

श्रीसरस्वतीस्तोत्रम् २

shrI sarasvatI stotram 2

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January 10, 2019

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Sanskrit Document Information



Text title : sarasvatistotram 2

File name : sarasvatistotram2.itx

Category : devii, sarasvatI, devI

Location : doc_devii

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Latest update : August 24. 2013

Send corrections to : Sanskrit@cheerful.com

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या कुन्देन्दु-तुषार-हार धवला या शुभ्र-वस्त्रावृता
या वीणा वर-दण्ड-मण्डित-करा या श्वेत-पद्मासना ।
या ब्रह्माच्युत-शङ्कर-प्रभृतिभिः देवैस्सदा पूजिता
सा मां पातु सरस्वती भगवती निःशेष-जाड्यापहा ॥ १ ॥

श्रीमच्चन्दन-चर्चितोज्वलवपुः शुक्लाम्बरा मल्लिका-
मालालालितकुन्तला प्रविलसन्मुक्तावलीशोभना ।
सर्वज्ञाननिदानपुस्तकधरा रुद्राक्षमालाङ्किता
वाग्देवी वदनाम्बुजे वसतु मे त्रैलोक्यमाता शुभा ॥ २ ॥

जय जय देवि दयालहरि जननि सरस्वति पालय माम् ।
अमले कमलासनसहिते अद्भुतचरिते पालय माम् ॥ ३ ॥

मातर्मङ्गलगुणजाले मनोज्ञशीले पालय माम् ।
किरीटकुण्डलसुशोभिते किन्नरगीते पालय माम् ॥ ४ ॥

भगवति भारति गीर्वाणि पन्नगवेणि पालय माम् ।
सर्वलोकपरिपूजितचरणे रत्नाभरणे पालय माम् ॥ ५ ॥

कमलमुखि कमलपदे कमलदलायतविलोचने ।
कमलमालिके कमलकरे कमलासनदयिते वरदे ॥ ६ ॥

विमलमते विधुमकुटि विबुधगणार्चितचरणयुगे ।
विद्वन्मानसराजहंसि विद्यारूपे सरस्वति ॥ ७ ॥

बुद्धिचातुरीं भारति मे पूर्य देवि कृपालहरीम् ।
मुक्ते वर्धय मयि नितरां मुद्मनिशं दिश मम जननि ॥ ८ ॥

सुरमुनिगेये विधिजाये सुस्मितवदने शुभसदने ।
स्वरमयवीणापुस्तकधारिणि परब्रह्मरूपिणि वाणि ॥ ९ ॥

निरावधिकरुणे निरामये नित्ये निर्मलगुणोज्ज्वले ।
परमपावनि त्वं मम हृदये भगवति भारति विहर सदा ॥ १० ॥
तामरसासनमुखनिलये धार्मिकजनपालनसदये ।
सर्वलोकपरिपूजितपादे रञ्जय भारति मम वाणिम् ॥ ११ ॥
कामदुघा भव नस्सततं काञ्चनमणिमयविभूषणे ।
सामगानलोले सुकपोले शारदाम्बिके पालय माम् ॥ १२ ॥
॥ इति श्री सरस्वती स्तोत्रं सम्पूर्णम् ॥

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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. दुःखालयमशाश्वतम्।

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 अज्ञानेनावृतं ज्ञानं

तेन मुह्यन्ति जन्तवः। 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 जन्म-मृत्यु-जरा-व्याधि-दुःख-दोषानुदर्शनम्।

(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.

ज्ञानेन तु तदज्ञानं येषां नाशितमात्मनः ।

तेषामादित्यवज्ज्ञानं प्रकाशयति तत्परम् ॥

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. चित्तस्य शुद्धये कर्म says Shri Shankaracharya in his Vivekachudamani

(11). Then one should worship the Lord whom the vedas describe as the repository of all knowledge.

