

## श्री रुद्रम् Śrī Rudram

नमस्तीर्थ्याय च कूल्याय च

Namastīrthyāya kūlyāya ca—Salutation to the Lord who obtains in a sacred place, a place of pilgrimage. Prayag in Allahabad is considered to be tīrtha rājā, since it is a place of confluence of the rivers Gaṅgā and Yamunā.

You go on a pilgrimage for prāyaścitta, to eliminate pāpa. That is why in earlier days people used to walk their way to the place of pilgrimage. In the tīrtha, who eliminates pāpa? Is it the water? No, it is the Lord who obtains there. He is sarvātmā and sarvāntaryātmā. A swim in Gaṅgā does not give you purity. It is your association of the Lord with the place or river that converts it into a sacred one. The purity is in your attitude. The river Gaṅgā is able to bless purely through your own attitude of śraddhā. Whichever place evokes śraddhā, there is Parameśvarā as vibhūti. Or one can say that one recognises a vibhūti because of śraddhā. Tasmai tīrthyāya namaḥ, salutation to the one because of whose glory a place becomes tīrtha.

Kūlyāya namaḥ – The bank of a river is a desirable place to live as people living on the banks of the river nourished the Vedic culture. For performing one's obligatory rituals, one requires a river. The villages are located on the banks of a river or its tributary; the Lord abides therein. Unto him my salutation.

Namaḥ pāryāya cā avāryāya ca<sup>1</sup> — Pāra is the other side of the river. When you cross saṁsāra, what is there on the other side is the Lord alone. Even on the side that you dwell, avāra, is also the Lord. Unto that Lord, my salutation.

Namaḥ prataraṇāya cottaraṇāya ca – Skanda Purāna mentions certain rivers in which one takes a holy dip to get purified of one's pāpas. Because of śraddhā in the purāṇas, one makes a pilgrimage to these rivers. These rivers are pāpa taraṇa hetu, cause for crossing the pāpas. There are other means like prāyaścitta rituals and austerities, which are also efficacious for purifying oneself. All such means are the Lord only. The one who helps you cross the darkness of ignorance through the only means of knowledge is included in the word uttarṇaḥ. Tasmai namaḥ, unto the Lord my salutation.

<sup>1</sup> arvāk tīram avāram tatra bhavaḥ avāryaḥ tasmai—the other side of the river is called avāra and the one who obtains there is avāra, unto him

Ātāryāya<sup>2</sup> namaḥ – Salutation to the one who obtains in rebirth. It is the law of karma that pushes everyone into various bodies. That law of karma is Bhavāvan. Unto Him my salutation.

Ālādyāya<sup>3</sup> namaḥ – Salutation to the one who obtains in the jivas in the form of karma-phala-bhokta, ālādyāḥ. The Lord is the jiva indwelling the body-mind-sense complex. Unto him my salutation.

Namaśśaṣpyāya ca phaenyā ca – Śaṣpyāya, the one who obtains in śaṣpa, tender grass and also the one who is in phaena, foam. Unto him my salutation. Any life form, small and common or any object that has no value in our estimation is not separate from the Lord. Unto Him my salutation.

Sikatyāya namaḥ—The Lord is the antaryāmī in the sand, who makes the sand what it is. Sand is the home for many creatures and the Lord is all of them. Sand is an important agent of filtration; different sizes of sand grains are used at different levels for filtering. Unto that Lord my salutation.

Pravāhyāya namaḥ – A pravāha is possible because someone is pushing the water. Who pushes the water? There is a law. The water's nature is to find its own level. The Lord is that law because of which the water behaves as it is. There are other pravāhas like the flow of time. The Lord is also that law because of which the flow of time is measurable. Unto that Lord my salutation.

*To be continued.....*

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<sup>2</sup> punaḥ āgamanam ātāraḥ tatra bhavaḥ ātāryaḥ tasmai –coming back again is called ātāraḥ and the one who obtains there is ātārya, unto him

<sup>3</sup> alam karma pūrṇam yathā bhavati tathā karmaphalam atti iti alādaḥ jivaḥ tatra bhavaḥ ālādyāḥ tasmai—one who enjoins the results of action in a manner that gives total satisfaction is alāda, the jiva and the one who obtains there is ālādyā, unto him.