


Narayana Hridayam or Narayana Hridaya Stotram

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நாராயணஹ்ருத்³யம்

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Narayana Hridayam or Narayana Hridaya Stotram

நாராயணஹ்ரு³த³யம்



॥ ஸ்ரீயை நம: ॥

॥ ஸ்ரீமதே நாராயணய நம: ॥

அத²ர்வணரஹஸ்யே உத்தர க²ண்டே³

॥ ஸ்ரீநாராயண ஹ்ரு³த³யம் ॥

.. Shri Narayana Hridayam ..

INTRODUCTION:- The following abbreviations are used in the comments that follow. (1) Narayana Hridayam - NH. (2) Laxmi Hridayam - LH (3) Vishnu Sahasranama with the commentary of Shri Shankaracharya - VS. (4) Bhagavad Gita - BG. (5) Shrimad Bhagavatham - BH (6) Lalitha Sahasranamam - LS. (7) Vivekachudamani of Shri Shankaracharya - VC. (8) Katha Upanishad - KU. (9) Mundaka Upanishad - MU.

Narayana Hridayam stotram is unique in that it is coupled with another stotram Laxmi Hridayam to form a pair. They are found in the Atharvana Rahasyam. They were given out by sage Bhargava. (Some manuscripts attribute it to brahmA RiShiH).

They belong to the category of stotram ஸ்தோத்ரம் .

The appellation stotram, stuti and stavam all describe a hymn only. ஸ்தவ: ஸ்தோத்ரம் நுதி: ஸ்துதி: । says Amara, the Sanskrit lexicon. They all narrate the qualities of a deity. கு³ணஸங்கீர்தநம் is stotram, says Shri Shankaracharya in his commentary to Vishnu Sahasranama. The Lord in His true form is described in the scriptures as having no attributes or qualities such as name, form or qualities.

யத்த³த³ரேஸ்ய-மக³ராஹ்ய-மகோ³த்ர-மவர்ணமசக்ஷு:ஸ்ரோத்ரம் தத³பாணி-பாத³ம்

|

நித்யம் விபும் ஸர்வகீதம் ஸுஸூக்ஷ்மம் ததீவ்யயம் யதீபூதயோநிம் பரிபஸ்யந்தி
தீரா: || MU(1-1-5.)

But since such a God will be impossible for a devotee to comprehend and relate with, the scriptures say that the Lord is also available with names and forms. This makes it easy for a devotee to worship Him. The kindly Lord accepts this kind of worship also.

STOTRAM:- Customarily a stotram describes a hymn that is ancient. It is generally found in vedas, puranas or itihisas such as the Ramayana or Mahabharatha. Thus we call Vishnu Sahasranama and the Lalitha Sahasranama as stotras. So also we call Aditya Hridayam as stotram. They were narrated by some sage, but the sage himself is not the author. He had heard it or got it from some one. Thus the origin is not known and is lost in antiquity. Generally the sage who narrates it says something about its glory in the beginning. He also appends a list of benefits one will get by reciting it or using it in some specific manner as in a sacrifice or homa. This is known as phalashruti (புலஸ்ருதி: |). Thus, we find these parts or components in these two stotras (NH) and (LH). But some hymns composed by great acharyas or saints later on that were outpourings of intense devotion also carry the appellation stotram. The popular Kanakadhara Stotram by Shri Shankaracharya and Hayagriva Stotram by Shri Vedanta Desika are examples of this kind. But the borderline has become grey with the result that nowadays any hymn is being called a stotram.

WHY RECITE STOTRAM? :- Let us briefly discuss as to why should one listen to and recite stotras. Our scriptures repeatedly state that the birth as a human being is very rare and so immensely valuable. Rarer still are the desire for liberation and association of noble souls They urge us to appreciate the fact and make best use of our birth as humans .

துரீலபும் த்ரயமேவைததீதேவாநுகீரஹ-ஹேதுகம் |

மநுஷ்யத்வம் முமுக்ஷுத்வம் மஹாபுருஷஸம்ஸ்ரய: || VC(No.3)

The reason for saying that a human

birth is great should be obvious. Animals may be stronger, faster and have capabilities such as very acute hearing, keen eye sight etc., which we do not possess. Still we claim to be superior to them because we humans are endowed with the power of reasoning and common sense. With these gifts we can plan our future intelligently, set goals and do all that is needed to attain the goals. Our scriptures say that if, after being born as a human being, one fails to exploit these gifts properly and achieve the goals, then that person is no different from an animal.

ஆஹார-நித்³ரா-ப⁴ய-முக்²யகாநி ஸாமாந்யமேதத் பஸுபி⁴ர்நராணம் |
பு³த்³தி⁴ர்ஹி தேஷாமதி⁴கோ விஸேஷோ பு³த்³யா விஹீந: பஸுபி:⁴ ஸமாந: |

GOALS - The goals may vary from one person to the other and so can be numerous. But our sages have analysed these numerous goals and divided them into four categories. They are (1) dharma, (2) artha or material acquisitions like wealth, house, family etc., (3) kama or sense pleasures that wealth and other material acquisitions mentioned earlier can provide and finally (4) mokSha or liberation. These are known as புருஷார்தா:² since they are sought after by people. அர்த:² = goal.

(1) Dharma - Performing actions as prescribed by our scriptures is called dharma. One who wants to move up the spiritual path is enjoined to follow the injunctions, though they may superficially appear to be illogical or inconvenient. Going against them is termed as a sinful act and will lead to one's downfall. Krishna states this clearly in BG (16-23,24).

