**PRAHLADA *CHARITRA* OF**

**POTANA’S *BHAGAVATA PURANA***



**T. S. B. Narasaraju**

 ***(i)***

***Foreword***

***Life on earth is sustained by many essentials. The most important among them, to live with joy and enthusiasm, is love-divine. Although Sri Bhagavata Purana is the quintessence of Karma, Bhakti and Jnana, it primarily elicits love-divine which is transcendental in its experience. Blessed are those who drank the nectar of love! Blessed are the Gopikas who could taste it and got completely merged with Sri Krishna Chaitanya!***

***There are many translations of Vyasa Bhagavata Purana into several Indian languages. Its translation into Telugu by Sri Bammera Potana of fourteenth century stands on a high pedestal both in its language and sweetness of Bhava. Its verses are sublime in thought, sweet to chant and easy to memorise. They bring out a vivid picture of stories and expressions of feelings of characters, especially the Leelas of Bhagawan Sri Krishna, even to ordinary readers who wish to read them as stories.***

***Telugu literature with all its lofty thoughts and rich translations is being slowly forgotten by the masses in the din and roar of modern life and its various compulsions. The fact that Puranas, epics and Upanishads, among others, build the character of our nation is not remembered and replaced with a modern craze for standard of living leading to dangerous tendencies. Such a trend causes all kinds of unhealthy comparisons and hatred among people resulting in destruction. These great texts that build character among human beings are going out of reach. Efforts must be made to bring a fresh breeze of life through a revival of a desire for higher knowledge.***

***It is with this sincere and dedicated thought that some aspects of Potana`s Bhagavata Purana have been brilliantly translated by Sri T. S. B. Narasaraju into English for the benefit of many residing abroad who lost touch with their mother-tongue, Telugu. Sri Raju`s heart throbbed with enthusiasm to bring Potana`s Bhagavata Purana to children of Telugu resulting in the form of this book. His translation is lucid and deep in its flavour. Without losing the essence of the original he brought out the translation in an exemplary manner using simple and effective language. The work is inspiring and holds the reader`s mind with inquisitiveness to read further. It is lucid in style and flows with beauty of expression. The content is absorbing.***

***It is not an easy task to bring out expressions from Potana`s verses into English. Sri Raju achieved this because of his devotion to the Lord, sincere self-application and taking up the work as a Tapas. I am sure that this work reaches the hands of many inspiring them to read, understand and cultivate the great ideals of Rishis of yore getting motivated to live as beacons of light to many around their lives. May Lord Sri Krishna bless one and all! Hari Om!***

***Swami Chidrupananda***

***Head, Noida Centre, Chinmaya Mission, New Delhi and***

***Director, All India Chinmaya Youth Kendra, Noida***

***April 24, 2024***

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**A TRANSLATION INTO ENGLISH OF**

**PRAHLADA *CHARITRA* OF**

**POTANA’S *BHAGAVATA PURANA***

 **T. S. B. Narasaraju**

**Invocation**

**“Srimannama! Payodasyama! Dharabhrulalama! Jagadabhirama! Ramajanakama! Mahoddama! Gunastomadhama! Dasaradharama!................ Bammera Potana**

(*“Dasaradharama!* You have a name which causes good to all. You have a complexion similar in colour to that of rain-producing clouds. You are an ornament to the earth. You are the most handsome. Women are attracted by you. You are the most majestic. You are an abode of all virtues.”)

**“Adaramoppa mokkididunu adrisuta hrudayanuraga sampadiki doshabhediki prasanna vinodiki vighnavallika chediki manjuvadikin ashesha jagajjanandavedikin modaka khadikin samada mushikasadiki suprasadikin” ……………………………Bammera Potana**

(I salute to him who is a recipient of maternal love of goddess *Parvati*, a cleanser of sins, a source of pleasure to his devotees, a destroyer of impediments, adept in talking sweetly and a centre of joy to his countless number of devotees. He relishes *Modakas,* granting what all is good, being seated on a *Mooshikavahana*.)

 **“Vidyadayaka! Vinayaka! Padyagadyapradayaka! Adyantarahita! Kalushitamidhyavinasaka! Suradhyaksha! Mooshikamadhyasthita! Bhooshitanaravarasevita!” ……… Narasaraju**

(Vinayaka! You are the donor of knowledge. You confer competence to write poetry and prose. You have neither a beginning nor an end. You destroy tarnished vision of imagining the creation to be true. You are the leader of *Devatas*. You are seated on the back of a *Mooshika*. You are the saviour of the virtuous among men.)

**“Evvaniche janinchu; jagamevvani lopalanundu leenamai;**

**Evvani yandu dindu; barameswaru devvadu; mula karanam**

**Bevva; danadhimadhyalayu devvadu; sarvamu danayayana va**

**Devvadu vani natmabhavu neeswarune saranambu vededan.”…….. Bammera Potana**

(I seek protection from the supreme ruler of the universe, who is responsible for its genesis, in whom it exists getting ultimately merged with him, who is the supreme being considered as soul of the universe being its root-cause, who transcends the processes of birth, existence and death and who is all-pervading being the primordial *Atma* permeating in all.)

**1.Introduction**

It is believed that *Vedas* and *Puranas* emerged from the four faces of Lord *Brahma*. Sage *Vyasa* became *Veda* Vyasa by classifying, so generated unified from of *Vedas*, into four parts, namely *Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda* and *Adharvanaveda*. *Vyasa* wrote *Mahapuranas* in Sanskrit, in the form of stories of Hindu gods, to illustrate the concepts embedded in the *Vedas. Puranas* are ancient and sacred. A *Purana* remains as a living entity from times immemorial. *“Purasi Navam Puranam”*which means that a *Purana* remains new in spite of its ancient origin. There are eighteen such *Maha*p*uranas* and an equal number of *Upapuranas.* In addition to containing the details of ancient cultures and customs, they embody information about ancient princely families, serving as sources of historical accounts. Their principal objective is to propagate principles of morality through stories. It was mentioned that writing of *Bhagavata* *Purana,* one among the *Mahapuranas*, gave mental piece to an agitated *Vyasa*.

*Bhagavata* *Purana* is prominent among the eighteen *Mahapuranas*. It underwent translation into many languages. Its translation into Telugu by Bammera Potana is one such. It is believed that Potana lived during the fifteenth century in a village called Bammera located in the present Telangana State. Intense devotion to god constituted the most significant aspect of Potana’s life. Potana did an unforgettable service to the Telugu-speaking people by this translation. Some among the poems of Potana’s *Bhagavata* *Purana* became inseparable ingredients of the daily-lives of countless number of these people. Potana’s *Bhagavata Purana* continues to remain close to their hearts since the concept of *Mathura Bhakti*, one of several methods of devotion to the Lord, is competently illustrated. His work is characterized by a simple, rhythmic and a delightful combination of vocabulary to make the readers recite its verses over and over again in a devotional ecstasy. Potana had a transcendental experience of Lord Rama exhorting him to translate *Bhagavata Purana* of Vyasa into Telugu. That experience transformed the natural poetic proficiency of Potana into an ecstatic state of mind which resulted in his version of *Bhagavata Purana* which makes a studious reader of the work wonder whether at all a human mind can attain such levels of excellence once again.

It has been emphasized in the scriptures of Hindu religion that realization of god can be through paths of *Jnana* (Knowledge), *Karma* (Action) and *Bhakti* (Devotion). The path of *Jnana* is difficult for mundane people. It is followed principally by *Rishis* and that too directed principally towards *Nirakara* or *Nirguna Brahma*. The path of *Karma* is also of restricted utility since it is dependent on gender, caste and age of the devotee. The path of *Bhakti*, emphasized in *Bhagavata* *Purana*, transcends all these obstacles since it has been successfully adopted by the learned, common folk, male and female as well as young and old. It is possible to realize the *Akara* or *Saguna* *Brahma* through *Bhakti.*

*Bhagavata* *Purana* emphasises the concept of *Navavidha* *Bhaktis*, the nine established forms of *Bhakti* towards the Lord, mentioned in *Narada’s* *Bhakti* *Sutras*. These are: 1. *Sravana* (Listening), 2. *Sankeertana* (Praising), 3. *Smarana* (Remembering), 4. *Paricharya* (Serving), 5. *Archana* (Worshipping), 6. *Vandana* (Prostrating), 7. *Dasya* (Serving), 8. *Sakhya* (Befriending) and 9. *Atma* *Nivedana* (Surrendering).

*Prahlada* *Charitra* is the principal constituent of the **Seventh Canto (*Saptama Skandha*)** of *Bhagavata Purana*. The different facets of devotion to the Lord, constituting his goal in life, are glorified by Potana in this work through the utterances of Prahlada. Among the nine forms of devotion, mentioned above as *Navavidha Bhaktis* of Narada, the role of *Smarana* (Remembering) the Lord in achieving realization of god has been emphatically illustrated by Potana in *Prahlada Charitra*

The following are some aspects mentioned by the famous *“Karuna Sri”*, Jandhyala Papayya Sastry, in his introduction to the *Saptama* *Skandha* of Bhagavata Purana published by *Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanamulu,* Tirupati:- Prahladais considered to be the most prominent among the devotees of the Lord being an embodiment of all virtues. Among a galaxy of staunch devotees of Lord Narayana such as Narada, Parasara, Pundarika, Vyasa, Ambareesha, Suka, Saunaka and Bheeshma, Prahlada is considered to be the foremost. Potana describes Prahlada as ***“Sri Narayana pada padma yugali chintamruta swada sandhanudu”*** which means that he is adept in relishing the nectar derived from a ceaseless remembering of the lotus-shaped feet of Lord Narayana. The grace of the Lord showered on Prahladaafter being subjected to diverse forms of cruelty by his father, Hiranyakasipu. The utterances of Prahlada such as, ***“Kamalaskshu narchinchu karamulu karamulu”,*** ***“Kanjakshunakugani kayambu kayame”, “Samsarajeemutha sanghambu vichune”, “Mandara makaranda madhuryamuna delu”***, ***“Indu galadandu ledani,*** and ***“Chakri chintaleni janmambu janmame”***, among others, substantiate the intensity of his devotion to the Lord and his implicit faith in the omnipresence of the Lord. It is no wonder that such verses composed by another great devotee of the Lord, Potana, became house-hold verses stored in the memory and often recited at contextual importance by countless number of Telugu-speaking people.

Such of the popular original poems belonging to the present Episode are given in English script, in the present write-up, in addition to the translation into English of the entire Episode. No transliteration is followed for the poems to avoid inconvenience in typing since the pronunciation of the terminology is known to the likely clientele of the work.

The numbers in brackets indicate the serial numbers of the verses or proses in *Saptama* *Skandha*.

The author accomplished earlier a literal translation into English of the entire *Dasama* *Skandha* and *Gajendra Mokshana* of *Ashtama Skandha* of Potana’s *Bhagavata* *Purana* which were published in ***Andhra*** ***Cultural*** ***Portal*** **(www.andhraportal.org)** which can be down-loaded by those interested.

**2. Preliminary Aspects**

**2.1 Sisupala’s Salvation**

Sage *Suta* was a great scholar, well-versed in all the *Puranas*. He was an eloquent speaker, competent to explain all the nuances of his narrations. He started narrating S*aptama* *Skandha* to a congregation of sages, the principal among them being Sage Saunaka. He began by saying that King Parikshit, inflicted by a curse to die in one week through a snake-bite, being assured by Sage Suka of attaining salvation within that period, started conversing with the sage (1, 2). The king wanted to know from the sage the reasons behind the favourable attitude of Lord *Vishnu* towards *Devatas* and hatred towards *Rakshasas* resulting in his killing of the latter, in spite of his exemplary qualities of virtue which make him an embodiment of grace and impartiality towards all creatures of his creation.

While answering that question, the sage replied that stories of the Lord are sacred leading to salvation of its listeners while remaining mysterious to understand. The sage continued by saying that human beings are subjected to three types of mental states known as *Satva, Rajas* and *Tamo Gunas.* Their proportions are time-dependent with the dominance of one among them at a given instant. The frequency of dominance of *Satva Guna* is more for *Devatas*, sages and other virtuous people. *Rakshasas* and other vicious categories of people have a more frequent dominance of the other two *Gunas*. Just as the identity of the sun is not affected in spite of his diverse appearance at different timings and places during the day and the year, the Lord, effulgent as *Atma* in all forms of his creation, maintains his oneness. He makes use of *Satva Guna* for manifestation of his playfulness and pleasure to *Devatas*, *Rajo* *Guna* for creation of the universe and inflicting sorrow on *Rakshasas* and *Tamo* *Guna* for sleep and relaxation. He makes his presence felt as the powerful wheel of time deriving the name of ***“Kala Swaroopa”*** (3 to 7). Earlier Sage Narada clarified these aspects to Dharmaraja during the performance of a ritual known as *Rajasuya* *Yaga* by the latter. Sage Suka decided to narrate them since they were relevant as a reply to King Parikshit’s query.

A young man named Sisupala insulted Lord Krishna during Dharmaraja’s ritual, being ignorant of the greatness of the Lord, and got killed by the Lord. A flame emerging from the slain Sisupala entered the body of the kind-hearted Lord and merged with it indicating salvation of the former. Sisupala and his brother Dantavaktra were known to hate the Lord always. Witnessing that event made Dharmaraja wonder as to how a sinner like Sisupala got salvation denied to many virtuous people. Narada replied that the Lord is impervious to such insults and never entertains hatred towards anyone. The Lord is accessible to all such who remember him always either through love or hatred. Sisupala had the name of the Lord in mind always due to hatred towards him. Incessant remembrance of the Lord transforms a *Nara,* a human being, into *Narayana*. Constant remembrance of the Lord can be due to any of the possible states of the human mind such as love and enmity to get the grace of the Lord leading to salvation (8 to 18).

