

ஸ்ரீஸரஸ்வதீஸ்தோத்ரம் உ

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யா குந்தேந்து-துஷார-ஹார தவலா யா ஸ,ப்ர-வஸ்த்ராவதா
யா வீணா வர-தண்ட-மண்டித-கரா யா ஸ்வேத-பத்மாஸநா ।
யா ப்ரஹ்மாச்யுத-ஸங்கர-ப்ரபதிபிஃ தேவைஸ்ஸதா பூஜிதா
ஸா மரீ பாது ஸரஸ்வதீ பகவதீ நிம்மேஷ-ஜாட்யாபஹா ॥ க ॥

ஸ்ரீமச்சந்தந-சர்சிதோஜ்வலவபுஃ ஸ,க்லாம்பரா மல்லிகா-
மாலாலிதகுந்தலா ப்ரவிலஸந்முக்தாவலீமோபநா ।
ஸர்வஜ்ஞாநநிதாநபுஸ்தகதரா ருத்ராக்ஷமாலாங்கிதா
வாக்தேவீ வதநாம்புஜே வஸது மே த்ரைலோக்யமாதா ஸ,பா ॥ உ ॥

ஜய ஜய தேவி தயாலஹரி ஜநநி ஸரஸ்வதி பாலய மாம் ।
அமலே கமலாஸநஸஹிதே அத்புதசரிதே பாலய மாம் ॥ ட ॥

மாதர்மங்கலகுணஜாலே மநோஜ்ஞஸீலே பாலய மாம் ।
கிரீடகுண்டலஸுமோபிதே கிந்நரகீதே பாலய மாம் ॥ ச ॥

பகவதி பாரதி கீர்வாணி பந்நகவேணி பாலய மாம் ।
ஸர்வலோகபரிபூஜிதசரணே ரத்நாபரணே பாலய மாம் ॥ ரு ॥

கமலமுகி கமலபதே கமலதலாயதவிலோசநே ।
கமலமாலிகே கமலகரே கமலாஸநதயிதே வரதே ॥ சு ॥

விமலமதே விதுமகுடி விபுதகணார்சிதசரணயுகே ।
வித்வந்மாநஸராஜஹீஸி வித்யாருபே ஸரஸ்வதி ॥ எ ॥

புத்திசாதுரீ பாரதி மே பூரய தேவி கபாலஹரீம் ।
முக்தே வர்தய மயி நிதரர் முதமநிஸ் திஸ் மம ஜநநி ॥ அ ॥

ஸுரமுநிகேயே விதிஜாயே ஸுஸ்மிதவதநே ஸ,பஸதநே ।
ஸ்வரமயவீணாபுஸ்தகதாரிணி பரப்ரஹ்மரூபிணி வாணி ॥ சு ॥

நிராவதிகருணே நிராமயே நித்யே நிர்மலகுணோஜ்ஜ்வலே ।
பரமபாவநி த்வீ மம ஹதயே பகவதி பாரதி விஹர ஸதா ॥ க௦ ॥

தாமரஸாஸநமுகநிலயே தார்மிகஜநபாலநஸதயே ।
ஸர்வலோகபரிபூஜிதபாதே ரஞ்ஜய பாரதி மம வாணிம் ॥ க௧ ॥

காமதுகா பவ நஸ்ஸததீ காஞ்சநமணிமயவிபூஷணே ।
ஸாமகாநலோலே ஸுகபோலே ஸாரதாம்பிகே பாலய மாம் ॥ க௨ ॥

॥ இதி ஸ்ரீ ஸரஸ்வதீ ஸ்தோத்ரீ ஸம்பூர்ணம் ॥

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COMMENTS:- In the following comments these abbreviations are used.

SS -Sivasahasranamam (Padmapuranam with the commentary of
Sri Paramasivendra Sarasvati.

LS - Lalithasahasranamam with the commentary of Sri Bhaskaracharya.

BG - Bhagavadgita

All living beings instinctively seek comfort and happiness.

They all dislike discomfort and pain. But in life we find that

the happiness that we seek eludes us. Even if we find a modicum of

happiness, it lasts for a short period only and is followed by a

spell of unhappiness. So our scriptures term this kind of happiness as not true happiness but unhappiness only because either it makes one hanker for more of the kind and leaves one restless and not enjoy the happiness on hand or is followed by unhappiness. Krishna wants us to ponder over this fact. He calls this life as a the repository of unhappiness and ephemeral. துஃகாலயமஸாப்வதம்।

BG (8-15). The ideal condition will then be to have happiness that is never ending. One would like to have happiness at all times and at all places. Such a condition appears like chimera or a distant dream. But our scriptures say that this need not be so; because our very nature is such happiness and wisdom. But then we cannot accept this statement looking at the condition we find ourselves in now.

