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Vishnu Sahasranama Part 36: Ishwar – He Who is Superior to All

by Shri Chandan Goswami Maharaj

The 36th Name in the *Vishnu Sahasranama Stotram* is Ishwar, the Lord who is superior to and controls all other powerful beings.

ईशस्त्वं सर्वभूतानामीश्वरोऽसि सदा स्मृत ॥

*īśas tvam sarvabhūtānām
īśvaro'si sadā smṛtaḥ ॥*

Shri Baldev Vidyabhushan says मानुष्यादि वेषोऽपि ब्रह्मादिनियमनादिश्वरः ईश्वरत्वं सर्वभूतानामीश्वरोऽसि सदा स्मृत इति शिवोक्तेः *mānuṣyādi veṣo'pi brahmādinīyamanādiśvaraḥ īśvaratvam sarvabhūtānām īśvaro'si sadā smṛta iti śivokteḥ*, "Even when you take human-like forms, you control Brahma and others.



Lord Shiv himself says, 'You are the Lord of all beings.'" (*Harivansh Puran*)

When Shri Krishn descends to perform his *lilas*, ignorant people and gods fall into delusion and fail to recognise his divine nature. However, his Name, Ishwar, means that even when Krishn comes in a human-like form, he remains in control over Brahma and others.

अवजानन्ति मां मूढा मानुषीं तनुमाश्रितम् ।
परं भावमजानन्तो मम भूतमहेश्वरम् ॥

*avajānanti māṁ mūḍhā mānuṣīṁ
tanum āśritam ।
paraṁ bhāvama jānanto mama bhūta-
maheśvaram ॥*

"When I descend in a human-like form, foolish people are unable to recognise me as the Lord of all beings." (*Bhagwad Gita*, 9.11)

Brahma himself became deluded upon witnessing Krishn's *lila*.

इतीरेशेऽतर्क्ये निजमहिमनि स्वप्रमितिके
परत्राजातोऽतन् निरसनमुखब्रह्मकमितौ ।
अनीशेऽपि द्रष्टुं किमिदमिति वा मुह्यति सति
चछादाजो ज्ञात्वा सपदि परमोऽजाजवनिकाम् ॥

*itīreśe'tarkye nijamahimani
svapramitike
paratrājāto'tan
nirasanamukhbrahmakamitau ।
anīśe'pi draṣṭuṁ kimidamiti vā
muhyati sati*

*chachādājo jñātvā sapadi
paramo'jājavanikām ॥*

"The Lord's form is beyond human reasoning, and his glory is extraordinary. He is the source of light, blissful and beyond *maya*. Even the *vedant* cannot describe him directly, so it only points to him as the blissful Supreme by indicating what he is not. Although Brahma is the master of all knowledge, he cannot understand Shri Krishn. He thought 'What is this?' and closed his eyes in extreme bewilderment. Realising Brahma was confused and ignorant, Shri Krishn effortlessly removed the veil of illusion and revived him. It was like Brahma had died and been reborn." (*Shrimad Bhagwatam*, 10.13.57)

तत्रोद्धत्पशुपवंशशिशुत्वनाट्यं
ब्रह्माद्वयं परमनन्त-मगाधबोधम् ।
वत्सान् सखीनिव पुरा परितो विचिन्वद्
एकं सपाणिकवलं परमेष्ठ्यचष्ट ॥

*tatro dvahat paśu pavaniśa
śīśutvanāṭyam
brahmādvayaṁ paramananta-
magādhbodham ।
vatsān sakhīniva purā parito vicinvad
ekaṁ sapāṇikavalaṁ
parameṣṭhyacaṣṭaḥ ॥*

"Brahma, after having *darshan* of Vrindavan, saw that the Supreme Being was playing as a cowherd boy. Although he was God, he had companions, and though infinite, he roamed here and there; and, despite his infinite

knowledge, he was searching for his cowherd friends and calves. Brahma saw that just as Lord Krishn had earlier searched for them with a morsel of yoghurt and rice in his hand, he was now similarly engaged in finding them." (*Shrimad Bhagwatam*, 10.13.61)

Realising his mistake:

दृष्ट्वा त्वरेण निजधोरणतोऽवतीर्य
पृथ्व्यां वपुः कनकदण्डमिवाभिपात्य ।
स्पृष्ट्वा चतुर्मुकुट कोटिभिरङ्घ्रियुगं
नत्वा मुदश्रुसुजलैः अकृताभिषेकम् ॥

*dr̥ṣṭvā tvareṇa nijadhoranato'vatīrya
pṛthvyāṁ vapuḥ kanakadaṇḍamivābhipātya ।
spr̥ṣṭvā caturmukuṭa koṭibhir aṅghriyugmaṁ
natvā mudaśrusujalaiḥ akṛtābhiṣekam ॥*