ய: ஸாஸ்த்ரவிதி⁴முத்ஸுரு²ஜ்ய வர்ததே காமகாரத: |
ந ஸ ஸித்³தி⁴மாப்நோதி ந ஸுக²ம் பராம் க³திம் || 23 ||

தஸ்மா-ச்சா²ஸ்த்ரம் ப்ரமாணம் தே கார்யாகார்ய-வ்யவஸ்தி²தௌ |
ஜ்ஞாத்வா ஸாஸ்த்ரவிதா⁴நோக்தம் கர்ம கர்துமிஹார்ஹஸி || 24 ||

(2) Artha - We need wealth and other material comforts to enable us to lead a worry-free life. Besides, money is required to perform religious duties like, going on pilgrimages, pujas, charity etc. So, seeking wealth, per se is not evil. Kalidasa, in his famous poem Raghuvamsam says (1-7) that the kings of the dynasty

of Raghu amassed wealth for giving away to the needy and worthy and not for enriching themselves. த்யாகாய ஸம்புருதார்தாநாம் | Working to acquire wealth and saving for a rainy day are recommended. It is not decried as long the means by which the wealth is obtained is legal and does not involve injury or harm to others. (3) Kama - Our scriptures allows one to enjoy the benefits of artha (i.e) wealth earned. They include house, family, friends etc. But, as said in the case of artha above, the enjoyments sought and indulged in should not be illegal or against the dictates of the shahstras.They should not be such that will lead to attachments and moral degradation. Having desire is natural and allowed. In fact, Krishna says that He is behind such proper desires in all beings. தர்மாவிருத்ய புதேஷு காமோஸம்மி பரதர்ஷப | BG(7-11). Our scriptures talk of special prayers and rituals by which one can obtain immense riches and pleasures including life among gods in the heavens and even the highest world - that of the creator Brahma. This shows that they allow us to entertain desires as long as they are proper as said above. But attachment binds and so is dangerous. Our scriptures warn us to be wary of developing attachment to money, property, relations, people etc. (4) MokSha or liberation - means liberation from rebirth.

REAL GOAL - It is to be noted that our scriptures do not consider the first three goals as real goals at all. The logic is this. All actions produce results. If one does actions that are dharmic he gets the fruits of the actions in the form of merit or punyam. If one acts contrary to dharma, he gets the results in the form of sins or papam. One enjoys these results in this birth or one may have to be born again once or many times for the purpose. The fruits of punyam may be a better and more comfortable birth in this world or higher worlds. The results of adharmic actions may be inferior births as animals and plants or a human birth full of sufferings and misery in the form of sickness etc. Thus one gets entangled in the cycle of repeated births and deaths. Krishna points out that even if one gets a place in the heavens, he should remember

that that place is got as the reward for his good deeds. As soon as the stock of punyam is exhausted he will necessarily have to come down to this world and rejoin the cycle of birth and death. BG(9-21)

தே தம் பு⁴க்த்வா ஸ்வர்க³-லோகம் விஸாலம்

கூ³ணே புண்யே மர்த்ய-லோகம் விஸந்தி |

ஏவம் த்ரயீத⁴ர்ம-மநுப்ரபந்நா

க³தாக³தம் காமகாமா லப⁴ந்தே ||

This is awful. So, our scriptures do not consider the three goals as commonly understood as real goals. Only liberation or mokSha is said to be the real goal since after attaining mokSha one escapes the agony of samsara. Therefore it is known as the supreme goal or பரமபுருஷார்த:² | Samsara implies being born, growing up, going through the ups and downs of life, growing old and dying only to be born again. Liberation is freedom for ever. So it becomes the duty of every intelligent person to work for liberation and not keep on wallowing in samsara. Keeping the above facts in mind, the scriptures define the purpose of the goals in a very different manner. They ask us to use these three goals for achieving spiritual progress in order to escape samsara. One should do dharma to earn wealth which should be used to earn religious merit and not for enjoying sensuous pleasures. The goal of dharma should be kept as spiritual progress. The aim of kama should not be taken as enjoying sense pleasures but should just be keeping the body and soul together. The aim of keeping the body and soul together should be to strive and learn about the way to liberation and not strive to attain transient pleasures like the enjoyment in heaven etc.

த⁴ர்மஸ்ய ஹ்யாபவர்க³ஸ்ய நார்தோ²஽ர்தா²யோபகல்பதே |

நார்த²ஸ்ய த⁴ர்மைகாந்தஸ்ய காமோ லாபா⁴ய ஹி ஸ்ம³ரு³: ||

காமஸ்ய நேந்த³ரியப்ரீதிர்லாபோ⁴ ஜீவேத யாவதா |

ஜீவஸ்ய தத்த்வஜிஜ்ஞாஸா நார்தோ² யஸ்சேஹ கர்மபி:⁴ || (BH - 1-3-9,10).

The devotees of the Lord were very clear about the above facts. For example, Kulasekhara declares that he is not interested in the three

goals - dharma, artha and kama. He says that let events, good or bad, happen according to karmas he had done. He prays to the Lord to grant him unwavering devotion to His lotus like feet in this and in future births. (Mukundamala).

நாஸ்தா² த⁴ர்மே ந வஸுநிசயே நைவ காமோபபோ⁴கே³
 யத்³யத்³ப⁴வ்யம் ப⁴வது ப⁴க³வந் பூர்வகர்மாநுரூபம் |
 ஏதத்³ப்ரார்த்²யம் மம ப³ஹுமதம் ஜந்மஜந்மாந்தரே⁵பி
 த்வத்பாதா³ம்போ⁴ருஹயுக³க³தா நிஸ்ச்வா ப⁴க்திரஸ்து ||

LIBERATION:- Liberation, as said earlier, means liberation from cyclic birth. It is spoken as attaining the lotus feet of the Lord in the puranas. According to upanishads liberation means dropping one's identification with the body/mind complex and realising his/her divine nature. The scriptures assert that one is distinct from the body/mind complex and is indeed divine in nature and so is not subject to sorrows and rebirth. The wrong identification with the body/mind complex is due to wrong knowledge or nescience known as ajnanam (அஜ்ஞாநம்). Thus, liberation implies settling down in our true or real nature which is divine and thus be free from problems for ever afterwards. தரதி ஸோகமாத்தமவித் | says the upanishad. Because of this reason, Krishna says there is no gain greater than this. BG(6-22).

