

Śrī Rudram

नमो॑ निचे॒रवे॑ परि॒चराया॑रण्यानां॑ पतये॑ नमः॑ ॥ ५ ॥
namo॑ nice॒ravē॑ paricā॒rāyā॑rāṅyānāṃ॑ pataye॑ namaḥ॑ ॥ 5 ॥

namaḥ – salutation; nicerave – to the one who wanders around (more cleverly than the robbers of the forest); pāricarāya – who is constantly on the move for stealing; āraṅyānām – of the forest-thieves; pataye – to the Lord; namaḥ – salutation.

Salutation to the one who wanders around more cleverly than the robbers of the forest, who is constantly on the move for stealing and who is the Lord of the forest thieves.

Namaḥ nicerave – Salutation to the one who is a clever robber. These robbers are in the forest and one must be lucky to return safely from their trap. In his early life, Vālmiki was a robber in the forest. Once he tried to rob Nārada. Nārada asked him, “Why do you commit this crime?”

Vālmiki (retorted): “Why should I not do this?”

Nārada: “This is pāpa karma, a wrong action, that will make you suffer later. Do you want to suffer?”

Vālmiki: “No. But the suffering will be small because it will be shared by my wife and parents.

Nārada: “No. They will not share your pāpas. They will only share the food you give them.”

Vālmiki was shocked to hear this from the sage. He went home and asked his father. His father said, ‘I have my own pāpas. I will not share yours. It is your duty to take care of me.’ His mother confirmed that what his father had said was right. Vālmiki went to his wife hoping for a favourable answer. She said, ‘I do my duty of making a home. Your duty is to provide. Why do you commit this crime? I will not share your pāpas.’

Hurt and disappointed, Vālmiki returned to the saint and prayed, ‘I want to get rid of all the pāpas. Please bless me.’ Nārada asked him to repeat the name ‘Rāma’. After a lapse of time when Nārada returned, he could only hear the sound of Rāma nāma. Nārada called him to come out of the Valmika, anthill, and he was called Valmiki¹. The Lord blesses even people like Vālmiki.

¹ valmike bhavaḥ– one who obtains in an anthill.

The forest thief waits for people to come his way. But there are others who look for people in the forest as well as in the periphery of the forest. They are called nicerus.² Paricara is one who moves around in the society. All these are different types of thieves. The Lord is in the form of nicerus, paricaras and so on.

Āraṇyānām pataye namaḥ – Salutations to the one who is the Lord of the āraṇyās, forest-thieves. A commentator says, ‘He is the greatest among the forests.’ But the idea highlighted in this section being the capacity of the Lord to do aparādha kṣamā, forgiving the wrong doings, the mantra is interpreted as āraṇyānām patiḥ, the Lord of the forest thieves. The Lord can condone any person. When the criminals become devotees, he becomes sahamāna.

नमस्सृकाविभ्यो जिघांसद्भ्यो मुष्णतां पतये नमः ॥ ६ ॥

namassṛkā vibhyo jighāṁsadbhyo muṣṇatām pataye namaḥ || 6||

namaḥ – salutation; sṛkā vibhyaḥ – to the one who is the Lord of those protecting themselves with weapons; jighāṁsadbhyaḥ- who is (the Lord of) those desirous of destroying others; muṣṇatām – of those who steal grains in fields; pataye – to the Lord; namaḥ – salutation.

Salutation to the one who is the Lord of those who are protecting themselves with weapons, desirous of destroying others and who is the Lord of those who steal grains in the fields.

Namaḥ sṛkā vibhyaḥ – Any yantra, weapon, is called sṛkā. Vajrāyudhā is a sṛkā. Sṛkadhāri, one who holds a sṛkā, is Indra. With weapon and armour, some people protect themselves and they are called sṛkāviṇaḥ.³

There are other people who wish to kill animals, jighāṁsats.⁴ One can kill animals for food, but the animals should have a chance to get the hunter. The hunters were equally exposed to the animals. Thus they were more or less matched. Animals do not have a rifle, but only their own legs, claws and so on. A deer has swiftness in its legs and can run away to protect itself. Modern killers, riding a jeep, protect themselves well and shoot the animals. This kind of criminal act will only give them sorrow in life. They are jighāṁsats, desirous of killing the animals without any fear of them. They may even want to kill other human beings too, by protecting themselves first. One who is the Lord of these people, unto him my salutation.

