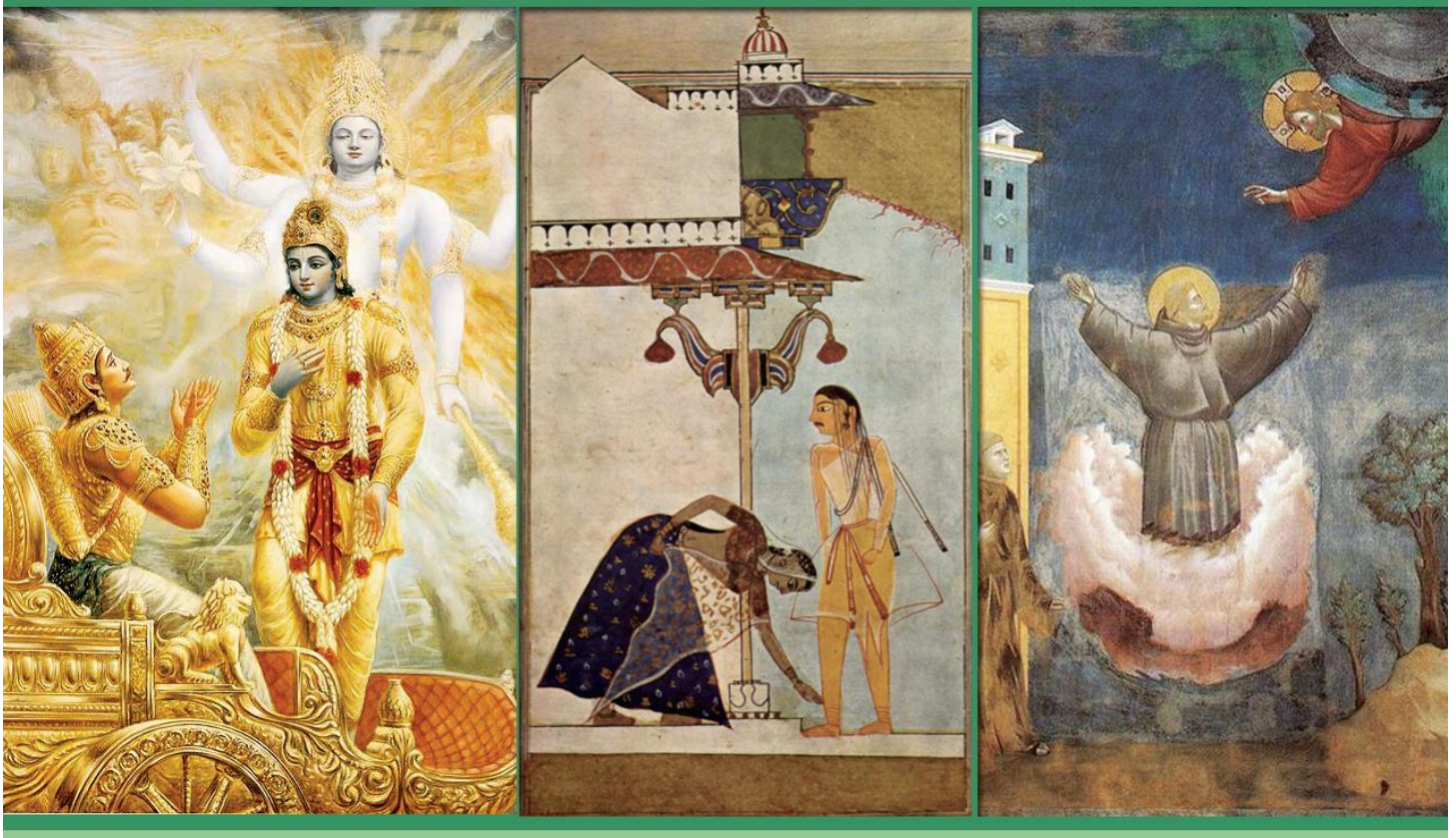


# PATH TO DEVOTION

A New Translation of the Nārada Bhakti Sūtra



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## I. The Nature of Devotion

१ ०१ अथातो भक्तिं व्याख्यास्यामः । १

1 01 athāto bhaktim vyākhyāsyāmaḥ | 1

We will now explain devotion.

१ ०२ सा त्वस्मिन् परमप्रेमरूपा । २

1 02 sā tvasmin paramapremarūpā | 2

Its nature is the highest love for That One.

