
prAtaHsmaraNam

ப்ராது:ஸ்மரணம்

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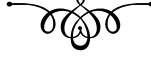
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The Pratasmaranam consists of some verses that are to be recited in the morning soon after waking up from the bed. ப்ராத: = at dawn, and ஸ்மரணம் = remembering. They may be recited sitting in the bed itself before getting out of it. They are an aid to remembering many venerable people and auspicious things in the creation, and through them the Lord. There are many versions of this poem containing less number of verses or more. One well known version is that of Sri Sankaracharya and this consists of just four verses. These verses are highly significant as they contain thoughts about the godhead residing within us. These four can be easily memorised and are a pleasure to recite if one knows the meaning. The text of the verses is given below to help those who are interested in reciting them. Then each verse is given with its meaning. They are also followed by some comments.

॥ ப்ராத:ஸ்மரணம் ॥

கராக்³ரே வஸதே லக்ஷ்மீ: கரமத்⁴யே ஸரஸ்வதீ |

கரமூலே து கௌ³ரீ ச ப்ரபா⁴தே கரத³ர்ஸநம் || 1 ||

ஸமுத்³ரவஸநே தே³வீ பர்வதஸ்தநமண்ட³லே |

விஷ்ணுபத்நி நமஸ்துப்⁴யம் பா⁴த³ஸ்பர்ஸம் க்ஷமஸ்வ மே || 2 ||

நமோ⁵ஸ்து ப்ரியத்³த்தாயை துப்⁴யம் தே³வி வஸுந்த⁴ரே |

த்வம் மாதா ஸர்வலோகாநாம் பா⁴த³ந்யாஸம் க்ஷமஸ்வ மே || 3 ||

ப்³ரஹ்மா முராரிஸ்த்ரிபுராந்தகாரீ பா⁴நு: ஸஸீ பூ⁴மிஸுதோ பு³த⁴ஸ்ச |

கு³ருஸ்ச ஸூக்ர: ஸநி-ராஹு-கேதவ: குர்வந்து ஸர்வே மம ஸுப்ரபா⁴தம் || 4 ||

ஸநத்குமார: ஸநக: ஸநந்த³ந: ஸநாதநோ-⁵ப்யாஸுரி-பிங்க³லௌ ச |

ஸப்தஸ்வரா: ஸப்த ரஸாதலாநி குர்வந்து ஸர்வே மம ஸுப்ரபா⁴தம் || 5 ||

ஸப்தார்ணவா: ஸப்த-குலாசலாஸ்ச ஸப்தர்ஷயோ த்³வீப-வநாநி ஸப்த |
 பூ⁴ராதி³க்ரு²த்வா பு⁴வநாநி ஸப்த குர்வந்து ஸர்வே மம ஸுப்ரபா⁴தம் || 6 ||

ப்ரு²த்²வீ ஸக³ந்தா⁴ ரைஸாஸ்ததா²ப: ஸபர்ஸீ ச வாயுர்ஜ்வலநம் ச தேஜ: |
 நப:⁴ ஸஸப்³த³ம் மஹதா ஸஹைவ குர்வந்து ஸர்வே மம ஸுப்ரபா⁴தம் || 7 ||

மஹேந்த³ரோ மலய: ஸஹ்யோ தே³வதாத்மா ஹிமாலய: |
 த்⁴யேயோ ரைவதகோ விந்த⁴யோ கி³ரிஸ்சாராவலி-ஸ்ததா² || 8 ||

க³ங்கா³ ணிந்து⁴ஸ்ச காவேரீ யமுநா ச ஸரஸ்வதீ |
 ரேவா மஹாநதீ³ கோ³தா³ ப்³ரஹ்மபுத்ரா புநாது மம் || 9 ||

அயோத்⁴யா மது²ரா மாயா காஸீ காஞ்சீ அவந்திகா |
 புரீ த்³வாராவதீ சைவ ஸப்தைதா மோக்ஷதா³யிகா: || 10 ||

ப்ரயாகா³ பாடலீபுத்ரம் விஜயாநக³ரம் புரீம் |
 இந்த³ர்ப்ரஸ்த²ம் க³யாம் சைவ ப்ரத்யூஷே ப்ரத்யஹம் ஸ்மரேத் || 11 ||

அருந்த⁴த்யநுஸூயா ச ஸாவித்ரீ ஜாநகீ ஸதீ |
 தேஜஸ்விநீஇ ச பாஞ்சாலீ வந்த³நீயா நிரந்தரம் || 12 ||

வைந்யம் ப்ரு²த்²ம் ஹைஹயமர்ஜூநம் ச
 ஸாகுந்தலேயம் ப⁴ரதம் நலம் ச |
 ராமம் ச யோ வை ஸ்மரதி ப்ரபா⁴தே
 தஸ்யார்த²லபோ⁴ விஜயஸ்ச ஹஸ்தே || 13 ||