**2.2. Punishment to *Dwarapalakas* of *Hari***

In continuation of his clarification of the reasons behind the slaying of *Rakshasas* by the Lord, Narada narrated to Dharmaraja the circumstances which led to the punishment inflicted on Sisupala and Dantavaktra who were in their previous birth the *Dwarapalakas*, the gate-keepers of Lord’s abode, *Vykuntha.* Sages *Sanaka* and *Sanandana*, sons of Lord *Brahma*, once went to enter *Vykuntha*. They were denied entry by the gate-keepers which provoked anger in them leading to inflicting a curse on the latter to take birth as *Rakshasas*. They had repentance and were afflicted by sorrow. They prayed for a remission of the punishment. The sages took pity on them and reduced the punishment to mere three births as demons. They were to cause anger to the Lord by courting constant hatred towards him. They had their first birth as Hiranyakasipu and Hiranyaksha and the latter, while carrying away the earth, was killed by the Lord in his incarnation as Varaha. Prahlada, the son of Hiranyakasipu, the elder among the two brothers, was a staunch devotee of Lord *Hari* for which he was subjected to diverse forms of cruelty by his father. Hiranyakasipu was consequently killed by Lord Narasimha. Prahlada attained salvation through his incessant devotion to the Lord.The gate-keepers of *Vykuntha* were born as Ravana and Kumbhakarna in their second birth and were killed by Lord Rama. Their third birth, relevant to the present context, was as *Sisupala* and *Dantavaktra*. They started hating the Lord from birth. They tormented the devotees of the Lord. Incessant hatred for the Lord kept the name of the Lord upper-most in their minds. They were beheaded by Lord Krishna terminating the punishment inflicted on them. They thus returned to the Lord’s abode, *Vykuntha* as *Dwarapalakas (19 to 25).*

Recollecting the reference to Hiranyakasipu’s torture of his son, Prahlada for worshipping *Hari*, Dharmaraja wanted to know the details since such a cruel behaviour of the father towards the son merely for devotion to the Lord appeared strange to him. It was known to all that prayers to the Lord were to cause prosperity to the devotees. The slaying of his brother by the Lord provoked in Hiranyakasipu intense anger and hatred towards the Lord. He took an oath to kill *Varaha* and started a search of the latter’s likely hiding places. He felt that killing of the Lord, the saviour of *Devatas*, could weaken them and their ruler, *Devendra* (26 to 33). As a first step, he ordered his subordinate group of demons to invade the earth to kill all those performing recitation of *Vedas* and rituals since the Lord was the basis for them. Places of safety of cows, *Brahmins* and residences of ascetics were to be destroyed. Those commands were implemented by his subordinates. Widespread destruction of villages, towns, sacred places, gardens, towers, lakes and bridges was done by the demons. They uprooted trees with fruits and flowers, demolished resorts, places of supply of drinking water and cottages. They killed harmless cows and ascetics. Terrified by those calamities, the *Devatas* left their abodes and took shelter in the forests.

Hiranyakasipu offered oblations to his deceased brother and condolences to his wife and children. His mother was consoled for the loss of her son. He praised the qualities of valour of his dead brother. He uttered words of wisdom to enlighten his mother regarding the philosophy behind the cycle of births and deaths. Travellers come together at places of distribution of drinking-water, quench their thirst and depart. In a similar way human beings come together in this world, complete their work and depart. *Iswara* is the supreme Lord. He is omniscient and omnipresent. He is ever present, transcending life and death. He creates for himself the three *Gunas.* Their combination leads to the creation of the physical body. Just as immobile trees appear to be mobile through reflection in agitated waters, the immobile *Atma* located in the body appears to be mobile for an agitated mind (33 to 39).

**2.3. *Suyajnopakhyna***

Continuing his conversation with his mother, Hiranyakasipu mentioned that understanding the ways of the Almighty was complex. Sometimes the Lord assumes human form to experience events such as birth, death, grief and enlightenment. He narrated a story to illustrate some of these aspects.

A king by name *Suyajna* was killed in a war by his enemies. His wives and children gathered near his disfigured body and started weeping recollecting the memories of their association with him. They were cursing the ruthlessness of the Lord in snatching the king away and their consequent helplessness. Lord *Yama* came there in the form of a *Brahmin* boy and started consoling them by uttering the following words: -

***“Machika veerikella bahumatramu jodyamu, dehi puttuchun jachuchununda***

 ***joochedaru, chavaka manedu vari bhangi ni***

***chachina varikedchadaru? Chavunakollaka daga vachune?***

***Yechata butte nachatiki neguta nyjamu pranikotikin.” (46)***

“It is strange that you weep by developing intense attachment for one whose life-span is over. Taking birth and death are natural for one who assumes a human body. You see these events daily. No one who takes birth can avoid death. You are weeping for a dead man as if you are going to be alive forever. None can escape from the grasp of death. Is it not compulsory for one to return to the place from where one comes (46)?”

The grace of the Lord which protects a baby in mother’s womb can protect one even in the proximity of wild animals. Wealth left unprotected remains safe with god’s grace. God is complex to understand, remaining radiant and unattainable. The gamut of living beings is controlled by time and destiny which are god’s creation. The human body is comparable to a building made of the five elements, earth, water, fire, air and sky. Controlled by past deeds, *Atma* resides in the body. It departs abandoning the body when the work to be done in this life is accomplished. The body is perishable while the *Atma* is eternal and permanent. The departure of *Atma* takes away the powers of the body to hear and converse. The human body and its accessories are playfully worn and abandoned by the *Atma.* It is futile to weep for what all had happened since the past bonds are broken when the *Atma* leaves the body. Attachment to parents, wife, children, friends and other associates makes one amass riches, houses and kingdoms. Such an attachment vanishes when the *Atma* gets delinked from the body. Wise people are aware of these aspects and are free from both happiness and sorrow.

Once there lived a barbarian surviving on hunting of birds. One day he started for hunting carrying his equipment. He mercilessly broke the wings of the birds caught by him to keep them in his bag. He came across a pair of wild sparrows. He could catch the female-sparrow. The male-sparrow witnessing that event from the tree-top wept and said to the female sparrow, “We have been living in this forest getting our food without causing harm to anybody. We became now a load to the cruel god who made you get caught by this savage man. Our off-springs have not yet got wings to fly. They anxiously wait for the mother to get food for them. How can I see their angry faces waiting for their mother?”In the meanwhile the hunter spotted out the male-sparrow and killed it instantaneously with his arrow. The *Brahmin* boy illustrated through the story the uncertainty associated with life. The family-members of the slain king could understand the philosophy embedded in the words of *Yama*. They could thus overcome their sorrow. They performed the last-rights for the dead king and departed (46 to 68)”. Narada mentioned to Dharmaraja that the above-mentioned words of Hiranyakasipu could take away sorrow from the minds of his mother and the wives of his slain brother.

**2.4. *Brahma* Granting Boons to Hiranyakasipu**

Hiranyakasipu decided to achieve freedom from old-age and death. His ambition was to rule unopposed the three *Lokas* by defeating the enemies through intense strength and valour. He started an austere and a rigorous penance at a convenient spot on the top of mountain, *Mandara*. With outstretched hands, he stood on the thumb of his foot gazing at the sky. It was impossible to look at his body overflowing with his long hair and effulgence comparable to that of a devastating sun with sharp and unbearable rays. The *Devatas* witnessed that spectacle. There was intense commotion created among them by the austerity of his penance. The earth with its ranges of mountains experienced tremors. His body in rigorous meditation emanated a conflagration. Severe turbulence was created in the oceans of the earth. The astronomical bodies were shaken asunder. An unprecedented heart-throb was created among the creatures of the earth. The uproar created became unbearable to the *Devatas.* They ran to the creator of the universe, Lord *Brahma* to express their agony (69 to 74). They brought to the notice of the Lord the following words: -

“Oh! Lord! You are an abode of kindness. The son of Diti embarked upon an unprecedented penance which created a commotion in *Amaravati*, our abode, making it uninhabitable. You are our lone saviour. Hiranyakasipu started a terrifying penance. He seemed to have an intention of destroying the three *Lokas*, suppressing the *Devatas* and to annihilate the *Veda* *Sastras.* Please think of a counter-move. You became famous by creating this universe through the powers of your penance. You excelled the gods in the process. Hiranyakasipu appeared to have plans to destroy this universe and to create a parallel one by acquiring powers through a rigorous penance. Being aware of the lack of permanancy of the human beings with only time-dependent life-span, he seemed to entertain plans of achieving power to live forever through such austerity. Oh! Lord of the universe! The *Rakshasa* looked like having plans to put an end to your supremacy as head of the universe, to your vast fortune and to your reputation of success. You please save the worlds by interrupting his penance (74 to 79).” Those words created in the heart of the Lord pity for the *Devatas*.

He came down to mountain *Mandara* along with a few sages such as *Bhrigu*. He saw Hiranyakasipu in a rigorous penance. His body was covered by ants sucking away its vitals. Ant-hills grew on his emaciated body covered by a lush growth of grass and bamboos. Consequent upon his meditation, the *Rakshasa* appeared radiant behind the over-growth like the effulgent sun behind thick black clouds. The Lord was astonished. He uttered the following words with a smile: - “Oh! The best among *Rakshasas*! There was none in the past who performed a penance of such intensity nor is one going to be there in future. I am happy with your devotion. There is no need for further austerity. Tell me your wishes. I am ready to fulfill them. I am amazed at your determination. Flies and ants attacked you incessantly sucking blood and flesh from your body leaving you totally emaciated. Your penance remained undisturbed in spite of growth of grass and bamboos on your body. Your remaining alive in the midst of all this is a matter of intense astonishment. Unwavering determination characterized your penance, lasting for several years. You abandoned food and water and still preserved life in your body. You have won over me by your unparalleled austerity. Come out with your wishes. I came here to fulfill all of them with affection for you.”

Lord *Brahma* sprinkled sanctified water on the worn-out body of Hiranyakasipu which made him relinquish his penance. He came out of the bushes of the bamboos like a flame emanating from ignited fire-wood. He regained his youthful body being sanctified by the water sprinkled by the Lord. Touching the earth with his fore-head, Hiranyakasipu, the enemy of *Devatas* saluted to Lord *Brahma,* the consort of goddess Saraswati, a donor of divine bliss, a saviour of his devotees, an abode of boons for ascetics, creator of the universe and one who decides the destinies of the entire gamut of living beings. The Lord was seated on a swan in mid-air. The happiness of the demon-king knew no bounds due to his excessive devotion to the Lord. His eyes were covered with tears. His entire body experienced an ecstasy. With folded hands and a trembling voice, he praised the Lord uttering the following words: - “You are an embodiment of effulgence to bestow light on the worlds engulfed in darkness at the time of annihilation of all the creation. Acquiring *Satva, Rajo* and *Tamo Gunas*, you create, maintain and destroy the entire creation. Your self-radiance is the genesis for all creation. You are vibrant at appropriate times with consciousness, life, intellect and sense-organs. You are the primordial form of divinity. I salute to you with implicit devotion (80 to 87).

You are the protector of life. You are the ruler of all. You are the controlling force of the mind, intellect and the sense-organs. You are the pivotal force for the entire gamut of living beings. You are an embodiment of *Vedas* and instrumental in the propagation of performance of rituals. You are a personification of all forms of knowledge and adept in fulfilling the wishes of your devotees. The concept of *Atma* is enlightened by you. You transcend the control of time as *Kalateeta* and monitor the life-span of living beings. You are a store-house of diverse forms of knowledge. You have neither a beginning nor an end. You are the Lord encompassing the *Trimurtis*. Your form permeates through the entire universe. There is nothing in this universe in which your presence is not felt. You are incomprehensible. You assume the manifested human form, when desired, by acquiring life, sense-organs, mind, intellect and the *Gunas.* I offer many salutations to you. Oh! Lord! You are an ocean of grace to your devotees. There is none to match with your kindness and skill in granting boons to your devotees. I bring my desires to your kind notice with the hope that you grant them.

Oh! Lord of the universe! Let not death come to me from air, dust, fire, water, sky, earth, and different directions of the universe. Further, let it not come to me during night and day-time, in darkness and under light. In addition, let it not come to me from *Rakshasas,* *Devatas,* animals, human beings and serpents. Let me not be killed in any war by any type of arrows. Please grant me such a deathless life. I desire valour in wars capable of being unopposed. I need reputation transcending that of all the kings and victory over all the three *Lokas*.”

The Lord granted all the desired boons exuding kindness towards the demon-king. He said, “These are extra-ordinary boons not possible for any to achieve. No one prior to you desired such boons nor did I grant them to any. With love towards you, I granted what all you desired. The Lord returned to his abode while the different groups of *Devatas* were showering praise on him. The *Rakshasa*, the foe of *Devatas*, delighted by his acquisition of boons, returned to his capital (88 to 93).

**2.5. Hiranyakasipu’s Acts of Violence Abusing Boons of *Brahma***

Sage *Suka* continued his narration to king Parikshit. Hiranyakasipu decided to wreak vengeance on Lord *Hari* for killing his brother, Hiranyakshu. He had least consideration for the words uttered by Lord *Brahma* while granting to him the boons desired. He started tormenting in turn *Gandharvas, Devatas,* *Yakshas*, *Sidhas*, *Kinneras*, *Vidyadharas*, *Sadhyas*, *Charanas*, serpents, birds, human beings, wild animals and several other categories of creatures. He acquired an undesirable conceit due to the boons granted to him. He destroyed with anger the fortresses of *Dikpalakas*, the protectors of the earth from all the directions and conquered their capital cities. He inflicted a total imbalance in the functioning of nature with the harmony of the entire gamut of natural processes being helplessly shattered by his conceited commands.

Hiranyakasipu entered the beautiful palace of the dethroned king of *Devatas, Devendra* with the intention of occupying it. He was astonished at the architectural grandeur exhibited by V*iswakarma*, the architect of *Devatas* for building the palace. The steps of the palace were embedded with corals while the sitting places were studded with emaralds and rubies. The pillars were shining with Viduryas and gems. The thrones had *Padmaragas*, gems of pink colour embedded in them. The walls were made of spotless quartz while the doors were of gold. The palace had lofty entrances, attractive windows, festoons of pearls, white silken canopies and decorated cots. There were gardens all around the palace with different types of air-crafts

landed there. The gardens were full of plants with fragrant flowers and trees bent down by the load of tasty fruits. There were beautiful lakes with golden coloured lotuses and various types of aquatic flowers. There were attractive buildings all around the lakes. Cool breeze permeated the entire area echoing with noises of parrots and cuckoos.