The reason is said to be that our true nature is veiled by spiritual ignorance. This is stated by Krishna அஃஞாநேநாவதீ ஃஞாநீ தேந முஹ்யந்தி ஃந்தவஃ। BG (5-15). This spiritual ignorance is known variously as avidya, ajnanam, maya and prakriti. The power of maya deludes us and makes us believe that we are the mixture of the body and mind and are subject to many ills such as sickness, pain, sorrow etc., that pertain to them. Krishna mentions these and says ஃந்ம-மத்யு-ஃரா-வ்யாதி-துஃக-தோஷாநுதர்ஸநம்। (BG-13-8). that one should discern the defects such as birth, death, old age, disease and sorrow that are the hallmark of life. But, truly speaking these ills pertain to the body and mind and not to us – the true self. The remedy then is to get the right knowledge. Just like darkness is dispelled by light, ignorance is dispelled by right knowledge. Once the ignorance about Self is removed true knowledge shines. Then we will be able to realise that we are separate from the body/mind complex and the ills that beset the body and mind

cannot affect us. Krishna points this out in BG (5-16) as follows.

ஜ்ஞாநேந து ததஜ்ஞாநீ யேஷரீ நாஸிதமாத்மநஃ ।
தேஷாமாதித்யவஜ்ஜ்ஞாநீ ப்ரகாமயதி தத்பரம் ॥

The question then, is how to get the right knowledge? Firstly one should do the duties prescribed by the scriptures. This first step is necessary as this will cleanse the mind of impurities. சித்தஸ்ய ஸுத்தயே கர்ம says Shri Shankaracharya in his Vivekachudamani (11). Then one should worship the Lord whom the vedas describe as the repository of all knowledge.

ஈஸாநஸ்ஸர்வவித்யாநரீ ஈஸ்வரஸ்ஸர்வபூதாநரீ
ப்ரஹ்மாஸ்திபதிர்ப்ரஹ்மணோஸ்திபதிர்ப்ரஹ்மா ஸிவோ மேஸ்து
ஸதாஸிவோம் ॥

The Mundaka Upanishad (1.1.9).says

யஃ ஸர்வஜ்ஞஃ ஸர்வவித்யஸ்ய ஜ்ஞாநமயீ தபஃ ।
தஸ்மாதேதத்ப்ரஹ்ம நாம ரூபமந்நீ ச ஜாயதே ॥

that He is the omniscient Being. He created Brahma the creator of all beings and taught Him (Brahma) the vedas to enable Him to carry on with the work of creation. The Svetasvataropanishad (6-18) says this as follows.

யோ ப்ரஹ்மாணீ விததாதி பூர்வ் யோ வை வேதரீம்ச ப்ரஹிணோதி தஸ்மை
தீ ஹ தேவமாத்மபுத்திரகாமீ முமுகூர்வை ஸரணமஹீ ப்ரபத்யே ॥

The Lord is moved by the sincere devotion of the seeker and grants him the wisdom that helps in destroying the darkness of ignorance. He says this in BG(10-10,11).

தேஷர் ஸததயுக்தாநர் பஜதர் ப்ரீதிபூர்வகம் ।
ததாமி புத்தியோகீ த் யேந மாமுபயாந்தி தே ॥

தேஷாமேவாநுகீபார்தீ அஹமஜ்ஞாநஜீ தமஃ ।
நாமயாம்யாத்மபாவஸ்தோ ஜ்ஞாநதீபேந பாஸ்வதா ॥

The vedas describe the Lord as having matted hair, three eyes and crystal clear body. When He appeared as DakShinamurty to teach the highest wisdom to the sages He had all these and also a rosary and a book in His hands. The DakShinamurtyupanishat describes His form as follows.

