

Narayana Hridayam or Narayana Hridaya Stotram

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नारयणहृदयम्

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నారాయణహృదయమ్



॥ శ్రీయై నమః ॥

॥ శ్రీమతే నారాయణాయ నమః ॥

అథర్వణరహస్యే ఉత్తర ఖణ్డే

॥ శ్రీనారాయణ హృదయమ్ ॥

.. 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 స్తోత్రమ్ .

The appellation stotram, stuti and stavam all describe a hymn only. ప్రవః స్తోత్రం నుతిః స్తుతిః । says Amara, the Sanskrit lexicon. They all narrate the qualities of a deity. గుణసంకీర్తనమ్ 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.

యత్తదదేశ్య-మగ్రాహ్య-మగోత్ర-మవర్ణమచక్షుఃశ్రోత్రం తదపాణి-పాదమ్ ।

నిత్యం విభుం సర్వగతం సుసూక్ష్మం తదవ్యయం యద్భూతయోనిం పరిపశ్యన్తి ధీరాః ॥
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 itihasas 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 (ఫలశ్రుతిః 1). 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 .

దుర్లభం త్రయమేవైతద్దేవానుగ్రహ-హేతుకమ్ |

మనుష్యత్వం ముముక్షుత్వం మహాపురుషసంశ్రయః || 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.

ఆహార-నిద్రా-భయ-ముఖ్యకాని సామాన్యమేతత్ పశుభిర్నరాణామ్ |
బుద్ధిర్హితేషామధికో విశేషో బుద్ధ్యా విహీనః పశుభిః సమానః |

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 పురుషార్థాః since they are sought after by people. అర్థః = 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).

యః శాస్త్రవిధిముత్సృజ్య వర్తతే కామకారతః |
న స సిద్ధిమాప్నోతి న సుఖం పరాం గతిమ్ || ౨౩ ||

తస్మా-చ్ఛాస్త్రం ప్రమాణం తే కార్యకార్య-వ్యవస్థితౌ |
జ్ఞాత్వా శాస్త్రవిధానోక్తం కర్మ కర్తుమిహార్హసి || ౨౪ ||

(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. త్యాగాయ సమృద్ధితార్థానామ్ | 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. ధర్మావిరుద్ధ భూతేషు కామోఽస్మి భరతర్షభ!

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)

తే తం భుక్త్వా స్వర్గ-లోకం విశాలం
క్షీణే పుణ్యే మర్త్య-లోకం విశన్తి ।
ఏవం త్రయీధర్మ-మనుప్రపన్నా
గతాగతం కామకామా లభన్తే ॥

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 పరమపురుషార్థః । 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.

ధర్మస్య హ్యోపవర్గస్య నార్థోఽర్థాయోపకల్పతే ।
నార్థస్య ధర్మైకాన్తస్య కామో లాభాయ హి స్మృతః ॥

కామస్య నేన్ద్రియప్రీతిర్లాభో జీవేత యావతా ।
జీవస్య తత్త్వజిజ్ఞాసా నార్థో యశ్చేహ కర్మభిః ॥ (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).

నాస్థా ధర్మే న వసునిచయే వైవ కామోపభోగే
 యద్యద్భవ్యం భవతు భగవన్ పూర్వకర్మానురూపమ్ ।
 ఏతత్ప్రార్థ్యం మమ బహుమతం జన్మజన్మాంతరేఽపి
 త్వత్పాదామోభరుహాయుగగతా నిశ్చైచ భక్తిరస్తు ॥

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 (అజ్ఞానమ్). Thus, liberation implies settling down in our true or real nature which is divine and thus be free from problems for ever afterwards. తరతి శోకమాత్మవితేః says the upanishad. Because of this reason, Krishna says there is no gain greater than this. BG(6-22).

యం లభ్యా చాపరం లాభం మన్యతే నాదికం తతః ।
 యస్మిన్ప్రీతో న దుఃఖేన గురుణాఽపి విచాల్యతే ॥

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. మనుష్యాణాం సహస్రేషు కశ్చిద్యతతి సిద్ధయేః 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).

