

ಶ್ರೀಸುಬ್ರಹ್ಮಣ್ಯ ಷೋಡಶನಾಮಾನಿ

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ಜ್ಞಾನಶಕ್ತಿಧರಃ ಸ್ಕಂದಃ ದೇವಸೇನಾಪತಿಸ್ತಥಾ |

ಸುಬ್ರಹ್ಮಣ್ಯೋ ಗಜಾರೂಢಃ ಶರಕಾನನಸಮ್ಭವಃ || ೧ ||

ಕಾರ್ತಿಕೇಯಃ ಕುಮಾರಶ್ಚ ಷಣ್ಮುಖಸ್ತಾರಕಾಂತಕಃ |

ಸೇನಾನೀಬ್ರಹ್ಮಶಾಸ್ತಾ ಚ ವಲ್ಲಿಕಲ್ಯಾಣಸುಂದರಃ || ೨ ||

ಬಾಲಶ್ಚ ಕೌಞ್ಜಭೀತ್ತಾ ಚ ಶಿಖಿವಾಹನ ಏವ ಚ |

ಏತಾನಿ ಸ್ವಾಮಿನಾಮಾನಿ ಷೋಡಶ ಪ್ರತ್ಯಹಃ ನರಃ |

ಯಃ ಪಠೇತ್ ಸರ್ವಪಾಪೇಭ್ಯಃ ಸ ಮುಚ್ಯತೇ ಮಹಾಮುನೇ || ೩ ||

COMMENTS:

In the following comments some abbreviations are used. They are -

(1) VS - Vishnu sahasranama. (2) SS - Siva sahasranama (Padma Purana).

(3) BG - Bhagavad Gita (4) BH - Shrimad Bhagavatam

(5) LS - Lalita sahasranamam.

Our religion lays great emphasis on the purificatory power of the Lord's name.

Our vedas talk about this. The following verse from the Yajur Veda will serve as an instance.

ಪ್ರತತ್ತೇ ಅದ್ಯ ಶಿಪಿವಿಷ್ಟ ನಾಮಾಯಃ ಶಂಸಾಮಿ ವಯುನಾನಿ ವಿದ್ವಾನ್ |

ತಂ ತ್ವಾ ಗೃಣಾಮಿ ತವ ಸಮತವೀಯಾನ್ ಕ್ವಯಂತಮಸ್ಯ ರಜಸಃ ಪರಾಕೇ ||

This prayer addressed to Lord Vishnu says "I specially extol Your name".

Swami Bodhendra, who was a great advocate of chanting of the Lord's name points out that ಶಂಸಾಮಿ indicates repeating the name several times.

The vedas themselves contain many hymns that extol the Lord. Shri Rudram, Shrisuktam etc., give the names of the Lord. The puranas also contain many compilation of names (nAmAvali) which are very suitable for recitation. Among these the Vishnu sahasranamam, Shiva sahasranamam and Lalita sahasranAmam are popular. Their recitation with devotion is guaranteed to confer immense benefits to the person. The Vishnu sahasranamam has the following verse towards the end. This says that the one who listens to it or recites it daily will not encounter misfortunes in this life or the life hereafter.

ಯ ಇದಂ ಶೃಣುಯಾನ್ನಿತ್ಯಂ ಯಶ್ಚಾಪಿ ಪರಿಕೀರ್ತಯೇತ್ |
ನಾಶುಭಂ ಪ್ರಾಪ್ನುಯಾತ್ ಕಿಂಚಿತ್ ಸೋಽಮುಕ್ತೇಹ ಚ ಮಾನವಃ ||

Similarly the Kaivalyopanishad says that one who recites Shri Rudram is absolved from great sins.

ಯಃ ಶತರುದ್ರೀಯಮಧೀತೇ ಸೋಽಗ್ನಿಪೂತೋ ಭವತಿ|ಸುರಾಪಾನಾತ್ಪೂತೋ ಭವತಿ|
ಬ್ರಹ್ಮಹತ್ಯಾತ್ಪೂತೋ ಭವತಿ| ಕೃತ್ಯಾಕೃತ್ಯಾತ್ಪೂತೋ ಭವತಿ|

Sage Naradha told sage Vyasa (BH 1-5-22) that wise men declare that the abiding purpose of man's austere penance, sacred knowledge, sacrificial performances, recitation of the Vedas with correct intonation, enlightenment and offering of gifts is to recount the virtues of the Lord.