The demon-king sat on the throne of *Devendra* and became the ruler of all the *Lokas*. He was adored by different clans of *Devatas* offering him presents with implicit obedience, the *Trimurties* being the only exceptions. Every day the *Devatas* were subjected to agony not knowing the impending next move of the wicked *Rakshasa* (94 to 100). The whole area was supervised by the soldiers of the demon-king. They entrusted work to the different sections of the *Devatas* to ensure the comfort of their king. Being intoxicated, with consequent reddened eyes, the demon-king accompanied by his wife *Leelavathy Devi* loitered in the beautiful gardens and flowery bushes. *Tumbura* and *Narada* provided entertainment to them playing on their musical instruments. The offerings from the rituals of the ascetics performed on the earth were snatched away by Hiranyakasipu, denying them to the *Devatas*. Prosperity in all aspects was promoted by the king who kept a control over all the facets of nature. He became the sole ruler of all the *Lokas* for a long time enjoying all the benefits from the boons acquired by him from Lord *Brahma*. He was quenching the desires of the sense-organs, conceited by the authority at his command, violating the norms stipulated for virtuous living (101 to 105).

**2.6. *Hari’s* Assurance to *Devatas* to Kill Hiranyakasipu**

The ascetics and various clans of *Devatas* were praying in their minds to the Lord who is capable of granting salvation. Their prayers were meant to get relief from the torture of Hiranyakasipu. They had a secret meeting escaping the notice of the demon-king to chalk out their future plan of action to escape from their plight. Wondering at his silence, they prayed to the Lord of the universe with raised hands abstaining from food and water, aware of the fact that he alone was the saviour of all. With a majestic voice like that of a thunder of the clouds, the Lord spoke the following words to them without manifesting himself: - “Oh! The best among *Devatas*! There is no need for you to panic. I am assuring safety to you. I am aware of the unlawful and evil deeds of Hiranyakasipu. My intervention very soon is to cause his end and victory to all of you. Spend your time vigilant till then. One who torments virtuous people, *Devatas* and *Brahmins*, maligns *Vedas*, kills cows and courts enmity towards me violating the norms of virtues, is to get killed and vanish eventually.

I kill him when he starts tormenting his son, Prahlada devoid of love and affection for him. Prahlada is an embodiment of virtues such as mental equanimity and austerity with enmity towards none. Hiranyakasipu is arrogant due to the strength of the boons granted by Lord *Brahma*. I am aware of the misdeeds being committed by him. I am tolerant since the present time is not appropriate for action. The time is fast approaching to kill him to cause good to you. You return to your places without entertaining doubts about my future course of action.” Having got assurance from the Lord, they prayed to him and started their return journey feeling confident about the impending death of the demon-king and the return of normalcy very soon. Hiranyakasipu was blessed with four sons with astonishing historical back-grounds (106 to 114). Prahlada was one among them.

**3. Commencement of Prahlada *Charitra***

**3.1. Virtues of Prahlada**

***Tanayandu nakhilabhutamulayandu nokabhangi samahitatvambuna jaruguvadu!***

***Peddala bodaganna bhrutyuni kyvadi jeri namaskrtul seyuvadu!***

***Kannudoyiki nanyakanta laddambyna matrubhavamu sesi maraluvadu!***

 ***Talli dandrulabhangi dharmavatsalatanu dinula gava chintinchuvadu***

 ***Sakhulayeda sodarasthiti jarapuvadu, dyvatamulanchu guruvula dalachuvadu***

 ***Leelalandunu bonkulu lenivadu, lalita maryadudaina Prahladu dadhipa (115)***

All the living beings were the same as himself to Prahlada. He was obedient to salute to elders with respect, whenever he came across them. He found motherliness in women sighted by him on his way and stepped aside to give them way. His kind heart entertained thoughts with parental affection to help the needy. Friends were treated as his brothers. Teachers were divine embodiments to him. His steadfastness to truth prevented him to speak lies even for playfulness and fun. Such were the sterling qualities of Prahlada (115).

Even a semblance of pride was absent in him, in spite of his good looks, birth in a royal family and an exalted level of education. He kept his sense-organs under control even in the midst of diverse objects of attraction. He was free from sensuous thoughts and anger in spite of his youthful exuberance and valour. Presence of women and availability of opportunities for comfort never provoked thoughts of amorousness in him. Seeing of affluent living and hearing about it failed to tempt him to run after it. Incessant thoughts of *Hari* deprived him of any other activity. The entire gamut of virtues clustered in Prahlada remained inseparably with him like his thoughts about the Lord. The best among *Devatas*, though opposed to the clan of *Rakshasas*, praised the virtues of Prahlada eloquently. He was an abode of excellent qualities. Any span of time was insufficient to enumerate all of them. An adequate description of them was beyond the reach of even the most eloquent such as Lord *Brahma* and *Brihaspati*, the *Guru* of *Devatas* (115 to 120).

Such a virtuous Prahlada prayed to Lord *Vasudeva* every day deriving immense pleasure from it, with his devotion increasing day by day. A feeling of proximity to the Lord made him forget to go to his friends. Playing with his acquaintances was given up since he entertained the feeling that the Lord was playing with him. Sometimes he stopped conversing with his friends imagining that the Lord was speaking to him. He forgot the surroundings when the feeling that the lord was seeing him came to his mind. His entire mind was filled with thoughts of the Lord when he was immersed in the nectar of devotion to the lotus-shaped feet of the Lord. In spite of his agility, he appeared immobile due to his incessant thoughts about the Lord.

***Paniyambulu dravuchun guduchuchun bhashinchuchun hasa lee***

***La nidradulu seyuchun diruguchun lakshinchuchun santata***

***Sri Narayana padapadma yugali chintamruta swada sam***

***Dhanundei marachen surarisutu detatviswamun bhuvara!(123)***

Relishing of the nectar of incessant thoughts of the lotus-shaped feet of Lord Narayana made the son of the demon-king absent-minded while drinking beverages, conversing, eating food, walking, smiling, playing and even while sleeping. He forgot the whole world under its influence (123).

The ecstasy of thoughts of Lord *Hari* made him sit alone with tears in the eyes. Unending devotion to the Lord made him sometimes sing loud, praising the glory of the Lord. Sometimes he laughed loud emphasizing that there existed none other than the Lord. He jumped in jubilation during some other times saying that he saw the Lord. Uttering the names of the Lord, he went into a trance sometimes. With eyes closed he stood stationary some other times. His heart was full with thoughts of adoration of the Lord independent of his movements. Prahlada developed intense devotion to the Lord by virtue of his close association with such devotees in his previous birth. Hence his mind never wavered from the thoughts of the Lord in spite of the proximity of vicious people. He avoided scrupulously getting entangled with family-bonds. With implicit obedience to the elders, he could sever the links with the after-effects of his past deeds. The demon-king Hiranyakasipu, developing enmity towards such a devoted and pious son, sent his soldiers to kill him.

**3.2. Teaching to Prahlada and its Feed-Back**

Getting astonished with such an account, Dharmaraja uttered the following words to Sage Narada: - “Fathers try to preach morals to mend their sons when they deviate from the path of virtue. Can there be fathers who develop enmity towards their sons and torture them? Prahlada, was outstanding as an embodiment of virtues. Instead of getting elated for getting blessed with such a noble son, how could Hiranyakasipu get thoughts to torture him (121 to 126)? He was young, well-behaved, handsomely radiant, kind-hearted, devoted to Lord *Hari*, obedient to his teachers, acclaimed by the virtuous and capable of transcending compulsions of desires. Was his father thoughtless to think of getting such a son killed? It is surprising.” Narada spoke the following words in reply: - “The demon-king observed closely the behaviour of his son. He felt that his son was least interested in wealth and comfort. He seems to be totally unenterprising, lazy, weak and sickly. He does not look like a prince brimming with valour and initiative. He hoped that the son might come to the right path through education. He told the boy that lack of education leads to ignorance. Enlightenment comes through learning and therefore education is essential for people. He told his son that he proposed to get him educated under competent teachers (127 to 130).”

He got *Chanda* and *Amarka,* the sons of *Sukracharya*, the *Guru* of *Rakshasas*,as teachers for his son. They were proficient in a branch of knowledge known as *Tarkavidya*. He uttered the following words after welcoming and rewarding them: - “You are teachers, pious, venerable, kind-hearted and desirous of our good. My son is engrossed in ignorance. He does not possess even a trace of our valour. He remains reserved in conversation. Kindly condescend to our request and make our boy read books of knowledge. You please teach him rules of morality and good behaviour to protect our heritage.” He entrusted Prahlada to them and ordered them to take the boy along with them. They took the demon-prince with them and made him join with other boys of his age-group. They started teaching the boy, with admirable attention, many important branches of knowledge in a building adjacent to the royal palace. With unwavering devotion to Lord *Vishnu*, the boy read and understood all that was taught. He learnt strictly in accordance with the instructions of the teachers without contradiction and criticism, even after knowing well that what was taught was associated with inaccuracies and fallacies. Being seated in his royal palace, Hiranyakasipu was inquisitive about the way teaching was done to his son and the progress made. He decided to call the youngster one day to converse with him to see the effect of teaching on him (131 to 136).

The demon-king sent message to his son through royal servants to come and meet him. The boy by then transcended the bondage of the family, overcoming the influence of feelings such as lust, anger and miserliness. He had clean thoughts through incessant devotion to the Lord, conquering the shortcomings of mundane minds. Prahlada came to his father accompanied by his teachers. The father caressed the boy with delight and affectionately made him sit on his lap. He told the boy that for success of a work undertaken, three factors namely, grace of the Lord, power of the rituals and the level of enthusiasm are to be favourable. He wanted to know whether those were fulfilled in the attempts of the boy at learning leading to enrichment of knowledge through recitation of *Vedas* and study of *Sastras.* He said that words uttered by the sons adorn the ears of the parents as ornaments giving unending pleasure through respite from toil and sorrow (137 to 140). He wanted his dear son to narrate whatever part of teaching was remembered by him and he replied as follows: - “Oh! Emperor of *Rakshasas*! The human beings are engrossed in the darkness of ignorance. They see plurality in the creation of the Lord due to mental aberration. They fail to realize that what all they see around is the outcome of the playfulness of the Lord. It is wise to reside in thick forests with thoughts focused on Lord *Vishnu.* Having heard those words of his son in praise of his foe, the king of the demons spoke smilingly the following words: - “Children speak the way they are asked to speak. They are incapable of commenting about others on their own. Did anybody influence you to speak in praise of our foe? I am surprised to hear your words. Did they occur to you in your mind on their own or did others, who are bad, make you utter such words? Did your teachers teach you such words in isolation? *Vishnu* is the biggest enemy of the entire clan of demons. Why do you want to praise him? We are to drive away *Devatas*, torture their leaders, torment *Sidhas,* punish the ascetics and destroy *Yakshas, Kinnaras, Gandharvas, Nagas and Garudas.* Why do you get spoiled by uttering words such as *Hari* and *Giri* and get blinded by ignorance (141 to 146).” Looking at his teachers, Prahlada said that he prayed to such a Lord, by worshipping whom ignorance is overcome to get enlightened. Ignorant people entertained false thoughts of discrimination, considering themselves to be different from others.

On hearing the words of his father, Prahlada said, “For the enlightened people with thoughts focused on the Lord, the discrimination among persons vanishes with an outlook of universality dawning on them. I pray to such a Lord. Getting entangled in ignorance, some fail to overcome the thought of plurality among people. How can such people understand the unfathomable Lord even after applying superior intelligence? When intellectuals such as Lord *Brahma* fail to comprehend the Lord, mundane people stand nowhere in this respect. Addressing his teacher, Prahlada mentioned that by the grace of the Lord his mind was getting attracted to *Hrishikesa* like iron getting attracted to a magnet.

***Mandara makaranda madhuryamuna delu madhupambu vopune madanamulaku?***

***Nirmala mandakini veechikala dugu rayancha sanune taranginulaku?***

***Lalita rasalapallava khadi yei chokku koyila serune kutajamulaku?***

***Burnendu chandrika sphurita chakorikum barugune Sandra niharamulaku?***

***Nambujodara divya padara vinda, chintanamruta panavisesha matta***

***Chittameriti nitarambu jeranerchu? Vinuta gunaseela! Maatalu veyu nela? (150)***

Oh! Possessor of laudable qualities! Does a bee tasting and rejoicing honey from a flower, fly to *Ummetta* plant?Does a swan swimming happily on the waves of still waters of *Akasaganga* fly to ordinary streams? Does a cuckoo singing, intoxicated by swallowing tender leaves of a mango-tree, fly to a *Kondamalli* tree? Does a *Chakorika* bird glittering under light of a full-moon fly towards a region covered by thick layers of dew? How does a mind relishing the joy, comparable to nectar, derived by getting engrossed in the thought of divine lotus-shaped feet of Lord *Vishnu*, deviate to other mundane objects? There is no point in repeatedly enquiring about the state of such a mind since it cannot be otherwise (150).” On hearing those words of Prahlada, his teacher, an employee of the king, was angry. He uttered the following words: - “You are a tiny five-year old boy. You are uttering words of reasoning. You are not mentioning anything about the *Sastras* taught to you by us. You made us bend our heads in shame before the king. You are praising our foe and causing insult to our race.” Facing the king, he said further, “He does not seem to be the son of demon-king. He appears to be a foe like a thorny plant in a garden of sandal-wood trees. He praises incessantly the enemy of the race of *Rakshasas.* He can be mended only by corporal punishment. He should therefore be held and beaten. Oh! The best among the demons! We take an oath to teach this boy with a skilful handling through reprimand and punishment. Please do not get angry with us.”

The teachers frightened the boy by various methods and took him away from the king. They began to teach morals to him by keeping him alone (151 to 155). They taught him many *Sastras,* adhering to tradition, and made him recite several times to promote unrestrained memory and intelligence. The boy was taught the four established modes of dealing with people, namely, *Sama, Dana, Bheda* and *Danda* to ensure that he became adept in morality. Information about the boy was conveyed to the mother who got him ready for meeting his father. Looking at the boy, his teacher said, “Do not speak before the demon-king anything other than what was taught to you. Do not err in reciting the things narrated by me. Avoid narrating the detestable history of *Vishnu*, probing into the praise of our foe.” The boy was thus coaxed and brought to the presence of the demon-king once again. Prahlada often forgot himself by relishing at every instant the sweetness of the nectar of uttering the name of Lord *Madhava*. He was an embodiment of a level of devotion to *Hari*, unattainable even by Lord *Brahma*. He had his thoughts on *Achuta* uninterrupted, from the instant he entered the womb of his mother. He held incessantly the thought that the entire universe was permeated by *Vishnu* and derived bliss from him. He was an abode of obedience, power of discrimination, pure thoughts of kindness towards others (156 to 160). The teacher asked him to go before his father to salute to him.