Muṣṇatām pataye namaḥ – Salutations to the one who is the Lord of those who steal grains. For instance, a full-grown crop that is standing in the field is harvested overnight and

² āraṇyaka corāpekṣayāpyapahāra viṣaye nitarām sañcaraṇaṣilo niceruḥ

³ sṛkeṇa yantrēna ātmānam avanti iti sṛkāviṇaḥ tebhyaḥ sṛkā vibhyaḥ (sṛkāviṇām) pataye namaḥ - — those who protect themselves with a thunderbolt are sṛkāviṇaḥ; unto him, the one who is the Lord of them.

⁴ prāṇinaḥ hantum icchantāḥ jighāṁsantāḥ tebhyaḥ jighāṁsadbhyaḥ (jighāṁsatām) patāye namaḥ- those who desire to kill (other) beings is jighāṁsantāḥ; unto him, the one who is the Lord of them, who protects from them (my) salutation.

stolen away by people. In this manner, a tree full of harvestable mangoes can become bereft of fruits overnight. Suppose they give up such acts and surrender to Īśvara, the Lord then becomes their protector. Otherwise, being a svāmī, master, he will chastise them. When those people turn into devotees, they escape by neutralising the pāpa. It is said in Kaivalyopaniṣad⁵ yaḥ śata-rudriyam adhite saḥ brahmahatyāyaḥ pūto bhavati... – one who chants Śata Rudriya... becomes freed of pāpa of killing a brahmin. The upaniṣad describes different forms of crimes from which a person is released.

Here the mantra reveals that one should not condemn such people. They are not separate from the Lord. The only problem is their abuse of free will, for which they will suffer. But Bhagavān does not suffer. Because of his knowledge, he is asaṅga, untouched; this is a very important thing to know about Īśvara. The absolute purity of vastu is the saving fact for Īśvara and is also the saving grace for jīva, as he is non-separate from Īśvara.

Carl Jung conceived of a God that included Satan also. God should include the shadow. The good and bad together make the Lord. But then, since God is bad too, Jung said that he could not trust him. And a God who cannot be trusted is of no use to the human being. It is only in the appreciation of the infallible Lord that the jīva can resolve distrust. In childhood you pick up distrust. Once you discover the parents are fallible, then you lose the capacity to trust. You continue to get hurt again and again. You can only trust the infallible. Infallible is the Lord. Without your knowing the Lord's nature, he cannot help you as much as he could otherwise. In your awareness of the infallibility of Īśvara alone, you can relax.

Jung failed to conceive the infallible nature of God transcending good and bad. Therefore, he could not have trust in God that included Satan, who is ṣṛkāvi, jighāṁsat and so on, as these are all given to acts of hurting. For us, they are non-separate from Parameśvara. When the criminals pray to the Lord, they earn his grace and the prayer neutralises their pāpas. Thus, when they surrender, Lord becomes a blessing factor for them. He is the chastiser and he is also the chastised.

Suppose you say, the Lord is chastised and not me, then you are free from it. It is your ahaṅkāra that isolates you. You can dilate this ahaṅkāra through prayer. There is no reality for the ahaṅkāra as it is only figurative. I consider this section is the best because it covers every crime in the world. Have you committed any crime? The Lord says, 'Come to me'. He is presented as perpetrator of crime. When a habitual offender recognises, 'I am Īśvara,' then the habitual offender in him resolves. Behind every crime there is hurt, angry ego, which is frightened and isolated. The pressure to accomplish and do something is greater than the basic sense of right and wrong called conscience. One goes against the basic conscientious self that has the knowledge of right and wrong and one does so because of one's pressure. If one is able to recognise the Lord as oneself, even though one may not be the Lord, one has surrendered to the Lord. The act itself will give one relief and one will not commit crime anymore.

To be continued.....

⁵ Mantra 24