ಇದಂ ಹಿ ಪುಂಸಸ್ತಪಸಃ ಶ್ರುತಸ್ಯ ವಾ ಸ್ವಿಷ್ಟಸ್ಯ ಸೂಕ್ತಸ್ಯ ಚ ಬುದ್ಧಿದತ್ತಯೋಃ |
ಅವಿಚ್ಯುತೋಽರ್ಥಃ ಕವಿಭಿರ್ನಿರೂಪಿತೋ ಯದುತ್ತಮಶ್ಲೋಕ-ಗುಣಾನುವರ್ಣನಮ್ ||

In view of such statements many have the habit of reciting these hymns daily after completing their worship. But in these days, when time has

become a scarce commodity, many have given up performing daily puja and even sandhyavandanam. For the benefit of such people, our kindly sages have provided shorter version of the hymns. In addition to sahasranamas that contain 1000 names, they have given us trishatis that contain 300 names, ashtottarashatams that list 108 names and even lists containing 16 and 12 names. If someone was to claim that he has not the time even to say these abridged versions, our puranas suggest repeating any of Lord's names that one prefers. Towards the end of the Vishnu sahasranama stotram, there is a verse in which Parvati asks Lord Shiva if there is an easy method to recite the lengthy sahasranamam. In reply Lord Shiva says that repeating the name Rama is equivalent to reciting the entire sahasranamam!

ಪಾರ್ವತೃವಾಚ -

ಕೇನೋಪಾಯೇನ ಲಘುನಾ ವಿಷ್ಣೋರ್ನಾಮಸಹಸ್ರಕಮ್ ।

ಪಠ್ಯತೇ ಪಣ್ಡಿತೈರ್ನಿತ್ಯಂ ಶ್ರೋತುಮಿಚ್ಛಮ್ಯಹಂ ಪ್ರಭೋ ॥

ಈಶ್ವರೋವಾಚ -

ಶ್ರೀರಾಮ ರಾಮ ರಾಮೇತಿ ರಮೇ ರಾಮೇ ಮನೋರಮೇ ।

ಸಹಸ್ರನಾಮ ತತ್ಪಠ್ಯಂ ರಾಮನಾಮ ಪರಾನನೇ ॥

The stotram that is given herein contains sixteen names of Lord Subrahmanya who is a very popular deity worshipped in the country. The last verse says that one who recites these names daily will be absolved from all sins. So, the Lord has the name ಪಾಪನಾಶನಃ - ಕೀರ್ತಿತಃ ಪೂಜಿತೋ ಧ್ಯಾತಃ ಸ್ಮೃತಃ ಪಾಪರಾಶಿಂ ನಾಶಯತಿ | VS(992). Reciting a short poem that contains few names looks very easy and because of this reason one may entertain some doubt if repeating few names can free one from

sins. Shrimad Bhagavatam gives the example of one taking a medicine. A tablet may weigh only few milligrams, but it can work even in the body of a burly person and can give great relief. Also a medicine will do its work even one takes it by mistake! (Eg.) a laxative tablet even when swallowed by mistake will make the person run to the toilet within a short time. Similarly, the Lord's names will purify a person in whatever manner it is uttered. The Padma Purana says this as follows.

ಆಶ್ಚರ್ಯೇ ವಾ ಭಯೇ ಶೋಕೇ ಕ್ಷುತೇ ವಾ ಮಮ ನಾಮ ಯಃ |
ವ್ಯಾಜೇನ ವಾ ಸ್ಮರೇದ್ಯಸ್ತು ಸ ಯಾತಿ ಪರಮಾಂ ಗತಿಮ್ ||

That is why in the introduction to Vishnu shasranama stotram Shri Bhishma says that worshipping the Lord by reciting hymns (stotras) is the best and easiest form of worship by which one can get over the problem of samsara or cyclic births.

ಏಷ ಮೇ ಸರ್ವ ಧರ್ಮಾಣಾಂ ಧರ್ಮೋಽಧಿಕತಮೋ ಮತಃ |
ಯದ್ಭಕ್ತ್ಯಾ ಪುಣ್ಣರೀಕಾಕ್ಷಂ ಸ್ತವೈರರ್ಚೀನ್ನರಃ ಸದಾ ||

We should note an important point here. The stotras may be named after different forms of gods such as Vishnu or Shiva or Lalita Devi etc.

But when we go through the names we find that there are some that clearly say that the god that is praised is the Supreme Being. So, there is no question of one being superior or inferior to the others.

They all are in praise of one and the same Being.

Where is the Supreme Being and how to worship it – one may wonder.

It is everywhere and every thing according to the scriptures.

