

Śrī Rudram Mantra 7

(Continued from the last issue)



The word *heḍaḥ* mean anger. The prefix *ava* has to be connected to the verb *īmahe*; *īmahe*; *rudrāṇām heḍaḥ avemahe*—we neutralise that anger of the Rudras by this stuti and namaskāra. Let them give us their prasāda. May these devatās bless us.

When you say, ‘Do not inflict any harm to me,’ what do you mean? Do the devatās have any agendum for you? No! They are only adhiṣṭhāna devatās, presiding deities, giving you your *karma phala*. Your helplessness as a *jīva* makes you pray to Bhagavān who has all the six aiśvaryās with him. Here, the *jīva* who prays is the one who feels the helplessness and therefore, he or she prays. He may be a *mumukṣu* seeking mokṣa, freedom, or a devotee seeking limited ends. It is one’s saṅkalpa that makes the difference. There can be some severe obstacles in one’s pursuits over which one has no control. The helplessness on the part of the *jīva* is the basis for this kind of prayer. He prays, ‘Let my pursuit be free from all obstacles.’ When he says, ‘withdraw your anger’, it is an attitude on the part of the *jīva*. Every *mantra* here has an episode in the purāṇās wherein these kinds of vākyās are seen. One can just realise one’s helplessness and wail, or seek help. Seeking help is intelligent living. “Let me be free from guilt and hurt”. It is the reason why this *mantra* is chanted by a sannyāsi, a *karma-* yogī, as well as a person of the world.

This mantra is read with the next *mantra* to complete its meaning.

Mantra 8

Rṣi - Marutvān; Chandas - Ṣaṭpadā Jagatī; Devatā - Ādityātmaka Parameśvaraḥ

असौ योऽवसर्पति नीलग्रीवो विलोहितः ।

– उतैनं गोपा अदृशन्नदृशन्नदह्यार्यः ।

उतैनं विश्वा भूतानि स दृष्टो मृडयति नः ॥ ८ ॥

asāu yo’vāsarpati nīlagrīvo vilohitaḥ ।
utainaṁ gopā adṛśannadrśannudahāryaḥ ।

utainaṁ viśvā bhūtāni sa dṛṣṭo mṛdayāti naḥ ॥ 8 ॥

asau – this; yaḥ – the one who; avasarpati – moves (in the sky); nīlagrīvaḥ – one having a blue neck; vilohitaḥ – one having red hue; uta – even; enam – this (Rudra in the form of sun); gopāḥ – shepherds; adṛśan – see; adṛśan – see; udahāryaḥ – women who bring waters; uta – even; enam – this Rudra; viśvā bhūtāni – all beings (see); saḥ – that Lord Rudra; dṛṣṭhaḥ – seen (by us); naḥ mṛdayāti – make us enjoy happiness.

Lord Rudra whose neck (sky) is blue; moves in the sky. Even shepherds see him, women who bring waters also see Him. All beings see Him. May that Lord who is seen by us make us happy.

Rudra in the form of Āditya is a blessing as He travels from east to west. Who is this Āditya? He is none other than nīlagrīva, one whose neck is blue. This particular expression of the Lord is Vedic and there is a puranic story based on the Vedic expression¹. These kinds of stories are gold mines for psychologists and philosophers as these are myths conveying messages. The best myths are available only in the purāṇās. Star Wars is a modern myth. And some are committed to these science fictions as others are committed to Soaps². As the puranic story goes, once the *asuras* and *devas* were churning the milky ocean (represents the Veda) as both wanted to get amṛta, the nectar of freedom from mortality (represents the knowledge of Vedanta). The Lord told them to churn the ocean of milk. For this, they used Mount Mandara as the churning rod. They enticed Vasuki to act as the cord for churning the ocean with Mount Mandara.

With the *devas* and the *asuras* on either side of the Mount Mandara, each pulling one of the ends of the coiled Vasuki alternately, the churning began. As they were churning, out came varieties of things. A lot of sādhyās, things to be gained were seen. For good things to emerge, all the impurities have to first go. So first came the poison and its fumes were found to be deadly. The *devas* prayed to Lord Śiva who responded consuming the poison. Pārvati stopped the poison at the neck and so the Lord is called Nīlakaṇṭha. In this story, *bhakta-anugraha*, the blessing nature of the Lord is shown. In the Vedic imagery of the Lord's form, heaven is his head, his neck is the (blue) sky, his breath is vāyu and his feet are the earth.

Being the sun, he is vilohitaḥ, crimson in colour. When he rises in the east and sets in the west, he can be seen so. The Lord moves in the sky, as though, so that all can see Him. Gopāḥ api adṛśan³ udahāryaḥ api adṛśan, viśvā bhūtāni api adṛśan—Even the cowherds see, women carrying waters see, all beings see. Uдахāryas are also water carriers who are often nomads.

All of us see the sun, enjoy the sun and take the blessings of the sun. All beings including trees, plants, cows and crows see him. Coconut trees grow straight but denied of sunlight they will bend to get it. Cows, sheep and so on wait for the sun to come. The crows wake up before you wake up. In villages, people wake up generally by the call of the birds. They all get up and welcome the sun. What does it indicate? It looks as though the Lord in the form of sun appears to be happy seeing us in the morning. Sarvāṇi bhūtāni ānandayitum upasarpati udyantaṁ vā etāṁ sarve prajāḥ pratinandanti—he rises to make all beings happy or as the sun rises, all beings welcome him with praise.

The idea here is that everybody enjoys the Lord as a blessing who is sarva- pratyakṣa, available for all to see and upāsya, worshipful. In fact, whatever is seen here is all Parameśvara. Both Puruṣasūktam and Śrī Rudram talk of the Lord being everything. The prayer is to shower blessings and neutralise the duritas.

¹ When we interpret Veda, quoting this puranic story is not appropriate.

² Soap-operas – TV Serials of social themes.

³ paśyanti ityarthah