யம் லப³த்⁴வா சாபரம் லாப⁴ம் மந்யதே நாதி³கம் தத: |
 யஸ்மிந்ஸ்திதோ² ந து:³கே²ந கு³ருணா⁵பி விசால்யதே ||

DESIRE FOR LIBERATION:- For this reason, liberation does indeed sound immensely attractive. But the sad truth is that it has very few takers. Only a minuscule minority is interested in seeking liberation. Krishna ruefully says this in Gita. மநுஷ்யாணாம் ஸஹஸ்ரேஷு^௭ கஸ்சித்³யததி ஸித்³த⁴யே | BG(7-3). Yama, the Lord of death, also bemoans the fact, and says that the dullards are attracted by sense pleasures and so choose the path of mundane prosperity, but the wise choose the path of liberation. KU (1-2-2).

ஸ்ரேயஸ்ச ப்ரேயஸ்ச மநுஷ்யமேத-ஸ்தௌ ஸம்பரீத்ய விவிநக்தி தீ⁴ர: |

ஸ்ரேயோ ஹி தீரோ஽பி⁴ ப்ரேயஸே வ்ரு³ணீதே ப்ரேயோ மந்தோ³ யோக³க்ஷமாத்
வ்ரு³ணீதே ||

Wrong knowledge can be righted only by right knowledge called jnanam (ஜ்ஞாநம் |) just like darkness can be removed only by bringing in light. The way to gain jnanam is described in a very systematic manner in our scriptures. However, our scriptures never tire of warning that the path to gain wisdom is extremely difficult.

“The wise men say it is as difficult as walking on the razor’s edge” said Yama to his disciple Nachiketās. கூஉரஸ்ய தா⁴ரா நிஸிதா து³ர்த்யயா து³ர்க³ம் பத²ஸ்தத்கவயோ வத³ந்தி | KU (1-3-14). KrishnA too says this. அவ்யக்தா ஹி க³தி³து³க²ம் தே³ஹவத்³பி⁴-ரவாப்யதே | BG(12-5) The reason that this path is very difficult for most people is that their minds are sullied by negative qualities like desires, anger, attachments, jealousy etc. These qualities cloud the intellect and often distort judgement.

Impelled by anger or greed one may turn selfish and indulge in illegal or immoral acts. Our scriptures declare that people who have such weaknesses, will always be distracted and so cannot comprehend the subtle spiritual wisdom. Even after hearing about liberation repeatedly, their minds will not be excited enough to take a step in that direction. This is very unfortunate. நாவிரதோ து³ஸ்சரிதாந்நாஸாந்தோ நாஸமாஹித:

| நாஸாந்தமாநஸோ வா஽பி ப்ரஜ்ஞாநேநைநமாப்நுயாத் || KU(1-2-24). So it is said that one with the desire for liberation, known as முமுக்ஷுத்வம் is a rare phenomenon.

The first thing to do for one who desires liberation

is to purge the mind of such distracting traits and steady it. This is achieved by regular performance of prescribed karma or duties. However we saw earlier that karmas produce results and lead to rebirth. The way to escape the results is to blend karma with devotion or bhakti. One continues to engage himself in all regular activities, but escapes the results by offering the results to the Lord. The results having been offered to God will not attach to the performer of the action. Krishna says this in BG(9-27, 28).

யத்கரோஷி யத³ஸ்நாஸி யஜ்ஜுஹோஷி க்த³தா³ஸி யத் |

யத்தபஸ்யஸி கௌந்தேய தத்குருஷ்வ மத³ர்பணம் || 27 ||

ஸூபா⁴ஸூப⁴-ப²லரேவம் மோக்ஷயஸே கர்மப³ந்த⁴நை: | 28 |

He tells Arjuna: whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever sacrifices you perform, whatever you give by way of charity, whatever austerities you engage yourself in do it as an offering to Me. By doing so, you will be liberated from the bonds of action that result in good or evil results.

In this way, actions done, but without any desire for results, lead to purification of the mind. சித்தஸ்ய ஸூத்³த⁴யே கர்ம | VC(11). and யோகி³ந: கர்ம குர்வந்தி ஸங்க³ம் த்யக்த்வாத்மஸூத்³த⁴யே || BG(5-11).

ASSOCIATION OF SAINTS:- As the mind sheds its impurities and gets pure, God's grace slowly reveals itself like the full moon emerging from behind the clouds. The kindly Lord arranges for him to come into contact with noble souls, like sadhus or saints. Our shastras describe them as the messengers of God. They move around the world telling people about the weaknesses of the life one normally leads and explaining the need for treading the spiritual path. They do this without any expectations. They have found the source of happiness. They have the noble desire that others too should take to the spiritual path and find everlasting happiness. Shri Shankaracharya says this.

ஸாந்தா மஹாந்தோ நிவஸந்தி ஸந்த: வஸந்தவல்லோகஹிதம் சரந்த: |
தீர்ண ஸ்வயம் பீ⁴மப⁴வார்ணவம் ஜநா- நஹேதுநாந்யாநபி தாரயந்த: || VC (37).

We, normally will not be able to identify a saint, because he will look like anyone else and will shun publicity and crowds. It is only God's grace that can lead to a meeting with a mahatma and make us listen to his words. Thus, a human birth is a rarity in the first place and rarer still is the meeting with a saintly person. King Nimi says this when he gets a chance to meet the nine yogis. BH(11-2-29).

து³ர்லபோ⁴ மாநுஷோ தே³ஹோ தே³ஹிநாம் கூஷணப⁴ங்கு³ர: |
ததா²பி து³ர்லப⁴ம் மந்யே வைகுண்ட²ப்ரியத³ர்ஸநம் ||

As the minds of saints are imbued with devotion, they take delight in talking about the Lord - who is none other than their inner self - and not about mundane matters.

மச்சித்தா மத்கீத-ப்ராண போத்யந்த: பரஸ்பரம் |
கத்யந்தஸ்ச மாம் நித்யம் துஷ்யந்தி ச ரமந்தி ச || BG(10-9).

The words of such God intoxicated devotees have great power. They go to the heart and so can work wonders. As one comes into contact with them and listen to their nectar like words, they strengthen the devotion.

The mind slowly turns away from the world and towards the Lord. The worldly attractions and worries gradually lose their hold. Mind becomes calm and peaceful. It acquires qualities required to for spiritual progress. These qualities are said to be four in number and are known in the vedantic parlance as ஸாதீந சதுஷ்டயம் or four means of attainment. They are described in texts like Viveka Chudamani and Tattva Bodha. They are more elaborately described by Krishna in chapter 16 of Bhagavat Gita. He calls them as தைவீ ஸம்பத் or divine qualities. They are necessarily to be acquired by one stepping on to the path of liberation. தைவீ ஸம்பத் விமோக்ஷாய | says Krishna. BG(16-5).