The teacher said, “Oh! Head of the race of *Rakshasas*! We taught the boy various branches of learning. We made him a well-behaved boy by diverting his attention from praise of the foes. You examine the progress in his education.” On hearing the words of the teacher, the demon-king blessed his son who stood before him after bowing down in respect. He stretched his hand to have his son near him, caressed him with intense affection, made him sit on his lap, smeared his hair and the entire body, kissed on his cheeks and drew him close. Tears from the eyes of the king due to intense affection drained down to the face of the boy. He uttered the following words gently and sweetly: - “It is a long time since I last saw you. I am therefore experiencing a strange feeling. I am curious to hear about the aspects taught and the methods adopted during such a long period. I am interested in knowing the essence of the knowledge acquired by you. Recite a poem from any branch of your learning giving its summary. I heard that your class-mates, the other demon-boys, showed a greater progress than you in *Neetisastra* and are therefore belittling you. I am anxiously awaiting your progress in this branch. Prahlada, his beloved son, spoke the following words to his father (161 to 165): -

***“Chadivinchiri nanu guruvulu, chadiviti dharmardha mukhyasastrambulu ne***

***Jadivinavi galavu pekkulu, chaduvulalo marmamella jadiviti dandri! (166)***

Oh! Father! My teachers taught me. I read many important *Sastras*. There are many studied by me. I could study the essence of all branches of learning (166).

Oh! King of *Rakshasas*! Attachment to the Lord, listening to his stories, serving, saluting and worshipping him, offerings to the Lord, surrendering to him, praising him and meditating on him are the nine paths of devotion to the Lord. One cultivates these methods through synchronization of mind, words uttered and deeds done. One reposes faith in Hari to lead a pious life. It strikes to my mind that this is the only truth. Life of one devoid of devotion to Hari is barren and futile like, moon-light to a blind man, sound of a conch to a deaf man, a book for a blind man, a woman’s lust for an impotent man, relationship with an ungrateful man, burning of items to be used in Yajna, wealth of a miser and fragrance to a swine.

***Kamalakshu narpinchu karamulu karamulu srinathu varninchu jihva jihva***

***Surarakshakuni joochu choodkulu choodkulu seshasayiki mrokku siramu siramu,***

***Vishnu nakarninchu veenulu veenulu madhuvyri davalina manamu manamu.***

***Bhagavantu valagonu padamulu padamulu purushottamanu meedi budhi budhi***

***Devadevuni jintinchu dinamu dinamu, chakrahastuni brakatinchu chaduvu chaduvu,***

***Kumbhinadhavu jeppedi gurudu gurudu, tandri Hari cherumanedi tandri tandri (169).***

A hand is worth its name when used for worshipping the Lord with lotus-shaped eyes. A tongue deserves to be called a tongue only when it describes the grandeur of Lord *Srinatha*. Eye-sight is worth having only when it is used to see the Lord who is a saviour of *Devatas*. A head does not deserve its name if it does not bow down before *Seshasayi*. Ears are futile when they are not utilized to hear about Lord Vishnu. A mind fulfills its function only when it thinks of the Lord who is a foe of *Madhu*. Legs fulfill their function only when they are used to perform a *Pradakshana* of the Lord. Concentration of the mind is only that which is directed to Lord *Purushottama*. A day is worth spending only when it is used to think about the Lord of *Devatas*. Scholarship is worth its name only when it is used to glorify Lord *Chakradhari*. The true purpose of a *Guru* is to teach about the greatness of the Lord who lifted the earth. A father is worth having only when he provokes devotion towards Hari in his son to reach him ultimately (169).

***Kamalakshunaku gani kayambu kayame pavana gumphita bhastri gaka!***

***Vykunthu bogadani vaktrambu vaktrame dhama dhama dhwanitodi dhakka gaka! Haripujanamu leni hastambu hastame tarusakha nirmita darvi gaka!***

***Kamalesu joodani kannulu kannule tanukudyajala randhramulu gaka!***

***Chakri chintaleni janmambu janmame tarala salila budbudambu gaka!***

***Vishnubhakti leni vibhudundu vibhudude padayugamu todi pasuvu gaka! (170)***

A body which does not worship the Lord with lotus-shaped eyes does not deserve its name. It is merely an air-filled pair of bellows. A mouth which does not praise the Lord who resides in *Vykuntha* is worthless. It is a mere double-drum. A hand which does not worship Hari is futile. It is merely a wooden oar. By refusing to see the Lord having a lotus in the navel, the eyes become useless. They are futile to the body like holes on a wall. A life devoid of thoughts of the Lord with a *Chakra* in hand deserves to be called a short-lived water-bubble. A scholar not having devotion to Lord Vishnu is not worthy of his knowledge degrading himself thereby to the level of a two-legged animal (170).

Oh! King of the demons! The cluster of family-bondages, comparable to thick, dark clouds, is never driven away without strong winds compared to prayers offered to Lord *Chakri*. The cluster of diverse calamities of life is never overcome without a shower of the nectar of service to Lord Vishnu, just as a forest-conflagration is never extinguished without rain. Remission to the sins committed in life is possible only through thoughts directed to Lord Hari, just as waters of the sea can be evaporated by *Badabagni*, fire generated in mid-oceans. Just as pitch-darkness vanishes with the effulgence of the sun, disasters are circumvented by prayers in praise of the Lord with lotus-shaped eyes. Attainment of a matchless state of sanctity with a cessation of cycle of rebirths is impossible even for Lord Brahma without a magical intervention of meditation on the form of Lord *Kodanda* (166 to171).

Such unhesitating words of his son were like thorns to the ears of the father who was totally shattered. He started biting his lips with his teeth. He looked at the teacher of the boy scornfully blaming him for teaching to his son the stories of the foe. The demon-king uttered the following words: - “You took the boy along with you saying that you teach him *Neetisastra*. You deceived me by narrating to him stories of the foe. Alas! I trusted you as one born in the race of Sage Bhrigu. You appear to be a Brahmin but I doubt your credibility. Those who violate the righteous path of *Dharma* are entangled by sins and get tormented by diseases”. The *Purohit* told the king, “I swear that there was nothing wrong from my side and stories of the foe were never taught even by cruel people. This tendency was born to your son on its own. It was not taught by anybody. No one can dare to do so. Please explore carefully a remedy for this. We are your well-wishers, *Purohits* and descendants of Bhrigu. We deserve your grace. Are we your foes to make your son behave like this (172 to 177)?” Those words took away the anger of the demon-king towards the teacher of the boy, the son of Guru Sukracharya.

The king turned towards the boy and uttered the following words: - “My son! The teachers did not teach you these aspects. Who else taught them to you? Tell me!” Prahlada uttered the following words: -

***“Achapu jeekatim badi gruhavratulei vishaya pravishtulei***

***Chachuchu puttuchun marala jarvitacharvanu leina varikin***

***Jachera puttune parulu seppinanaina nijechanaina ne***

***Michina naina ganalaku neginanaina Hari prabodhamul? (181)”***

“Some remain in ignorance, comparable to pitch darkness, immersing themselves in *Maya* of family-life without overcoming desires. They die and take birth again repeatedly revolving in the wheel of *Samsara*. Can such people get devotion towards Hari by themselves, or by teachings of others, or by the temptation of offering of gifts, or even by attempts at renunciation by going to stay in forests (181)?

Oh! Emperor of demons! A blind man fails to locate an object with the help of another blind man. Similarly engrossed in worldly matters, one succumbs to temptations and thus fails to get realization of god. Those who keep on their heads dust from the feet of Vishnu see the Lord. Oh! Lord of demons! I explored all the *Sastras* and dug out many stories and related aspects. I realized that the family is comparable to a fearful ocean with wife and children as whales, the sea-monsters. Qualities such as desire, anger, pride and arrogance are like tidal waves. Attempts to cross such an ocean through discussions and intelligence are futile. The only ship which enables one to cross such an ocean is devotion to Lord *Madhava*. Things such as mere scholarliness, extensive learning and meditation are ineffective for the purpose (178 to 183).

**3.3. Torture of Prahlada by Hiranyakasipu**

On hearing those words, the king of the demons treated the son contemptuously, stopped to love him, threw him down from his lap, looked at him with eyes exuding the fire of anger and spoke the following words to his ministers and servants: - “Hari, the foe of our family, killed his uncle. My son had neither anger nor repentance for what was done by Hari. Being my son, he was behaving like a servant to Hari worshipping him. He appears to be taking away life out of me. He has enmity towards me turning out to be a son deceptive to his father. Have you seen such a son anywhere in this world? This boy is only five years old. He is fearlessly disobeying me, praising my foe Vishnu unmindful of my warnings. He is like a pestilence originating from my body. Show your valour in taking him away immediately and killing him. A surgeon amputates a defective organ to protect the remaining organs. In a similar way I save my race from having disrepute by getting killed this idiot, traitor and a fellow taking the side of a foe. I get thereby the reputation of performing a noble act (184 to 188). He is not to be excused. He deserves to be killed and sent to *Yama*. There is no need to show mercy towards him. His mistakes are not to be pardoned. Go and kill him without showing grace.”

Having got such an order from the king of demons, many cruel *Rakshasas*, holding spears in hands with fearful widely opened mouths started jumping in jubilation and shouting at the top of their voices. Their dishevelled red hair resembled a conflagration exuding smoke. They started tormenting the boy by cursing and beating him. They were cruel in torturing the boy with least consideration that he was a prince, full of kindness, delicate, virtuous and deserving exoneration. Seeing all that was happening, the king did not take back his command nor did he utter even a word of repentance. The skin of the boy remained unscathed inspite of piercing of spears into it by many demons. His body remained unaffected with no oozing of blood from it. His skeletal system and eye-sight remained intact. The radiance of the moon-like countenance of the boy remained undiminished. There was no tiresomeness and sadness in him. While he was so tormented by the demons, he was uttering repeatedly the names of the Lord, such as *“Pannagasayi!, Madhava! Madhusudana! Lokeswara! Rakshasantaka! Deenasaranya! Paramapavana!.”* He was preoccupied by prayers to the Lord with absence of fear, tears in the eyes and agony (189 to 193).

Prahlada did not run here and there nor did he cover himself with his hands. He did not run towards his relations to hide himself. He did not blame anyone saying that what was done was cruel. He did not call any of his friends for help nor did he run into the golden abode of his mother. He did not shout for help nor did he show signs of agony. Prahlada appeared to have become an embodiment of the indescribable and all-pervadin*g Parabrahma.* Keeping his thoughts on the Lord, he attained a state of ecstasy and bliss. The torturous acts inflicted on him by his father became futile like laurels bestowed on a sinner. Seeing what all was happening, the father wondered as to why the boy did not fall on the floor or run away or die when spears were pierced into his body. He did not fall at the feet of the father expressing a desire to abstain from worshipping Hari. Having failed to know the reasons behind the boy remaining unscathed, the demon-king got enraged and sent the boy to be crushed by a ruffled group of elephants. He got the boy bitten by fearful venomous serpents. He got him thrown into a scorching conflagration. He ordered merciless beating of the boy followed by drowning him in the middle of a sea. The boy was made to drink poison, get cut by swords, get thrown down from hill-tops and got tied to get immobilized. Those methods were tried in turn by the demon-king to kill the boy. With unending anger, the king of the *Rakshasas*tried to get his son killed by additional cruel methods such as getting him thrown into a devastating fire, making him stand in scorching sun, making him get drenched in heavy rain, getting him choked by strangulation, getting him scared by exhibiting his magical methods of cruelty, getting him stand alone in biting-cold, making him stand against strong whirlwinds and finally getting buried under the soil. He made the boy get starved without food and water. He got the boy whipped and made him face pelting of stones, beating by maces and getting pierced by sharp arrows. Those were the methods used by the cruel *Rakshasa* under the sway of having uncontrollable anger. The demon-king thus failed to kill his pious son and went to solitude getting totally perplexed and thought within himself as follows (194 to 200): -

“I got him drowned in seas, hammered with maces, thrown from hill-tops, pierced with weapons, crushed by elephants, thrown into flames, beaten, cursed, insulted and tortured in several ways. His not getting killed appears to be a great wonder. He is innocent about life-saving drugs. There is none appearing to protect him. Incapable of enduring the torture, he is not running away from here. The natural radiance on his face remains undiminished. It is getting brighter with torture. He is not feeling sad even for a second. I am getting disgusted and devoid of methods of killing him. His powers seem to be divine. In the past there was one by name, *Sunassepa*, the son of an ascetic. He was donated by his father for sacrificial killing at a ritual. He survived by virtue of continued good-will towards his father inspite of the harm done to him. My son seems to be one like *Sunassepa*.

***Agrahamuna ne jesina nigrahamulu parulathoda neri nokanadun***

***Vigrahamu lanuchu balukadanugrahamuluga smarinchu, novvadu madilon (204)***

He never mentioned to others about the torture inflicted on him by me. He never complained to any one that it was unjust on the part of his father to punish him in several ways. On the contrary he considers me to be affectionate towards him. He does not even entertain in his mind feelings of hatred towards me. Prahlada is endowed with great powers. He is totally fearless. Enmity with him certainly leads to my death.”

Bending his head and looking down, the demon-king became sad and felt totally humiliated. His *Gurus*, Chanda and Marka uttered the following words to console him (201 to 205): - “Oh! King of *Rakshasas*! You are greatly reputed. Your valour is astonishing. You ruled the world unopposed. Seeing you twisting your eye-brows in anger in wars, even the *Dikpalakas*, entrusted with the job of protecting the earth from all directions, run away out of fear. This boy is insignificant for one like you. Ignorant prattle of this infant should not cause anxiety to you. Why do you feel worried about it (201 to 206)? This delinquent boy becomes well-behaved if kept for some time in the service of veteran *Gurus*. Subsequently he becomes more mature with age. He can be groomed to develop hatred towards Lord *Indra*. The boy becomes alright by the time of arrival of *Sukracharya.*” Hearing those words, the demon-king told the teachers to enlighten Prahlada about *Dharma, Ardha and Kama,* the essential aspects of knowledge taught normally to kings. The teachers followed the orders of the king.