ஸ்படிக-ரஜதவர்ணீ மௌக்திகீமக்ஷமாலர்
அமதகலஸவித்யர் ஜ்ஞாநமுத்ரர் கராக்ரே ।
ததத-முரககக்ஷீ சந்த்ரகூட் த்ரிநேத்ரீ
விததவிவிதபூஷீ தக்ஷிணாமூர்திமீடே ॥

Such a Supreme Being appears in various forms to enable people to worship Him and to satisfy their diverse tastes. One such form that is popular among all is that of Sarasvati Devi. She is also described as having matted hair, three eyes and crystal clear body. She is also having rosary and a book in Her hands. She is worshipped by other gods like Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. This is said in the first verse given above. In fact our scriptures say that it is the Supreme Being that appears as Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva etc . cf.,Narayana Suktam (Taittiriyaanyakam, 4.10.13) ஸ ப்ரஹ்மா ஸ பரிவஃ ஸ ஹரிஃ ஸேந்த்ரஃ ஸோக்ஷரஃ பரமஃ ஸ்வராட் ॥

Lord Krishna says that He (the Supreme Being) alone appears as all

deities. Any worship offered to any form and name goes to Him alone
and He alone grants the wishes of the worshippers through that form.

But such worshippers of these various forms do not realise the truth.

யோ யோ யர் யர் தந் பக்தஃ ப்ரத்தயா஽ர்சிதுமிச்சதி ।

தஸ்ய தஸ்யாசலர் ப்ரத்தர் தாமேவ விததம்யஹம் ॥ BG(7-21).

Whichever form a devotee wishes to worship with faith, I make
the faith more firm.

ஸ தயா ப்ரத்தயா யுக்தஃ தஸ்யாராதநமீஹதே ।

லபதே ச ததஃ காமாந் மயைவ விஹிதாந்ஹிதாந் ॥ BG(7-22).

Possessed of that faith, he engages in the worship of that form and

he obtains his desires that are indeed granted by Me alone. Thus,

the Supreme being alone that is worshipped as Sharada Devi represents

Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva is said in one of Her names in the 108 names

(நாமாவலிஃ) as : ப்ரஹ்ம-விஷ்ணு-பரிவாத்மிகா । This same name

can also be seen in the 108 namavali of Lakshmi. The list of 108 names

also have the names பாரதா, ரமா, பரிவா-(பரிவாபேதா பரிவா),

சண்டிகா, சாமுண்டி, வாராஹீ । She can be worshipped by all,

though each one may have different desires, and She will fulfill

all those desires. Lalitha Devi has also the name Sarasvathi

(LS 703). ஸரஸ்வதீ - ஸரஸ்வதீ ஜ்ஞாநாபிமாநிநீ

தேவதா ஜ்ஞாநஸமுத்ரூபேத்யர்தஃ । She has the form of Dakshinamurti

also. (LS724). தக்ஷிணாமுர்திரூபிணீ - பரிவஸ்ய தக்ஷிணாபிமுகீ

மூர்திர்ப்ரஹ்ம-நாராயணாதேரத்யபகத்வேந ப்ரஸித்தா । All these show

that whom we call as Sarasvati is the very Supreme Being only. This

is said as பரப்ரஹ்மரூபிணி in verse No.9 in the poem given in

the beginning.

The Mukhapanchasati says that She is also Kamakshi.

விமலபட கமலகுட புஸ்தகருத்ராக்ஷமஸ்தஹஸ்தபுட।
காமாக்ஷி பக்ஷமலாக்ஷீ கலிதாவிபஞ்சீ த்வமேவ வைரிஞ்சீ ॥

(Mukhapanchashati – Aryashatakam -92). The verse says that Kamakshi

alone shines as Sarasvati wearing clean robes who is seated in a
lotus flower, has a book and rosary in her beautiful hands, has
charming eyes and holds the veena in Her hands.

She is also known as Sharadha Devi. She is seen at Shringeri
temple with chinmudra (in which the thumb and index finger are
joined together and the three other fingers stand apart), rosary,
a book and a pot containing nectar. The Kamalajadayitashtakam
(கமலஜதயிதாஷ்டகம்) composed by the late acharya Shri
Nrisimha Bharati Swamigal of Shringeri describes Her form as
follows.

வித்யாமுத்ராக்ஷமாலாமதகட-விலஸத்பாணி-பாதோஜஜாலே
வித்யாதாந-ப்ரவீணே ஜட-பதிர-முகேப்யோ஽பி ஸீக்ரீ நதேப்யஃ ।
காமாதீநந்தராந் மத்ஸஹஜ-ரிபுவராந் தேவி நிர்மூல்ய வேகாத்
வித்யா ஸ,த்தரீ ச புத்தி கமலஜ-தயிதே ஸத்வரீ தேஹி மஹ்யம் ॥

வித்யாமுத்ரா = chinmudra or jnanamudra as mentioned above. The
thumb represents Paramatma or the Supreme Being described as the
size of the thumb (for the purpose of meditation) in the Katha
Upanishad (II-1-12) in the following mantra.