த³த்⁴யங் மநுர்ப்⁴ரு³கு³ரஸௌ ஹரிபூர்வசந்த³ரோ
 பீ⁴ஷ்மார்ஜூந-த்⁴ருவ-வஸிஷ்ட-ஸூகாத³யஸ்ச |
 ப்ரஹ்லாத³-நாரத³-ப⁴கீ³ரத²-விஸ்வகர்ம-
 வால்மீகயோத்ர சிரசிந்த்யஸூபா⁴பி⁴தா⁴நா: || 14 ||

அஸ்வத்தா²மா ப³லிர்வ்யாஸோ ஹநாமாம்ஸ்ச விபீ⁴ஷ்ண: |
 க்ரு²ப: பரஸூராமஸ்ச ஸப்தைதே சிரஜீவிந: || 15 ||

ஸப்தைதாந் ஸம்ஸ்மரேந்நித்யம் மார்கண்டே³யமதா²ஷ்டமம் |
 ஜீவேத் வர்ஷஸுதம் ஸாக்³ரமபம்ரு²த்யுவிவர்ஜித: || 16 ||

புண்யஸ்லோகோ நலோ ராஜா புண்யஸ்லோகோ யுதி⁴ஷ்டி²ர: |
 புண்யஸ்லோகோ விதே³ஹஸ்ச புண்யஸ்லோகோ ஜநார்த்³ந: || 17 ||

॥ ப²ஸ்ருதி: ॥

இத்த²ம் ப்ரபா⁴தே பரமம் பவித்ரம்

படே²த் ஸ்மரேத்³வா ஸ்ரு³ணுயாச்ச தத்³வத் ॥

து:³ஸ்வப்நநாஸஸ்த்விஹ ஸுப்ரபா⁴தம்

ப⁴வேச்ச நித்யம் ப⁴க³வத்ப்ரஸாதா³த் ॥ 18 ॥

INTRODUCTION:- The following abbreviations are used in the notes.

- 1- VS - Sri Vishnu Sahasranama with Sri Sankaracharya's commentary.
- 2 - SS - Sri Siva Sahasranama (from Padma Purana) known as Vedasara Sahasram with the commentary of HH Sri Paramasivendra Saraswathi.
- 3 - LS - Sri Lalita Sahasranamam with the commentary of Sri Bhaskararaya.
- 4 - BG - Srimad Bhagavadgita with Sri Sankaracharya's commentary.
- 5 - BH - Srimad Bhagavatam.
- 6 - MU - Mundakopanishad

The Pratasmaranam is a stotram ஸ்தோத்ரம் or hymn. A stotram is defined as கு³ண ஸங்கீர்தநம் ॥ (VS) or stating the attributes. The Pratasmaranam may be taken as extolling the glory விபூ⁴தி: of the Lord. The glory that is extolled is His omnipresence: that He is every where and as every thing. The Upanishad says this clearly: that whatever is seen or heard of in this universe is permeated by the Lord, in and out.

யச்ச கிஞ்சிதஜக³த்யஸ்மிந் த்³ரு³ஸ்யதே ஸ்ருயதே⁵பி வா ॥

அந்தர்ப³ஹிஸ்ச தத் ஸர்வம் வ்யாப்ய நாராயண: ஸ்தி²த: ॥ (Taittiriaryanya, 10-II-4-6)

More on this subject is discussed later on in this article. **THE MORNING**

TIME:- The morning time, just before the sun rise and the evening time just before the sunset are recommended for prayer because the mind is calm and fresh at these times. So, they are ideal for prayer and meditation. The practice of meditating and praying at these times have been in vogue since time immemorial. The vedas say that one should meditate on the Sun as the Supreme Being at both these times . Doing so, one will be blessed with all good things in life and attain liberation..

உத்³யந்தமஸ்தம் யந்தமாதி³த்யமபி⁴த்யாயந், குர்வந்,

ப்³ராஹ்மணே வித்³வாந்ஸகலம் ப⁴த்³ரமஸ்நுதே

அஸாவாதி³த்யோ ப்³ரஹ்மேதி, ப்³ரஹ்மேவ ஸந்-ப்³ரஹ்மாப்யேதி, ய ஏவம் வேத்³ |

Our scriptures also say that one should use this time only for meditating on the Lord and add that one who does not, but sleeps at this time, that sleep eats into his stock of punyam (result of doing good deeds).

ப்³ராஹ்மே முஹூர்தே யா நித்³ரா ஸா புண்யக்ஷயகாரிணீ | In addition to losing punyam the person incurs sin. This is said by Bharata in Ramayana. He states that he who had any part in making Rama abdicate the kingdom and go to the forests should incur the sin of a person who sleeps at either of the junctions (of the day and night). Valmiki Ramayana (2-75-44).

