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Charama ślokas: Assurances by lord of supremacy

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Abstract

In Hindu religious texts, certain verses known as "Charama Ślokas" or ultimate verses hold profound spiritual significance and transformative power. This paper explores three such verses from different texts: the Bhagavad Gītā, Śrī Varāha Purāṇa, and Śrīmad Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa. By examining these ślokas, we uncover the essence of surrender (prapatti) and divine grace in Hindu philosophy. The study highlights the significance of these verses in understanding the concept of complete surrender, divine protection, and the path to liberation (mokṣa).

Keyword: Charama Śloka, Bhagavad Gītā, Varāha Purāṇa, Rāmāyaṇa, prapatti, bhakti, Hindu philosophy

Introduction

The fundamental texts like Vedas, epics, and Purāṇas are the most sacred scriptures that enlighten the mind of a seeker of truth. In this transmigratory world, crossing the ocean of Saṃsāra without a guide is difficult. The Lord has incarnated as Śrī Rāma, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Varāha, and others to give assurance and elevate devotees to the transcendental world through words of promise. This paper aims to explore three key Charama Ślokas from different texts, elucidating their meaning, significance, and the philosophical concepts they embody.

Objectives

1. To analyze the Charama Śloka from the Bhagavad Gītā and its importance in Kṛṣṇa's teachings.
2. To explore the Charama Śloka from the Śrī Varāha Purāṇa and its significance in the concept of divine remembrance.
3. To examine the Charama Śloka from the Śrīmad Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa and its emphasis on complete surrender.
4. To investigate the interrelationship between these Charama Ślokas and their role in Hindu spiritual philosophy.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach, primarily relying on textual analysis of the Bhagavad Gītā, Śrī Varāha Purāṇa, and Śrīmad Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa. Additionally, it draws upon traditional interpretations and scholarly works on Hindu philosophy and Vaiṣṇava literature.

Findings and Discussion

Charama Śloka in the Bhagavad Gītā

In Chapter 18 of the Bhagavad Gītā, Śrī Kṛṣṇa declares:

सर्व धर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रज।

अहं त्वां सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः॥

"sarva dharmān parityajya mām ekaṃ śaraṇaṃ vraja
ahaṃ tvāṃ sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ" (Gītā 18.66)

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This verse emphasizes complete surrender to the Divine, transcending all other dharmas. Kṛṣṇa assures liberation from all sins to those who take refuge in Him alone.

Charama Śloka in the Śrī Varāha Purāṇa

The Śrī Varāha Purāṇa presents this Charama Śloka:

स्थिते मनसि सुस्वस्थे शरीरे सति यो नरः।
धातुसाम्ये स्थिते स्मर्ता विश्वरूपं च मामजम्॥
ततस्तं भ्रियमाणं तु काष्ठ पाषाण सन्निभम्॥
अहं स्मरामि मद्भक्तं नयामि परमां गतिम्॥

This verse emphasizes the power of remembering God, especially at the time of death. It suggests that even if a person loses physical consciousness at the end of life, their prior devotion ensures divine guidance to the highest spiritual realm.

Charama Śloka in the Śrīmad Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa

The Rāmāyaṇa presents this powerful Charama Śloka:

सकृदेव प्रपन्नाय तवास्मीति च याचते।
अभयं सर्वभूतेभ्यो ददामि एतद् व्रतं मम॥

"sakṛdeva prapannāya tavāsmīti ca yācate
abhayaṁ sarvabhūtebhyo dadāmi etad vrataṁ mama"

This verse, attributed to Lord Rāma, emphasizes the power of a single act of surrender. It suggests that even one sincere declaration of surrender to the Divine is sufficient to gain His protection.

The Spiritual Trinity: Divine Assurance, Remembrance, and Surrender

The interconnectedness of these three Charama Ślokas forms a powerful spiritual framework in Hindu tradition. This synergy offers multiple insights into the concept of surrender and divine grace:

- Complete Surrender (Prapatti): Emphasized in the Gītā and Rāmāyaṇa ślokas
- Divine Remembrance: Highlighted in the Varāha Purāṇa śloka
- Assurance of Protection: A common theme across all three ślokas

These concepts, when understood and practiced together, are believed to be particularly efficacious in attaining spiritual enlightenment and liberation.

Theological Implications

The Charama Ślokas carry profound theological implications within Hindu philosophy:

- Nature of the Divine:** These verses present the Divine as both transcendent and immanent. The Lord is portrayed as supreme and beyond all worldly dharmas, yet intimately accessible through surrender and remembrance.
- Divine-Human Relationship:** The ślokas emphasize a personal relationship between the devotee and the Divine. This relationship is characterized by the Lord's compassion and the devotee's surrender, challenging more impersonal philosophical interpretations.
- Soteriology:** These verses present a soteriology (doctrine of salvation) based on divine grace rather than human

effort alone. This aligns with the concept of prapatti in Vaiṣṇava theology, suggesting that ultimate liberation is a gift from the Divine.

- Universality of Devotion:** The Charama Ślokas, coming from different texts and contexts, collectively suggest that the path of surrender is universally applicable, transcending specific forms of worship or philosophical schools.
- Ethical Implications:** The assurance of protection and liberation, even to those who have committed sins, raises important questions about divine justice and the nature of karma. It suggests a theology where divine grace can supersede the law of karma.
- Eschatology:** These verses provide insights into Hindu eschatology, particularly the Varāha Purāṇa śloka which deals with the moment of death. They suggest that one's final thoughts and prior devotion play a crucial role in determining one's spiritual destiny.
- Ontological Status of the Individual Soul:** The emphasis on surrender implies a distinct ontological status for the individual soul (jīva) in relation to the Supreme Being, aligning more closely with qualified non-dualistic (Viśiṣṭādvaita) interpretations of Vedānta.

These theological implications have been subjects of extensive commentary and debate among various schools of Hindu philosophy, contributing to the rich tapestry of Indian spiritual thought.

Conclusion

The Charama Ślokas from the Bhagavad Gītā, Śrī Varāha Purāṇa, and Śrīmad Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa represent the pinnacle of devotional philosophy in Hinduism. They encapsulate the essence of the relationship between the individual soul and the Divine, emphasizing surrender, divine remembrance, and assurance of protection. By engaging with these verses, devotees can deepen their understanding of bhakti and progress on the path to mokṣa. This study underscores the rich spiritual heritage embedded in Hindu scriptures and its universal applicability in the quest for divine union.

References

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- Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā
- Śrī Varāha Purāṇa
- Śrī Viṣṇu Purāṇa