அங்குஷ்டமத்ரபுருஷோ மத்யே ஆத்மநி திஷ்டதி ।
ஈஸானோ பூதபவ்யஸ்ய ந ததோ விஜிகுபஸதேஃஏதத்வை தத் ।

The mudra represents the merging of the jivatma and Paramatma that
is implied by the mahavakyam. The three fingers represent the three

bodies (gross, subtle, causal). The jivatma, represented by the index finger, has to get free of the bodies to realise its identity with the Paramatma, represented by the thumb. Sharadha Devi has this mudra as also DakShinamurti. Then, She (as also DakShinamurthi) has the rosary in another hand. The string of beads is made of crystal or rudrakSha beads. The rudrasha beads are from the tree that are said to have sprung from the tear drops that fell from the eyes of Shri Rudra. The RudrakShajabalopanishad says this as follows.

அத ஹைநீ காலாக்நி ருத்ரீ புஸுண்டஃ பப்ரச்ச கதீ
ருத்ராக்ஷாத்பத்திஃ தீ ஹோவாச பகவாந் காலாக்நி ருத்ரஃ ।
திவ்யவர்ஷஸஹஸ்ராணி சக்ஷுருந்மீலிதீ மயா ।
பூமாவாக்ஷி புடாப்யரீ து பதிதா ஜலபிந்தவஃ ।
தத்ராப்ருபிந்தவோ ஜாதா மஹாருத்ராக்ஷ வக்ஷகாஃ ।
பக்தாநரீ தாரணாத் பாபி திவாராத்ரிகதீ ஹரேத் ।
ஸுப்தே பீதே ஸதாகாலீ ருத்ராக்ஷ தாரயேந்நரஃ ॥

The AkShamalikopanishat (அக்ஷமாலிகோபநிஷத்) gives the procedure for purifying the rosary or the string of beads. In this procedure one invokes each letter of the alphabet in each bead and does puja. Thus the first letter is அ and the last letter is க்ஷ. The name AkSha (அக்ஷ) represents all the letters of the alphabet. The letters are arranged either in the ascending order or descending order. So, we have the string having either 54 beads standing for the 54 letters or 108 beads representing both the orders.

பஞ்சபிர்கவ்யைஃ கந்தோதகேந ஸீஸ்நாப்ய,
தஸ்மாத் ஸௌங்காரேண பத்ர கூர்சேந ஸ்நாபயித்வா,
அஷ்டபிர்கந்தைஃ ஆலிப்ய, ஸுமநஃ ஸ்தலே நிவேஸ்ய,
அக்ஷத-புஷ்பைராராத்ய, ப்ரத்யக்ஷமாதிக்ஷாந்தைர்வர்ணைர்பாவயேத் ।

Sarasvathi Devi uses the rosary for japa just to inspire us to do japa and gain purity of the mind. A pure mind is a prerequisite for acquiring and assimilating spiritual wisdom. The qualities that characterise a pure mind that qualifies for receiving spiritual teachings from a guru are given in detail in chapters 13 and 16 of Gita. Krishna calls these qualities as divine qualities or தைவீ ஸீபத். She has வித்யா a book, indicating the scriptural knowledge. This is said as ஸர்வஜ்ஞாநநிதாநபுஸ்தகதரா in verse No.2 in the poem given in the beginning. She is ready to give the vedic wisdom to one who worships her with devotion. This was indicated above in the verses BG(10-10,11). The famous Tamil poetess Avvaiyar gives a delightful meaning to Sarasvathi holding a book made of handful of palm leaves in Her hand. Avvaiyar says it is to show that what even She has learnt is only a handful and what is not learnt is vast as the universe. So one should never become puffed up with one's learning. Then, pot of amrita or nectar symbolising mokSha or liberation. So, if we do japa and get a pure mind, learn the scriptures from a qualified guru and understand the teachings and also worship Her She will bless us with spiritual wisdom which will lead us to liberation.

In the last line of the verse வித்யாரீ ம,த்தரீ ச புத்தி கமலஜ-தயிதே ஸத்வரீ தேஹி மஹ்யம் || the spiritual seeker

prays to Her to bless him with a pure mind and knowledge. He prays for வித்யா or knowledge. The Mundaka upanishat divides knowledge into two categories – the inferior one and the superior one.