**3.4. Enlightenment of Demon-Boys by Prahlada**

Prahlada concluded within himself that the words of his teachers were needed for those with a desire for worldly pleasures influenced by likes and dislikes. He was convinced that they were irrelevant for one who was spiritually enlightened. He was invited by the children of the *Rakshasas* to play with them after his teachers left for their domestic routine rituals. He told them that the teachings were mundane to get entangled in worldly matters. They were useless and tend to puncture the ear-drums of the listeners. He told them to listen to what he taught, meant to be pleasing to their minds. Inspite of being the prince, he could mix with companions of his age-group with familiarity and play with them. He taught them at a secluded place the following aspects: -

“Oh! Boys! Come here! Our teacher is harmful. He is distorting undesirables to teach them as desirables. Those are not to be learnt by us. You see in this world that some boys even of our tender age-group die. Life-span is therefore limited and should not be wasted. I propose to teach you some aspects for your good (206 to 212). Listen! Only human beings are endowed with the power of leading a righteous life. It is therefore a good fortune to get such a birth and more so as a male. The life-span of a human being is about hundred years. Darkness as night, engulfs half of this duration resulting in man spending his time for sleep and related aspects. From the remaining half, about twenty years are spent in infancy and boy-hood. Man succumbs to comforts offered by sense-organs during the remaining nearly thirty years. He gets entangled in a net-work woven by lust, anger, miserliness, love and hatred. He succumbs to desires which appear to be attractive. He gets tempted even to steal wealth of others to quench such desires. Interaction with people such as servants, thieves and businessmen exposes him even to risk of losing life. He desires sensual pleasures through association with women and tries to achieve them through tactful means. He gets wives who are impediments to activities. He begets children causing him pleasure through their sweet prattle. His parents shower love and affection on him provoking kindness in him towards them. His daughters acquire good behaviour with maturity and good looks. His sons get educated and become obedient with humility. His brothers cooperate as desired by him. He gets a well-behaved circle of relations. He consequently gets tied by diverse bondages in life. He gets totally immersed in his family by acquiring fortunes such as money, gold, ornaments, vehicles for travel, buildings, agricultural products, servants and cattle. He finds it difficult to part with wealth and other accessories inherited from successive generations of his ancestors. He is incapable of disentangling himself from these shackles like an insect caught in a web spun by a spider. He thus reaps the consequences of his past deeds. He forgets the path of salvation being engulfed in sensual pleasures and means of bringing up his family. He remains in darkness created by himself through a feeling of discrimination between himself and others.

Man has to develop devotion to god through his intellect and cultivate the habit of doing righteous deeds right from his early days. Good and bad things occur in one’s life on their own and hence valuable part of human life is not to be wasted on them. Devotion to *Srihari* is the only path to salvation. God is the well-wisher and the controller of all the living beings. The feet of the Lord are to be worshipped throughout the span of life. You see the toil undergone by our people as family-men. They solicit happiness without overcoming ignorance. Man gets drowned in his family, comparable to a mire. He takes several births from the womb of a woman. He is being subjected to diverse forms of torture. He fails to know about his self, not getting disentangled from bondage even after several births. He thus fails to reach the proximity of Lord *Vishnu*. There is no pleasure to be derived from one`s family. No laurels are stored in it. Man endures repeatedly the tortures of birth and death. It is recommended that a path leading to a situation of no birth and no death is to be explored.

Even a great scholar gets intoxicated by consuming alcohol. He loses control over his body. He gets entangled in the shackles of good looks of women. He fails to realize that a part of precious period of human life is thus wasted away. Being attracted by women, he gets degraded to a low state of mind, caught in their hands as an offspring of a deer. Have you heard about such a sad state? Association with such people, who are not our well-wishers, is not desirable. Desiring the path of salvation, you pray to Lord *Vishnu* by soliciting the friendship of virtuous people right from your child-hood. Devotion to Lord *Hari* is beyond the reach of *Rakshasas*, entangled in desires. Do not think that such a devotion is difficult. God is omnipresent. He is present in all beings both seen and unseen, in all directions, in the *Panchabhutas,* in all materials emerging out of them and in all human qualities such as *Satva, Rajas* and *Tamo Gunas* constituting the diverse forms of human thoughts. He is known by various names. He can be known by experience as an embodiment of happiness. He is eternal, unchangeable, with no definite shape, capable of permeating through all available space. He can be felt and he can make others feel. His form can be visible and invisible. These considerations should motivate one to give up cruelty and cultivate mercy towards all. One thus gets the mercy of the Lord attaining ultimately salvation.

The *Vedas* contain all aspects needed for human existence. Surrender to the lord with a mind free from desires. By understanding the Lord one overcomes the feeling of discrimination between himself and others. One realizes that the universe seen around is a myth (213 to 217). These aspects were taught to Narada by Lord *Narayana* when the latter was moving on the earth in the company of *Nara*. They could be understood only by great people sanctified by the dust emanating from the feet of the Lord and persons with an unwavering mind endowed with humility and divine knowledge. Prahlada told the boys that he could know through *Narada* the spiritual knowledge and qualities of staunch devotees of the lord. The astonished demon-boys said, “Oh! Friend! We heard together many aspects of the *Sastras* from the sons of the *Guru* of the demons. There was no other teacher for us. No other person, even Lord *Siva*, could enter our royal school. We are not allowed to go out of it. Under such restrictions, which great teacher could teach you? Please clarify. We are enlightened and subservient to you hereafter. We treat you as our king. We are interested in knowing as to how you got this enlightenment. Prahlada, a great devotee of the Lord, then recollected the words of *Narada* heard by him and uttered the following words (218 to 222): - “Long back my father went up a mountain named *Mandara* to undertake an intense penance with an undisturbed mind. *Devatas* felt that my father, being vicious, would get annihilated by his own sins like a serpent being caught by ants. They therefore waged a war against the *Rakshasas* to exploit the opportunity of the absence of my father. *Devendra* and *Devatas* invaded blowing war-trumpets. The *Rakshasas* ran away in an attempt to save themselves leaving behind their wives, children and property. The invading *Devatas* occupied the palace of the demon-king and looted all his belongings and the treasury. *Devendra* entered unhesitatingly the royal palace, humiliated and imprisoned my mother unmindful of her sorrow. Due to god’s grace *Narada* happened to come on the way and uttered the following words: - “Oh! Ruler of *Swarga*! You are the best among *Devatas.* You are virtuous and law-abiding. It is wrong to bring with you the wife of someone else, more so, unmindful of the fact that she is pregnant. She is terrified. You leave her immediately. She is not a sinner. Reserve your anger to be directed to Hiranykasipu, the foe of *Devatas* and release this pious lady (223 to 228).” In reply *Devendra* spoke as follows: - “Oh! Great soul! The son of Hiranyakasipu is in the womb of his queen progressing as an embryo to be a destroyer of the race of *Devatas* in future. I propose to keep her in prison till the baby delivered is killed to keep my mind peaceful. I release her from imprisonment afterwards.”

Narada replied as follows: - “The boy growing in the womb of the demon-queen is to be bold, subservient to the Lord and free from enemies inheriting devotion to the Lord from all his past births. Being intensely virtuous, the boy remains unaffected by your attacks.” Being himself a devotee of *Hari, Devendra* saluted to my mother, made her free and left for *Swarga*. *Narada*, showing paternal affection to my mother, consoled her and gave asylum to her in his hermitage. *Narada* uttered the following words to my mother: - “You are pious and devoted to your husband. A great devotee of the Lord is growing in your womb. Your husband is sure to return after his penance getting boons from the Lord. You stay here till the time of return of your husband.” My mother consented to the proposal. She was a gem among the woman-folk considering her husband as divine and waiting anxiously for his return. She had no ill-will towards anybody. She stayed virtuously in the hermitage of *Narada* serving him and praying unhesitatingly for the safety of her offspring growing in her womb (229 to 233).

*Narada*, being adept in protecting the needy, assured safety for my mother serving him with devotion. He taught her principles of enlightenment and righteousness keeping in view my presence in her womb. Being an event of distant past, my mother forgot about it having not paid adequate attention to the teachings. Consequent upon the divine grace and the condescension *Narada* had towards me, I have not forgotten even a fraction of that knowledge passed on to me. You listen to what I teach you about it. All including women and children are eligible to listen to what I say since it eliminates mundane thoughts of entanglement with this perishable body and attachment people get with others due to their affection for them. The listeners develop, as a consequence, implicit devotion to the Lord.”

Prahlada continued his narration of the teachings of *Narada* as follows: - “Time owes its genesis to *Iswara*. It controls the germination of a tree which grows to the stage of fruition. The fruit in turn has its genesis, growth, ripening, drying up and ultimately withering down. The human body also experiences the same sequence of events. However, the soul, *Atma* is impervious to such transformations. It is indestructible and pure. It is divine, being constituted by the primordial entities such as sky, air, water, fire and earth, the *Panchabhutas*, the fundamental building materials of the entire universe. It is unchangeable, self-effulgent and responsible for the entire creation. It permeates through the entire space available. It is unattached and a model of perfection being second to none. It is said that it has a total of twelve such qualities. Gold mines contain gold as specks in stones and other such waste-materials. Miners get gold out of them by calcination of other ingredients. In a similar way *Atma* is realized skillfully by one in search of it by relinquishing the sources of attachment to the body and the accompanying attractions achieving thereby god-realization. Such a person is conscious of the fact that he is separate from the body.

A human being is associated with a total of eight *Prakrutigunas* constituted by *Mulaprakruti*, *Mahat*, *Ahankara*, and the five *Panchatanmatras* constituted by hearing, touch, seeing, taste and smell. The first two among these are constituted by mind, intellect and the results of the acts of past births. In addition there are three *Gunas*, namely *Satva*, *Rajo* and *Tamo* *Gunas*. To these are to be added five *Karmendriyas* which are the organs, mouth, pair of hands, pair of legs, pair of excretory organs and organ of reproduction. In addition there are five *Jnanendriyas* constituted by a pair of eyes, a pair of ears, skin, nose and tongue. An additional ingredient is the awareness of self, known as *Manas*. Lastly there are the primordial ingredients known as *Panchabhutas* represented by earth, water, sky, air and fire. Out of a total of these 27, the last sixteen are known as *Vikaras*. The *Atma* resides in all of them as a witness. The human body is thus constituted by the ingredients mentioned above and is both mobile and immobile. *Atma* is effulgent permeating in all these ingredients like a thread holding the beads together. An enlightened mind knows its three states, namely *Jagrat*, *Swapna* and *Sushupti.* Such a mind realizes *Atma* as one beyond birth and death. *Atma* appears apparently to be involved in all functions of the body. It is impervious to all of them. Just as the presence of air is known through the fragrance of flowers carried by it, the mental states unravel the *Atma.* The mind is influenced by its diverse states performing various acts under the variable proportions of its three *Gunas*. What all one sees around is the creation of the mind encircled by the acts performed under the influence of the three *Gunas.* The family in which one lives is a dream. It is entirely unreal. The mind is the seat for the genesis of desires. The states of dream and waking up have no difference. The ignorance inherent in the human mind is to be cleansed by knowledge. Such a mind is suited for the search of god (234 to 238).

Doing service to teachers, offering fruits of action to the Lord, befriending with virtuous people, pious activities, worshipping the idols of the Lord, listening to narrations of stories of the Lord, chanting god’s names, praising the glory of the Lord, bowing down before the feet of idols of the Lord and imagining the all-pervading form of the Almighty and all such related qualities bring about enlightenment and a feeling of renunciation. These are all the attributes of spiritually elevated people which are to be imbibed. Being conscious of the presence of the Lord in all beings, one develops a tendency of kindness towards all. Mundane qualities such as *Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Mada* and *Matsarya* are to be overcome. Sense organs are to be put under control. These are all acts which lead one with certainty to the realization of the Lord. A staunch devotee of the Lord gets intoxicated on hearing narration of acts of valour by the Lord in his diverse incarnations*.* He gets excited knowing the virtues of the Almighty. He dances and sings loud in ecstasy, with tears in his eyes and a choked voice, the names of the lord such as *Narayana! Govinda! Varada! Vasudeva!* He laughs and talks within himself the names of the Lord and salutes to the Lord. He wanders like a mentally derailed man ultimately disentangling himself from the shackles of the mundane world overcoming ignorance and reaching the abode of the Lord.

A human mind filled with desires can overcome the shackles of the family-cycle only through thoughts of *Hari*. The scholars say that the bliss of merging with the Lord is derived through intense devotion towards him. Worshipping the Lord is not difficult. He is present in all creatures permeating like the sky. One realizes that ultimately happiness eludes the possession of riches and enjoyment of worldly comforts. The human lives are extremely transitory. Possession of wife and children; relations and friends; kingdoms and palaces; domestic animals and servants is temporary. Even the results of performance of rituals which elevate one to *Swarga* are short-lived. Man becomes egoistic and tries to derive benefits through performance of diverse acts. Human action is to be devoid of a desire for its fruits. All acts motivated by desires lead to unhappiness. Man is incessantly in quest of comforts for his body unmindful of the fact that it is perishable and eatable by dogs when life vanishes from it. One who takes birth is bound by the acts performed during the span of life which decide the type of the next birth. Ignorance of the human mind paves the way for repetition of the cycle of births and deaths. Enlightenment of the mind alone leads to salvation of human life. The Lord is the donor of such a salvation. He loves the entire gamut of his creation being present in all of them. One has to pray selflessly with devotion to the Lord present in oneself. All categories of people such as *Danavas, Daityas, Suras, Naras, Nagarajas* and *Gandharvas* get sanctified by worshipping the feet of the lord.

***Chikkadu vratamula gratuvula, jikkadu danamula sauchaseela tapamulam***

***Jikkadu, yuktini bhaktini jikkina kriyanachyutundu siddhamu sundi! (243)***

Charitable acts, performing rituals, austerities, *Japas,* T*apas,Yajnas,* having an unruffled mind and related acts are ineffective even for *Brahmanas* and *Devatas,*in comparison with intense devotion, to get the grace of the Lord. The thought that *Vishnu* is all-pervading is enough to sanctify all types of creation including birds, serpents and animals (239 to 245). Our teachers teach us ways of making us submissive to them and never the ways of realization of the Lord. Why should we run after them getting ourselves immersed in darkness and ignorance? Return all the books to the teachers and come along with me to an isolated place to listen to more truths. Those of you who do not like the proposal may go back to the teachers and bear the consequences of your past deeds. Let us play keeping thoughts of *Hari* in our hearts, singing songs of his glory, leaving the acquaintance of demons and courting fearlessly the friendship of Lord’s devotees.

