

Sree Nrisinghadeva

The Manifestations of Vishnu cannot be numbered. Each of them has distinctive Functions which should not be confounded with those of the Others. None of Them must be supposed to be inferior or superior to Another. None of Them is less than Divine. There is no applicability of the principle of

disruptive divisibility either of Function or of Personality to Vishnu or in regard to His Divine constituents. Those, therefore, who choose to display any want, or discrimination in the degree, of regard towards any of the Manifestations of the Divinity, commit a grave offence and display utter ignorance of the real

Nature of the Divinity by confounding Him with a narrow fiction of their depraved imaginations.

It is, however, no offence to recognize the distinctive nature of the Personality and Functions of the different Divine Manifestations. The view that there can be no distinctiveness in Godhead as regards either activity or personality ignores the absolute Nature of the Divinity who comprehends, both individually as well as collectively, every entity and, at the same time, maintains His Absolute aloofness from all of them in His Own Proper Personality and his infinite plenary and secondary Manifestations.

As a matter of fact it is only the unreserved serving aptitude of the perfectly pure soul that is eligible to function on the plane of the Absolute without being troubled by disruptive discriminations on the one hand and denial of all distinctiveness of the Divine Function on the other.

Sree Nrisinghadeva performs the Divine Function of protecting the Devotee of Godhead and punishing his persecutors. This Function is performed in a way that is wholly incomprehensible to the expectations of the persecutors themselves. In their confusion those who happen to undergo the Divine punishment are only impressed with the most terrible form of an unintelligible manifestation. The

devotee is privileged to find the true and perfectly benign nature of the process and of the Personality of the Punisher. This Function as well as this distinctive Divine Personality are not a passing affair. Both of them are eternal and there is a specific realm where Sri Nrisinghadeva is eternally served by His devotees.

Sree Nrisinghadeva graciously made His Appearance in this world, that is to say to the actual view of unbelievers, at a very early stage in the evolution of the theistic consciousness of the human race. He has been described as the fourth of the Avatars of Vishnu. He appeared as the protector of the great devotee of Godhead, Sree Prahlad Maharaj from the persecutions of his demon-father Hiranyakashipu who was slain by Sree Nrisinghadeva.

The beginning of devotion is attended by the manifestation of the causeless mercy of Sree Nrisinghadeva exemplified in the conduct of Sree Prahlad Maharaj. The boy Prahlada is perfectly fearless and is distinguished by the quality of speaking the truth under all circumstances from his very childhood. He does not brag of his bravery. Such bragging would be hypocrisy for one who is perfectly aware that he is the protected of the Lord. He is only anxious to act up to his great opportunity of preaching the unalloyed truth in the most uncon-

genial circumstances humanly conceivable in the only manner in which it will command attention viz. by the direct method of blunt unconcern for personal consequences.

The martyr for religion is one of the trite characters, who has been unduly lauded to the skies by persons who have no idea of true devotion. It is time that the so-called martyr for religion need go out of the theistic literature of the world for good. Let there be martyrs for all other causes. But religion does not require any martyrs or any sacrifice on the part of any person. This is so for the simple reason that he is the only person who is in a position to understand that every thing in the scheme of Providence is a contrivance for his protection.

A child can be infinitely more fearless, and naturally, than the bravest warriors and heroes of this world, if he obtains the mercy of Sri Nrisinghadeva. It is not altogether inconceivable to admit the possibility of the eternal existence of a happy realm where this mercy is enjoyed by every one of its denizens. It is also perfectly admissible that such a state of things would be incompatible with one of the interests that we are so anxious to promote (?) by our futile efforts. But it is not given to our poor understanding to apprehend how such conduct would be feasible on this mundane plane. The conduct of

Prahlada would seem to be opposed to all our most cherished interests and the methods intended for securing them. It is likely to be voted as chimerical and mischievous and there is every possibility of its turning out a real nuisance if the attempt to imitate the conduct of Prahlada is made by a person who has no access to the plane of Divine service.

But it would not be less foolish to pay no heed to the teachings of Sri Prahlada Maharaj on the ground that it is not applicable to a hypocrite like myself. It would be both foolish and wicked to condemn the conduct of a pure devotee of Sri Nrisinghadeva, for the deliberate failures of fettered souls. This argument will not of course help to establish the claim of any particular individual to the status of a pure devotee of Sri Nrisinghadeva. The pure devotee is a substantive reality in the only sense of that term. His existence cannot be challenged any more than the existence of a piece of stone. Nay the existence of the devotee is rightly claimed to be the substantive reality itself of which the mundane stone is only a perverted reflection. The function of the devotee is also correspondingly more real than any form of mundane activity and is, therefore, not obstructible by any so-called adverse mundane circumstance. As a matter of fact there can be no adverse

circumstance on the plane of the spiritual function.

There are persons who may be disposed to assent to the principle of the above facts but who withhold their complete consent to the point of personal participation in the ritualistic worship of Sri Nrisinghadeva as laid down in the Scriptures. This objection to ritual takes one of two forms. The objection may be either to mechanicality, or to the form of concrete external symbols as representing the object or offerings of worship. Those who are disposed to confound the Holy form of the Divinity revealed to our view by the *sadhus* in pursuance of the Scriptures, with idols made by man, may be regarded as opposed to all worship on principle. Because the charge will be brought against all forms of worship if one is definitely disposed to be sceptical regarding the possibility of revelation. This would be also opposed to the rational principle itself and one may be pardoned if one refuses to consider further the opposition of such irrational atheists.

The objection of mechanicality deserves the most careful consideration at the hands of all persons who are not prepared to be deprived of the proper use of their rational faculty. The whole issue of genuineness of worship depends practically on the personality of the

worshipper. It is our contention based on Shastric as well as rationalistic considerations that unless the worshipper has access to the transcendental plane no genuine worship of the Absolute person is possible. The *sadhu* is such a person. The *sadhu* is identical with the individual soul in the natural state of perfect freedom from the domination of the limiting power. It is the possible nay the only and paramount, duty of every person to seek to attain to the purely spiritual state. This is a duty which every individual owes to his own proper self. This state of free spiritual existence is not attainable by any method devised by the limited understanding of man, as it is at present. He, therefore, requires help from a transcendental source. The genuine *sadhu* is such a source. He alone can, therefore, devise any system of genuine worship for the conditioned soul. This help is also in accordance with the teachings of the Scriptures.

If we try to follow the Scriptures by our own limited and fallible understanding we are bound to be turned into either an irrational fanatic or an irrational sceptic or a malicious atheist. But neither can any of us avoid the duty of following the Scriptures under the absolute guidance of real *sadhus* without turning into the enemies of pure devotees like Sri

Prahlada Maharaj, and being killed by the offence of persecuting His servants
Sri Nrsinghadeva in consequence of for their beneficent activities.