శ్రేయశ్చ ప్రేయశ్చ మనుష్యమేత-స్తౌ సమృరీత్య వివసక్తి ధీరః ।
 శ్రేయో హి ధీరోఽభి ప్రేయసే వృణోతే ప్రేయో మన్దో యోగక్షేమాత్ వృణోతే ॥

Wrong knowledge can be righted only by right knowledge called jnanam (జ్ఞానమ్) 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. క్షూరస్య ధారా నిశితా దురత్యయా దుర్గం పథస్తత్కవయో వదన్తి KU (1-3-14). Krishna too says this. అవ్యక్తా హి గతిర్దుఃఖం దేహవద్ధి-రవాప్యతే 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. నావిరతో దుశ్చరితాన్నాశాన్తో నానమాహితః | నాశాన్తమానసో వాఽపి ప్రజ్ఞానేనైనమాప్నుయాత్ || KU(1-2-24). So it is said that one with the desire for liberation, known as ముముక్షుత్వమ్ 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).

యత్కరోషి యదశ్నాసి యజ్ఞహోషి క్షదాసి యత్ |
యత్తపస్యసి కౌన్తేయ తత్కరుష్య మదర్పణమ్ || ౨౭ ||

శుభాశుభ-ఫలైరేవం మోక్ష్యసే కర్మబన్ధనైః | ౨౮ |

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 as 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. చిత్తస్య శుద్ధయే కర్మ | VC(11). and యోగినః కర్మ కుర్వన్తి సజ్గం త్యక్తౌత్మశుద్ధయే || 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.

శాస్త్రా మహావ్రో నివసన్తి సన్తః వసన్తవల్లోకహితం చరన్తః |
తీర్ణా స్వయం భీమభవార్ణవం జనా- నహేతునాన్యానపి తారయన్తః || 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).

దుర్లభో మానుషో దేహో దేహినాం క్షణభజ్జురః |
తథాఽపి దుర్లభం మన్యే వైకుణ్ఠప్రియదర్శనమ్ ||

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.

మచ్చిత్తా మధత-ప్రాణా బోధయంతః పరస్పరమ్ |
కథయంతశ్చ మాం నిత్యం తుష్కన్తి చ రమన్తి చ || 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 సాధన చతుష్టయమ్ 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 దైవీ సమృత్ or divine qualities. They are necessarily to be acquired by one stepping on to the path of liberation. దైవీ సమృద్ధిమోక్షాయ | 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).

భక్త్యా మామభిజానాతి యావాన్ యశ్చాస్మి తత్త్వతః |
తతో మాం తత్త్వతో జ్ఞాత్వా విశతే తదనంతరమ్ ||

and again in BG(18-58) మచ్చిత్తః సర్వదుర్గాణి మత్ప్రసాదాత్తరిష్యతి |

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 Bhisma for a simple method that will give one freedom

from samsara. కిం జపన్ముచ్యతే జన్తుః జన్మసంసార-బన్ధనాత్ |

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. లోకాధ్యక్షం స్తువన్నిత్యం సర్వదుఃఖాతిగోభవేత్ | and

ఏష మే సర్వధర్మాణం ధర్మోఽధికతమో మతః |
యద్భక్త్యా పుణ్డరీకాక్షం స్తవైరేచ్ఛన్నరః సదా ||

Shri Shankaracharya, in his commentary to the above line, explains why Bhishma said this is the best method. He says హింసాది-పురుషాన్తర-ద్రవ్యాన్తర-దేశకాలాది-నియమానపేక్షత్యం ఆధిక్యే కారణమ్ | 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 recitng the hymns which enumerate the virtues of the Lord is the abiding purpose of doing austere penances, rituals, recitation of vedas etc.