***Vittamu samskruti patalamu, vrattamu kamadi vyri vargambula ne***

***Dittamu chittamu Harikini, jottamu nirvanapadamu, subhamagu manakun (249)***

Let us disentangle ourselves from the bondage of family, abandon qualities such as *Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Mada* and *Matsarya*, surrender our thoughts to *Hari* today and attain salvation. This is the most auspicious path for us. (249)”

Prahlada started thus teaching secretly the path of salvation to the youth of the demons during convenient timings. The demon-boys stopped learning from their *Gurus* and turned their hearts towards *Narayana.*

**3.5. Dialogue between Prahlada and Hiranyakasipu leading to Manifestation of Narasimha**

Having noticed those developments, their teacher felt agitated and came to Hiranyakasipu to express his woes in the following words (246 to 250): - “Oh! Head of the race of demons! Your son started collecting all the demon-boys to criticize my teachings as false and to teach them about path of salvation. He has been causing damage to us. You have to salvage the situation using your capability. They started disobeying me, ignoring my teachings thinking that I never narrate to them stories of *Vishnu*. Please pay attention to these developments.

***Udugadu madhuripu kathanamu, vidivadi jadupagidi dirugu, vikasamuna ne***

***Nodivina noduvulu noduvadu, dudukani jadivimpa maku durlabhamadhipa! (253)***

Your son is not obedient to listen to what is taught for his enlightenment. He does not abstain from narrating stories *Madhuripu*. He wanders absent-minded. It is impossible for us to educate such a delinquent boy.

***Chokkapu rakkasi kulamuna, vekkuru janminchinadu vishnuniyandun***

***Nikkapu makkuva viduvam, dekkadi sutuganti? Rakshaseswara! verrin (254)***

Oh! Head of Rakshasas! This useless boy is born in a superlative race of demons. He never gives up his admiration of *Vishnu.* Alas, you gave birth to such a mentally retarded son.”

On hearing those words of Prahlada’s teacher, Hiranyakasipu felt as if swords were pierced into his ears. Suddenly he was enraged like a snake with a trampled tail, a conflagration aggravated by wind and a lion with inflicted injuries. His whole body was trembling with anger. His eyes were reddened due to uncontrollable rage. He got ready to cut his son to pieces. He got his son brought before him. With no trace of affection, he uttered thunderous words of anger (251 to 255). Prahlada was an embodiment of peace, virtues and knowledge. He was an ardent devotee of the Lord. He was like a fire destroying the forest of ignorance, being a treasure-house of knowledge. Devotion to the lotus-shaped feet of the Lord was ever present in his mind with hands folded in total submission to the Almighty. Enraged Hiranyakasipu, the enemy of the Lord, uttered the following words of hatred towards such a virtuous son: -

“Without my command, the sun is afraid of showing full brilliance. Wind is to blow pleasantly round the year and is scared to be otherwise. Even fire is to be submissive before my effulgance and does not dare to exhibit full intensity. Violating my rigorous commands, even *Yama* is afraid of taking away lives of people. Even *Devendra* shudders to raise his head before me. *Devatas, Kinneras, Yakshas, Gandharvas, Vidyadharas,* birds and serpents are all submissive to me. Oh! Evil-minded fellow! Why are you not afraid of me? Who is there to protect you?” The *Dikpalakas*, inspite of being my foes, are afraid of me. They do not dare to violate my orders. My looks of anger make all the three *Lokas* shudder. What makes you conceited to disobey my orders inspite of knowing the powers wielded by me? Oh! Little fellow! You shout straining your vocal cords that the Lord of *Vykuntha* is unconquerable. If he is so, why did he not intervene when I was tormenting and killing *Devatas*? Disobeying your teacher, you raked up desire for salvation in the minds of your colleagues. You extolled the virtues of our foe, *Vishnu* using your eloquence. You eroded the traditions of *Rakshasas*. You are a traitor. It is better to kill such a mean fellow like you to avoid any blemish to the race of the *Rakshasas* (256 to *260)*. I conquered all corners of the earth. *Devendra* and others who rule different directions of the *Lokas* worship me as their saviour in the absence anybody else. Who is there to save you from me? I am the strongest in all the *Lokas*. I vanquished even the strongest, fighting alone without the help of the army.”

Hearing those words of his father, the son replied as follows in all humility: - “Oh! King of the demons! The source of strength for me is the saviour of the strong and the weak, you and me, *Brahma*, other *Devatas* and all living beings. Oh! Great soul! One who transcends time and space and stands as the source of strength to the weak and strong alike, is the protector of me (261 to 265). Oh! Father! The Lord is the ruler of the universe. He manifests himself in different forms and in different ways in tune with the situation. By virtue of his sterling qualities, strength and valour, the Lord creates, maintains and destroys the universe. He is omnipresent and eternal. Keep your mind righteous. There is no foe more powerful than an evil mind. Do not make the mind a foe. Conquer the mind. Give up evil thoughts. Nobody else tells you what is good. Oh! Ruler of the demons! You conquered all the *Lokas* instantaneously. You failed to conquer your mind and sense organs. *Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Mada, Moha* and *Matsarya* are your potential enemies. You are imprisoned by them. You become devoid of foes if you can overpower these enemies. Please pay attention to my request with a pure mind. Try to sever bondages and entanglements. Develop a balanced mind giving up thoughts of discrimination. Keep the mind eternally on *Madhava.*”

The vicious demon-king uttered the following words to Prahlada, an embodiment of devotion to the Lord: - “Oh! Evil-minded fellow! You became desperate, uttering harsh words exceeding limits of decency, unmindful of the risk of getting killed (266 to 270). You entered in to an altercation with me. There is no ruler other than me for all the *Lokas* and their inhabitants. I searched for *Narayana* several times soon after he killed my brother and failed to find him. Tell me about his whereabouts, appearance and mode of roaming about since you behave like his servant. I am prepared to kill both of you.” Hearing those words, Prahlada, being a devotee of *Hari,* spoke the following words saluting to the Lord, dancing in ecstasy, unhesitatingly, unruffled and with implicit faith on the Lord: -

***“Kaladambhodi, galandu gali, galadakasambunan, gumbhinim***

 ***Gala, dagnin disalam bagalla nisalan khadyota chandratmalam***

 ***Gala, donkaramunam drimurtula drilingavyaktulam dantam***

 ***Gala, disundu galandu, tandri! vedakanga nela ni ya yedan (274)***

Oh! Father! Lord is omnipresent. He is present on earth, in sea, air, sky and fire. He is present in all the directions of the universe. He is present in the darkness of the night and in the light of the day. He is present in the sun and the moon. He is present in *Omkara*, *Trimurtis* and in all human beings. When he is present everywhere, where is the need for you to search for him here and there (274)?

***Indu gala dandu ledani, sandehamu valadu, chakri sarvopagatum***

***Demdendu vedaki chuchina, nandande kaladu, danavagrani! vinte (275)***

Oh! The best among the demons! Do not entertain doubts about the presence or absence of the Lord. *Chakri* is omnipresent. Wherever you search for him, you find him there. Please listen to my words (271 to 275).” Prahlada stated emphatically that *Hari* is present in all forms of objects. *Achuta* makes his presence felt everywhere. Hiranyaklasipu shouted that he was not present anywhere. Hiranyakasipu shouted vociferously at that time as follows pointing towards a pillar: - “Oh! Young fellow! You are shouting at the top of your voice that the Lord with lotus-shaped eyes is omnipresent. Can you show your *Chakri* or *Gikri* in this pillar? If you fail to show him in this pillar, I sever your head and drop it on the floor to see whether *Hari* is powerful enough to prevent me from doing it (276 to 280).” Prahlada uttered the following words:- “The Lord permeates all over the universe right from its creator, *Brahma* to even an insignificant object like a blade of straw. That being so, how can his presence in such a big pillar be doubted? His presence in the pillar is absolutely certain and can be seen right now if desired.” Hearing those words, Hiranyakasipu laughed derisively, stood up suddenly from his throne, rushed, pulled out his sword from its armour, swung it in air to terrify Prahlada and shouted the following words: - “Oh! Immature fellow! Idiot! Listen! You say that *Vishnu* is omnipresent! If that is so, show him in this pillar?”

**3.6. Manifestation of Narasimha from a Pillar**

The enmity of the demon-king towards *Hari* got aggravated. Due to anger, he lost his sense of humility and discrimination. His agitated and mischievous mind made him audacious. Showing utter contempt to his son and motivated by a sense of arrogance, he smashed that pillar of the royal palace hitting it savagely with his powerful hand, strong enough to pulverize even the tusks of an elephant. The act was accompanied by the tinkling sound of his shining bracelets studded with precious stones. That imposing pillar crumbled with dazzling sparks shattered in all directions, unbearable to the mundane human eyes. Alarming sounds, intolerable to the human ears, were produced, comparable to those of thunders accompanying torrential down-pour and gale, blown at the time of total annihilation of the universe. The deafening tumultuous sounds made it appear as though a gigantic globe constituting the entire universe, suddenly exploded with the gamut of its animate and inanimate objects and the *Devatas,* such as *Brahma, Indra, Varuna,* *Vayu* and *Agni.* From the middle of the crumbled pillar manifested Lord Narasimha with a rare grandeur. He caused delight to Prahlada and terror to Hiranyakasipu. His brilliant appearance exhibited intense affection to his devotee and a sense of ferocity to the demon-king.

The feet of the Lord were shining like blossoming flowers. They had auspicious signs such as a wheel, a bow, a plough, and a fish. A slow motion of his legs caused a depression of the earth below as though a sense of humility was shown to him by all those such as *Ashtadiggajas, Adishesha, Adikurma* and the mountain ranges supporting it. The sturdiness of his pair of imposing thighs was comparable to that of the trunk of the mighty elephant *Iravata,* emerging from *Ksheerasagara.* A tinkling diamond-studded girdle encircled his waist embellished by a *Pitambara* worn by him. His majestic navel was like a whirlpool of a beautiful and deep lotus-pond. His thin soft fist-sized waist was looking brilliant. His broad and hard chest was comparable to the valley of a mountain. The elongated and bent nails of the ferocious Lord were razor-sharp as if they were sickles to sever the creepers considered to be the confidence levels of the demons. They were like sharp ploughs commissioned to plough the waste-lands constituted by the hardened hearts of the demons. They were comparable to balls of fire dazzling the eyes of the *Rakshasas*. Inspite of their devastating appearance to the demons, they were pleasing to the devotees of the Lord. To the demon-king they were not merely nails but a source of terror like *Vajrayudha* of *Indra*.

The hands of the Lord were innumerable resembling lofty mountain-peaks. They had countless number of garlands of a variety of flowers as decorations. They were holding diverse weapons such as a lance, a sword, a spear in addition to a *Sankha* and *Chakra*. They were like coast-lines to a sea comparable to the immense valour of the Lord. He was dazzling due to brilliance from the light-scattered by his diamond-studded ornaments such as anklets, garlands, bracelets, armlets and earrings. His corrugated neck looked sturdy, like a mountain-top. Due to anger his delightful lips were trembling like air-driven tender leaves of the tree of heaven, *Parijata*. His fangs were brilliant like lightnings on the dark clouds of autumn. His tongue was terrifying with intense red colour. It looked as though it was the all-pervading conflagration capable of swallowing the entire gamut of *Lokas* during total annihilation of the universe. The mouth and the nasal cavities of the fearful Lord were large like the mighty caves of mountain *Meru*. The exhaled breath from his nostrils agitated the *Saptasagaras*. The dazzling of his eyes resembled the effulgence of the solar region during sun-rise from the hill-tops of the east. A heap of sparks got shattered from his eye-corners. It appeared as if it was making the stars and the planetary system topsy-turvy. His knotted eyebrows, bent like a rain-bow, made his countenance ferocious. His handsome cheeks were hard like large stones. The long cluster of hair dangling on his back was brilliantly red resembling the group of clouds seen immediately preceding the sun-set. The breeze generated by the swinging of his hair was intense. It caused turbulence in the air leading to up and down jerkiness of the air-crafts flying above. His steady elevated ears resembled conches. His hair got dishevelled. It resembled the turbulent and agitated waves of *Ksheerasagara,* hovering the sky, caused by the lightning speed of churning of the ocean with *Mandaraparvata.* The white bright hair on his body looked radiant like the rays of the full-moon. His roar was deafening. It sounded as though it was puncturing the ear drums of the elephants such as *Kumuda, Supratika Vamana, Iravana* and *Sarvabhauma* known as *Ashtadiggajas* , protecting all directions of the earth. His skin was radiant and white comparable to the brilliance of a mountain of silver. It was dazzling and intolerable to the human eye. The pride of the demons considered as darkness was erased by the effulgence of his body. His manifestation was a source of delight to Prahlada and sorrow to Hiranyakasipu. The Lord appeared to be a conglomeration of kindness and cruelty, the former to Prahlada and the latter to Hiranyakasipu (281 to 285). Seeing the manifestation of such a mysterious form, Hiranyakasipu thought as follows within himself: - “His appearance is neither that of a human being nor of a lion. It is a mysterious form improvised by him unseen anywhere earlier. His manifestation is to keep up the audacious words spoken by Prahlada, to substantiate his omnipresence and to punish me. My death in his hands appears to be certain. However, I exhibit my valour to achieve success by killing the foe.”

**3.7. Slaying of Hiranyakasipu by Narasimha**

Having such thoughts of desperation, Hiranyakasipu mustered courage, lifted his mace and started approaching hesitantly Lord Narasimha who looked like a ferocious lion while the former appeared like a timid elephant. Hiranyakasipu appeared like a fire-fly before the cluster of effulgent rays of the lord. The demon-king was listless having lost his grandeur. When the universe was on the verge of total annihilation, Lord *Vishnu* swallowed the darkness which engulfed it, exhibiting his radiance. How can thevalour of mean people stand before the greatness of such a Lord? It is bound to get shattered.The demon-king swung his fearful mace round and round and threw it towards Lord Narasimha. It was ineffective.The Lord grasped him firmly like *Garuda* siezing a serpent. The demon-king wriggled out of the grasp of the lord, mustering strength skilfully and exhibiting anger. Overcoming despair, he started his fight, jumping up and down, like a serpent let loose from the grip of a hawk. Hiranyakasipu thought that the lord could be overcome by his superior muscle-power and started exhibiting his valour undaunted. The *Devatas* were watching secretly the proceedings, hiding themselves in the sky behind the dark clouds. They were entertaining thoughts of despair and impending danger to their lives, finding the demon-king seemingly insurmounatable to the lord. The demon-king was exhibiting skill and dexterity in sword-fight, protecting himself with his armour. He was appearing to be covering both heaven and earth by his brisk movements and manoeuvrability in escaping from being caught. The Lord was unable to tolerate the sight of Hiranyakasipu appearing like a fearful hawk hovering on the sky (286 to 290).