१ ०३ अमृतस्वरूपा च । ३

1 03 amṛtasvarūpā ca | 3

And its essence is the nectar of immortality.

१ ०४ यल्लब्ध्वा पुमान् सिद्धो भवति अमृतो भवति तृप्तो भवति । ४

1 04 yallabdhvā pumān siddho bhavati amṛto bhavati tṛpto bhavati | 4

When one obtains this, a person becomes perfect, immortal, and content.

१ ०५ यत्प्राप्य न किञ्चिद् वाञ्छति न शोचति न द्वेष्टि न रमते नोत्साही

भवति । ५

1 05 yatprāpya na kiñcid vāñcati na śocati na dveṣṭi na ramate notsāhī  
bhavati | 5

Upon attaining this, one desires nothing more at all. One does not grieve nor hate nor lust, nor does one strive for anything else.

१ ०६ यज्ज्ञात्वा मत्तो भवति स्तब्धो भवति आत्मारामो भवति । ६

1 06 yajñātvā matto bhavati stabdho bhavati ātmārāmo bhavati । 6

When one truly realizes this, one becomes intoxicated, stunned; their joy is self-contained.

१ ०७ सा न कामयमाना निरोधरूपत्वात् । ७

1 07 sā na kāmāyānā nirodharūpatvāt । 7

It is not ordinary desiring because its nature is cessation.

१ ०८ निरोधस्तु लोकवेदव्यापारन्यासः । ८

1 08 nirodhastu lokavedavyāpāranyāsaḥ । 8

And this cessation involves giving up on both worldly and religious business.

१ ०९ तस्मिन्ननन्यता तद्विरोधिषूदासीनता च । ९

1 09 tasminnananyatā tadvirodhiṣūdāsīnatā ca । 9

And it also involves disinterest in anything other than That One and in things inimical to that.

१ १० अन्याश्रयाणां त्यागोऽनन्यता । १०

1 10 anyāśrayāṇāṃ tyāgo'nanyatā । 10

Devoted to nothing other, he or she renounces all other sources of refuge.

१ ११ लोकवेदेषु तदनुकूलाचरणं तद्विरोधिषूदासीनता । ११

1 11 lokavedeṣu tadanukūlācaraṇaṁ tadvirodhiṣūdāsīnatā | 11

Disinterest in things inimical to that (devotion) means that when it comes to worldly or religious activities one engages only in conduct which accords with that (devotion).

१ १२ भवतु निश्चयदाढर्यादूर्ध्वं शास्त्ररक्षणम् । १२

1 12 bhavatu niścayadārdhyādūrdhvaṁ śāstrarakṣaṇam | 12

One should adhere to the authoritative religious teachings even after having gained a strong conviction (about the importance of devotion).

१ १३ अन्यथा पातित्यशङ्कया । १३

1 13 anyathā pātityaśaṅkayā | 13

Otherwise there is the danger of back-sliding.

१ १४ लोकोऽपि तावदेव भोजनादि व्यापारस्त्वाशरीरधारणावधि । १४

1 14 loko'pi tāvadeva bhojanādi vyāpārastvāśarīradhāraṇāvadhi | 14

Worldly activities such as eating and so on should be done only to the extent necessary to keep the body from death.

## II. The Benefits of Devotion

२ ०१ सा तु कर्मज्ञानयोगेभ्योऽप्यधिकतरा । २५

2 01 sā tu karmajñānayogebhyo'pyadhikatarā | 25

And it (the yoga of devotion) is superior to the yogas of action and wisdom.

२०२ फलरूपत्वात् । २६

2 02 phalarūpatvāt | 26

(It is superior) due to the form the effect takes.

२०३ ईश्वरस्याप्यभिमानद्वेषित्वात् दैन्यप्रियत्वात् च । २७

2 03 īśvarasyāpyabhimānadveṣitvāt dainyapriyatvāt ca | 27

And because The Lord dislikes pride and loves humility.

२०४ तस्याः ज्ञानमेव साधनमित्येके । २८

2 04 tasyāḥ jñānameva sādhanamityeke | 28

Some say it can be practiced by wisdom alone.

२०५ अन्योन्याश्रयत्वमित्यन्ये । २९

2 05 anyonyāśrayatvamityanye | 29

Others regard the two as mutually dependent.