ఇదం హి పుంసస్తపః శ్రుతస్య వా స్విష్టస్య సూక్తస్య చ బుద్ధిదత్తయోః |
అవిమ్యతోర్థః కవిభిర్నిరూపితో యదుత్తమశ్లోకగుణానువర్ణనమ్ || 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.

స్వ-వర్ణాశ్రమధర్మేణ తపసా హరి-తోషణాత్ |
సాధనం ప్రభవేత్ పుంసాం వైరాగ్యాది-చతుష్టయమ్ ||

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

వాసుదేవే భగవతి భక్తియోగః ప్రయోజితః |
జనయత్యాశు వైరాగ్యం జ్ఞానం చ యదహైతుకమ్ ||

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 recitng Shri Rudram will purify one of all sins. యః శతరుద్రీయమధీతే, సోఽగ్నిహతో భవతి, సురాపానాత్పాతో భవతి, బ్రహ్మహత్యాత్పాతో భవతి, కృత్యాకృత్యాత్పాతో భవతి, తస్మాదవిముక్తమాశ్రితో భవతి। 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 పుణ్యః ఏవమ్ సృరణాది కుర్వతాం సర్వేషాం పుణ్యం కరోతీతి పుణ్యః । 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.

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 punyam 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)

యథాదర్శే తథాఽఽత్మని యథా స్వప్నే తథా పితృలోకే ।
యథాఽప్పు పరీవ దదృశే తథా గన్ధర్వలోకే ఛాయాతపయోరివ బ్రహ్మలోకే ॥

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).

లభ్యా సుదుర్లభమిదం బహుసన్భవాన్తే
మానుష్యమర్థదమనిత్యమపీహ ధీరః ।
తూర్ణం యతేత న పతేదనుమృత్యు యావ-
న్నిశ్రేయసాయ విషయః ఖలు సర్వతః స్యాత్ ॥

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. స్వబుద్ధౌ ఆదర్శవన్నిర్మల-భూతానాం వివిక్తమాత్మనో దర్శనం భవతీత్యర్థః । 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 (హృదయమ్) 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. లక్ష్మీహృదయకే స్తోత్రే సర్వమన్యత్ ప్రకాశితమ్ | (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. గోప్యమేతత్సదా కుర్యాత్ న సర్వత్ర ప్రకాశయేత్ | 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) దైవీ హ్యేషా గుణమయీ మమ

మాయా దురత్యయా ॥ మామేవ యే ప్రపద్యంతే మాయామేషాం తరన్తి తే ॥

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. మాయాం తు ప్రకృతిం విద్యాన్మాయినం చ మహేశ్వరమ్ । 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).

గిరామాహుర్దైవీం ద్రుహిణగృహిణీమాగమవిదో హరేః పత్నీం పద్మాం

హరసహచరీమద్రితనయామ్ । తురీయా కాపి త్వం దురధిగమ-నిస్సీమ-మహిమా

మహామాయా విశ్వం భ్రమయసి పరబ్రహ్మ-మహిషి ॥

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. వాగర్థావివ సమ్ముక్తై వాగర్థప్రతిపత్తయే | జగతః పితరౌ వందే పార్వతీపరమేశ్వరౌ || 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:

విశ్వం నారాయణం దేవమక్షరం పరమం పదమ్ |
 విశ్వతః పరమాన్నిత్యం విశ్వం నారాయణః హరిమ్ |
 విశ్వమేవేదం పురుషస్తద్విశ్వముపజీవతి |
 పతిం విశ్వస్యాత్మేశ్వరః శాశ్వతః శివమచ్యుతమ్ |
 నారాయణం మహాజ్ఞేయం విశ్వాత్మానం పరాయణమ్ ||
 నారాయణపరో జ్యోతిరాత్మా నారాయణః పరః |
 నారాయణపరం బ్రహ్మ తత్త్వం నారాయణః పరః |
 నారాయణపరో ధ్యాతా ధ్యానం నారాయణః పరః |
 యచ్చ కింశ్చిజ్జగత్సర్వం దృశ్యతే శ్రూయతేఽపి వా |
 అస్తర్బహిశ్చ తత్సర్వం వ్యాప్య నారాయణః స్థితః |

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.