ईशानस्सर्वविद्यानां ईश्वरस्सर्वभूतानां

ब्रह्माऽधिपतिर्ब्रह्मणोऽधिपतिर्ब्रह्मा शिवो मेऽस्तु सदाशिवोम् ॥

The Mundaka Upanishad (1.1.9).says

यः सर्वज्ञः सर्वविद्यस्य ज्ञानमयं तपः ।
तस्मादेतद्ब्रह्म नाम रूपमन्नं च जायते ॥

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 Svetasvatropanishad (6-18) says this as follows.

यो ब्रह्माणं विदधाति पूर्वं यो वै वेदांश्च प्रहिणोति तस्मै ।
तं ह देवमात्मबुद्धिप्रकाशं मुमुक्षुर्वै शरणमहं प्रपद्ये ॥

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).

तेषां सततयुक्तानां भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकम् ।
ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं येन मामुपयान्ति ते ॥

तेषामेवानुकंपार्तं अहमज्ञानजं तमः ।
नाशयाम्यात्मभावस्तो ज्ञानदीपेन भास्वता ॥

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.

स्फटिक-रजतवर्णं मौक्तिकीमक्षमालां
अमृतकलशविद्यां ज्ञानमुद्रां कराग्रे ।
दधद-मुरगकक्षं चन्द्रचूडं त्रिनेत्रं
विधृतविविधभूषं दक्षिणामूर्तिमीडे ॥

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 (Taittiriyanakam, 4.10.13) स ब्रह्मा स शिवः स हरिः सेन्द्रः सोऽक्षरः परमः स्वराट् ॥

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.

यो यो यां यां तनुं भक्तः श्रद्धयाऽर्चितुमिच्छति ।

तस्य तस्याचलां श्रद्धां तामेव विदधम्यहम् ॥ BG(7-21).

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

स तया श्रद्धया युक्तः तस्याराधनमीहते ।

लभते च ततः कामान् मयैव विहितान्दितान् ॥ 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 (नामावलिः) as : ब्रह्म-विष्णु-शिवात्मिका । This same name can also be seen in the 108 namavali of Laksmi. The list of 108 names also have the names शारदा, रमा, शिवा-(शिवाभेदा शिवा), चण्डिका, चामुण्डी, वाराही । 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).सरस्वती - सरस्वती ज्ञानाभिमानिनी देवता । ज्ञानसमुद्ररूपेत्यर्तः । She has the form of Dakshinamurti also. (LS724). दक्षिणामूर्तिरूपिणी - शिवस्य दक्षिणाभिमुखी मूर्तिर्ब्रह्म-नारायणादेरध्यपकत्वेन प्रसिद्धा । All these show that whom we call as Sarasvati is the very Supreme Being only. This is said as परब्रह्मरूपिणि in verse No.9 in the poem given in the beginning.

The Mukhapanchasati says that She is also Kamakshi.

विमलपटी कमलकुटी पुस्तकरुद्राक्षशस्तहस्तपुटी।

कामाक्षि पक्षमलाक्षी कलिताविपञ्ची त्वमेव वैरिञ्ची ॥

(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 (कमलजदयिताष्टकम्।) composed by the late acharya Shri Nrisimha Bharati Swamigal of Shringeri describes Her form as follows.

विद्यामुद्राक्षमालामृतघट-विलसत्पाणि-पाथोजजाले

विद्यादान-प्रवीणे जड-बधिर-मुखेभ्योऽपि शीघ्रं नतेभ्यः ।

कामादीनन्तरान् मत्सहज-रिपुवरान् देवि निर्मूल्य वेगात्

विद्यां शुद्धां च बुद्धिं कमलज-दयिते सत्वरं देहि मह्यम् ॥

विद्यामुद्रा = 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.

अङ्गुष्ठमत्रपुरुषो मध्ये आत्मनि तिष्ठति ।

ईशानो भूतभव्यस्य न ततो विजिगुप्सते। एतद्वै तत् ।

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 Dakshinamurti) 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.