த்வே வித்யே வேதிதவ்யே இதி ஹ ஸ்ம யத்ப்ரஹ்மவிதோ வதந்தி பரா சைவாபரா ச ।

தத்ராபரா க்வேதோ யஜுர்வேதஃ ஸாமவேதோதர்வவேதஃ மரிக்ஷா கல்போ
வ்யகரணீ நிருக்தீ சந்தோ ஜ்யோதிஷமிதி ।
அத பரா யயா ததக்ஷரமதிகம்யதே॥

The former one represents the secular knowledge that includes
the sciences, literature, grammar etc. This is termed as அபரா
வித்யா or the inferior knowledge. This is named "inferior" because
any amount of this knowlege may help one to gain name, fame and
perhaps lot of wealth but will not lead to liberation or mokSha.
Sankaracharya, in his commentary says that the lower knowledge is
ignorance only that has to be eradicated, inasmuch as nothing in
reality is known by knowing the objects of ignorance.

அபரா ஹி வித்யா அவித்யா, ஸா நிராகர்தவ்யா ।
தத்விஷயே ஹி விதிதே ந கிஞ்சித்தத்த்வதோ விதிதீ ஸ்யாதிதி ।

Liberation can be had by acquiring the spiritual knowledge
only. There is no other means to gain liberation. Our scriptures
very firmly assret this fact. தமேவீ வித்வாநமத இஹ பவதி
நாந்யஃ பந்தா வித்யதேயநாயி (Purushasukta, No. 17) We worship
Sarasvati for granting us both types of knowledge.

She is described as Vak Devi or as the Goddess presiding over
the power of speech. The popular hymn Shyamaladandakam says that
if one meditates on Her holding a rosary of crystal beads, a book
that represents essence of wisdom, a hook or goad and a noose then
he will become a great poet. From his mouth will flow words in the
form of prose and poetry.

பாணிபத்மத்வயேநாக்ஷமலாமபி ஸ்பாடிகீ ஜ்ஞாநஸாராத்மகீ புஸ்தகீ
சாங்குஸீ பாஸமாபிப்ரதீ யேந ஸ்சிந்த்யஸே,
தஸ்ய வக்த்ராந்தராத்தகத்யபத்யாத்மிகா பரதீ நிஃஸரேத்॥

The Rig veda worships Her as Vak Devi.

ஓ ப்ரணோ தேவீ ஸரஸ்வதீ வாஜேபிர்வாஜிநீவதீ தீநாமவித்ர்யவது || ஓ ||

(Rig veda. 6.5.12). Lord Shiva is also known as such. One of His

names to be seen in the list of His 108 names and also in the 1008

names is கிரிமஃ - கிரி பக்தாநர் வாசி ஸகலவித்யாப்ரவசந

நிக்ரஹாநுக்ரஹ ஸாமர்த்ய ப்ரதாநேந வஸதி இதி கிரிமஃ।

She is also known as Medha Devi (மேதாதேவீ). Medha implies

intellectual brilliance and also retentive power. The Medha Suktam

(மேதாஸூக்தம்) in the Taittiriya Aranyakam (4.10.41-44) praises

Her and says that one who receives Her grace becomes a sage,

wealthy and obtains various other riches. He gets the spiritual

enlightenment by which he crosses the ocean of samsara.

த்வயா ஜ,ஷ்ட ஷிர்பவதி தேவீ த்வயா ப்ரஹ்மஸ்கதம்ரீருத த்வயா।

த்வயாஜ,ஷ்டம்சித்ரீ விந்ததே வஸு ஸா நோ ஜ,ஷஸ்வ த்ரவிணேந மேதே।

Thus the worship of Sarasvati Devi is necessary to have a happy

life in this world and also to get relief from the frightful cycle

of birth and death. Let us wind up this short piece with a prayer

to Her.

ஸர்வமங்கலமாங்கல்யே ஸிவே ஸர்வார்தஸாதிகே।

மரண்யே த்ர்யம்பகே கௌரி நாராயணி நமோஸ்து தே || (Devimahatmya, XI,9.)

O auspicious One! You are the source of all auspiciousness. You

are the accomplisher of all cherished desires. You are the giver

of refuge. You possess the eye of wisdom and beautiful form. O You

Power divine! salutations to You.

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