

श्रीचौराग्रगण्य-पुरुषाष्टकम् Śrī Caurāgraganya-puruṣāṣṭakam

An ancient prayer by an unknown Vaiṣṇava author

व्रजे प्रसिद्धं नवनीतचौरं, गोपांगनानां च दुकुल-चौरम् ।
अनेक-जन्मार्जित-पाप-चौरं, चौराग्रगण्यं पुरुषं नमामि ॥१॥

*vraje prasiddham navanīta-cauraṁ, gopāṅganānāṁ ca dukula-cauram
aneka-janmārjita-pāpa-cauraṁ, caurāgraganyaṁ puruṣaṁ namāmi (1)*

Who is famous in Vraja as the butter-thief and He who steals the *gopīs'* clothes, and who, for those who take shelter of Him, steals the sins which have accrued over many lifetimes—I offer *praṇāma* to the foremost of thieves.

श्रीराधिकाया हृदयस्य चौरं, नवांबुद-श्यामल-कान्ति-चौरम् ।

पदाश्रितानां च समस्त-चौरं, चौराग्रगण्यं पुरुषं नमामि ॥२॥

*śrī-rādhikāyā hṛdayasya cauraṁ, navāmbuda-śyāmala-kānti-cauram
padāśritānāṁ ca samasta-cauraṁ, caurāgraganyaṁ puruṣaṁ namāmi (2)*

Who steals Śrīmatī Rādhikā's heart, who steals the dark lustre of a fresh raincloud, and who steals all the sins and sufferings of those who take shelter of His feet—I offer *praṇāma* to the foremost of thieves.

अकिञ्चनी-कृत्य पदाश्रितं यः, करोति भिक्षुं पथि गेह-हीनम् ।

केनाप्यहो भीषण-चौर ईदृग्, दृष्टःश्रुतो वा न जगत्त्रयेऽपि ॥३॥

*akiñcanī-kṛtya padāśritaṁ yaḥ, karoti bhikṣuṁ pathi geḥa-hīnam
kenāpy aho bhīṣaṇa-caura īdṛg, dṛṣṭaḥ-sruto vā na jagat-traye 'pi (3)*

Who turns His surrendered devotees into paupers and wandering, homeless beggars—*aho!* Such a fearsome thief has never been seen or heard of in all the three worlds.

यदीय नामापि हरत्यशेषं, गिरि प्रसारानपि पाप-राशीन् ।
 आश्चर्य-रूपो ननु चौर ईदृग्, दृष्टः श्रुतो वा न मया कदापि ॥४॥
yadīya nāmāpi haraty-aśeṣaṁ, giri prasārān-api pāpa-rāśīn
āścarya-rūpo nanu caura īdṛg, dṛṣṭaḥ śruto vā na mayā kadāpi (4)

Even the shortest utterance of His name purges one of even a mountain of sins—such an astonishingly wonderful thief I have never seen or heard of anywhere.

धनं च मानं च तथेन्द्रियाणि, प्राणांश्च हत्वा मम सर्वमेव ।
 पलायसे कुत्र धृतोऽद्य चौर, त्वं भक्ति-दाम्नासि मया निरुद्धः ॥५॥
dhanam ca mānaṁ ca tathendriyāṇi, prāṇāṁśca hṛtvā mama sarvam eva
palāyase kutra dhṛto 'dya caura, tvaṁ bhakti-dāmnāsi mayā niruddhaḥ (5)

Hey Thief! Having stolen my wealth, my honour, my senses, and my very life, to where can You run? I have caught You with the rope of my devotion.

छिनत्सि घोरं यम-पाश-बन्धं, भिनत्सि भीमं भव-पाश-बन्धम् ।
 छिनत्सि सर्वस्य समस्त-बन्धं, नैवात्मनो भक्त-कृतं तु बन्धम् ॥६॥
chinatsi ghoram yama-pāśa-bandham, bhinatsi bhīmaṁ bhava-pāśa-bandham
chinatsi sarvasya samasta-bandham, naivātmano bhakta-kṛtaṁ tu bandham (6)

You cut the terrible noose of Yamarāja, You sever the dreadful noose of material existence, and You slash everyone's material bondage, but You are unable to cut the knot fastened by Your own loving devotees.

मन्मानसे तामस-राशि-घोरे, कारागृहे दुःखमये निबद्धः ।
 लभस्व हे चौर! हरे! चिराय, स्वचौर्य-दोषोचितमेव दण्डम् ॥७॥
man-mānase tāmasa-rāśi-ghore, kāragṛhe duḥkha-maye nibaddhaḥ
labhasva he caura! hare! cirāya, sva-caurya-doṣocitam eva daṇḍam (7)

O stealer of my everything! Hey Thief! Today I have imprisoned You in the miserable prison-house of my heart which is very fearful due to the darkness of my ignorance, and there for a very long time You will remain, receiving appropriate punishment for Your crimes of thievery!

कारागृहे वस सदा हृदये मदीये मद्भक्ति-पाश-दृढ-बन्धन-निश्चलः सन् ।

त्वां कृष्ण हे! प्रलय-कोटि-शतान्तरेऽपि सर्वस्वचौर! हृदयान्नहि मोचयामि ॥८॥

*kārāgṛhe vasa sadā hṛdaye madīye mad-bhakti-pāśa-dṛḍha-bandhana-niścalaḥ san
tvāṁ kṛṣṇa he! pralaya-koṭi-śatāntare 'pi sarvasva-caura! hṛdayān-nahi mocayāmi (8)*

O Kṛṣṇa, thief of my everything! The noose of my devotion remaining forever tight, You will continue to reside in the prison-house of my heart because I will not release You for millions of aeons. This *aṣṭaka* is sung in the melody known as 'Upajāti'.