२०६ स्वयं फलरूपतेति ब्रह्मकुमारः । ३०

2 06 svayaṁ phalarūpateti brahmakumāraḥ | 30

According to Narada, it (devotion) is its own reward.

२०७ राजगृहभोजनादिषु तथैव दृष्टत्वात् । ३१

2 07 rājagṛhabhojanādiṣu tathaiva dr̥ṣṭatvāt | 31

It's like a king who sees his palace, food, etc.

२०८ न तेन राजा परितोषः कश्चान्तिर्वा । ३२

2 08 na tena rājā paritoṣaḥ kśuccāntirvā | 32

It's not by just seeing those things that a king is pleased or appeases his hunger.

२०९ तस्मात् सैव ग्राह्या मुमुक्षुभिः । ३३

2 09 tasmāt saiva grāhyā mumukśubhiḥ | 33

So it (devotion) alone is to be practiced by those wishing liberation.

### III. Cultivating Devotion

३०१ तस्याः साधनानि गायन्त्याचार्याः । ३४

3 01 tasyāḥ sādhanāni gāyantyācāryāḥ | 34

The religious teachers sing about the methods for cultivating it.

३०२ तत्तु विषयत्यागात् सङ्गत्यागात् च । ३५

3 02 tatttu viṣayatyāgāt saṅgatyāgāt ca | 35

But it comes from renouncing objects of the senses and attachment.

३०३ अव्यावृत्तभजनात् । ३६

3 03 avyāvṛttabhajanāt | 36

And from unrelenting worship.

३०४ लोकेऽपि भगवद्गुणश्रवणकीर्तनात् । ३७

3 04 loke'pi bhagavadguṇaśravaṇakīrtanāt | 37

And from chanting and listening to the praises of the Lord's qualities all day long.

३०५ मुख्यतस्तु महत्कृपयैव भगवत्कृपालेशाद् वा । ३८

3 05 mukhyatastu mahatkṛpayaiḥ bhagavatkṛpāleśād vā | 38

But it is mainly through just the compassion of a Great One, or from just a fragment of the compassion of the Lord.

३०६ महत्सङ्गस्तु दुर्लभोऽगम्योऽमोघश्च । ३९

3 06 mahatsaṅgastu durlabho'gamyo'moghaśca | 39

And a connection with a Great One is hard to obtain – difficult to come by and infallible.

३०७ लभ्यतेऽपि तत्कृपयैव । ४०

3 07 labhyate'pi tatkr̥payaiḥ | 40

It's only through the compassion of That One (the Lord) that even it (this connection with a Great One) is obtained.

३०८ तस्मिंस्तज्जने भेदाभावात् । ४१

3 08 tasmīnstajjane bhedābhāvāt | 41

It's because there is no difference between That One (the Lord) and That Person (the Great One).

३ ०९ तदेव साध्यतां तदेव साध्यताम् । ४२

3 09 tadeva sādhyatām tadeva sādhyatām | 42

**Just practice that! Just practice that!**

३ १० दुस्सङ्गः सर्वथैव त्याज्यः । ४३

3 10 dussaṅgaḥ sarvathaiva tyājyaḥ | 43

**Bad associations should be totally abandoned.**

३ ११ कामक्रोधमोहस्मृतिभ्रंशबुद्धिनाशसर्वनाशकारणत्वात् । ४४

3 11 kāmakrodhamohasmṛtibhramśabuddhināśasarvanāśakāraṇatvāt | 44

**Because this is the cause of desire, anger, delusion, loss of mindfulness, the destruction of the intellect, the destruction of everything.**

३ १२ तरङ्गायिता अपीमे सङ्गात् समुद्रायन्ते । ४५

3 12 taraṅgāyitā apīme saṅgāt samudrāyante | 45

**These, although they may start out as just small waves, become like a tsunami because of the association.**

३ १३ कस्तरति कस्तरति मायाम् यः सङ्गं त्यजति यो महानुभावं सेवते

निर्ममो भवति । ४६

3 13 kastarati kastarati māyām yaḥ saṅgaṁ tyajati yo mahānubhāvaṁ sevate nirmamo bhavati | 46

**Who is that crosses over? Who is it that is rescued from illusion? It is the one who renounces (bad) associations, who serves the high-minded ones, and who becomes selfless.**