अथ हैनं कालाग्नि रुद्रं भुसुण्डः पप्रच्छ कथं
 रुद्राक्षोत्पत्तिः । तं होवाच भगवान् कालाग्नि रुद्रः ।
 दिव्यवर्षसहस्राणि चक्षुरुन्मीलितं मया ।
 भूमावाक्षि पुटाभ्यां तु पतिता जलबिन्दवः ।
 तत्राश्रुबिन्दवो जाता महारुद्राक्ष वृक्षकाः ।
 भक्तानां धारणात् पापं दिवारात्रिकृतं हरेत् ।
 सुप्ते पीते सदाकालं रुद्राक्षं धारयेन्नरः ॥

The AkShamalikopanishat (अक्षमालिकोपनिषत्) 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 अ and the last letter is क्ष. The name AkSha (अक्ष) 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.

पञ्चभिर्गव्यैः गन्धोदकेन संस्नाप्य,
 तस्मात् सौङ्कारेण पत्र कूर्चेन स्नापयित्वा,
 अष्टभिर्गन्धैः आलिप्य, सुमनः स्थले निवेश्य,
 अक्षत-पुष्पराराध्य, प्रत्यक्षमादिक्षान्तैर्वर्णैर्भावयेत् ।

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 दैवी संपत्. She has विद्या a book, indicating the scriptural knowledge. This is said as सर्वज्ञाननिदानपुस्तकधरा 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 **विद्यां शुद्धां च बुद्धिं कमलज-दयिते सत्वरं देहि मद्यम्॥** the spiritual seeker prays to Her to bless him with a pure mind and knowledge. He prays for **विद्या** or knowledge. The Mundaka upanishat divides knowledge into two categories - the inferior one and the superior one.

द्वे विद्ये वेदितव्ये इति ह स्म यद्ब्रह्मविदो वदन्ति परा चैवापरा च ।
तत्रापरा ऋग्वेदो यजुर्वेदः सामवेदोऽथर्ववेदः शिक्षा कल्पो
व्यकरणं निरुक्तं छन्दो ज्योतिषमिति ।
अथ परा यया तदक्षरमधिगम्यते ॥

The former one represents the secular knowledge that includes the sciences, literature, grammar etc. This is termed as **अपरा विद्या** or the inferior knowledge. This is named "inferior" because any amount of this knowledge 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.

अपरा हि विद्या अविद्या, सा निराकर्तव्या ।
तद्विषये हि विदिते न किञ्चित्त्वतो विदितं स्यादिति ।
Liberation can be had by acquiring the spiritual knowledge

only. There is no other means to gain liberation. Our scriptures very firmly assert this fact. तमेवं विद्वानमृत इह भवति
नान्यः पन्था विद्यतेऽयनाय। (Purushasuktam, 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.

पाणिपद्मद्वयेनाक्षमलामपि स्फाटिकीं ज्ञानसारात्मकं पुस्तकं
 चाङ्कुशं पाशमाभिभ्रती येन संचिन्त्यसे,
 तस्य वक्रान्तराद्गद्यपद्यात्मिका भरती निःसरेत्॥

The Rig veda worships Her as Vak Devi.

ॐ प्रणो देवी सरस्वती वाजेभिर्वाजिनीवती। धीनामवित्र्यवतु ॥ ॐ ॥
 (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 गिरिशः - गिरि भक्तानां वाचि सकलविद्याप्रवचन
 निग्रहानुग्रह सामर्थ्य प्रदानेन वसति इति गिरिशः।


She is also known as Medha Devi (मेधादेवी). Medha implies intellectual brilliance and also retentive power. The Medha Suktam (मेधासूक्तम्) 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.
 त्वया जुष्ट ऋषिर्भवति देवी त्वया ब्रह्मऽऽगतश्रीरुत त्वया।
 त्वयाजुष्टश्चित्रं विन्दते वसु सा नो जुषस्व द्रविणेन मेधे।

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.


सर्वमङ्गलमाङ्गल्ये शिवे सर्वार्थसाधिके।

शरण्ये त्र्यम्बके गौरि नारायणि नमोऽस्तु ते ॥ (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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pdf was typeset on January 10, 2019

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