॥ ఓం తత్సత్ ॥

నారాయణహృదయమ్

అథ స్తోత్రమ్ ।



హరిః ఓం ।

అస్య శ్రీనారాయణహృదయస్తోత్రమహామస్త్రస్య భార్గవ ఋషిః, (బ్రహ్మ ఋషిః)
అనుష్టుప్చందః, లక్ష్మీనారాయణో దేవతా, నారాయణప్రీత్యర్థే జపే వినియోగః ॥

॥ కరన్యాసః ॥

నారాయణః పరం జ్యోతిరితి అజుష్టాభ్యాం నమః,
నారాయణః పరం బ్రహ్మేతి తర్జునిభ్యాం నమః,
నారాయణః పరో దేవ ఇతి మధ్యమాభ్యాం నమః,
నారాయణః పరం ధామేతి అనామికాభ్యాం నమః,
నారాయణః పరో ధర్మ ఇతి కనిష్ఠికాభ్యాం నమః,
విశ్వం నారాయణ ఇతి కరతలకరపృష్ఠాభ్యాం నమః ॥

॥ అజ్గన్యాసః ॥

నారాయణః పరం జ్యోతిరితి హృదయాయ నమః,
నారాయణః పరం బ్రహ్మేతి శిరసే స్వాహా,
నారాయణః పరో దేవ ఇతి శిఖాయై వౌషట్,
నారాయణః పరం ధామేతి కవచాయ హుమ్,
నారాయణః పరో ధర్మ ఇతి నేత్రాభ్యాం వౌషట్,
విశ్వం నారాయణ ఇతి అస్త్రాయ ఫట్,
భూర్భువస్సువరోమితి దిగ్బంధః ॥

॥ అథ ధ్యానమ్ ॥

ఉద్యదాదిత్యసంకృశం పీతవాసం చతుర్భుజమ్ ।

శంఖచక్రగదాపాణీం ధ్యాయేల్లక్ష్మీపతిం హరిమ్ ॥ ౧ ॥

త్రైలోక్యాధారచక్రం తదుపరి కమలం తత్ర చానంతభోగీ

తన్మధ్యే భూమిపద్మాజ్జుశశిఖరదళం కర్ణికాభూతమేరుమ్ ।

తత్రత్యం శాస్తమూర్తిం మణిమయమకుటం కుణ్ణలోద్భాసితాఙ్గం
లక్ష్మీనారాయణాఖ్యం సరసిజనయనం సస్తతం చింతయామః ॥ ౨॥

అస్య శ్రీనారాయణాహృదయస్తోత్రమహామస్త్రస్య బ్రహ్మ ఋషిః,
అనుష్టుప్ ఛందః, నారాయణో దేవతా, నారాయణప్రీత్యర్థే జపే వినియోగః ॥

ఓం నారాయణః పరం జ్యోతిరాత్మా నారాయణః పరః ।
నారాయణః పరం బ్రహ్మ నారాయణ నమోఽస్తు తే ॥ ౩॥

నారాయణః పరో దేవో ధాతా నారాయణః పరః ।
నారాయణః పరో ధాతా నారాయణ నమోఽస్తు తే ॥ ౪॥

నారాయణః పరం ధామ ధ్యానం నారాయణః పరః ।
నారాయణ పరో ధర్మో నారాయణ నమోఽస్తు తే ॥ ౫॥

నారాయణః పరో దేవో విద్యా నారాయణః పరః ।
విశ్వం నారాయణః సాక్షాన్ నారాయణ నమోఽస్తు తే ॥ ౬॥

నారాయణాద్ విధిర్జాతో జాతో నారాయణాద్భవః ।
జాతో నారాయణాద్దిస్తో నారాయణ నమోఽస్తు తే ॥ ౭॥