३ १४ यो विविक्तस्थानं सेवते यो लोकबन्धमुन्मूलयति निस्त्रैगुण्यो भवति  
योगक्षेमं त्यजति । ४७

3 14 yo viviktasthānaṁ sevate yo lokabandhamunmūlayati nistraiguṇyo  
bhavati yogakṣemaṁ tyajati | 47

**It is the one who lives in a solitary place, who pulls up worldly attachments by the roots, who is free from the three qualities of nature, and who renounces the false security of possessions.**

३ १५ यः कर्मफलं त्यजति कर्माणि सन्न्यस्यति ततो निर्द्वन्द्वो भवति । ४८

3 15 yaḥ karmaphalaṁ tyajati karmāṇi sannasyati tato nirdvandvo  
bhavati | 48

**It is the one who renounces the short-term results of actions, who renounces ordinary karma and thereby becomes free from dualistic thinking.**

३ १६ यो वेदानपि सन्न्यस्यति केवलमविच्छिन्नानुरागं लभते । ४९

3 16 yo vedānapi sannasyati kevalamaviccinnānurāgaṁ labhate | 49

**It is the one who gives up attachment even to the scriptures and organized religion who obtains complete and uninterrupted love for the Divine.**

३ १७ स तरति स तरति स लोकांस्तारयति । ५०

3 17 sa tarati sa tarati sa lokāṁstārayati | 50

**He crosses over! He crosses over! He helps everyone in the world to cross over!**

#### IV. When One Develops True Devotion

४ ०१ अनिर्वचनीयं प्रेमस्वरूपम् । ५१

4 01 anirvacanīyaṁ premasvarūpam | 51

The true nature of pure love is indescribable.

४ ०२ मूकास्वादनवत् । ५२

4 02 mūkāsvādanavat | 52

It's like a mute person trying to describe how something tastes.

४ ०३ प्रकाशते क्वापि पात्रे । ५३

4 03 prakāśate kvāpi pātre | 53

It appears in one who is a pure vessel.

४ ०४ गुणरहितं कामनारहितं प्रतिक्षणवर्धमानं अविचित्रं सूक्ष्मतरं

अनुभवरूपम् । ५४

4 04 guṇarahitaṁ kāmanārahitaṁ pratikṣaṇavardhamānam aviccinnaṁ  
sūkṣmataram anubhavarūpam | 54

It is free of limiting qualities and of base desire; it increases moment to moment, uninterruptedly; and it takes the most subtle form of consciousness.

४ ०५ तत्प्राप्य तदेवावलोकति तदेव शृणोति तदेव भाषयति तदेव  
चिन्तयति । ५५

4 05 tatprāpya tadevāvalokati tadeva śṛṇoti tadeva bhāṣayati tadeva  
cintayati | 55

When one achieves that (love), one sees, hears, speaks, and thinks about  
only it.

४ ०६ गौणी त्रिधा गुणभेदाद् आर्तादिभेदाद् वा । ५६

4 06 gauṇī tridhā guṇabhedād ārtādibhedād vā | 56

Its secondary form is threefold: according to the three kinds of qualities  
or according to the three divisions beginning with distress.

४ ०७ उत्तरस्मादुत्तरस्मात् पूर्व पूर्वा श्रेयाय भवति । ५७

4 07 uttarasmāduttarasmāt pūrva pūrvā śreyāya bhavati | 57

In both cases, what is previous is superior to what follows.

४ ०८ अन्यमात् सौलभं भक्तौ । ५८

4 08 anyamāt saulabham bhaktau | 58

Devotion is an easier path than any other.

४ ०९ प्रमाणान्तरस्यानपेक्षत्वात् स्वयं प्रमाणत्वात् । ५९

4 09 pramāṇāntarasyānapekṣatvāt svayaṁ pramāṇatvāt | 59

The proof of this is self-evident and does not depend on any other proof.

४ १० शान्तिरूपात् परमानन्दरूपाच्च । ६०

4 10 śāntirūpāt paramānandarūpācca | 60

And because it is the very nature of peace and the highest bliss.

४ ११ लोकहानौ चिन्ता न कार्या निवेदितात्मलोकवेदत्वात् । ६१

4 11 lokahānau cintā na kāryā niveditātmalokavedatvāt | 61

Because one has dedicated oneself and all one's worldly and religious activities, there is nothing to worry about when it comes to relinquishing the world.