உபே⁴ ஸந்த⁴யே ஸயாநஸ்ய யத் பாபம் பரிகல்பதே | தச்ச

பாபம் ப⁴வேத் தஸ்ய யஸ்யார்யோ⁵ந்ருமதோ க³த: ||

Later on, when Bharata met Rama at Chitrakoot, Rama enquired about the welfare of his father and others. He then gave instructions in judicature. One of the questions he put to Bharata was I hope you do not fall a prey to excess of sleep and wake up early in the morning. கச்சிந்நித்³ராவஸம் நைஷி கச்சித் காலே⁵வபு³த்யஸே | (2-100-17).

The junction of the day and night, (i.e) the time of sun rise and the sun set (the twilight hour) is known as ஸந்த⁴யா (sandhya). There are two sandhyas ; the morning one and the evening one. They are known as the the ப்ராத: ஸந்த⁴யா and the ஸாயம் ஸந்த⁴யா. We have to dedicate the sandhya time for prayers only and not for any other activity like eating and, much less for sleeping.

ப்³ராஹ்மே முஹூர்தே உத்தா²ய சிந்தயேதா³த்மநோ ஹிதம் |

கு³ரும் விஷ்ணும் நமஸ்க்ரு³த்ய மாதரம் பிதரம் ததா² |

One should wake up before sunrise and think of his own welfare. He should salute his guru, Lord Vishnu, mother and father. We may recall that Rama and LakShmana accompanied the sage Viswamitra to the forests and rested for the night on the bank of the Sarayu river. Just when the day was about to break, the sage woke them up saying that the twilight

ஸந்த்யா has set in and it is time for prayer.

கௌஸல்யா ஸுப்ரஜா ராம பூர்வா ஸந்த்யா ப்ரவர்த்தே |

உத்திஷ்ட² நரஸார்தூ³ல கர்தவ்யம் தை³வமாந்ஹிகம் ||

This verse is from Ramayana (1-23-2) and is very popular. It is recited as part of the Suprabhatam. We learn that Sri Krishna too used to get up very early in the morning and meditate on the Supreme Being. Then, He had bath and performed sandhya vandanam. He silently chanted the Gayatri mantra. BH(10-70-4,6).

ப்³ராஹ்மே முஹூர்த உத்தா²ய வார்யுபஸ்ப்ரு³ஸ்ய மாத⁴வ: |

த³த்யேள ப்ரஸந்ந கரண ஆத்மாநம் தமஸ: பரம் ||

அதா²ப்லுதோ⁵ம்ப⁴ஸ்யமலே யதா²விதி⁴ க்ரியாகலாபம் பரிதா⁴ய வாஸஸீ |

சகார ஸந்த⁴யோபக³மாதி³ ஸத்தமோ ஹுதாநலோ ப்³ரஹ்ம ஜஜாப வாக்³யத: ||

These facts establish the importance of praying at the sandhya times. Why should we recite such verses as the first thing in the morning instead of going about our routine morning ablution? If we study our life we will find that it was not all smooth, but it had some stretches of happiness and also of sorrow. What is happiness and gives us joy and what is sorrow and causes pain and grief depends on time, place and circumstances. Thus there is no uniform definition of joy and sorrow. But our aim is to avoid sorrow in any form as much as possible and have happiness and happiness only. The question is whether such a condition is possible? It seems to be a dream like situation. Though the condition appears to be fanciful and impractical to achieve, our scriptures assert that such a life which is full of pure, unalloyed joy is achievable. The way to achieve to attain such a life is through devotion or bhakti. Sorrow is the result of the doing (prohibited) sinful actions and failing to do prescribed duties we have committed in this and earlier human births. Sage Yagnavalkya says this:

விஹிதஸ்யாநநுஷ்டா²நாத் நிந்தி³தஸ்ய ச ஸேவநாத் |

அநிக்³ரஹாச்சேந்த³ரியாணம் நர: பதநம்ரு³ச்ச²தி ||

The big bundle of sins we

have accumulated in so many births is to be expended by experiences in the form of sorrow and pain by us. Sorrow afflicts the mind and pain affects the body. Since the stock of sins is huge, this one birth may not suffice to work it out. So one has to go through painful experiences in this birth and in addition, one may have to be born again and again many times to clear off the debt. The way out of this dreadful situation is to resort to bhakti. In the introduction to Shri Vishnusahasranamam the king Yudhishtira asks Bhishma the easiest way for one to get rid of sorrows and attain happiness. Bhishma replies that the way is to chant the glories of the Lord.

அநாதி³நித⁴நம் விஷ்ணும் ஸர்வலோகமஹேஸ்வரம் |
லோகாத்⁴யக்ஷம் ஸ்துவந்நித்யம் ஸர்வது:³கா²தி³கோ³ப⁴வேத் |

So, the Lord has the names புண்ய: - ஸ்ம்ரு³திமாத்ரேண

கல்மஷாணி க்ஷபயதீதி புண்ய: | VS(687). He removes the sins of those who just think of Him. and ஹரி: - ஸ்ம்ரு³திமாத்ரேண பும்ஸாம் பாபம்

ஸம்ஸாரம் வா ஹரதீதி ஹரி: | VS(359) and SS(542). பாபநாஸகர: -

லௌகிகவைதி³கநாமபி:⁴ கீர்தித:, ததா² லௌகிகவைதி³கை: ஸ்தோத்ரை: ஸ்துத:,

ததா² பஞ்சாக்ஷராதி³பி⁴ர்ஜப்த: பூஜிதஸ்ச உமாஸஹாயத்வாதி³ருபேண ஸ்ம்ரு³தோ

த்⁴யானேந வா பாபநாஸகர: | SS(355). He destroys the sins of those

who repeat His holy names or chant hymns or chant mantras such as the panchakShara.

