VIṢṆU STOTRAS IN GARUḌAPURĀṆA

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Abstract

The Purāṇas in general are records of various transformations that have taken place on this earth and in the universe as a whole. Every time of human knowledge is recorded here along with His awareness that He is a speck in this large creation of the cosmos. He is also very much aware that if there is a creation there should be Creator; this Creator, though only One has been variously addressed by our ancient Rśis. In their gratitude to the Supreme Being they have extolled this Creator in numerous ways.

Stotras are one type of praising the Creator as a record of our awe and devotion. The Purāṇas are replete with stutis on the different deities. Lord Śiva and Lord Viṣṇu and goddess Śakti are the recipients of majority of stutis.

Here the stutis specifically on Viṣṇu as found in the Ācāra Kaṇḍa of Garuḍapurāṇa are analysed.

The Garuḍapurāṇa is one of the eighteen Mahā Purāṇas in Sanskrit literature. This Purāṇa is classified into three sections namely Ācāra Kaṇḍa, Preta Kaṇḍa and Brahma Kaṇḍa.

The Ācāra Kaṇḍa of Garuḍapurāṇa has several stotras like Gaṇapatistotra, Śivastotra, Śūryastotra, Gāyatrīstotra, Durgāstotra, Lakṣmīstotra and Viṣṇustotras. Of these, the Viṣṇustotras namely the Vaiṣṇava Pañjara, Viṣṇu Sahasranāma, Kulāṃḍatotra, Mṛtyāṣṭakastotra, Acyutastotra and Nārasiṁha stotra tell us about Lord Viṣṇu’s supremacy and his great fame; and these are discussed.

VAIṢṆAVA PAṽJARA:

The thirteenth chapter consisting of fourteen ślokas of Ācāra Kaṇḍa in Garuḍapurāṇa is called the Viṣṇu Pañjara also known as Vaiṣṇava Pañjara. Lord Hari describes in these ślokas the greatness of himself as Viṣṇu, the Supreme God of gods. The Pañjarastotra is about Lord Hari’s prowess as Viṣṇu along with his various weapons and wonderful adornments. This stotra once chanted will help devotees
to operate it as a *kavaca* to protect themselves by invoking Lord Viṣṇu's various weapons and embellishments to one's help.

Lord Viṣṇu's various weapons protect the devotee from different directions as - the Sudarśana cakra in the east, the Gada-Kaumodaki (mace) in the South, the Hala (ploughshare) in the west and the Musala (club) in the North:

1. **Namo Namo tāte gòvinda chakrā guṇḍa sudarśanaṁ.**
   
   प्राच्या रक्षस्व मां विष्णो त्वामहं शरणं गतः।
   
2. **Gadā Kośamodakī- guṇḍa padanāṁ namo dhrṣṭu tāte.**
   
   गदां कौमोदकी- गूढ़ पद्यनाम नमोदस्तु ते।
   
3. **Yaṁga raktasva maṁ viṣṇo tvaṁ haṁ sharvaṁ gataṁ.**
   
   याम्यं रक्षस्व मा विष्णो त्वामहं शरणं गतं।
   
4. **Hṛtamaṅgā saindhve nāstte puruṣottam.**
   
   हठमान्याः सौनन्दे नासते पुरुषोत्तम।
   
5. **Pratiyaṁ raktasva maṁ viṣṇo tvaṁ haṁ sharvaṁ gataṁ.**
   
   प्रतीत्यां रक्षस्व मा विष्णो त्वामहं शरणं गतं।
   
6. **Musūtane śātane guṇḍa pūndrikapanse ṛkṣa māmaṁ.**
   
   मुसुतनं शातनं गूढ़ पुण्ड्रिकाश्रक्षा मामा।
   
7. **Uttarstvājanāmabhavatṛ sharaṁ gataṁ.**
   
   उत्तरस्त्वा जनानाथ भवत् शरणं गतं।

The Khaḍga (sword) protects in the North East and the Pāñcajanya (conch) in the South East, the weapon Cāndramāsa in the South West and his beautiful adornments in the form of the Vaijayantī garland and the Śrīvatsa (gem) in the North West:

1. **Khagāmaṅgā channārth abhishābhdikāhāre.**
   
   खड्गमान्याः चन्द्रार्थ अभिशाब्धदिकं हरे।
   
2. **Namastre raktarhatr ēṣātāntī sharanaṁ gataṁ.**
   
   नमस्ते रक्षोऽहि ऐशान्त्या शरणम् गताः।
   
3. **Pañcārthā mahāśvetākathārthā caṇṭakāmā.**
   
   पांचार्थं महाश्वेताकथार्थं चर्पनकथम्।
   
4. **Pragūḍha raktāṁ viṣṇo āgaṇḍeṣyvāṁś raktāṁ sukaṁ.**
   
   प्रगूढ़ ह्रक्षां मां विष्णो आगण्डेṣ्यवसं रक्षसं सुकर।
   
5. **Chandrasūryaṁ samagraśa khāṁ caṇḍamsaṁ तथा.**
   
   चन्द्रसूर्यं समागृह्य खड्गं चाण्डमसं तथा।
   
6. **Nāmaḥrthāṁ ca rक्षत्रविवंद्यवर्तिः नृत्तसरिणर।**
   
   नामर्थाः मा च रक्षस्व विवंद्यवर्त्त नृत्तसरिणर।
   
7. **Vaijyantī- samagraśa śrīveṣṭaṁ kṛṣṇadhūṣyaṁ.**
   
   वैजयंती- समगृह्य श्रीवेष्टम कृष्णधूष्यां।
   
8. **Vāyanāṁ raktāṁ maṁ deva hṛṣyātvā namo dhrṣṭu tāte.**
   
   वायावनं रक्षां मा देव हृष्याय नमोदस्तु ते।

The Lord is further prayed to for protecting a person from above seated on Garuḍa and from the powers of the nether worlds in the form of Kūrma and Matsya:

1. **Vacnetantī samārahaṁ tvāntarikser jāhāṁ.**
   
   वैन्ततं समारह्यं त्वांतरिक्षे जाहां।
   
2. **Rakṣasvājitaṁ sadā namaste dhrṣṭu prajñā.**
   
   रक्षसवाजितं सदा नमस्ते द्हर्ष्टस्तप्रज्ञ।
   
3. **Viṣṇulakṣaṁ samārahaṁ raktāṁ maṁ tvā rṣṣaṇtā.**
   
   विष्णुलक्षः समारह्यं रक्षां मा त्वा र्षष्ठात्त।
   
4. **Akkūpar namastubhyāṁ mahāgyāna namo dhrṣṭu tāte.**
   
   अक्रूपः परं नमस्तुभ्यं महाग्येन नमोदस्तु ते।
The entire upper body of the devotee is to be protected by Bāhupañjara of the Lord:

कर्तर्यांगपुलिषु सत्य त्वं वाहपञ्जरम्॥
कठवत्वा रक्ष्यते मा विष्णो नम्स्ते पुरुषोत्तम।

The various names of the Lord used in these fourteen ślokas are-

Viṣṇu, Puruṣottama, Punḍarikākṣa, Rakṣogna, Nṛkesarin, Hayagriva, Janārdana, Akūpāra, Mahāmī, Ajita and Aparājita.

Lord Śaṅkara had narrated this mantra to Goddess Kātyāyanī and the Goddess chanted this mantra with reverential faith; the infinite power of this mantra protected her well and it helped the goddess in killing the mighty Mahiṣāsura, Raktabeja and other evil powers:

पुरुषोत्तमस्य यात्रा ज्ञातवज्जन: कात्यायनस्य वृष्टीवज।

It is further added that by reciting this stotra with reverential faith, one can destroy one’s enemies at all times from different directions as it helps him draw Lord Viṣṇu’s powers:

एत्यजनपन्नो भत्त्या शत्रूर्विजयं रक्षस्ति।

There is a similar śloka seen in the tenth Skanda of Bhāgavata purāṇa which is called Bālarakṣaṇa stotra. It is addressed by Yaśodā to Lord Viṣṇu as a prayer to protect childKRṣṇa.

VIŚṆU SAHASRANĀMA:

Like the Vaiṣṇava Pañjara which tells us about Lord Viṣṇu’s weapons protecting on all directions, in the fifteenth chapter (260 ślokas) of Garuḍapurāṇa we have Viṣṇu Sahasranāma which speaks of Lord Viṣṇu’s many praiseworthy names that burn one’s sins. When Lord Rudra asks for a means of deliverance, Lord Viṣṇu imparts to him the hymn of His own names. This hymn is different from the well-known one uttered by Bhīma in the Anuśāsanaparva of the Mahābhārata. Despite the differences between the Viṣṇu Sahasranāma in the Garuḍapurāṇa and the Viṣṇu Sahasranāma in Mahābhārata, there are some similarities. Out of Lord Viṣṇu’s many wonderful names, 127 names are the same and 56 names are closely related to each other.

Here are a couple of examples that show the similarities between the two Viṣṇu Sahasranāmas:
NĀRASIMHA STOTRA:

This stotra in twenty-five ślokas forms the content of chapter 231 of the Ācāra Kaṇḍa. The circumstances leading to the composition of this stotra is briefly stated in the first five ślokas. Lord Śiva had created the Mātrkās with the purpose of killing the demon Andhaka. Once Andhaka was killed, the Mātrkās started devouring all the other living souls of the universe without listening to Lord Siva's admonitions. Lord Śiva meditates on the figure of the mighty Narasimha who appears before him. Here the terrific form of the Lord is described in great detail.