"As soon as he saw Krishn, he jumped down from his *vaahan*, the swan, and fell like a golden staff. He gently touched the Lord's lotus feet with the tips of his four crowns in obeisance, and bathed them with tears of joy." (*Shrimad Bhagwatam*, 10.13.62)

ईश्वर ईशेभ्योऽपि वरः । तच्चोक्तम् ईशेभ्यो ब्रह्मरुद्रश्रीशेषादिभ्यो यतो भवान् ।
वरोऽत ईश्वराख्या ते मुख्या नान्यस्य कस्यचित् ॥
इति ब्रह्मवैवर्ते । समर्थ ईश इत्युक्तस्तद्वत्त्वात्त्वमीश्वरः इति च ।

*īśvara īśebhyo'pi varaḥ । tac coktam īśebhyo brahmarudraśrīśeṣādibhyo yato bhavān
। varo'ta īśvarākhyā te mukhyā nānyasya kasyacit ॥ iti brahma vaivarte । samartha
īśa ityuktas tadvarato'at tvam īśvaraḥ iti ca ।*

In his commentary on the *Bhagwad Gita*, 4.6, Shri Madhwacharya says, "*Ish* means great, and *ishwar* means greater than great – the greatest. Shri Krishn is greater than Brahma, Vishnu (Shesh), and Mahesh, meaning no one is superior to him. (*Brahmavaivart Puran*) It is also stated that 'You, Shri Krishn, are supreme as you are the most powerful, and therefore you are called Ishwar.'"



Nityanand Prabhu - Part 8: Das Gadadhar's Previous Life



In the previous issue, kadamb flowers miraculously blossomed on Raghav Pandit's lemon tree, and Nityanand wore them as a garland. In this issue, Nityanand leaves Panihati and begins visiting devotees's homes one by one, starting with the home of Das Gadadhar.

Nityanand Departs from Panihati

Nityanand stayed at Raghav Pandit's house in Panihati for three months. When it was time to leave, he allowed everyone to do his *shringaar* again. They dressed him in silks of white, yellow and blue, and adorned him with jewellery made from silver, gold, pearls, coral and diamonds.

His ears glittered with pearls set in gold. To please Lord Shiv, he wore a special necklace of gold and silver with *rudraksh* and cat's eye. Garlands of fragrant flowers decorated his chest and turban, and they painted his skin with golden designs of sandalwood and *gorochan*.¹ His iron staff looked like silver and

was embellished with real gold.

His companions also dressed beautifully with jewellery, anklets, buffalo horns, cow-herding sticks, ropes, flutes and *gunjamalas*,² reflecting their true identities (*swaroop*) as cowherd boys from eternal Vrindavan. Walking along the Shri Ganga River, they visited the homes of various devotees.

Meeting Das Gadadhar at Eriyadaha

The first village they visited was Eriyadaha,³ the home of Das Gadadhar.⁴ एक-दिन गदाधर-दासेर मन्दिरे। आइलेन ताने प्रीति करिबार तरे॥
ek din gadadhar daser mandire। ailen taane preeti koribaar tore "One day, Nityanand went to Das Gadadhar's house, to enact a *lila* of love." (*Chaitanya Bhagwat*, 3.5.371)

Das Gadadhar was always lost in the mood of a *sakhi*. Sometimes he took on the mood of Radharani herself as well.

1. A waxy, fragrant substance from the digestive system of the cow. It has a deep golden colour and is used in Ayurvedic medicine.

2. A garland of beads made from dried *gunja* berries, which are bright red and black in colour.

3. Eriyadaha was a village at that time but is now a part of the Calcutta metropolitan area on the North side of the city near Dakshineswar.

4. Das Gadadhar is different from Gadadhar Pandit, who is the incarnation of Radharani in Mahaprabhu's *Lila*.

हैला राधिका-भाव गदाधर दासे ।
दधि के किनिबे बले अट्ट अट्ट हासे ॥

*haila raadhikaa bhaava gadaadhara
daase ।
dadhi ke kinibe bale atta atta haase ॥*

"Becoming possessed with the *bhav* of Shri Radha, Das Gadadhar said, 'Who wants to buy yoghurt?' and laughed energetically."
(*Chaitanya Bhagwat*, 3.5.238)

Das Gadadhar's Previous Life

According to the *Gaur Ganoddesh Dipika* (154-155), Das Gadadhar was the combined incarnation of Radharani's expansion (*vibhuti*) named Chandrakanti, and Balram's dear *sakhi*, Purnananda. The story of Chandrakanti is mentioned in the *Purans* and discussed by Roop Goswami in *Bhakti Rasamrit Sindhu* and *Stavamala*.