రవిర్నారాయణస్తేజః చంద్రో నారాయణో మహాః ।
వహ్నిర్నారాయణః సాక్షాత్ నారాయణ నమోఽస్తు తే ॥ ౮॥

నారాయణ ఉపాస్యః స్యాద్ గురుర్నారాయణః పరః ।
నారాయణః పరో బోధో నారాయణ నమోఽస్తు తే ॥ ౯॥

నారాయణః ఫలం ముఖ్యం సిద్ధిర్నారాయణః సుఖమ్ ।
హరిర్నారాయణః శుద్ధిర్నారాయణ నమోఽస్తు తే ॥ ౧౦॥

నిగమావేదితానస్తకల్యాణగుణవారిధే ।
నారాయణ నమస్తేఽస్తు నరకార్ణవతారక ॥ ౧౧॥

జన్మమృత్యుజరావ్యాధిపారతన్త్ర్యాదిభిః సదా ।
దోషైరస్పృష్టరూపాయ నారాయణ నమోఽస్తు తే ॥ ౧౨॥

వేదశాస్త్రార్థవిజ్ఞానసాధ్యభక్త్యేకగోచర ।
నారాయణ నమస్తేఽస్తు మాముద్ధర భవార్ణవాత్ ॥ ౧౩॥

నిత్యానన్త మహోదార పరాత్పర జగత్పతే ।
నారాయణ నమస్తేఽస్తు మోక్షసామ్రాజ్యదాయినే ॥ ౧౪॥


ఆబ్రహ్మస్థమృపర్వస్తమఖిలాత్మమహాశ్రయ ।
 సర్వభూతాత్మభూతాత్మన్ నారాయణ నమోఽస్తు తే ॥ ౧౫॥
 పాలితాశేషలోకాయ పుణ్యశ్రవణకీర్తన ।
 నారాయణ నమస్తేఽస్తు ప్రలయోదకశాయినే ॥ ౧౬॥
 నిరస్తసర్వదోషాయ భక్త్యాదిగుణదాయినే ।
 నారాయణ నమస్తేఽస్తు త్వాం వినా న హి మే గతిః ॥ ౧౭॥
 ధర్మార్థకామమోక్షాఖ్యపురుషార్థప్రదాయినే ।
 నారాయణ నమస్తేఽస్తు పునస్తేఽస్తు నమో నమః ॥ ౧౮॥
 అథ ప్రార్థనా ।
 నారాయణ త్వమేవాసి దహరాభ్యే హృది స్థితః ।
 ప్రేరితా ప్రేర్యమాణానాం త్వయా ప్రేరితమానసః ॥ ౧౯॥
 త్వదాజ్ఞాం శిరసా కృత్వా భజామి జనపావనమ్ ।
 నానోపాసనమార్గాణాం భవకృద్ భావబోధకః ॥ ౨౦॥
 భావార్థకృద్ భవతీతో భవ సౌఖ్యప్రదో మమ ।
 త్వన్మాయామోహితం విశ్వం త్వయైవ పరికల్పితమ్ ॥ ౨౧॥
 త్వదధిష్ఠానమాత్రేణ సా వై సర్వార్థకారిణీ ।
 త్వమేవ తాం పురస్కృత్య మమ కామాన్ సమర్థయ ॥ ౨౨॥
 న మే త్వదన్యస్త్రాతాస్తి త్వదన్యన్న హి దైవతమ్ ।
 త్వదన్యం న హి జానామి పాలకం పుణ్యవర్ధనమ్ ॥ ౨౩॥
 యావత్సాంసారికో భావో మనస్థో భావనాత్మకః ।
 తావత్పిద్ధిర్భవేత్ సాధ్య సర్వదా సర్వదా విభో ॥ ౨౪॥
 పాపినామహమేకాగ్రో దయాలూనాం త్వమగ్రణీః ।
 దయసీయో మదన్యోఽస్తి తవ కోఽత్ర జగత్త్రయే ॥ ౨౫॥
 త్వయాహం నైవ సృష్టశ్చేత్ న స్యాత్తవ దయాలతా ।
 ఆమయో వా న సృష్టశ్చేదౌషధస్య వృథోదయః ॥ ౨౬॥
 పాపసంకపరిశ్రాంతః పాపాత్మా పాపరూపధృక్ ।
 త్వదన్యః కోఽత్ర పాపేభ్యః త్రాతాస్తి జగతీతలే ॥ ౨౭॥