Śankara paying obeisence describes the glory of Lord Nārāśimha and pleases him with his hymns in which he praises the Lord as below– the Lord is the destroyer of the demon king Hiranyakasipu whose entrails were torn asunder by the Lord’s finger-nails; Lord Nārāśimha is radiant like millions of suns with a voice of roar of universal ocean of dissolution; His riches exceed thousands of Kuberas; He is mightier than thousands of planets and Rudras; He is prayed to by thousands of Brahmās; He is looked up to by thousands of Indras; He is the remover of thousands of rebirth:

Nārāśimha then states that he does not wish to destroy the Mātrkās as he is their creator. Lord Nārāśimha, being the supreme god of gods, merges them into His own person and re-establishes peace in the world.
The penultimate sloka says that by reciting this hymn, all that is desired is said to be fulfilled and a person is capable of getting his miseries destroyed just like the morning dew getting dissolved by the rising sun:

जपेरि द्व सन्ततुः स्वज्ञात: ज्ञात: नीत्यायार्थावशैषुमाती ।
समासंगमस्य करोति मूलत: वद तदा तिष्ठति तत:सिर्भे ॥

KULĀMṚṬA STOTRA:

Kulāmṛṭa stotra in twenty-four verses (of chapter 232) has been narrated for the first time by Lord Śiva to sage Nārada, the foremost of Rṣis. The stotra explains about the Supreme Being of all Deities, Lord Viṣṇu. It is a secret hymn of Jñānātmā that dispels all the miseries associated to the chain of rebirths:

झानामूर्ति परं गुह्यं रहस्यमृतिततम ।
वश्यामि श्रृणु हुःश्रवं भववन्धयापरम् ॥

The next twelve verses explain how by praying to Lord Viṣṇu one can be liberated from the shackles of samsāra. Of them, the first five verses give in detail how gods and men get deluded about their own supremacy and how by constantly meditating upon Lord Viṣṇu one can attain liberation.

The ensuing eight verses are beautifully composed with the repetition of the phrase – Viṣṇum sadā dhyayet sa mucyate – at the end of each verse reiterating thereby the supremacy of Viṣṇu as the Almighty. Also his qualities such as being birthless, omniscient, eternal, blissful, pure, the embodiment of knowledge, decayless, fearless and so on are also enumerated:

वर्तनु विष्णुमनाचन्तज्ञातमति संसिद्धतम ।
सर्वज्ञातम विष्णु सदा ध्यायेतसमुच्चयते ॥
देवं गमोचितं विष्णु सदा ध्यायन्विचुंच्यते ।
अशारीरं विधातां सर्वज्ञातमनोरतिम् ॥
अन्धसं सर्वगं विष्णु सदा ध्यायनुविसुच्यते ॥
निविकल्पं निराभासं निष्प्रपं सिरामणम् ॥
वासुदेवं गुरुं वं विष्णु सदा ध्यायनुविसुच्यते ॥
सर्वोद्भावस्य यावत्मात्मं चैतन्यः पक्षम् ॥
शुभमेकातरं विष्णु सदा ध्यायनु विसुच्यते ॥
वाक्यातीतं त्रिकालं विश्वेष्यं लोकसम्प्रक्षणाम् ॥
Anyone who recites this *mantra* or listens to this recitation gains the blessings of having done Āśvamedha Yāga and Vājapeyī Yajña; he is also relieved of all fears and miseries that are attached to the chain of rebirth\textsuperscript{14}:

अथमेधपरस्हाणि वाजपेयशतानि च ।
क्षणेमकाणुस्तिनयं कलां नाहि नित्यः पोढ़दीः ॥

**MṛTYVAŚṬAKA STOTRA:**

The *Mṛtyvaśṭaka* (chapter 233 with 11 verses) is said to have been taught by Lord Viśṇu himself to Märkaṇḍeya who conquered the Lord of death by reciting this\textsuperscript{15}:

मृत्यु-अश्मकमिदं पुरुषं मृत्यु प्रशांनम् गुरुम् ।
मार्कण्डेयस्यिदः स्वयं विषुरुवाच ह ॥

And Sage Märkaṇḍeya contemplated on Lord Viṣṇu who is eternal, infinite and the most effulgent in his *ḥṛdpadma*\textsuperscript{16}:

हृद्यमःयः पुरुषं नारायणं शास्त्वमहेर्यम् ।
विचित्रत्व स्मृत्युदिर्घिरामां मृत्युं स योगी जितवामहैव ॥