४ १२ न तत्सिद्धौ लोकव्यावहारो हेयः किन्तु फलत्यागः तत्साधनं च । ६२

4 12 na tatsiddhau lokavyavaharo heyah kintu phalatyāgaḥ tatsādhanam ca | 62

Upon accomplishing that, one should not stop engaging in worldly business but rather do it as a practice, renouncing the short-term results.

४ १३ स्त्रीधननास्तिकचरित्रं न श्रवणीयम् । ६३

4 13 strīdhananāstikacaritraṁ na śravaṇīyam | 63

One should not listen to gossip about women, wealth, and the conduct of the irreligious.

४ १४ अभिमानदम्भादिकं त्याज्यम् । ६४

4 14 abhimānadambhādikaṁ tyājyam | 64

Pride, hypocrisy, and other vices should be given up.

४ १५ तदर्पिताखिलाचारः सन् कामक्रोधाभिमानादिकं तस्मिन्नेव

करणीयम् । ६५

4 15 tadarpitākḥilācāraḥ san kāmakrodhābhimānādikaṁ tasminneva karaṇīyam | 65

With everything one does being fully dedicated to That One, what is done out of desire, anger, pride, etc., is directed toward That One only.

४ १६ त्रिरूपभङ्गपूर्वकम् नित्यदास्यनित्यकान्ताभजनात्मकं प्रेम कार्यं प्रेमैव

कार्यम् । ६६

4 16 trirūpabhaṅgapūrvakam nityadāsyanyakāntābhajanātmakam prema kāryam premaiva kāryam | 66

Breaking out of the limitations of the three (secondary) forms mentioned above, one should act out of pure love alone – acting always with the pure love like that of a servant serving the master or a lover adoring the beloved.

## V. Making the World Sacred

५ ०१ भक्ता एकान्तिनो मुख्याः । ६७

5 01 bhaktā ekāntino mukhyāḥ | 67

The highest of the devotees are those who are single-pointed in their devotion.

५०२ कण्ठावरोधरोमञ्चाश्रुभिः परस्परं लपमानाः पावयन्ति कुलानि पृथिवीं

च । ६८

5 02 kaṅṭhāvarodharomañcāśrubhiḥ parasparam lapamānāḥ pāvayanti kulāni pṛthivīm ca । 68

Speaking with one another with lumps in their throats, hair standing on end, and tears in their eyes, they purify their families and the whole world.

५०३ तीर्थीकुर्वन्ति तीर्थानि सुकर्मि कुर्वन्ति कर्माणि सच्चास्त्रीकुर्वन्ति

शास्त्राणि । ६९

5 03 tīrthīkurvanti tīrthāni sukarmī kurvanti karmāṇi saccāstrikurvanti śāstrāṇi । 69

They make sacred places sacred; they make actions beneficial; they make the scriptures holy.

५०४ तन्मयाः । ७०

5 04 tanmayāḥ । 70

They are filled with That One.

५०५ मोदन्ते पितरो नृत्यन्ति देवतः सनाथा चेयं भूर्भवति । ७१

5 05 modante pitaro nṛtyanti devataḥ sanāthā ceyam bhūrbhavati । 71

Their ancestors rejoice, the gods dance, and this world is endowed with great masters.

५०६ नास्ति तेषु जातिविद्यारूपकुलधनक्रियादि भेदः । ७२

5 06 nāsti teṣu jātividyārūpakuladhanakriyādi bhedaḥ | 72

Among them there is no divisions based on caste, education, appearance, family background, wealth, occupation, etc.

५०७ यतस्तदीयाः । ७३

5 07 yatastadīyāḥ | 73

Because they all belong to That One.

५०८ वादो नावलम्ब्यः । ७४

5 08 vādo nāvalambyaḥ | 74

One should not engage in disputation.

५०९ बाहुल्यावकाशत्वाद् अनियतत्वाच्च । ७५

5 09 bāhulyāvakaśatvāḍ aniyatatvācca | 75

Because it can go on forever with no final resolution.

५१० भक्तिशस्त्राणि मननीयानि तदुद्बोधकर्माणि करणीयानि । ७६

5 10 bhaktiśastrāṇi mananīyāni tadudbodhakarmāṇi karaṇīyāni | 76

One should contemplate the scriptures on devotion and, recalling them, carry out one's duties.