As children, we were taught to worship God in pictures and idols in the home and in temples. This is necessary to get the mind fixed on the Lord. This form of worship is relevant to the beginners and also all through the life and is very important. One cannot view this as mere idol worship. In addition, we also listened to stories from puranas. We were told that God created the world. He first created Brahma who then created the world. He resides in places like Vaikunta and Kailas; but will come to rescue His devotees as He did in the case of Prahlada and Gajendra. Listening to such stories made us know more about God and His qualities. In this way listening draws our minds to Him and

sows the seeds of bhakti or devotion. It is said that bhakti wells up in the heart of one who listens to the exposition of sacred texts like Bhagavatam. Such devotion dispels grief and fear. BH(1-7-7)

யஸ்யாம் வை ஸ்ருயமாணயாம் க்ருஷ்ணே பரமபூருஷே |
புத்திருத்தபத்யதே பும்ஸாம் ஸோகமோஹபுயாபஹா ||

Please note the usage of

the word புத்திருத்தபத்யதே meaning that devotion springs up in the hearts of people. This implies that devotion sprouts up in the hearts even where the seeds are absent earlier. Such is the glory of listening to the holy texts. Because of this fact chanting and listening to the glories of the Lord is highly recommended. The many hymns available to us are of great help to us in this matter. They elaborately describe the glorious attributes of the Lord. Since one has his own duties to perform throughout the day our tradition has introduced the practice of prayers at different times of the day, like the Pratasmaranam right from the time one wakes up in the morning till one retires to bed. This helps us to keep remembering the Lord. Our minds will not stray away from Him and so will remain pure and calm. Just as we take food at regular intervals to remain healthy and ward off pangs of hunger, similarly by indulging in small doses of bhakti at regular intervals in between our activities we can mitigate the adverse effects of past karma. This will cushion our journey through life. GOD'S NATURE:- If we want to think more of God we would like to know more of His form and nature. The question, then, is what is His form and nature? Is His nature the ones stated above, namely those available in the idols and pictures and available in Vaikunta and Kailasa? The answer to this is discussed in detail in chapters 7 to 11 of Bhagavat Gita. God has two aspects. In His higher nature He is without form or any other attributes. He is therefore known as நிர்குண: | VS(840).

ISHVARA:- In His other aspect He is known as Ishvara and is accompanied by His power of maya. As Ishvara He is the cause of the universe. This is

the topic of discussion in this article. The universe which is the effect or product is born or made of Him - the cause. It is like saying the ornaments are made of gold - the cause. One may say that that to make the ornaments out of gold we require two causes - a goldsmith to fashion the ornaments. Thus we have the gold - the material cause and the goldsmith - the intelligent cause (the one who provides the expertise necessary to make the ornament using the gold). But in the case of the universe God is both the material and the efficient cause. He is known as காரணம் - உபாதா³நம் நிமித்தம் ச காரணம் | VS(379). He does not need the help of any external agency in this process. We have the example of the humble spider which is able to spin the thread from its mouth and withdraw it back into itself without any external help. யதோ²ர்ணநாபி:4 ஸ்ரு'ஜதே க்³ரு'ண்ஹதே ச | . MU (1-1-7) We may ask one question here. When we say that an ornament, say bangle, is made of gold - the cause, what is bangle? Is it something different from the gold? The answer is No. We can say that gold is bangle. This is because of the fact that what we call bangle is only the name given to a particular form of gold. If we take the gold away from the bangle by melting it, we will be left with gold and no bangle. Such a thing that seems to exist, but does not indeed exist separately is called மித்²யா or unreal. We have the familiar example of the mirage. In these mithya cases we should note that gold only is seen as bangle and sand as water. Vedanta texts give the example of one seeing a snake in a rope and getting frightened at the snake. Thus the mithya objects can produce effects: but they do not exist. Things like the rope or gold that support the appearance of mithya objects like the snake and ornaments are known as அதி⁴ஷ்டா²நம் | or substratum. For this reason, God, who is the substratum of the mithya universe has the name அதி⁴ஷ்டா²நம் - அதி⁴திஷ்ட²ந்தி பூ⁴தாநி உபாதா⁴நகாரணத்வேந ப்³ரஹ்மேதி அதி⁴ஷ்டா²நம், மத்ஸ்தா²நி ஸர்வபூ⁴தாநி (கீ³தா 9-4) இதி ப⁴க³வத்வசநாத் | VS(324). This is said more explicitly by the name மித்²யாஜக³த³தி⁴ஷ்டா²நா - மித்²யாருபஸ்ய ஜக³தோ⁵தி⁴ஷ்டா²நம்

பா⁴நாதி⁴கரணம் ரஜதஸ்யேவ ஸூக்தி: | LS(734).