Chandrakanti was a beautiful Gandharv⁵ girl living in Gandharv Lok.⁶ The Gandharvs' main

job is to sing and play musical instruments for gods like Brahma and Indra. However, Chandrakanti only liked singing for Shri Krishn.

By the grace of her favourite deity of Krishn, Chandrakanti had already attained *bhav-bhakti*.⁷ Deep in her heart and soul, she chose Krishn as her only Beloved. For this reason, she remained celibate her whole life, vowing never to marry. Chandrakanti never deviated from this even mentally, despite the abundant pleasures of Gandharv Lok. Chandrakanti spent most of her time blissfully singing songs about Krishn and hearing about his *lilas*.

Once, on Prabodhini Ekadashi⁸ in the holy month of Kartik, Chandrakanti stayed awake the whole night dancing for her beloved deity. As she danced, she could feel Krishn dancing with her. She thought to herself:

बह्वीष्व अन्यासु नारीषु मय्य एवाधिक-प्रीतिमान् ।
नृत्यत् असौ मया सार्धं कण्ठाश्लेषादि-भावकृत् ॥

5. Gandharvs are beautiful beings from a realm beyond Earth, who are known for being talented singers and instrumentalists. The *Rig Ved* (9.85.12) also describes them as the guardians of *soma*, a sacred drink that grants immortality. The *Mahabharat* says, गन्धर्वाः स्वर्गीयाः वादका गायकाश् च, सुगन्धिकानां पुष्पानाम् आसतः उत्पद्यन्ते। *gandharvāḥ svargīyāḥ vādakā gāyakāś ca, sugandhikānām puṣpānām āsataḥ utpadyante*। "The Gandharvs are celestial musicians and singers who originate from the fragrance of flowers." (*Adi Parv*, 67)

6. The realm of the Gandharvs.

7. *Bhav-bhakti* is an advanced spiritual stage that comes right before reaching the ultimate stage of sacred love (*prem-bhakti*).

8. This *ekadashi* is also known as Devotthan Ekadashi, and it is the last day of the Kartik *vrat* for those who began on *ekadashi*. Staying up all night (*jagran*) is one of the recommended practices for all *ekadashis*.

*bahvīṣv anyāsu nārīṣu mayy evādhika-
prītimān |
nr̥tyaty asau mayā sārđham
kaṇṭhāśleṣādi-bhāva-kṛt ||*

"So many women love him, yet he loves me the most! He is dancing with me with his arms around my neck!" (*Padma Puran*, quoted by Jeev Goswami in his commentary on *Bhakti Rasamrit Sindhu*, 1.3.14)

Radharani alone is Krishn's dearest Beloved, and no one else could ever take that place. However, Radharani was so pleased with Chandrakanti's devotion that she gave her a special blessing.

When Chandrakanti reached the final stage of her devotional path, Shri Radha blessed her to become her *sakhi* in eternal Vrindavan. She also retroactively accepted Chandrakanti's actions, feelings, and her very being as non-different from her own. In other words, Chandrakanti became Radharani's special *ansh* (partial manifestation). For this reason, Shri Roop Goswami writes in the *Stavamala*:

प्रबोधनी निशा नृत्य महात्म्य भर दर्शिनी ।
चन्द्रकान्तिचरी सर्व-गन्धर्व कुल पावनी ॥

*prabodhanī niśā nr̥tya māhātmya bhara
darśinī |
candrakānti-carī sarva-gandharva kula
pāvanī ||*

"Becoming Chandrakanti, Shri Radha glorified Krishn by dancing on the night of Prabodhini

Ekadashi, thus purifying the whole Gandharv lineage." (*Stavamala*, Prem Sudha Satram, 12)



Chandrakanti and Krishn dance on the night of Prabodhini Ekadashi

The same Chandrakanti was later born as Das Gadadhar.

To be continued . . .

References:

Bhakti Rasamrit Sindhu by Roop Goswami
Chaitanya Bhagwat by Vrindavan Das Thakur
Padma Puran by Vyas Dev
Stavamala by Roop Goswami



Braj Animal Care



Dogs attacked this calf. Although our street dogs live alongside human society, they still retain some of their wild instincts. When the dogs are hungry, they may attack cows and calves, though they rarely kill them. Bodily injuries and torn ears are more common. This calf was badly torn up, but he will recover with treatment and love.



The calf's injuries

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Maharajji's Latest Updates



Maharajji has embarked on his 2024 tour! He is currently in the UK meeting devotees and giving the nectar of Hari Katha.