५ ११ सुखदुःखेच्चालाभादित्यक्ते प्रतीक्ष्यमाणे क्षणार्धमपि व्यर्थं न नेयम् ।

७७

5 11 sukhaduḥkheccālābhādityakte pratikṣyamāṇe kṣaṇārdhamapi vyartham na neyam | 77

One should be patient and give up attachment to such things as pleasure and pain and getting what one selfishly desires. One should not be led into useless activity even for half a second.

५ १२ अहिंसासत्यशौचदयास्तिक्यादिचारित्र्याणि परिपालनीयानि । ७८

5 12 ahimsāsatyaśaucadayāstikyādicāritrayāṇi paripālanīyāni | 78

Qualities like nonviolence, truthfulness, purity, compassion, and right worldview, as well as good behavior, should be cultivated.

५ १३ सर्वदा सर्वभावेन निश्चिन्तैः भगवानेव भजनीयः । ७९

5 13 sarvadā sarvabhāvena niścintaiḥ bhagavāneva bhajanīyaḥ | 79

The Lord alone is to be worshiped always and with one's whole being by those without doubt.

५ १४ स कीर्त्यमानः शीघ्रमेवाविर्भवत्यनुभावयति भक्तान् । ८०

5 14 sa kīrtyamānaḥ śīghramevāvīrbhavatyānubhāvayati bhaktān | 80

The Lord, being glorified like this, quickly appears and reveals Himself or Herself to the devotees.

५ १५ त्रिसत्यस्य भक्तिरेव गरीयसी भक्तिरेव गरीयसी । ८१

5 15 trisatyasya bhaktireva garīyasī bhaktireva garīyasī | 81

Devotion is the most important thing in the three realities; devotion alone is the most important thing.

५ १६ गुणमाहात्म्यासक्ति-रूपासक्ति-पूजासक्ति-स्मरणासक्ति-

दास्यासक्तिसख्यासक्तिवात्सल्यसक्ति-कान्तासक्ति-आत्मनिवेदनासक्ति-

तन्मयतासक्ति-परमविरहासक्ति-रूपा एकधा अपि एकादशधा भवति । ८२

5 16 guṇamāhātmyāsakti-rūpāsakti-pūjāsakti-smaraṇāsakti-dāsyāsakti-sakhyāsakti-vātsalyasakti-kāntāsakti-ātmanivedanāsakti-tanmayatāsakti-paramavirahāsakti-rūpā ekadhā api ekādaśadhā bhavati | 82

Although one, it has eleven forms: attaching oneself to the divine qualities; attaching to the form; attaching to the rituals of worship; attaching to constantly remembering; the attaching a servant has; the attaching a friend has; parental attachment; the attachment of a lover; the attachment of dedicating one's whole self; that attachment of being identified with That One; and the supreme attaching oneself to the love that's generated in separation.

५ १७ इत्येवं वदन्ति जनजल्पनिर्भयाः एकमतः कुमार-व्यास-शुक-

शाण्डिल्य-गर्ग-विष्णु-कौण्डिन्य-शेषोधदवारुणि-बलि-हनुमद्-विभीषणादयो

भक्त्याचार्याः । ८३

5 17 ityevaṃ vadanti janajalpanirbhayāḥ ekamataḥ kumāra-vyāsa-śuka-śāṇḍilya-garga-viṣṇu-kaunḍinya-śeṣodhdavāruṇi-bali-hanumad-vibhīṣaṇādayo bhaktyācāryāḥ | 83

The teachers of devotion – Kumara, Vyasa, Shuka, Sandilya, Garga, Vishnu, Kaundinya, Shesha, Uddhava, Aruni, Bali, Hanuman, Vibhishana, and the rest – unanimously teach this same sort of thing, undeterred by the chatter of the mobs.

५१८ य इदं नारदप्रोक्तं शिवानुशासनं विश्वसिति श्रद्धते स भक्तिमान् भवति  
सः प्रेष्टं लभते सः प्रेष्टं लभते । ८४

5 18 ya idaṁ nāradaproktaṁ śivānuśāsanam viśvasiti śraddhate sa  
bhaktimān bhavati saḥ preṣṭam labhate saḥ preṣṭam labhate । 84

**Someone who believes and has confidence in this auspicious doctrine  
taught by Narada becomes filled with devotion. Someone like that  
reaches the Most Beloved; he or she reaches the Most Beloved.**