She (Lalitha) is the support of the unreal world, like the shell of silver. A shell shines like silver in the sun light and one may indeed mistake it for silver. Thus the real shell supports the appearance of the unreal silver. We said that God is the cause of the universe. This means that God is only seen as the universe, just as gold is seen as bangle. Thus the Lord has the name:- விஸ்வம் -

கார்யரூப ஜக³த: காரணத்வேந விஸ்வம் இത്യுச்ச்யதே ப்³ரஹ்ம |
He being the cause is seen as the product universe. VS(1).

The ornaments are many and different, but the gold is one and the same. Gold permeates the ornaments and gives them substance. So also, the whole world made up of numerous objects is permeated by the Lord. He gives them substance Every object is in Him but He is not in them. This is because the objects are only mithya and have no existance apart from the cause - the Lord Krishna says this clearly. BG(9-4).

மயா ததமித³ம் ஸர்வம் ஜக³-த³வ்யக்த-மூர்திநா |
மத்ஸ்தா²நி ஸர்வபூ⁴தாநி ந சாஹம் தேஷ்வவஸ்தி²த: ||

The fact that the universe is the form of God implies that all objects or products with names and forms, from Brahma the creator to an insignificant insect, are all His forms only. This is expressed in His name விஸ்வரூபீ - விஸ்வாநி ஸர்வாணி சேதநாசேதநாத்மகாநி ரூபாணி அஸ்ய ஸந்தீதி விஸ்வரூபீ He has the forms of all the animate and inanimate objects in the universe. SS(75). Arjuna, with the grace of Krishna, sees this form. The description of this form and Arjuna's reaction to this is described in BG-Ch11. But as is the case with the rope snake, the objects in the world make us believe they are real. We see the cause and the product as separate things. We are beguiled by the forms of the ornaments to such an extent that we overlook the content - gold. In like fashion, we are so thoroughly lost in the world of names and forms that we miss the Lord who is really the substance behind them. This makes us see multiplicity. We see individuals as separate entities and as different

from us. From this arises a variety of emotions such as, likes, dislikes, jealousy, hatred etc. These feelings affect us. We express love for some, dislike for some and so on. We love some items - like wealth, very much because we feel they have some special qualities in them and work very hard to get them. We love our family more than other's family. These actions lead to conflict and strife. The result is sorrow.

BENEFITS OF THE NEW UNDERSTANDING: But when we are understand that what all we see is His forms only our outlook changes totally. We do not notice differences among them, but see only the substance God. We cannot hate any thing because every thing is divine. We can have only love for all beings. Further, love takes a special meaning and is replaced by devotion. This idea is impressed in our minds even as we are young by teaching us to respect our mother, father, acharya and the elders who may visit our house as God. The Taittiriyopanishad (1-11) instructs us in this matter. மாத்ரு' தே³வோ ப⁴வ | பித்ரு' தே³வோ ப⁴வ | ஆசார்ய தே³வோ ப⁴வ | அதிதி² தே³வோ ப⁴வ | We wer asked to worship our text books as Sarasvathi, the Goddess of learning. Every thing in the creation, be it animate or inanimate becomes an object of worship, since it is His form only. Thus we have the custom of worshipping trees, rivers, cows, etc., since we see divinity in them.

The great devotee Prahlada had this vision. He said that because the Lord is every where and in the form of every thing it becomes very easy to worship Him. BH(7-6-27).

ந ஹ்யச்யுதம் ப்ரீணயதோ ப³ஹ்வாயாஸோ⁵ஸுராத்மஜூ: |
ஆத்மத்வாத் ஸர்வபு⁴தாநாம் ஸித்³த⁴த்வா-தி³ஹ ஸர்வத: ||

The seers of ancient India had this wonderful vision. The famous vedic hymn Sri Rudram salutes the Supreme Being as Lord Rudra not by names as in a Sahasranama but as being resident in various objects and beings. It salutes Rudra as being dogs, the lowly outcastes, the cheat, the robber, the trees, the sand dunes and so on. Thus there can be nothing bad in the creation but the Lord only and so they all deserve

our respect. Saint Ramakrishna Paramahansa had such a vision. When some prostitutes were introduced into the room to test his character, he rose and prostrated to them as he saw them as the images of Devi only.

Since everything is divine, we cannot destroy or pollute the environment because it will amount to showing disrespect to the Lord. Naturally, this is a very high stage in spiritual progress. Rarely one will find people who have got such a vision. However we have to understand this fact clearly, take it seriously and try to develop such a vision. But if we fail to do so and confine our worship of God to images and pictures in our houses and temples, we will stagnate. Lord, in His incarnation as Kapila, says this. BH(3-30-21 to 27).

