vrindavan play and swing on the high-voltage wires because most trees have been cut down.



Electrocuted monkey

After several days of attempting to find and capture this electrocuted monkey, we finally succeeded and treated him. He was in poor condition but still mobile. We hope to locate him again for follow-up treatment.

The good news is that, after more than five years of treating sick and injured animals on the streets of Vrindavan, Braj Animal Care is establishing a small but crucial shelter space where our patients can recover. With this space and ongoing rehabilitation care, we can keep injured animals like this monkey and treat them until they get better.

If you have considered supporting Braj Animal Care, this is an opportunity to make a big difference!

If you would like to contribute to this cause, please scan the QR code below:



For more information about Braj Animal Care's programmes and services, please keep in touch with us via the following channels:

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Maharajji's Latest Updates



The Essence of Devotional Conduct Among the Vaishnav Community: Insights from Updeshamrit

Roop Goswami's *Updeshamrit*, verse 5, states:

कृष्णोति यस्य गिरि तं मनसाद्रियेत दीक्षास्ति चेत्रणतिभिश्च भजन्तमीशाम् ।
शुश्रूषया भजनविज्ञमनन्यमन्यनिन्दादिशून्यहृदमीप्सितसङ्गलब्ध्या ॥

*kṛṣṇeti yasya giri tam manasādriyeta
dīkṣāsti cet praṇatibhiś ca bhajantam īśam ।
śuśrūṣayā bhajana-vijñam ananyam anya-
nindādi-śūnya-hṛdam īpsita-saṅga-labdhya ॥*

"Respect those who chant Lord Krishn's Name. Bow to those who have received spiritual initiation and worship the deity. Serve and stay close to pure devotees who are steady in their devotion and do not criticise others."

According to Shri Radharaman Das Goswami, the simpler meaning of this verse describes the different levels of devotees. After receiving initiation, known as Diksha or Hari Naam Diksha, a devotee chants Hari Naam (the Holy Name) on their *tulsi* beads. One should always respect such a devotee. When you encounter a devotee initiated by any Guru, not just yours, who is earnestly trying to understand the philosophy and engage in spiritual activities, or someone who is entirely absorbed in Radha and Krishn and constantly meditates on their pastimes, always strive to be with them, respect them, and serve them. Ask them relevant questions, as this is the only way to progress in your devotional life.

At the beginning of his commentary on this verse, Shri Radharaman Das Goswami makes an important point. He says this verse is a direct worship of Shri Krishn. He elaborates on the concept of स्वरूप सिद्धा भक्ति, which is one of the three types of *bhakti* as explained by Shri Gopal Bhatt Goswami in the *Bhakti Sandharbh*.

The three types of *bhakti* are:

1. आरोप सिद्धा भक्ति (*āropa-siddhā bhakti*): This refers to performing any Vedic rituals for oneself, not necessarily connected to Krishn. After completing the ritual, one may offer it to Krishn, but Krishn was not the main focus initially.
2. संग सिद्धा भक्ति (*sāṅga-siddhā bhakti*): This involves using non-spiritual practices to support one's *bhakti*. For example, meditation or renunciation to better focus on the lotus feet of Radha and Krishn. These practices are not direct *bhakti* but support spiritual activities.
3. स्वरूप सिद्धा भक्ति (*svarūpa-siddhā bhakti*): This consists of direct activities such as hearing, chanting, and other practices aimed at pleasing Krishn. It includes the nine types of *bhakti* mentioned in the *Shrimad Bhagwatam*, 7.5.23, which are direct services to Krishn. These are as follows:

श्रवणं कीर्तनं विष्णोः स्मरणं पादसेवनम् ।
अर्चनं वन्दनं दास्यं सख्यमात्मनिवेदनम् ॥

*śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ
smaraṇam pāda-sevanam ।
arcanaṁ vandanam dāsyam
sakhyam ātma-nivedanam ॥*

"Listen and sing about Lord Vishnu's Name, form, qualities, and pastimes. Remember him, serve his feet, worship him with offerings, pray to him, become his servant, see him as

your best friend, and dedicate everything to him – your body, mind, and words."

Shri Radharaman Das Goswami emphasises that respecting all kinds of Vaishnavs is *svarūpa-siddhā-bhakti*, which is the direct worship of Krishn. He criticises the tendency among some devotees to demean others based on their initiation or level of practice, urging for mutual respect and understanding instead.

In the seventh Canto of the *Shrimad Bhagwatam*, Narad Dev speaks about the highest *dharma*, non-violence towards every living entity through mind, words, and actions. He also discusses the topmost *bhakti*, desireless devotion performed daily.