ಸರ್ವಃ - ಸರ್ವ ಸ್ವರೂಪಃ | ಕ್ಷಿತಿ-ಸಲಿಲ-ಹತವಹ-ಪವನ-ಗಗನ-ಹಿಮಕರ-

ದಿನಮಣಿ-ಯಜಮಾನಾತ್ಮ ಭಿರ್ಮೂರ್ತಿಭಿಃ ಸರ್ವಂ ವ್ಯಾಪ್ಯ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಿತಃ ||

।ದೋ ಸರ್ವೋ ವೈ ರುದ್ರದೋ ಇತಿ ಶ್ರುತಿಃ | SS(802)

We find the name in the Vishnu sahasranama (25) also. For the convenience of those who want to worship the Lord, He has assumed various forms such as Rama, Krishna, Shiva, Devi etc. We may worship Him in anything as He is every thing. So, we have the habit of worshipping Ashwattha tree, rivers like Ganga, books like the Gita or Ramayana and so on. But for the sake of convenience we have the practice of worshipping Him in idols, shaligrama and lingam. It is known that the mind is wavering by nature and so is difficult to concentrate for a long time during the worship. This kind of worship is easy and most suitable for those who require an external object to help them to focus their mind during the worship. After proper installation with mantras the idol is no more an inanimate idol, but the living prescence of the Lord. As the worship of the Lord in such a consecrated idol has to be done with great deal of devotion the external object helps in paying attention to the Lord in the object. So, one may say that it is most suited during the early stages of worship for one whose mind is not steady. But as one continues with the worship he progresses steadily on the spiritual path. Devotion swells in the heart and the Lord slowly creeps into his mind. The mind is gradually purged of undesirable traits such as likes, dislikes, anger, lust that pollute and distract the mind. In such a mind that is pure and steady the Self within reveals Itself. Such a devotee who has made great progress on the spiritual path may worship the Lord within himself – in the space (called

'cave' or ಗುಹಾ). The Katha upanishad (1-2-20)says this as follows.

ಅಣೋರಣೀಯಾನ್ಮಹತೋ ಮಹೀಯಾನ್ ಆತ್ಮಾಽಸ್ಯ ಜನ್ಮೋರ್ನಿಹಿತಂ ಗುಹಾಯಾಮ್ |
ತಮಕ್ರತುಃ ಪಶ್ಯತಿ ವೀತಶೋಕೋ ಧಾತುಪ್ರಸಾದಾನ್ಮಹಿಮಾನಮಾತ್ಮನಃ ||

For this reason, Lord Subrahmanya is also known as Guha (ಗುಹಃ||). SS(865).

ಗುಹಃ ಸ್ಯಂದಃ, ತದ್ರೂಪತ್ವಾತ್ | ಯದ್ವಾ ಗುಹಾ ಬುದ್ಧಿಃ,
ಸಾಽಸ್ಯಾಭಿವ್ಯಕ್ತಿಸ್ಥಾನತ್ವೇನಾಸ್ತಿತಿ ಮತ್ವರ್ಥೀಯಾಚ್ಛ್ರೇಯಾಂತಃ ಶಬ್ದಃ |
|ದ್ಃ ಯೋ ವೇದ ನಿಹಿತಂ ಗುಹಾಯಾದ್ಃ ಮಿತಿ ಶ್ರುತಿಃ||ದ್ಃ ಯೋ ವೈ ರುದ್ರಃ ಸ
ಭಗವಾನ್ಯಶ್ಚ ಸ್ಯಂದಃ ಇತಿ ಶ್ರುತಿಃ ||

Devi Lalita also has the name Guhya (ಗುಹ್ಯಾ - ಗುಹಾಂ ಪ್ರವಿಷ್ಟಾ ಗುಹ್ಯಾ ||)

LS(624)

Sage Vishvamitra narrates the story of the birth of Subrahmanya to Shri
Rama and Laxmana as he is taking them through the forests. In the end, he
gives the benefits that will accrue to one who listens to the story and
says that if one is devoted to Lord Subrahmanya he will have longevity
and an abode in the divine world of Skanda along with his sons and
grandsons. (Balakanda-37-32).