Some select verses are given below.

அஹம் ஸர்வேஷு பூ⁴தேஷு பூ⁴தாத்மாவஸ்தி²த: ஸதா³ |
தமவஜ்ஞாய மாம் மர்த்ய: குருதே⁵ர்சாவிட³ம்³நம் || 21 ||

யோ மாம் ஸர்வேஷு பூ⁴தேஷு ஸந்தமாத்தமாநமீஸ்வரம் |
ஹித்வார்சாம் ப⁴ஜதே மௌட்⁴யாத்³ப⁴ஸ்மந்யேவ ஜுஹோதி ஸ: || 22 ||

The Lord says that He resides in all beings as their inner soul. Disregarding this fact, people make a show of worshipping Me through images.If one disregards My prescence in all, but ignorantly offers worship only to images, such worship is wasteful as the sacrificial offerings poured into ashes. The worship of God in pictures and images is important. It should continue as this is the stepping stone to higher forms of worship. But we should not forget the fact that God is present not only in images but also as all things.

When we understanding the fact that God is in every thing and every where, we find that we can never be alone at any time, but are always surrounded by Him. Krishna makes this very clear. BG(6-30).

யோ மாம் பஸ்யதி ஸர்வத்ர ஸர்வம் ச மயி பஸ்யதி |
தஸ்யாஹம் ந ப்ரணஸ்யாமி ஸ ச மே ந ப்ரணஸ்யதி ||

A bird flying in the air is surrounded by air in all directions. Similarly we are surrounded by the Lord who is all pervading. He is before,

behind, to the right, to the left, below and above - manifests Himself
in all forms.

ப்ரஹ்மைவேத³மம்ரு²தம் புரஸ்தாத்³ப்ரஹ்ம பஸ்சாத்³ப்ரஹ்ம த³க்ஷிணதஸ்சோத்தரேண
|

அத⁴ஸ்சோர்த்⁴வம் ச ப்ரஸ்ரு²தம் ப்ரஹ்மைவேத³ம் விஸ்வமித³ம் வரிஷ்ட²ம் ||
MU (2-2-11).

Because of this reason, we have His company at all times and so we should
feel immensely secure .

Though we hear that every thing in the creation is divine, but because
our minds are not pure, but are coloured with likes and dislikes we feel
some things are pure and holy and some are dirty or lowly. So we
are not able to see Him in such objects. We want a way out of this
awkward situation. Arjuna too, who had love towards some and hatred for
some, had the same problem and puts the question to Krishna. He asked
Him in which forms He can be meditated upon or worshipped. BG(10-17).

கத²ம் வித்³யாமஹம் யோகி³ம்ஸ்த்வாம் ஸதா³ பரிசிந்தயந் |
கேஷு கேஷு ச பா⁴வேஷு சிந்தயோ⁵ஸி ப⁴க³வந்மயா ||

Krishna understands Arjuna's predicament and gives a list of items in
which He may be worshipped or meditated upon. But He makes a significant
observation. He says that the list is not exhaustive but whatever there is
that has some special glory or strength etc., is part of His manifestation
only. BG(11-41).

யத்³யத்³விபூ⁴திமத்ஸத்வம் ஸ்ரீமதூ³ர்ஜிதமேவ வா |
தத்ததே³வாவக³ச்ச த்வம் மம தேஜோ⁵ம்ஸஸம்ப⁴வம் ||

Uddhava, the friend of Krishna, puts the same question to Krishna
and Krishna gives a list of items (BH 11- Chapter 16) in which He
may be meditated upon. He concludes with a similar statement saying
"Wherever there is power, beauty, fame, prosperity, modesty, sacrifice,
agreeableness, luck, strength, fortitude or knowledge, there am I
manifested. BH(11-16-40).

தேஜ: ஸ்ரீ: கீர்த்ரைஸ்வர்யம் ஹரீஸ்த்யக: ³ ஸௌப⁴க³ம் ப⁴க: ³ |

வீர்யம் திதிகூஶ விஜ்ஞாநம் யத்ர யத்ர ஸ மேம்ஸக: ||

From this we understand that any special quality or glory, like beauty, strength, talent etc., we observe any where or in any one, really belongs to God only. Because of this reason, whenever we think of an item or person with some special quality or greatness we should realise that we are thinking of a repository of His glory only. The hymn Pratasmaranam mentions a list of such items that have some special glory. These includes a wide assortment including rivers, mountains, kings, sages etc..The greatness we observe in them really belongs to Him only and so we marvel at His glory and feel humble. Therefore by the remembrance of these items we learn to remember the Lord as being inherent in every thing. We can no more ask as to how to see God, because we are seeing Him all the time. It is said that once some one told Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi that he wants to see God and requested Bhagavan to help him. Bhagavan said that he cannot help the visitor in this task since what he is seeing is God only.