It is difficult to acquire these virtues by practice. But one need not despair and refrain from making any attempt in this direction. Our shastras are aware of this problem and provide an attractive solution to the seemingly difficult problem. They say that one who worships the Lord regularly and practises devotion to Him gets over the difficulties with His grace and acquires the qualifications as by-products. He will, therefore progress without much effort on the spiritual path. Krishna makes this assurance. BG(18-55).

புத்த்யா மாமபிஜாநாதி யாவாந் யஸ்சாஸ்மி தத்த்வத: |
ததோ மாம் தத்த்வதோ ஜ்ஞாத்வா விஸதே ததநந்தரம் ||
and again in BG(18-58) மச்சித்த: ஸர்வதுர்காணி மத்ப்ரஸாதாத் ததரிஷ்யதி |

The easiest methods of worship are listening to His glories as described in stotras, puranas etc., or chanting stotras or repeating His names by way

of doing japa. That is why in the introduction to Vishnu Sahasranama we find Yudhistira asking Bhishma for a simple method that will give one freedom from samsara. கிம் ஜபந்முச்யதே ஜந்து: ஜந்மஸம்ஸார-ப³ந்த⁴நாத் | Bhishma answers that the best and also the simplest method to tide over all kinds of sorrows, including samsara, is reciting the hymns that sing the praise of the Lord. லோகாத்⁴யக்ஷம் ஸ்துவந்நித்யம் ஸர்வது: ³கா²திகோ³ ப⁴வேத் | and

ஏஷ மே ஸர்வத⁴ர்மாணம் த⁴ர்மோ⁵திகதமோ மத: |
யத்³ப⁴க்த்யா புண்ட³ர்¹காக்ஷம் ஸ்தவைரர்சேந்நர: ஸதா³ ||

Shri Shankaracharya, in his commentary to the above line, explains why Bhishma said this is the best method. He says

ஹிம்ஸாதி³-புருஷாந்தர-த்³ர்வ்யாந்தர-தே³ஸகாலாதி³-நியமாநபேக்ஷத்வம் ஆதி⁴க்யே காரணம் | That is, this method does not involve causing injury to other beings as in animal sacrifices, does not require help from another person, or money, or depend on a particular time as Ekadasi or Amavasya or travel to holy places such as Kasi or Rameshvaram. It can be practised by any one irrespective of age, sex, status in society etc. The sage Naradha emphasises the importance when he told Shri Vyasa that reciting the hymns which enumerate the virtues of the Lord is the abiding purpose of doing austere penances, rituals, recitation of vedas etc.

இத³ம் ஹி பும்ஸஸ்தபஸ: ஸ்ருதஸ்ய வா ஸ்விஷ்டஸ்ய ஸலித்தஸ்ய ச பு³த்³தி⁴த்³த்யோ: |

அவிச்யுதோர்த: ² கவிபி⁴ர்¹நிருபிதோ யது³த்தமஸ்லோககு³ணுவர்ணநம் || BH(1-8-22).

The reason is, that by practising devotion to God one gets the four qualifications necessary to progress on the spiritual path that culminates in wisdom or jnanam as by-products. Shri Shankaracharya says this in his Aparokshanubhuti thus.

ஸ்வ-வர்ணஸ்ரமத⁴ர்மேண தபஸா ஹரி-தோஷணாத் |
ஸாத⁴நம் ப்ரப⁴வேத் பும்ஸாம் வைராக்³யாதி³-சதுஷ்டயம் ||

Shri Bhagavatam also says this. BH(1-2-8).

வாஸுதே³வே ப⁴க³வதி ப⁴க்தியோக:³ ப்ரயோஜித: |

ஜநயத்யாஸு வைராக்யம் ஜ்ஞாநம் ச யத³ஹைதுகம் ||

Thus, it is necessary to perform our prescribed duties and in

addition, make listening to and reciting stotras an essential part of our daily routine to intensify the devotion. The scriptures contain hymns that narrate the qualities of God with name and form. Shri Rudram is a well known example of a vedic hymn. The Kaivalyopanishad says that reciting Shri Rudram will purify

one of all sins. ய: சதருத்³ரீயமதீ⁴தே, ஸோ⁵க³நிபூதோ ப⁴வதி,

ஸுராபாநாத்பூதோ ப⁴வதி, ப்³ரஹ்மஹத்யாத்தூதோ ப⁴வதி, க்ரு³த்யாக்ரு³த்யாத்தூதோ

ப⁴வதி, தஸ்மாத³விமுக்த்தமாஸ்ரிதோ ப⁴வதி | In addition, we have

hymns in puranas. Our acharyas and other devotees have also contributed

many hymns. The recital of such hymns is the easiest and best method of

worshipping Him and acquire purity of mind by purging it of sins. Because

of these reasons, the Lord has the name புண்ய: ஏவம் ஸ்மரணாதி³ குர்வதாம்

ஸர்வேஷாம் புண்யம் கரோதீதி புண்ய: | VS(925) Thus reciting hymns or

just listening to them is eminently suitable for people in this modern

age as they are pressed for time.

age as they are pressed for time.

SUMMARY: To summarise the above,

we should first realise that the human birth is an invaluable asset.

Our scriptures say that one gets it after many births as other beings as

birds, beasts, plants etc., depending on our karma stock. So, we should

grab the opportunity with both hands and work assiduously for liberation.