In a hymn praising the Lord, Märkaṇḍeya says at the end of each of the six *slokas*\textsuperscript{17} a refrain – *kinno mṛtyuḥ karisyati* (what shall Mṛtyu do unto me?) since he has taken refuge with Lord Viṣṇu.
The seventh śloka declares that Mrtyu on hearing this hymn fled away and Märkanḍeya thus conquered death:

इत्युदीर्दितमार्कर्य स्तोत्रं तत्त्वं महात्मनः।
अप्यातस्ततो मृत्युः विष्णुदृष्टोऽप्रपीडितः॥

It is also stated that those who chant this mantra thrice a day with devotion will not suffer a premature death and will live a full life:

इदम् यद घटतः विद्वेदन्त नियतं शुचिः।
नाकोऽवलं तत्वं मृत्युः स्यात् नस्यवाच्यं चैव चैव॥

There are similar ślokas like Mrtyuñjayā śloka and Candraśekarāśṭakam which were recited by sage Märkanḍeya on Lord Śiva to conquer death.

**ACYUTA STOTRA:**

Sūta narrates the Acyuta stotra to Śaunaka (chapter 234 in 66 verses). The stotra, it is said, was originally narrated by Brahmā to Nāradā. The hymn describes the various characteristics and deeds of Lord Acyuta. From śloka 5 - 17, paying obeisence to Lord Acyuta, his various names are enumerated.

From verses 18 - 22, the greatness of the Lord is extolled; from verses 23 - 36, the Lord is addressed directly. From 37-49 the inexplicable cosmic presence of the Lord which can be understood by the Yogis and self-controlled people is once again described.

In short, He is the supreme preceptor, the mantra itself, the object of worship as well as the worship itself, the supreme power, the sacrifice, the implements of sacrifice, the sacrifical mantra, the oblation as well as the priest:

त्वं गुरुस्तं हरे विष्णुस्तं दीक्षामभ्रमण्डलम्।
त्वं व्यासभ्रमण्डलस्तं च पुष्पादिसाधनम्॥...
धर्ममदानंस्तं हि वेदिभ्यं च शतंकः॥
In the next few ślokas the Lord Himself is eulogised as the Vedas Brahmā, Indra and other deities, all the different types of beings in the world like Devas, Dānavas and Manuṣyas. Thus the omnipervasive nature of the Lord is brought out in these ślokas.

By chanting this hymn with devotion, a person gets his worldly ties broken immediately and attains supreme Bliss instantaneously:

अविराल्लभमेव भोज्यं चित्तवा संसारवनिमोऽ
अन्योऽपि यो जपेदत्रया नित्यं नियतः चुच्चिः

The positive effect of the hymn is said to be that a person can fulfill his desires by reciting it thrice a day even during Kaliyuga. Instances of a son less man getting a son, a sick man getting rid of his diseases, a poor man attaining wealth and a captive man attaining liberty are also given:

इदं स्तोत्रं मुने सोपपि सर्वकाममवासुभाषात्
पुिराधिष्ठि लम्बते पुिािवद्धौ सुचेते बन्धनं भवत्
रोगार्थिमुन्ये रागी लम्बते निदन्नावणमं
विद्यार्थी लम्बते विद्या भाग्यं कीर्तिं च विन्दुः

A self controlled person is said to become absolved of all sins by reciting this hymn with devotion:

इर्मं स्तव्व ये सतं मनुष्यं पठेच तद्द्वप्रयत् प्रशान्त: ।
स भूताप्पमावित्तप्रभावः प्रवाति लोकं वित्तं मुरारे: ॥

CONCLUSION:

The stotras from the Ācāra Kāṇḍa of the Garudapurāṇa seen above tell us of Lord Viṣṇu’s great supremacy and how he is the supreme god of all gods and Brahmā of all Brahmā’s. These stotras help us to attain good virtues through meditation and devotion to the Lord. The devout recital of his names of the Lord absolves us of our sins.

ENDNOTES:
1. Garudapurāṇa, 13.1cd-4.
2. ibid. 13.5-8
3. ibid. 13.9-10
4. ibid. 13.11.
5. ibid. 13.12cd-14ab
6. ibid. 13.14cd
7. ibid. 231.6-11
8. ibid. 231.12-6
9. ibid. 231.18-22
10. ibid. 231.24
11. ibid. 232.5
12. ibid. 232. 6-11
13. ibid. 232.12-8
14. ibid. 231.21
15. ibid. 233.9
16. ibid. 233.11
17. ibid. 233.1cd-6
18. ibid. 233.7
19. ibid. 233.10
20. ibid. 234. 23, 24cd
21. ibid. 234. 28-36cd
22. ibid. 234.52
23. ibid. 234. 53-4
24. ibid. 234.64

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2. Garuḍapurāṇa, Text, Sarasvati Vilas Press, Calcutta. (N.D)

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