త్వమేవ మాతా చ పితా త్వమేవ త్వమేవ బన్ధుశ్చ సఖా త్వమేవ ।
 త్వమేవ విద్యా ద్రవిణం త్వమేవ త్వమేవ సర్వం మమ దేవ దేవ ॥ ౨౮॥
 ప్రార్థనాదశకం చైవ మూలాష్టకమతఃపరమ్ ।
 యః పఠేచ్ఛుణుయాన్నిత్యం తస్య లక్ష్మీః స్థిరా భవేత్ ॥ ౨౯॥
 నారాయణస్య హృదయం సర్వాభీష్టఫలప్రదమ్ ।
 లక్ష్మీహృదయకం స్తోత్రం యది చైతద్విద్యానాకృతమ్ ॥ ౩౦॥
 తత్సర్వం నిష్ఫలం ప్రోక్తం లక్ష్మీః క్రుధ్యతి సర్వదా ।
 ఏతత్సంకల్పితం స్తోత్రం సర్వాభీష్టఫలప్రదమ్ ॥ ౩౧॥
 జపేత్ సంకల్పితం కృత్వా సర్వాభీష్టమవాప్నుయాత్ ।
 నారాయణస్య హృదయం ఆదౌ జప్త్వా తతఃపరమ్ ॥ ౩౨॥
 లక్ష్మీహృదయకం స్తోత్రం జపేన్నారాయణం పునః ।
 పునర్నారాయణం జప్త్వా పునర్లక్ష్మీనుతిం జపేత్ ॥ ౩౩॥
 తద్వద్ధోమాదికం కుర్యాదేతత్సంకల్పితం శుభమ్ ।
 ఏవం మధ్యే ద్వివారేణ జపేత్ సంకల్పితం శుభమ్ ॥ ౩౪॥
 లక్ష్మీహృదయకే స్తోత్రే సర్వమన్యత్ ప్రకాశితమ్ ।
 సర్వాన్ కామానవాప్నోతి ఆధివ్యాధిభయం హరేత్ ॥ ౩౫॥
 గోప్యమేతత్ సదా కుర్యాత్ న సర్వత్ర ప్రకాశయేత్ ।
 ఇతి గుహ్యతమం శాస్త్రం ప్రోక్తం బ్రహ్మీదిభిః పురా ॥ ౩౬॥
 లక్ష్మీహృదయప్రోక్తేన విధినా సాధయేత్ సుధీః ।
 తస్మాత్ సర్వప్రయత్నేన సాధయేద్ గోపయేత్ సుధీః ॥ ౩౭॥
 యత్ప్రేతత్పుస్తకం తిష్ఠేత్ లక్ష్మీనారాయణాత్మకమ్ ।
 భూతపైశాచవేతాళభయం నైవ తు సర్వదా ॥ ౩౮॥
 భృగువారే తథా రాత్రౌ పూజయేత్ పుస్తకద్యయమ్ ।
 సర్వదా సర్వదా స్తుత్యం గోపయేత్ సాధయేత్ సుధీః ।
 గోపనాత్ సాధనాల్లోకే ధన్యో భవతి తత్త్వతః ॥ ౩౯॥
 ॥ ఇత్యధర్వణరహస్యే ఉత్తరభాగే నారాయణహృదయస్తోత్రమ్ ॥


This should be chanted with the complementary Laxmihridayam Sanskrit text.

Stotra encoded by Anuradha, Commentary by N.Balasubramanian

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