If we fail to do so, then the loss is immense since we do not know what

our next and subsequent births will be and when we will get another birth

as a human being again and will be able to work our way up. At this point

there may be an argument. One may say that he will do lot of good karmas,

earn plenty of merit or punya and as a result gain birth in higher worlds. This

may be in the world of gods such as Indra and may be even in that of Lord

Brahma the creator. There one can have a great time, full of enjoyment

and also work for liberation in such a wonderful environment. This is

not a wise argument, say our acharyas. The upanishad says that the vision

of the Self can be had clearly in the mind, as in a mirror, only in this world. It cannot be had clearly in the world of Gandarvas, manes and gods like Indra. These worlds are meant for enjoyment of pleasures got as a result of many good karmas. The mind that is behind the senses will, therefore, be pulled in many directions. The image of the Self will consequently be scattered like the reflection on the surface of water that is agitated by the wind and so not clear. One will be unable to concentrate on the spiritual progress. KU(II-III-5)

யதா²த³ர்ஸே ததா²ஶ்ஶத்மநி யதா² ஸ்வப்நே ததா² பித்ரு²லோகே |
யதா²ஶ்பஸு பர்வ த³த்³ரு²ஸே ததா² க³ந்த⁴ர்வலோகே சா²யாதபயோரிவ ப்³ரஹ்மலோகே
||

If one misses the chance to attain liberation in this world, then he can get a chance to get vision of the Self clearly only in the Brahma Loka. But that world is the highest one and very difficult to attain. It can be reached only by numerous special kinds of rites and meditation. Therefore one should leave no stone unturned to attain liberation in this world itself. Krishna tells Uddhava that, sense-enjoyments can be had in any body, but realisation can be had only with the human body. So, keeping in the mind the fact that the human body is fragile, one should make haste and strive for liberation here itself. BH(11-9-26).

லப்³த்⁴வா ஸுது³ர்லப⁴மித³ம் ப³ஹுஸந்ப⁴வாந்தே

மாநுஷ்யமர்த²த்³மநித்யமபீஹ தீ⁴ர: |

தூர்ணம் யதேத ந பதேத³நும்ரு²த்யு யாவ-

ந்நிஸ்ரேயஸாய விஷய: க²லு ஸர்வத: ஸ்யாத் ||

Shri Shankaracharya, in his commentary to the above verse quoted from the KU (II-III-5) makes a subtle observation. The upanishad says that the vision of the Self may be had distinctly, as in a mirror, in our intellect in this world. The idea, he says, is that the reflecton will be distinct in a mirror, only when it is spotlessly clear. Similarly, the mind, in order to be able to reflect the Self clearly, should first be

made absolutely clear by the performance of prescribed duties, prayers, meditation etc. ஸ்வபு³த³தெள⁴ ஆத³ர்ஸவந்நிர்மல-பூ⁴தாநாம் விவித்தமாத்மநோ த³ர்ஸநம் ப⁴வதீத்யர்த:² | Then, with the guidance of a guru and following his instructions one can progress towards liberation.

NARAYANA HRIDAYAM AND LAXMI HRIDAYAM (or HRIDYASTOTRAM):-
Narayana Hridayam (NH) and

Laxmi Hridayam (LH) form a pair of very valuable and sacred hymns. NH is the shorter one. It consists of only 37 verses. LH is longer and consists of 108 verses. The word (ஹ்ரு³த்யம்) hridayam is popularly taken to mean the heart. The word also is used to mean secret, true or divine knowledge.

Being hymns found in the Veda the Narayana Hridayam and Laxmi Hridayam Stotras are highly efficacious. They are sanctifying as was said

of Shri Rudram earlier. They also contain recondite vedantic truths

which may be found in the upanishads, puranas, Bhagavad Gita etc. These truths are also to be seen in other stotras and in the hymns of later

acharyas. லக்ஷ்மீஹ்ரு³த்யகே ஸ்தோத்ரே ஸர்வமந்யத் ப்ரகாஸிதம் | (NH - 33).

So, to describe them as hridayam is very apt. They are, therefore,

very precious. For these reasons they are considered very sacred and

therefore secret - not to be easily given out. கோ³ப்யமேதத்ஸதா³ குர்யாத்

ந ஸர்வத்ர ப்ரகாஸயேத் | says Narayana Hridayam (34) in its later

part. Because of this restriction these stotras were handed down from a

worthy guru to deserving disciples only. They were not freely available

like Vishnu Sahasranamam.

Only some noteworthy features of this stotram (NH) could be mentioned

in this brief introduction. The reader is requested to read the comments

given to the LH also (available in this site under the heading Laxmi in

the category DEVI) as these two stotras are linked.

The Narayana Hridayam stotram contains sixteen verses in the beginning

that narrate the glory of the Lord. Verses No. 1 and 2 describe the Lord

with form. This is suitable for meditation. This form is to be retained

in the mind when reciting the NH.

But there is another form of the Lord which needs to be known. This is the form that Krishna discusses in Chapter 7 of BG.

The Lord says He has two aspects. The superior one has no attributes. It is the very soul of all beings and sustains the universe. The other, namely, the inferior aspect is divided into eight categories and from that the universe of names and forms evolves. This is said to be inferior aspect since people get snared in names and forms and overlook the Lord behind them who sustains the universe. A familiar example is that we go to a theatre and watch a movie. We get absorbed in the movie and forget to notice the screen. It is the screen that is behind the movie and sustains it, but this fact is overlooked. Similarly we are absorbed in the world of names and forms and fail to notice the Lord who bears all the names and forms.

They, thus get caught in samsara. This aspect is known as Prakriti or maya. Krishna says that His maya is very powerful and difficult to cross over without His grace. BG(7-14) தை³வீ ஹ்யேஷா கு³ணமயீ மம மாயா து³ரத்யயா || மாமேவ யே ப்ரபத்³யந்தே மாயாமேஷாம் தரந்தி தே || The supreme Being, known as Brahman, when associated with maya is known as Ishvara or Maheshvara and becomes the cause of the universe through the agency of Maya. மாயாம் து ப்ரக்ரு³திம் வித்³யாந்மாயிநம் ச மஹேஸ்வரம் | says the Svetasvataropanisad (4-10). Everything is born of Prakriti. Maya, in Sanskrit, is of feminine gender. So, it is spoken of as the consort of the Lord, Mother Goddess or Lalitha, Lakshmi etc. Thus, though they are spoken as two items, they are indeed one indivisible Brahman only.

Shri Shankaracharya says this in his Saundaryalahari (sloka No.97).