Accepting these facts takes us one step higher than worshipping Him in idols and images. With this kind of thinking permeating our mind, we can go out and face our day with confidence.It can only be auspicious. A popular verse says this and asks how can one who has made his heart as the abode of the Lord face failure?

லாபு¹ஸ்தேஷாம் ஜயஸ்தேஷாம் குதஸ்தேஷாம் பராபு¹வ: |

யேஷாம் ஹ்ரு²தி³ஸ்தோ² ப⁴க³வாந் மங்க³ளாயதநம் ஹரி: ||

Let us now proceed to the stotram proper. The translations given are not exact, but will help to understand the meaning of the verses. Some comments are also provided. The comments are confined to some items only since many of the names and items mentioned in the stotra will be familiar to all.

கரா³ரே வஸதே லக்ஷ¹மீ: கரமத்⁴யே ஸரஸ்வதீ |

கரமூ¹லே து கௌ³ரீ ச ப்ரபா⁴தே கரத³ர்ஸநம் || 1 ||

Meaning:- Laksmi (the goddess of wealth) resides in the upper part

of hands, Sarasvati (the goddess of learning) resides in the middle, and Gauri (the goddess of valour) in the lower part. Therefore, every morning one should respectfully have a look at one's hands.

Notes:- We have five organs of action - பஞ்ச கர்மேந்த்³ரியாணி | These are speech, the hands, the legs, the anus and the genitals. வா¹க்-பா²ணி-பா³த³-பாயு³பஸ்தா²நீ²தி பஞ்ச கர்மேந்த்³ரியாணி | (Tattva Bodah). The organs are not the physical ones but the power behind them. Thus one may have his leg in tact, but may be unable to move it about because of some disease and the power is gone. This power resident in the organ is derived from the Lord only. This is said in the scriptures.

ஸ்ரோத்ரஸ்ய ஸ்ரோத்ரம் மநஸோ மநோ யத்³வாசோ ஹ வாசம் ஸ உ ப்ரணஸ்ய ப்ராண:
|

சக்ஷுஷ்¹சக்ஷு-ரதிமுச்ய தீ⁴ரா: ப்ரேத்யாஸ்மால்லோகா-த³ம்ரு³தா ப⁴வந்தி ||
Kenopanishat (1-2).

The devotee Dhruva said this in praise of the Lord. BH(4-9-6).

யோ⁵ந்த: ப்ரவிஸ்ய மம வாசமிமாம் ப்ரஸுப்தாம்
ஸஞ்ஜீவயத்யகி²ஸஸக்தித⁴ர: ஸ்வதா⁴ம்நா |
அந்யாம்ஸ்ச ஹஸ்த-சரண-ஸ்ரவண-த்வகா³தீ³ந்
ப்ரணந் நமோ ப⁴க³வதே புருஷாய துப்யம் ||

He salutes the Lord saying that He had entered into him through His intelligent power and roused his dormant power of speech. Being the Lord of all powers, He had also kindled to activity also all his other organs. Though He is the Lord of all powers, He weilds it through various deities. This is like saying that the President is the head of the country, but he exercises the power through many officers. It is so with the powers resident in the organs of the body. The power in an organ is called the presiding deity or அதி⁴ஷ்டா²தா தே³வதா | Each of the organs have its own presiding deity. Even though all these organs are all equally important for leading an active and happy life, the hands are considered more equal than the other organs. They are needed for

performing the obligatory duties known as the five great yagnas பஞ்சமஹா யஜ்ஞாநி |. They include worship of God, the manes, the rishis, the guests and the animals and plants. Because of this reason, the deity presiding over the hands is Indra. Indra in this case means the Supreme Being. தஸ்மாதி³ந்³ரோ நாமே³ந்³ரோ ஹ வை நாம தமி³ந்³ரம் ஸந்தமி³ந்³ர இ³த்யாசக்ஷதே பரோக்ஷண | (Aitareyopanishad 1-14). He is the One who sees all. He helps us to use the hands and do the enjoined duties. He is on the other side accepting them and blesses us with the fruits of these actions. Thus, by discharging our duties we can achieve all the goals of life known as புருஷார்தா:² | So, the vedic hymn Sri Rudram says the hands are greatly blessed, in fact more blessed than the other organs. The reason is simple. It has the fortune to come into contact with the auspicious body of the Lord (in the form of idols) during His worship. He is called the universal physician. By worshipping Him one may get rid of his sorrows and achieve all the goals of life including the most prized one - salvation (mokSha) itself.

அயம் மே ஹஸ்தோ ப⁴க³வாந், அயம் மே ப⁴க³வத்தர: |

அயம் மே விஸ்வபே⁴ஷஜோ⁵யம் ஸிவாபி⁴மர்ஸந: ||

The benefits one may get from the worship of the Lord include knowledge, wealth, stamina etc. These are very essential for living happily and to do our duties, both secular and religious. These are got by the blessings of the Goddesses LakShmi, Sarasvathi and Gauri - who are all the Lord's manifestations only. So all the Devis also said to reside in the hands. Thus, by looking at the hands we get to remember the Lord; and this in turn is equivalent to looking at the three Devis. Here too, we should remember that the Devis are one only. Thus we find the the names LakShmi, Sarasvathi and Gauri in the 1008 names of LakShmi.