ಭಕ್ತಶ್ಚ ಯಃ ಕಾರ್ತಿಕೇಯೇ ಕಾಕುತ್ಸ್ಥ ಭುವಿ ಮಾನವಃ |
ಆಯುಷ್ಮಾನ್ ಪುತ್ರಪೌತ್ರೈಶ್ಚ ಸ್ಕಂದಸಾಲೋಕ್ಯತಾಂ ಪ್ರಜೇತ್ ||

The late Paramacharya of Kanchi math pointed out that the name swami
(ಸ್ವಾಮೀ) occuring in the third verse is unique to Lord Subrahmanya and
identifies Him with the Supreme Being. He quotes the verse from Amarakosha
in support. ದೇವಸೇನಾಪತಿಃ ಶೂರಃ ಸ್ವಾಮೀ ಗಜಮುಖಾನುಜಃ| The word swami

(ಸ್ವಾಮೀ) means the owner. What does the Lord own? He owns the entire universe and so is the Supreme Being. The name Subrahmanya may be split as su (ಸು) and brahmanya (ಬ್ರಹ್ಮಣ್ಯ). Brahmanya means protector of dharma. The name appears in the Vishnu and Siva sahasranamas. The commentators Shankaracharya define the word as follows.ಬ್ರಹ್ಮಣ್ಯಃ -
 |ದ್ಂ ತಪೋ ವೇದಾಶ್ಚ ವಿಪ್ರಾಶ್ಚ ಜ್ಞಾನಂ ಚ ಬ್ರಹ್ಮಸಂಜ್ಞಿತಮ್ |ದ್ಂ
 ತೇಭ್ಯೋ ಹಿತತ್ವಾತ್ ಬ್ರಹ್ಮಣ್ಯಃ | VS (661). Tapas or austerities, the vedas,
 those who study and abide by the vedic injunctions and have got the
 knowledge of the Self, and the spiritual wisdom are known as brahma
 (not the creator Brahma). The Lord supports them. The name is defined
 similarly in SS(562).

ಬ್ರಹ್ಮರೂಪಾಣಂ ಜ್ಞಾನಿನಾಂ ಹಿತಕಾರೀ ಬ್ರಹ್ಮಣ್ಯಃ |
 |ದ್ಂ ತಸ್ಯೈವ ಆತ್ಮಾ ವಿವೃಣೋತಿ ತನೂಮ್ |ದ್ಂ ಇತಿ ಶ್ರುತಿಃ |
 ಜ್ಞಾನೀತ್ವಾತ್ಮೈವ ಮೇ ಮತಮಿತಿ ಭಗವದ್ವಚನಾಚ್ಚ | (Gita-7-18)

We find from the Skanda Purana that Lord Subrahmanya incarnated to quell
 the asuras and bring the dharma back on its feet. This is in accordance
 with what the Lord said in the Bhagavad Gita in the following
 verses that are quite popular. (4-7 and 8).

ಯದಾ ಯದಾ ಹಿ ಧರ್ಮಸ್ಯ ಗ್ಲಾನಿರ್ಭವತಿ ಭಾರತ |
 ಅಭ್ಯುತ್ಥಾನಮಧರ್ಮಸ್ಯ ತದಾತ್ಮಾನಂ ಸೃಜಾಮ್ಯಹಮ್ || ೭ ||

ಪರಿತ್ರಾಣಾಯ ಸಾಧೂನಾಂ ವಿನಾಶಾಯ ಚ ದುಷ್ಕೃತಾಮ್ |
 ಧರ್ಮ-ಸಂಸ್ಥಾಪನಾರ್ಥಾಯ ಸಂಭವಾಮಿ ಯುಗೇ ಯುಗೇ || ೮ ||

But we should notice one difference with Lord Subrahmanya's fighting the
 asuras like Shura and Taraka. According to the puranas, He no doubt fought

with them, but did not kill them (unlike in other avatars). He subdued them and made them His servants in the form of the peacock etc. This shows His extraordinary kindness. Shri Sankaracharya points this out in his Subrahmanya Bhujanga stotram. He says that there are gods who shower their grace on the sages and their devotees. But I do not know of a god who showers His grace even on one belonging to the lowest category.

ಮುನೀನಾಮುತಾಹೋ ನೃಣಾಂ ಭಕ್ತಿಭಾಜಾಮಭೀಷ್ಟಪ್ರದಾಃ ಸಂತಿ ಸರ್ವತ್ರ ದೇವತಾಃ |
ನೃಣಾಮನ್ತ್ಯಜಾನಾಮಪಿ ಸ್ವಾರ್ಥದಾನೇ ಗುಹಾದ್ದೇವಮನ್ಯಂ ನ ಜಾನೇ ನ ಜಾನೇ ||

Let us pray to Lord Subrahmanya and seek His grace.

॥ ಓಂ ತತ್ಸತ್ ॥

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