கி³ராமாஹுர்ர்தே³வீம் த்³ருஹிணக்³ரு³ஹிணீமாக³மவிதோ³ ஹரே: பத்³நீம் பத்³மாம் ஹரஸஹசரீமத்³ரிதநயாம் | து³ரீயா காபி த்வம் து³ரதி⁴க³ம-நிஸ்ஸீம-மஹிமா மஹாமாயா விஸ்வம் ப்⁴ரமயஸி பரப்³ரஹ்ம-மஹிஷி ||

He says that wise people who are well read in the scriptures say that You are Sarasvati the consort of Brahma the creator; again they say You are Laxmi the consort of Hari and also You are Parvati the consort of Siva. You are beyond the three and are the limitless One who is very difficult to reach. You

are the Maya who makes the entire universe go round and round.

Thus, Ishvar and Maya are inseparable and are known as the parents of the universe. This concept is depicted in our shastras as Ardhanariswara in whom both Siva and Parvati share half of one body.

The poet Kalidasa says this in the invocatory verse to

his immortal classic Raghuvamsam as follows. வாக்கீர்தா²விவ ஸம்ப்ருக்¹த்தெள

வாக்கீர்த²ப்ரதிபத்தயே | ஜக³த: பிதரெள வந்தே³ பார்வதீபரமேஸ்வரெள || He

salutes Parvati and Parameswara who are the parents of the Universe and

who are (inseparably) united like the speech and its sense. Prakriti or

maya named variouly as Parvati or Laxmi is the creative power of the Lord.

He indeed is the causeless cause of everything that are the products or

effect. It is to be noted that the properties of the cause will be there

in the products. Thus, ornaments made of gold will have the properties of

gold. Gold has no form but the ornaments are many and have different forms

and names. Same is the case with vessels made of clay and so on. In the

same way, Lord is the cause of everything. The visible universe contains

numerous items, right from Brahma the creator to insignificant insects

and inanimate things. But they are all manifestations of the Lord only,

but they all bear different forms and names. This is brought out in verse

No. 3 to 18. These verse say that there is nothing apart from Him and all

were His manifestations only. For this reason these verses are very significant.

The words used herein will sound familiar since they are same as the

verses in the Narayana Suktam said along with the Purusha Suktam.

The verses are:

விஸ்வம் நாராயணம் தே³வமக்ஷரம் பரமம் பதீ³ம் |

விஸ்வத: பரமாந்நித்யம் விஸ்வம் நாராயண³ஹ்ரிம் |

விஸ்வமேவேத³ம் புருஷஸ்தத³விஸ்வமுபஜீவதி |

பதிம் விஸ்வஸ்யாத்மேஸ்வர³ ஶாஸ்வத³ ஶிவமச்யுதம் |

நாராயணம் மஹாஜ்ஞேயம் விஸ்வாத்மாநம் பராயணம் ||

நாராயணபரோ ஜ்யோதிராத்மா நாராயண: பர: |

நாராயணபரம் ப்ரஹ்ம தத்த்வம் நாராயண: பர: |

நாராயணபரோ த்⁴யாதா த்⁴யாநம் நாராயண: பர: |
யச்ச கிருசிஜ்ஜுக³தஸ்ர்வம் த்³ரு³ஸ்யதே ஸ்ருயதே⁵பி வா |
அந்தர்ப³ஹிஸ்ச தத்ஸ்ர்வம் வ்யாப்ய நாராயண: ஸ்தி²த: |

These verse are eminently suitable for meditating on the Lord who is described as being the cause of the universe. From Him only even the creator Brahma and other gods were born. HE is every thing. There is none greater than Him. He is the goal and He is the one who can confer the supreme goal of mokSha and other goals spoken of earlier. So, He is the one to be meditated upon. These verse are followed by ten verses by which one surrenders to the Lord and seeks His grace.

The final part says that this stotram is to be recited first, to be followed by the recital of Laxmi Hridayam and again the recital of this stotram. This is not to be recited separately as a single piece. This is to stress the fact that Lord Narayana and Laxmi are indeed one though spoken of as two different deities.

CONCLUSION. It will be evident from what is said here that both the NH and LH are valuable hymns and like veritable mines of precious gems. An interested reader will be able to find more gems if he digs deep into them. The greater benefit will be, that by reciting them regularly, one will develop devotion to Divine Couple, Lord Narayana and Goddess Laksmi, and reap their abundant grace.

Now follows the NARAYANA HRIDAYAM or NARAYANA HRIDAYA stotram.

॥ ஓ தத்ஸத் ॥

Narayana Hridayam or Narayana Hridaya Stotram

நாராயணஹ்ரு³த்யம்

அத² ஸ்தோத்ரம் |



ஹரி: ஓ |

அஸ்ய ஸ்ரீநாராயணஹ்ரு³த்யஸ்தோத்ரமஹாமந்த்ரஸ்ய பா⁴ர்க்வ ரு³ஷி:, (ப்³ரஹ்மா ரு³ஷி:)

அநுஷ்டுப்ச²ந்த:~3, லக்ஷ்மீநாராயணே தே³வதா, நாராயணப்ரீத்யர்தே² ஜபே விநியோக:~3

||

|| கரந்யாஸ: ||

நாராயண: பரம் ஜ்யோதிரிதி அங்கு³ஷ்டா²ப்யாம் நம:,
நாராயண: பரம் ப்³ரஹ்மேதி தர்ஜநீ⁴யாம் நம:,
நாராயண: பரோ தே³வ இதி மத்⁴யமா⁴யாம் நம:,
நாராயண: பரம் தா⁴மேதி அநாமிகா⁴யாம் நம:,
நாராயண: பரோ த⁴ர்ம இதி கநிஷ்டி²கா⁴யாம் நம:,
விஸ்வம் நாராயண இதி கரதலகரப்ரு³ஷ்டா²ப்யாம் நம: ||