Shrimad Bhagwatam, (4.8.34), says, one should be happy when meeting someone more accomplished, compassionate when meeting someone less accomplished, and show friendship to someone equally accomplished without competitiveness:

गुणाधिकान्मुदं लिप्सेदनुक्रोशं गुणाधमात् ।
मैत्रीं समानादन्विच्छेन तापैरभिभूयते ॥

*guṇādhikān mudam lipsed
anukrośam guṇādhamāt ।
maitrīm samānād anvicchen
na tāpair abhibhūyate ॥*

The commentary of Shri Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur further explains this, stating one should never envy others, but always strive for personal spiritual

advancement while respecting them.

Shri Radharaman Das Goswami criticises the division within the Vaishnav community, where devotees often discriminate against each other based on their Guru or practices. He emphasises that such divisions are against the spirit of sacred love and urges for unity and mutual respect.

The following story illustrates some of these points. Five thousand years ago, Sandipani Muni faced envy from his fellow disciples due to his dedication to his Guru. Other disciples grew jealous, believing the Guru favoured Sandipani over them. One day, Sandipani's Guru announced he would soon contract a deadly disease that would also afflict anyone who tried to serve him, causing them great suffering and even physical harm. All the disciples, except for Sandipani, abandoned their service out of fear. Sandipani, however, remained steadfast, pledging to serve his Guru regardless of the consequences. Despite facing harsh treatment and verbal abuse from his ailing Guru, Sandipani continued his service. Impressed by this devotion, Lord Shiv appeared before Sandipani, offering to grant him a boon. Before asking for his Guru's recovery, Sandipani sought his Guru's permission. "Please Gurudev, can I ask for the boon that you get better soon?"

His Guru said, "So you can be free from Guru seva because you are getting tired?

"No Gurudev, not at all," replied Sandipani. "Then go and tell Shiv, you don't want

anything from him," his Guru replied.

Sandipani's Guru, pleased by his disciple's relentless selfless service, revealed that the entire ordeal had been a test. Blessing Sandipani, he predicted that one day Krishn would become his disciple. Recognising Sandipani's sincere devotion, Shiv informed Vishnu of this remarkable devotee. Vishnu acknowledged Sandipani's matchless Guru Bhakti. This story highlights the importance of sincerity on this path, warning against the pitfalls of envy and jealousy within spiritual practice. It highlights that true progress is achieved through humility and steady service.

The *Hari Bhakti Vilas*, 10.312, speaks of Vaishnav conduct towards other Vaishnavs.

हन्ति निन्दति वै द्वेष्टि वैष्णवान् नाभिनन्दति ।
क्रुद्धयते याति नो हर्ष दर्शने पतनानि षट् ॥

*hanti nindati vai dveshti vaisnavan
nabhinandati ।
krudhyate yati no harṣam darśane
patanāni ṣat ॥*

In this verse, there are six actions we must not engage in otherwise we will fall from the path of sacred love. These are:

1. Avoid envying devotees.
2. Refrain from insulting devotees.
3. Manage anger towards devotees.
4. Do not engage in criticism of devotees.
5. Avoid violence towards devotees.
6. Refrain from showing displeasure when

The poet, Soordas says,

भक्त अपराधे हरि दुःख पइ हैं।
सूरदास भगवन्त बदत यों मोहि भजत ते यमपुर जइ हैं॥

*bhakt aparaadhe hari dukhk pai hain |
soordas bhagwant badat yon mohi bhajat te yampur jai hain ||*

"If you are doing any offence towards a Vaishnav, Krishn becomes unhappy. Even if you are worshipping, doing all kinds of austerities, all types of spiritual practices, you will end up in hell."

Krishn has no power to help you if you commit an offence against a Vaishnav. Only the person against whom the offence has been committed forgives you, there is no way to be saved from the dire consequences.

In conclusion, the verse and its commentary stress the importance of respecting all devotees, avoiding envy and criticism, and focusing on one's spiritual advancement. By following these principles, one can progress towards sacred love and devotion to Krishn.



Spiritual Questions and Answers with Maharajji

Q: I have *vatsalya bhaav* for Ladoo Gopal ji. Can I serve him if I am not clean?

A: *Vatsalya bhaav* is beautiful. But, please note Yashoda Maa is his mother. You need to understand that your *bhaav* is not *pusht or perfect* yet. Until it is, you need to follow all Vedic rules of worship (*saadhan*).

For more information about Maharajji's upcoming programmes, please contact us via the following channels:

✉️ f @chandanjiofficial, @radharaman.temple
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