Shri Radharamano Jayati

Krishn Katha

Vaishnavacharya Chandan Goswami

UK	- 24 Sep to 30 Sep
USA	- 01 Oct to 14 Oct
Argentina	- 15 Oct to 30 Oct
Colombia	- 31 Oct to 14 Nov
Mexico	- 15 Nov to 15 Dec
Vrindavan	- 25 Dec to 31 Dec




ODEv
Ocean of Devotion

Radharaman: The Hidden Essence of the Mahamantra and Divine Love

The final verse of *Shrimad Bhagwatam* (12.13.23) states that the sins of one who recites, chants or participates in *sankirtan* are washed away:

नामसङ्कीर्तनं यस्य सर्वपापप्रणाशनम् ।
प्रणामो दुःखशमनस्तं नमामि हरिं परम् ॥

*nāma-saṅkīrtanaṁ yasya
sarva-pāpa praṇāśanam ।
praṇāmo duḥkha-śamanas
taṁ namāmi hariṁ param ॥*

"I respectfully bow to the Supreme Lord, Hari, whose Holy Name wipes away all sins and whose worship frees us from all worldly suffering."

When chanting the Mahamantra, we should meditate on the right meaning:

हरे कृष्ण हरे कृष्ण
कृष्ण कृष्ण हरे हरे ।
हरे राम हरे राम
राम राम हरे हरे ॥

*hare kṛṣṇa, hare kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa,
hare hare ।
hare rāma, hare rāma, rāma rāma, hare
hare ॥*

In all their commentaries, our scholars write that "*Rāma*" means Raman (Radharaman). When you chant "*hare rāma*", you are saying Radharaman. Devotees should meditate upon this meaning always.

राम रमयति तां नर्मनिरीक्षणादिनेति रामः, तस्य
सम्बोधने हे राम ।

*rāma ramayati tāṁ
narmanirīkṣaṇādineti rāmaḥ, tasya
sambodhane he rāma ।*

"Krishn who speaks very sweetly to Radharani, who roams from one forest grove to another with her, is Ram (Raman)." (Gopal Guru Goswami, *Sri Harinaam Mahamantrasya Vyaakhya*, Part 2)

In the *Gopal Campu*, 15.153, Jeev Goswami's commentary gives a very different meaning to the Name Ram.

गोवर्धनाधि कुंजेषु परिरम्भैः सविज्ञानः
श्रीराधां रमयामास रमतां बाध्यो हरिः ।

*govardhanādhi kuñjeṣu parirambhaiḥ
savijñānaḥ
śrīrādhāṁ ramayāmāsa ramatāṁ
bādhya hariḥ ।*

"In the groves of Govardhan, Krishn lovingly embraced and delighted Radha, skillfully overcoming all challenges."

He says, Krishn is known as Ram because he is an expert at giving embraces, and loves spending time in the *kunj*s of Govardhan, roaming from one grove to another with Radharani.

One of the best times to remember how Krishn receives an embrace from Radharani is during the Swing Festival (Jhulan Utsav) in Vrindavan.

Radha and Krishn sit together on a swing,

surrounded by the *gopis*. Krishn's left hand is on Radharani's shoulder, and she is holding Krishn's waist with her right hand. Then, the *gopis* come and start gently pushing the swing. But Krishn has a plan and asks the *gopis* not to stand behind the swing. He doesn't want them there because he's up to something.

Krishn puts his foot on the ground and pushes to swing faster, softly at first. He asks Radharani, "Do you like it?"

She replies, "Yes, I love it." Krishn grins and says, "Wonderful! What if I swing a little stronger?" Still enjoying herself, Radharani says, "You can," so Krishn pushes the swing faster.

Suddenly Krishn plants his foot firmly on the ground and gives the swing a bigger push, making it go much faster. Radharani, now a bit startled, says, "Stop! This is too fast!"

But Krishn, being playful, says, "No, no, no—I'm not stopping now! Let's go even faster!"

Radharani's braid, necklace, and veil become dishevelled as they swing faster. There's no stopping Krishn but Radharani starts to panic, thinking she might fall. Krishn, with that mischievous smile of his, tells her, "Embrace me tightly. I will save you!"

Radharani clings to Krishn, and he, the expert in giving embraces, enjoys the moment. Our scholars write in their poetry that he's always

looking for opportunities where this can happen.

To be continued . . .

Spiritual Questions and Answers with Maharajji

Q: I feel lost at times. How can I reconnect with my mentor spiritually and have full faith?

A: *Satsang, satsang, satsang!* Hari Katha, Hari Katha, Hari Katha! If you have these in your life, you will never feel lost.

For more information about Maharajji's upcoming programmes, please contact us via the following channels:

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Vaishnav Calendar

For upcoming festivals and Ekadashi dates, please click [here](#) to view our Vaishnav calendar.