|| அங்க³ந்யாஸ: ||

நாராயண: பரம் ஜ்யோதிரிதி ஹ்ரு³த்யாய நம:,
நாராயண: பரம் ப்³ரஹ்மேதி ஸிரஸே ஸ்வாஹா,
நாராயண: பரோ தே³வ இதி ஸிகா²யை வெளஷ்ட்,
நாராயண: பரம் தா⁴மேதி கவசாய ஹும்,
நாராயண: பரோ த⁴ர்ம இதி நேத்ரா⁴யாம் வெளஷ்ட்,
விஸ்வம் நாராயண இதி அஸ்த்ராய ப²ட்,
பூ⁴ர்பு⁴வஸ்ஸுவரோமிதி தி³க்³ப³ந்த:~4 ||

|| அத² த்யாநம் ||

உத்³யதா³தி³த்யஸங்காஸம் பீதவாஸம் சதுர்பு⁴ஜம் |

ஸங்க²சக்ரக³தா³பாணிம் த்யாயேல்லக்ஷ்மீபதிம் ஹரிம் || 1 ||

த்ரையோக்யாதா⁴ரசக்ரம் தது³பரி கமட²ம் தத்ர சாநந்தபோ⁴க்³
தந்மத்⁴யே பூ⁴மிபத்³மாங்குஸஸிக²ரத்³எம் கர்ணிகாபூ⁴தமேரும் |
தத்ரத்யம் ஸாந்தழூர்திம் மணிமயமகுடம் குண்ட³லோத்³பா⁴ஸிதாங்க³ம்
லக்ஷ்மீநாராயணக்²யம் ஸரஸிஜநயநம் ஸந்ததம் சிந்தயாம: || 2 ||

அஸ்ய ஹீநாராயணஹ்ருத்³யஸ்தோத்ரமஹாமந்த்ரஸ்ய ப்³ரஹ்மா ரு³ஷி:,
அநுஷ்டுப் ச²ந்த: ³, நாராயணே தே³வதா, நாராயணப்ரீத்யர்தே² ஜபே விநியோக: ³ ||

ஓ நாராயண: பரம் ஜ்யோதிராத்மா நாராயண: பர: |
நாராயண: பரம் ப்³ரஹ்ம நாராயண நமோ⁵ஸ்து தே || 3 ||

நாராயண: பரோ தே³வோ தா⁴தா நாராயண: பர: |
நாராயண: பரோ தா⁴தா நாராயண நமோ⁵ஸ்து தே || 4 ||

நாராயண: பரம் தா⁴ம த்⁴யாநம் நாராயண: பர: |
நாராயண பரோ த⁴ர்மோ நாராயண நமோ⁵ஸ்து தே || 5 ||

நாராயண: பரோ தே³வோ வித்³யா நாராயண: பர: |
விஸ்வம் நாராயண: ஸாக்ஷாந் நாராயண நமோ⁵ஸ்து தே || 6 ||

நாராயணத்³ விதி⁴ர்ஜாதோ ஜாதோ நாராயணத்³ப⁴:வ: |
ஜாதோ நாராயணதி³ந்த்³ரோ நாராயண நமோ⁵ஸ்து தே || 7 ||

ரவிர்நாராயணஸ்தேஜ: சந்த்³ரோ நாராயணே மஹ: |
வஹ்நிர்நாராயண: ஸாக்ஷாத் நாராயண நமோ⁵ஸ்து தே || 8 ||

நாராயண உபாஸ்ய: ஸ்யாத்³ கு³ருர்நாராயண: பர: |
நாராயண: பரோ போ³தோ⁴ நாராயண நமோ⁵ஸ்து தே || 9 ||

நாராயண: ப²லம் முக்²யம் ஸித்³தி⁴ர்நாராயண: ஸுக²ம் |
ஹிரிர்நாராயண: ஸுத்³தி⁴ர்நாராயண நமோ⁵ஸ்து தே || 10 ||

நிக³மாவேதி³தாநந்தகல்யாணகு³ணவாரிதே⁴ |
நாராயண நமஸ்தே⁵ஸ்து நரகார்ணவதாரக || 11 ||

ஜந்மம்ரு³த்யஜராவ்யாதி⁴பாரதந்தர்யாதி³பி: ⁴ஸதா³ |
தோ³ஷைரஸ்ப்ரு³ஷ்டருபாய நாராயண நமோ⁵ஸ்து தே || 12 ||

வேத³ஸாஸ்த்ரார்த்²விஜ்ஞாநஸாத்⁴யப⁴க்த்யேககோ³சர |
நாராயண நமஸ்தே⁵ஸ்து மாமுத்³த⁴ர ப⁴வார்ணவாத் || 13 ||