The conflagration exuding from the breath of Narasimha permeated the entire heaven and earth. The dazzling brilliance emanating from the pangs of the Lord blinded the eyes of the demon-king. Stretching and swirling of the mane of the Lord, appearing like a bunch of thorns, scattered asunder the cluster of clouds on the sky. The light emanating from the razor-sharp claws of Narasimha appeared like lightnings on the clouds at the time of annihilation of the universe.The Lord got enraged, stretched and shook his mane, roared fiercely, focused his attention, twisted his eye-brows, swirled his tongue, jumped and caught hold of the demon-king firmly. Like a serpent catching a mouse, Narasimha seized the demon in a carefree and playful way making the latter tremble under the fear of impending death. The foe of *Devatas* succumbed to Narasimha, a saviour of his devotees and a tormentor of vicious people, looking ferocious with dreadful alacrity fearfully swirling his tongue. Like *Garuda* grasping a snake and tearing it apart, enraged Narasimha caught hold of Hirnyakasipu, stretched him on his thighs and tore him apart piercing the assemblage of his claws, slaying thus the champion of demons who was intolerably fierce, strong-bodied with powerful shoulders, unshakable ebullience, and fearful even to *Indra, Agni* and Yama (291 to 295)*.* Cutting open the heart of the evil demon-king, the Lord rained blood on the ground. The strong blood vessels of the demon were torn apart, his hard chest broken-open, muscles cut to pieces and bones worn as garlands. The Lord thus appeared grand under the radiance of his claws. His powerful claws assumed the shape of an axe while breaking asunder the skeletal system of the demon. They looked like spades while scooping out his heart from his slain body. They appeared like sharp sickles to cut across the heap of blood-vessels of the demon-king. They appeared to be playing the role of saws in cutting the bones of Hiranyakasipu.Thus Narasimha slayed the *Rakshasa* lying on his lap by using exclusively his claws avoiding the necessity of weapons of any type. The nails of the Lord thus exhibited grandeur to achieve victory in the fight. They were a source of joy to the devotees of the Lord excelling even the radiance of the flames of fire. They could pierce into the body of the demon-king tearing it apart causing delight to the *Devatas*.

The Lord killed the demon-king who proved to be a menace to the inhabitants of all the three *Lokas* functioning as a spear capable of piercing through their hearts. The act was performed by a form of the Lord which was neither a human being nor a lion, during twilight which was neither day nor night, at the threshold of a building which was neither inside nor outside of it, on his lap which was neither earth nor sky and using the claws which were neither having life nor devoid of it. The lord appearing like a big conflagration with a fierce exterior, his face dreadful, outstretched tongue looking fearful like that of a snake, mace red being soaked in blood and the bowels of the slain demon as a necklace. The Lord was looking like a lion emerging after smashing the skull of an elephant. His nails soaked in blood resembled moonlight beautified by the colour of twilight. Unable to tolerate such a sight of the Lord, thousands of demon-warriors invaded the Lord with weapons. Narasimha killed all of them using his *Chakra* and other weapons bringing the fight to an end. Yet the anger of the enraged Lord did not subside. With looks still appearing dreadful, he sat on the throne with none among *Suras, Vidyadharas, Phanas, Charanas, Sidhus, Yakshas* and *Kinnaras*, present there, daring to approach him, look at him or converse with him (296 to 300). Seeing the victorious Lord, the *Devakantas* rained flowers on him in jubilation celebrating the event. Aircrafts of *Devatas*, music of *Gandharvas*, diverse forms of dancing of *Apsaras* and auspicious sounds of concussion and percussion instruments embellished the sky on that occasion. Companions of Lord *Hari* such as *Sunanda* and *Kumuda* and *Devatas* such as *Maheswara, Vidhata* and *Mahendra, Kinnaras, Kimpurushas, Sidhas, Sadhyas, Charanas, Vidyadharas, Pannagas, Prajapatis, Garudas* and *Gandharvas* came to witness Narasimha.

**3.8. *Devatas* such as *Brahma* Praising Narasimha**

Lord Narasimha is the saviour of human beings from the ocean of *Samsara*. He destroyed *Rakshasas* like a lion killing the elephants. All the *Devatas* present saluted to the Lord with devotion keeping their hands on their heads. They did it from a distance unable to dare to approach the enraged Lord. They started praising his glory separately. Lord *Brahma* praised the Lord by saying the words (301 to 305), “Oh! Lord! You are powerful to perform the noble acts of creation, maintenance and destruction of the whole universe in a playful way. You are an embodiment of everlasting radiance. Your valour is astonishing. You are eternal. I am praising you with eagerness to solicit your grace and acceptance of it.” Lord *Rudra* said, “Oh! The best among *Devatas*! The time for you to get enraged comes after a thousand *Yugas*. It is enough that you killed a demon who was tormenting *Devatas*. This boy, who is his son, is virtuous, sacred and a devotee of you. You are kind to your devotees. Save this boy by being considerate to him.” Lord *Indra* said, “Oh! Sri Narasimha! You reside in the hearts of all living beings. You are a terror to the demons. We were tormented by this demon-king till now. You saved all of us from his torture. Your grace enabled us to start once again getting the offerings of rituals. Our lives are saved. Grant us your grace to worship you with utmost devotion (306 to 310).”

The *Rishis* said, “Oh! Protector of *Dharma*! You condescended to create and protect the *Lokas.* The vicious demon-king created chaos in them. You killed him taking the form of Narasimha and restored the glory of *Vedas*. You could reestablish *Dharma*. The *Pitrudevatas* said, “Oh! *Atmeswara!* Lord Narasimha! Our sons offered oblations to us desiring our well-being. This conceited demon snatched them away from us. You saved us from our difficulties by putting an end to this offender. Salutations to you.” The *Sidhas* said, “Oh! Sri Narasimha! You killed the self-conceited demon who snatched away our powers. We could get them back because of your grace. We are grateful to you (311 to 315).” The *Vidyadharas* said, “Oh! Narasimha! By killing the demon, you demonstrated your kindness towards us. Our power of getting vanished was restored to us. Your glory is matchless and mysterious.” The *Bhujangas* said, “Oh! Lord! You tore apart the breast of a demon who stole our ladies and precious stones. We are happy to get them back (315 to 320)”.

*Manuvus* said, “By killing this vicious demon you restored the order of division of professions based on caste. It was earlier destroyed by him. Praising you adequately is beyond our reach. Devotion towards you is the basis for our existence.” The *Prajapatis* said,” Oh! Protector of safety of the world! You created us to propagate the continuity of existence of life in this world. This demon forced us to stop creation leading to total disorder. You killed this vicious demon by tearing off his chest. We now continue our act of creation unhindered. The *Gandharvas* said,” We used to sing and dance day and night before this *Rakshasa*. Yet he tormented us and was never kind towards us. Such a vicious demon was sent to the abode of *Yama*. How can there be good happening to a sinner in this world (321 to 325)?

*Charunas* said, “Oh! Lord of the universe! The tormentor of the hearts of people and a foe of *Indra* was killed by you. Our setbacks of life are averted. We now take solace at your feet capable of rescuing us from the bonds of families.” *Yakshas* said, “Oh! *Jagannivasa*! Ruler of the three *Lokas*! Enforcer of the twentyfour *Tatwas*! We are your servants freed from all querries. This demon used to roam about in all directions getting up on our shoulders unmindful of the sin resulting from it. You rescued us from our difficulties by putting an end to this demon (326 to 330).”*Kimpurushas* said, “Oh!*Purushottama*!The best among rulers!We are *Kimpurushas* and trivial in trying to praise your glory. You killed a vicious demon who was tormenting the virtuous. You thus brought back the world to animation.” *Vytalikas* said,”Oh! Lord of the universe! Saviour of the oppressed! The foe of all the three *Lokas* was made to vanish. We now move fearless and sing songs of your glory in public gatherings and places of rituals (331 to 335).” *Kinnaras* said, “Oh! *Hari*! You killed a vicious demon who violated the norms of *Dharma* by doing detestable acts. He forced us to do undesirable deeds. We now worship you leading a peaceful life.” The servants of Lord *Vishnu* said, “By killing him, who was born as a cruel demon due to a curse by *Brahmins*, you did not harm but did a favour to him instead. One can reach you earlier through hatred than through devotion. Your form of Narasimha is a marvel redeeming all from calamities.

*Brahma, Maheswara, Indra, Sidhas, Sadhyas* and other *Devatas* thus praised Lord Narasimha in several ways to bring down his anger. Their attempts proved futile. They felt diffident to go near the enraged Lord. They approached *Lakshmi Devi* and said to her, “Oh! Goddess! You are the empress of Lord *Hari*, dear to him always being skilled in serving him. You please go near him and bring down his anger (336 to 340).” The sweet-voiced goddess agreed and went to the proximity of Lord Narasimha with great enthusiasm. The face of the Lord was like the devastating sun at the time of annihilation of the universe unlike the pleasant moon. His looks were like raging flames unlike the condescending bright ones. His appearance was full of bravery, rage and excitement devoid of the gleaming mercy. His teeth lacked a smile of flowery tenderness. They were pangs exuding with waves of terror. He was an embodiment of a harsh ferocious form of human-lion combination unlike the one readily pleasing to the women-folk. The goddess, with a countenance looking beautiful as the moon, intending to accost the lord with a smile, was astonished to find a dreadful form of the Lord, neither heard about nor seen by her earlier. She thought that he might get enraged when provoked to talk. She was confronted with familiarity with the Lord on one side and fear on the other side. She was thus subjected to anxiety. Lord *Brahma* could conclude that goddess Lakshmi decided to approach the lord only after his anger came down. He felt that none other than Prahlada could free the lord from anger. He went near Prahlada and said, “Oh! Dear Prahlada! The lord is subjected to a state of intense anger because of your father. His rage seems to remain unabated. Kindly bring it down (341 to 345).”

Agreeing to the request, Prahlada, one of the best among pious men, approached the Lord slowly in all humility falling prostrate before him with an exemplary behaviour. The Lord, always gracious to his devotees, looked condescendingly towards Prahlada. There was overflowing kindness in the regal exterior of the Lord when he called the boy to come near him. The destroyer of the demons, Lord Narasimha, always ready to take care of the welfare of the world, caressed the boy`s head with his hand. The hand of the Lord was renowned for its ability to ward off fear of *Kalasarpadosha* and to cause always good. Prahlada`s fear vanished with the touch of the Lord. He was enlightened with knowledge of the divine. His body became ecstatic with tears of joy tickling from his eyes. His intense devotion towards the Lord made his tone tremble with emotion. Those qualities redoubled his grace with his mind getting focused. There was overflowing reverence towards the Lord. Imagining that the lotus-shaped feet of the lord were kept inside his heart, Prahlada praised the Lord as follows with folded hands: -

**3.9. Prahlada Praising Narasimha**

*“Devatas, Sidhas*, *Brahma*, ascetics and others worship you in several ways everyday with intense devotion. I heard that they are incapable of adequately knowing and praising your glory. I am the son of a demon, conceited, young and immature, having a low intellect. How can I venture to do it? Virtues such as, possessing valour and a beautiful exterior, performance of good acts, dexterity in their execution, a sacred life, austerity and proficiency in the knowledge and performance of rituals are all inadequate to satisfy you by enumerating your great qualities. Elephant-king, Gajendra could satisfactorily praise you by sheer adoption of *Bhakti* which alone gives competence to perform the act adequately (346 to 350). An untouchable worshipping you through synchronization of thoughts, speech, and actions, glorifying thereby his race, is superior in the eyes of you, to a conceited *Brahmin,* even when he is devoid of jealousy, possessing exemplary knowledge, charitability, patience, mental equanimity, adherence to truth and a virtuous life. You are an ocean of grace. You ignore the sins committed by innocent men incapable of knowing you. You punish others for their shortcomings. You are all-pervading and hence the result of every act is to be offered to you to get enlightened with a clarity comparable to that of one`s image in a mirror. Devotion towards you with a pure mind is accepted by you. You are averse to riches devoid of devotion. You are an embodiment of grace and wedded to your devotees.

Oh! Lord! You are eternal. I am insignificant. I now venture unhesitatingly to praise your glory with my limited intellect. One can overcome ignorance and attain salvation by glorifying your virtues. Oh! Ruler of the universe! You are an embodiment of truth. *Devatas* such as *Brahma,* obedient to you in executing your orders, are terrified today at the sight of your dreadful appearance. Your pleasant manifestations are for the good of the worlds and not for causing terror. You killed the demon who terrified people like serpents and scorpions. You thus caused delight in the hearts of the virtuous. The purpose of your manifestation is fulfilled. There is no need for you to be angry any longer. Oh! Lord with a pure mind! You are glorified by people as one eliminating bad and imparting happiness to all. I am not terrified by your fearful appearance as Narasimha with dreadful pangs and eyebrows, locks of hair and nails soaked in blood, eyes exuding fire and garlands of intestines. But I am afraid of the unbearable, cruel, fearful and mean family-life which is an embodiment of a dreadful conflagration. Permit me to take solace at your feet (351 to 355).

Oh! Lord! Suffering due to sorrow and alienation from happiness are usual events occurring to people over several births. One is always subjected to sorrow getting inflicted by its consequences. I am incapable of overcoming attachment to this body. You are the saviour from such a situation as a friend and a well-wisher. I get associated with your devotees, who sing incessantly your stories of incarnation, to overcome the sorrow caused by desires. You save one inflicted by the worries of family-life like parents guiding their children, a medicine saving a patient and a boat rescuing a person getting drowned in an ocean. I am neglected by you till now and it is time for you to come to my rescue. You are the motivation behind the act performed by one, its nature, the sense-organs causing it, its purpose, its time and place of occurrence and the mental state provoking its performance. You cause a mental setup comparable to that of *Janaka* for mundane acts and that of *Brahma* for divine acts. You control the entire gamut of events as one causing salvation and preserving righteousness.

The human being is a form of you. The mind is its powerful ingredient. Your *Maya* creates it, influenced by time and past deeds of the person. The human mind is ignorant. It is influenced by acts ordained by the *Vedas* and the milieu of the family. One gets salvation only through devotion to you by overcoming the influence of such a mind. You are an embodiment of knowledge through which the mind can be conquered. Time coupled with your *Maya* creates a web of the family and controls it. You save me from getting inflicted by the fire of such a family.