நித்யாநந்த³ மஹோதா³ர பராத்தர ஜக³த்தே |

நாராயண நமஸ்தே⁵ஸ்து மோக்ஷஸாம்ராஜ்யதா³யிநே || 14 ||

ஆப்³ரஹ்மஸ்த²ம்ப³ப்யந்தமகி²லாத்மமஹாஸ்ரய |

ஸர்வபூ⁴தாத்மபூ⁴தாத்மந் நாராயண நமோ⁵ஸ்து தே || 15 ||

பாலிதாஸேஷலோகாய புண்யஸ்ரவணகீர்தந |

நாராயண நமஸ்தே⁵ஸ்து ப்ரலயோத³கஸாயிநே || 16 ||

நிரஸ்தஸர்வதோ³ஷாய ப⁴க்த்யாதி³கு³ணதா³யிநே |

நாராயண நமஸ்தே⁵ஸ்து த்வாம் விநா ந ஹி மே க³தி: || 17 ||

த⁴ர்மார்த²காமமோக்ஷாக²யபுருஷார்த²ப்ரதா³யிநே |

நாராயண நமஸ்தே⁵ஸ்து புநஸ்தே⁵ஸ்து நமோ நம: || 18 ||

அத² ப்ரார்த²நா |

நாராயண த்வமேவாஸி த³ஹ்ராக²யே ஹ்ரு³தி³ஸ்தி²த: |

ப்ரேரிதா ப்ரேர்யமாணநாம் த்வயா ப்ரேரிதமாநஸ: || 19 ||

த்வதா³ஜ்ஞாம் சிரஸா க்ரு³த்வா ப⁴ஜாமி ஜநபாவநம் |

நாநோபாஸநமார்கா³ணம் ப⁴வக்ரு³த்³ பா⁴வபோ³த⁴க: || 20 ||

பா⁴வார்த²க்ரு³த்³ ப⁴வாதீதோ ப⁴வ ஸௌக்²யப்ரதோ³ மம |

த்வந்மாயாமோஹிதம் விஸ்வம் த்வயைவ பரிகல்பிதம் || 21 ||

த்வத³தி⁴ஷ்டா²நமாத்ரேண ஸா வை ஸர்வார்த²காரிணீ |

த்வமேவ தாம் புரஸ்க்ரு³த்ய மம காமாந் ஸமர்த²ய || 22 ||

ந மே த்வத³ந்யஸ்த்ராதாஸ்தி த்வத³ந்யந்ந ஹி தை³வதம் |

த்வத³ந்யம் ந ஹி ஜாநாமி பாலகம் புண்யவர்த⁴நம் || 23 ||

யாவத்ஸாம்ஸாரிகோ பா⁴வோ மநஸஸ்தோ² பா⁴வநாத்மக: |

தாவத்ஸித்³தி⁴ர்ப⁴வேத் ஸாத⁴யா ஸர்வதா³ ஸர்வதா³ விபோ⁴ || 24 ||

பாபிநாமஹமேகாக்³ரோ த³யாலாநாம் த்வமக்³ரணீ: |

த³யநீயோ மத³ந்யோ⁵ஸ்தி தவ கோ⁵த்ர ஜக³த்த்ரயே || 25 ||

த்வயாஹம் நைவ ஸ்ரு³ஷ்டஸ்சேத் ந ஸ்யாத்த்வ த³யாலுதா |

ஆமயோ வா ந ஸ்ரு³ஷ்டஸ்சேதௌ³ஷத⁴ஸ்ய வ்ரு³தோ²த³ய: || 26 ||

பாபஸங்க³பரிஸ்ராந்த: பாபாத்மா பாபருபத்⁴ரு³க் |

த்வத³ந்ய: கோ⁵த்ர பாபே⁴ய: த்ராதாஸ்தி ஜக³தீதலே || 27 ||

த்வமேவ மாதா ச பிதா த்வமேவ த்வமேவ ப³ந்து⁴ஸ்ச ஸகா² த்வமேவ |
 த்வமேவ வித்³யா த்³ரவிணம் த்வமேவ த்வமேவ ஸர்வம் மம தே³வ தே³வ || 28 ||

ப்ரார்த²நாத³ஸகம் சைவ மூலாஷ்டகமத:பரம் |
 ய: ப²டே²ச்ச²ரு²ணுயாந்நித்யம் தஸ்ய லக்ஷமீ: ஸ்தி²ரா ப⁴வேத் || 29 ||

நாராயணஸ்ய ஹ்ருத்யம் ஸர்வாபீ⁴ஷ்டப²லப்ரத³ம் |
 லக்ஷமீஹ்ருத்யகம் ஸ்தோத்ரம் யதி³ சைதத்³விநாக்ரு³தம் || 30 ||

தத்ஸர்வம் நிஷ்ப²லம் ப்ரோக்தம் லக்ஷமீ: க்ருத்⁴யதி ஸர்வதா³ |
 ஏதத்ஸங்கலிதம் ஸ்தோத்ரம் ஸர்வாபீ⁴ஷ்டப²லப்ரத³ம் || 31 ||

ஜபேத் ஸங்கலிதம் க்ரு³த்வா ஸர்வாபீ⁴ஷ்டமவாப்ருயாத் |
 நாராயணஸ்ய ஹ்ருத்யம் ஆதெள³ ஜப்த்வா தத:பரம் || 32 ||

லக்ஷமீஹ்ருத்யகம் ஸ்தோத்ரம் ஜபேந்நாராயணம் புந: |
 புந்நாராயணம் ஜப்த்வா புந்லக்ஷமீநுதிம் ஜபேத் || 33 ||

தத்³வத்³தோ⁴மாதி³கம் குர்யாதே³தத்ஸங்கலிதம் ஸூப⁴ம் |
 ஏவம் மத்⁴யே த்³விவாரேண ஜபேத் ஸங்கலிதம் ஸூப⁴ம் || 34 ||

லக்ஷமீஹ்ருத்யகே ஸ்தோத்ரே ஸர்வமந்யத் ப்ரகாஸிதம் |
 ஸர்வாந் காமாநவாப்நோதி ஆதி⁴வ்யாதி⁴ப⁴யம் ஹரேத் || 35 ||

கோ³ப்யமேதத் ஸதா³ குர்யாத் ந ஸர்வத்ர ப்ரகாஸ்யேத் |
 இதி கு³ஹ்யதமம் ஶாஸ்த்ரம் ப்ரோக்தம் ப்³ரஹ்மாதி³பி:⁴ புரா || 36 ||

லக்ஷமீஹ்ருத்யப்ரோக்தேந விதி⁴நா ஸாத⁴யேத் ஸுதீ:⁴ |
 தஸ்மாத் ஸர்வப்ரயத்நேந ஸாத⁴யேத்³ கோ³ப்யேத் ஸுதீ:⁴ || 37 ||

யத்ரைதத்புஸ்தகம் திஷ்டே²த் லக்ஷமீநாராயணாத்மகம் |
 பூ⁴தபைஸாசவேதாளப⁴யம் நைவ து ஸர்வதா³ || 38 ||


ப⁴ரு³கு³வாரே ததா² ராத்ரௌ பூஜயேத் புஸ்தகத்³வயம் |
 ஸர்வதா³ ஸர்வதா³ ஸ்துத்யம் கோ³ப்யேத் ஸாத⁴யேத் ஸுதீ:⁴ |
 கோ³பநாத் ஸாத⁴நால்லோகே த⁴ந்யோ ப⁴வதி தத்³வத: || 39 ||

|| இத்யத²ர்வணரஹஸ்யே உத்தரபா⁴கே³ நாராயணஹ்ருத்யஸ்தோத்ரம் ||


This should be chanted with the complementary Laxmihridayam Sanskrit text.

Stotra encoded by Anuradha, Commentary by N.Balasubramanian

Proofread by Anuradha, N.Balasubramanian, PSA Easwaran

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Narayana Hridayam or Narayana Hridaya Stotram

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