People including those who are powerful to control all the directions of the earth, desire riches, longevity, good health and laurels thinking them to be long-lasting. All those could be destroyed by my father through the mere power of twisting of his eyebrows motivated by his anger and fun. Such a powerful person could be killed by you within minutes. Fortunes and the lives of persons like *Brahma* are all transitory. They all vanish under the influence Lord *Vishnu* who is an embodiment of *Kala*, the wheel of time. Summing up, I can say that I became aware of the significance of devotion towards you and the knowledge about you. I serve you hereafter as your servant. Man does not get renunciation from mirage-like comforts of life. Due to ignorance, he considers them to be the objectives of life. Bearing a disease-prone body, he gets engrossed in the fire of lust. He fails to overcome the series of apparent pleasures getting immersed in them. Oh! Lord of the universe! Goddess *Lakshmi*, Lord *Siva* and Lord *Brahma* tried to approach you and failed to get assurance of safety from you. I am a boy born in the family of demons known for their *Tamasa Gunas*. I have a predominance in me of *Rajo Guna*. It is a great wonder for a person like me to get overflowing grace from you shown by putting your hand on my head.

Oh! *Mahatma*! You grant boons impartially to both virtuous persons such as *Brahma* and to vicious people like us, commensurate with the acts of their worshipping you. You are an embodiment of grace like *Kalpavriksha* in fulfilling desires of your devotees. I escaped from falling into the well of *Samsara*, an abode of of *Manmadha*, the god of lust. I could get your grace through the teachings of your devotee *Narada*. Your acts of saving me and punishing my father are not favours done to me. Punishing the bad and protecting the good are your natural instinctive acts. The universe is in you and you are a *Viratswarupa*, a form containing all in you. You create the universe constituted by *Trigunas* and enter into it. Assuming the qualities required, you function both as a saviour and a destroyer. You are responsible for the creation of this universe constituted by acts seemingly permanent and temporary. Your *Maya* creates an imaginary discrimination among the inhabitants of this universe as different individuals. The entire universe is constituted by you. Creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe are acts embedded in you like the power of germination in a seed. At the time of annihilation of the universe created by you, you amalgamate it with you and rejoice in relaxing, closing your eyes actionless, on the bed constituted by Nagendra floating on an ocean. You wake up from that state of meditation after some time. A lotus sprouted from your navel like a banyan tree from its seed. Lord *Brahma* with four faces emerged from the lotus perceiving four directions. He failed to find you in spite of the fact that you were the genesis for his birth. He went into meditaion for several years and found your *Viswarupa* with several heads, several eyes, several faces, several tongues, several ears and several hands. You appeared as *Purushottama* with several ornaments on your body endowed with great qualities and self-effulgence (356 to 360).

Oh! Lord of the universe! You are worshipped by the learned as the focal point of all. You manifested as *Hygriva*, killed the demons, *Madhu* and *Kaitabha*, rescued the *Vedas* and gave them to *Brahma*. Oh! Lord! Please listen! You protect and destroy all the *Lokas* preserving the contemporary rules and regulations in the *Yugas,* namely *Kruta, Treta* and *Dwapara* while ruling them after taking birth in diverse forms such as animals, humans, ascetics and aquatic creatures.

***Kamaharshadi sankalitamai chittambu bhavadiyachintana padavi soradu,***

***Madhuradirasamula maragi chokkuchu jihva nee varnanamunaku nigudaneedu,***

***Sundarimukhamula jooda goruchu choodki tavakakrutulapai dagulavadadu,***

***Vividha durbhashalu vina goru veenulu vinavu yushmatkadhavirachanamulu,***

***Ghrana muravadi dirugu durgandhamulaku, davulu golupadu vyshnavadharmamulaku,***

***Nadagi yundavu, karmendriyamulu purushu, galachu savatula gruhamedhi! galachunatlu (363).***

The human mind filled with qualities such as lust, anger and happiness does not follow the path of devotion towards you. The human tongue addicted to tastes such as sweetness fails to relish the nectar of uttering your name. The human eye attracted by the good looks of beautiful women is not inclined to look at your handsome appearance. The human ears desiring to hear foul language are averse to listen to your stories. The human nose, got habituated to inhaling foul smell, fails to relish fragrance of burning incense used as an oblation in your worship. The organs of work such as hands and legs torture the human body like the troubles thrust on a polygamous husband by his wives. A human being gets thus entangled in the net-work of sense-organs resulting in love for his relations and enmity towards others. *Lokas,* getting drowned in the whirlpool of life and death, need redemption from you since you are responsible for their creation, maintenance and destruction. Such an act is your responsibility. The human beings are your servants and your ardent devotees among them need emancipation by you. Oh! Lord of the universe! Having drunk the nectar of glorifying your virtues, my mind is filled with thoughts about you. I am therefore not frightened by the ocean of *Samsara.* I am pained by the plight of those who are not inclined to worship you due to ignorance, being engrossed in disparities among human beings and immersed in a false sense of happiness (361 to 365).

Through poignant meditation abstaining from desires one can have you as their shelter. Some get engrossed in family-life indulging in mean acts of union with the other sex, like animals, birds and insects. They never get satiated and end up in sorrow. A virtuous man getting your grace remains free from desires. Abstinence from superfluous talking, observing rituals, meditation, worship, listening to sacred stories, study of sacred books, duty-consciousness, exposition of sacred works, staying in solitude and ability to get focused on the job on hand are all acts promoting salvation. Violation of these ten acts is a source of pleasure to those devoid of self-control. It contributes to livelihood for the lazy and becomes an instrument of publicity for the showy. Spiritual knowledge eludes one devoid of devotion towards you.

 A sprout shoots out from a seed after remaining dormant in it. Similarly *Sat* and *Asat* spring from you while you remain formless. A wise man finds you in them through devotion like one getting fire from friction between two pieces of wood. You are *Panchabhutas,* namely earth, water, fire, air and sky. You are also *Pachatanmatras,* namely sound, touch, form, taste and smell. Life, sense-organs, mind, intellect and ego are all your constituent parts. You are both a tendency to act and to abstain from it. The mortals well-versed in worldly knowledge subjected to qualities such as *Satwa, Rajas* and *Tamas* fail to know the beginning and end of your creation and to fathom your complexity. The enlightened persons, abstaining from the mundane rituals, know about you through intense meditation. One who does not pray before your idol daily lying prostrate in your temple, does not utter repeatedly sacred descriptions of you, does not dedicate to you with devotion the entire gamut of actions, does not become ecstatic while worshipping your feet with a pure mind, fails to listen with ears your praise, fails to serve you with his hands, is incapable of attaining salvation in spite of his being a *Yogi*, adept in meditation, a scholar and a saint.”

Prahlada saluted to the lord to condescend and grant him the favour of serving him. Lord *Hari* was pleased with the praise uttered by Prahlada, gave up his anger, became pleasant and said, “Oh! Boy! I am delighted with your behaviour. May everything go well with you! I grant to you what all you desire in your mind. Let there be no anxiety in your mind. I am to satisfy the wishes of my devotees. I am no doubt beyond the comprehension of the mundane living beings. There is salvation for one who sees me even once. My dear boy! I am the donor of all forms of prosperity. The ascetics and scholars pray to me for granting diverse forms of desires. I sanction them. Pray for granting whatever desire you have in mind (366 to 370).” The Lord uttered these words to test the presence or absence of desires in Prahlada’s mind. Prahlada was an embodiment of wantlessness. He had a firm conviction that desires are impediments for one to get salvation through devotion towards the Lord.

Prahlada replied, “Oh! Lord Narasimha! *Paramatma! Purushottama!* Are you tempting me with an offer to grant boons, knowing that I had a tendency from the time of my birth to get desires fulfilled? Desires are the root-cause for terrestrial bonds. I am afraid of such a tendency of my mind. I came to your presence desiring salvation, regimenting my mind to refrain from such temptations. I am aware that desires, sense-organs, mind, body, valour, intellect, life, virtuous living, shyness, memory, riches, truthfulness and achievements are all transient. Subordinates serve the kings expecting wealth in return. Kings respond favourably to get benefits in return. *Such* considertions are not valid in my case. I have no desires nor do you expect benefits. Oh! Lord! In spite of all these considerations, if you wish to grant me a boon, kindly make me attain a state of wantlessness. Such a state makes one attain divinity.” Prahlada saluted to the Lord in all humility uttering these words.

Lord *Hari* replied, “Oh! Prahlada! One like you, well-versed in knowledge and soliciting solitude, never entertains desires. However, I want you to enjoy for a duration of one *Manvantara* all comforts as the king of demons. You listen to stories of my deeds with an auspicious mind. You worship me keeping thoughts in your mind that I permeate in all creatures, as a ruler of the universe and as one promoting *Yajnas*. You pray to me, delinking yourself from the bondages of action by offering its fruits to me. Your store of virtues accruing from your past pious deeds gets spent due to your enjoyment of comforts. You perform rituals to ward off sins. You relinquish your body afterwards as ordained by the laws of nature. You thus get freed from all bondages. Later you attain the privilege of residing in my proximity with a reputation shining brilliant in all the three *Lokas,* matching with that of *Devendra* and permeating in all directions. A human being who thinks reverentially about my incarnation as Narasimha and your narration of my glory gets liberated from rebirth overcoming the bondages of past *Karmas* (370 to 375)”.

Prahlada said, “Oh! Lord with a handsome body and eyes resembling lotuses! You make the faces of those who worship you blossom like the sun blossoming the lotuses. You redeem your devotees from sins like a sickle cutting the creepers. My father failed to recognise your greatness as the saviour of all the *Lokas.*  He was carried away by hatred and anger towards you due to your slaying of his brother *Hiranyaksha* as Lord *Varaha*. He tortured me since I am your devotee. He got cleansed today by your grace. Grant me a boon to redeem him from the cluster of sins and sanctify.” The kind-hearted Lord replied, “Oh! The best among the demons! You are a true devotee of mine. By giving birth to you, your father and ancestors of several of his preceding generations are sanctified and attained auspicious levels. It is true that even sinners are sanctified by residing in places of my devotees who enlighten people to liberate them from the darkness of ignorance. You have a sacred history. Both young and old among the human beings, who worship me like you, overcoming desires, become my devotees. You are the best among them. You keep your thoughts on me and perform now with devotion the last rites of your father as stipulated in the *Vedas*. His body is purified by my touch. He goes to sacred *Lokas* by liberating himself from his sins.” Having got such orders from Lord Narasimha, Prahlada performed the last rites for Hiranyakasipu getting the praise of the best among the *Brahmins* (376 to 380)*.*

**4. Conclusion**

Lord Narasimha appeared pleasant. Lord *Brahma* along with the best among *Devatas* said to him, “Oh! Lord of all with eyes resembling lotuses! You are the consciousness of all. Hiranyakasipu became proud by getting a boon from me to avoid death from all the living beings of my creation. He violated all forms of righteousness. He was killed by you today due to our good fortune. All the *Lokas* are jubilant. This boy is the best among your devotees. You saved him from the fear of death. You granted him boons. All those who recite with devotion the story of your incarnation as Narasimha are freed from the tortures of *Yama* and the fear of death.” Lord Narasimha said,

***“Manninchi devasatrulakennadu nituvanti varamuleekumu,***

 ***Papotpannulaku varamulichuta, pannagamulakamrutamiduta***

 ***Pankajagarbha!”*** (383)

“Oh! Lord born out of a lotus! Never give such boons to the foes of *Devatas*. Giving boons to sinners is like offering nectar to snakes (383).

Having given the command mentioned above, Lord Narasimha vanished after accepting the salutaions of *Brahma* and the other *Devatas*. Prahlada saluted to Lord Narasimha, *Brahma*, the *Prajapatis* and the *Devatas.**Brahma* along with ascetics such as *Sukracharya* conducted the coronation of Prahlada as the emperor of the kingdom of demons, blessed him and was worshipped by him. All the *Devatas* such as *Isanadha* blessed Prahlada complimenting him on his accomplishment. The *Devatas* followed *Brahma* and returned to their respective abodes.

*Narada* narrated as follows to King *Dharmaraja*, the following episode of two gate-keepers of Lord *Vishnu*: - “Consequent upon a curse inflicted on them by a *Brahmin*, they were born as sons of *Diti* in their first birth bearing the names, *Hiranyaksha* and *Hiranyakasipu* and were killed respectively by *Varaha* and *Narasimha,* the two incarnations of the Lord*.* They were born as *Ravana* and *Kumbhakarna* in their second birth and were slain by *Rama*, another incarnation of the Lord. Taking birth as *Sisupla* and *Dantavakta* in their third birth, they were killed by *Krishna.* Intense hatred towards the Lord in all the three births made them utter incessantly the name of the Lord getting thus sanctified. They finally returned as gate-keepers of the Lord.” *Narada* further mentioned that human beings reach an auspicious land devoid of fear by listening or perusing with a pure mind the narration of Lord Narasimha`s sojourn, slaying of Hiranyakasipu and Prahlada`s movements. *Narada* said, “Oh! The best among the Kings! It is your good fortune that Lord *Krishna* visits your house as a friend, brother-in-law, adviser, and a pleasant companion. The form of the Lord to think, introspect and express in words, is beyond the comprehension of even *Devatas* such as *Brahma*.

 ***Sarve Janaha Sukhino Bhavanthu***

 

 **T. S. B. Narasaraju**

***5. Some Biographical Aspects of the Author***

*The author was born in Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh, India, to late Sri Talluri Syamala Rao and Srimati Surya Prabhavatamma on June 7, 1935. He had his earlier education in the V. T. H. School and the Government Arts College, Rajahmundry. He got his M. Sc. Degree with specialization in Chemistry from the Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, in 1957, and joined the Department of Chemistry of the University as a Lecturer. He went on study-leave to the University of Hamburg, Germany by virtue of a Research Fellowship awarded by Government of India and got the Ph. D. Degree in Chemistry of the University in 1964. He was married to Srimati Seetha Devi and has a son and a daughter. He was promoted as a Reader in B. H. U. in 1970 and went to the North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong as a Professor in 1979. He published several research papers in national and international journals and supervised the research work of a large number of Ph.D. students. After retirement in 1995, he served the Acharya Nagarjuna University, Guntur, as a UGC-Visiting Professor.*

*He stays in Hyderabad, Telangana. He can be contacted through mobile no.* ***9949243339*** *and email:****shaamran@gmail.com.***