ஸமுத்³ரவஸநே தே³வீ பர்வதஸ்தநமண்ட³லே |

விஷ்ணுபத்ரி நமஸ்துப⁴யம் பா⁴த³ஸ்பர்ஸம் க்ஷமஸ்வ மே || 2 ||

Meaning:- O Devi! You are wearing the ocean as a clothing on your body. The mountains are your breasts! O Consort of Visnu! I salute you and beg your pardon for having to set foot on your body for my routine activities.

Notes: - This verse is addressed to the goddess of earth, called Bhu Devi. She sustains all life on this earth and is verily the mother of all living beings, including the plants and animals. Like the saree worn by a lady, the oceans cover most of the Goddess Earth. Like the milk flowing from the breasts of a mother provides nourishment to her child, the waters flowing down the mountains provide nourishment to the land and the people. Her glory is sung by the vedic hymn பூ⁴ ஸூக்தம் and by many poets. Acharya Vedanta Desika's poem Bhustuti is very popular. In one of the verses he says that the Bhu Devi is very close to the Lord. This is evident from the fact that when we start reciting the Gayatri mantra the word பூ⁴ which represents Bhu Devi immediately follows ஓ which represents the Lord. த்வம் வ்யாஹ்ரு³தி: ப்ரத²மத: ப்ரணவ: ப்ரியஸ்தே

ஸம்வேத³யத்யகி²ல மந்த்ர க³ணஸ்தமேவ | In fact the Lord Himself is in the form of the earth . பூ⁴ . VS(437, 942) and மேதி³ந்ரூபீ

- மேதி³ந் ப்ரு²தி²வீ ரூபம் - ஸ்வரூபம் அஸ்ய அஸ்தீதி மேதி³ந்ரூபீ | யோ வை ருத்³ரஸ்ஸ ப⁴க³வாந் யா ச பூ⁴ஸ்தஸ்மை நமோ நம: இதி ஸ்ருதி: || SS(360). So, it is natural that we should hesitate to put our feet on

Her. But we cannot avoid doing so also. So we request Her to pardon our act. She being the embodiment of forbearance will, we may be sure, tolerate and allow it. The following verse is also in praise of Bhu Devi.

நமோ⁵ஸ்து ப்ரியத³த்தாயை துப்⁴யம் தே³வி வஸு⁴ந்த⁴ரே |

த்வம் மாதா ஸர்வலோகாநாம் பா³த³ந்யாஸம் க்ஷமஸ்வ மே || 3 ||

Meaning:- O Devi! I salute you and beg your pardon for having to set foot on your body for my routine activities. You are the giver of all that is dear to us. You are the mother and repository of all wealth.

Notes:- Earth is called the mother as She bears all like a fond mother bearing her child in her lap. In addition She sustains all living beings by giving food items in many forms like grains, fruits etc., besides water in abundance. These are most needed by all and so dear to us. வஸு: = wealth, riches. The mother who gave birth to us may not be with us till

our end and look after us, but may leave us any day before it. But the mother Earth bears and sustains us all through our life. Further, we may, without being aware of Her greatness, treat Her lightly. She bears all the abuses patiently and so is the very embodiment of patience. Narada describes Rama as the counterpart of Mother Earth in forbearance. கூடியா ப்ரு²தி²வீஸம: | Ramayana (1-1-18). The question is, how the earth which itself is suspended in space is able to bear all beings and also make plants grow? The Lord says that it is He who is behind the earth and provides the necessary support. BG((15-13).

கா³மாவிஸ்ய ச பூ⁴தாநி தா⁴ரயாம்யஹமோஜஸா |

புஷ்ணமி செளஷதீ:⁴ ஸர்வா: ஸோமோ பூ⁴த்வா ரஸாத்மக: ||

ப்³ரஹ்மா முராரி-ஸ்திரிபுராந்தகாரீ பா⁴நு: ஸஸீ பூ⁴மிஸுதோ பு³த⁴ஸ்ச |

கு³ருஸ்ச ஸாக்ர: ஸநி-ராஹு-கேதவ: குர்வந்து ஸர்வே மம ஸுப்ரபா⁴தம் || 4 ||

Meaning:- Brahma (the Creator), Murari (Visnu), Tripurantakari (Siva, the slayer of Tripuras), the nine planets, Sun, the Moon, Mars the son of Bhumi, Budha (Mercury), Brihaspati (Jupiter), Sukra (Venus), Sani (Saturn), Rahu and Ketu; may all these make the morning auspicious for me.

Notes:- It was pointed out earlier that every thing in the universe that has a name or form is His manifestation only. Because of this reason, He is known as ப³ஹுருப: - ப்³ரஹ்மாதி³ ஸ்தா²வராந்தகாரேண ப³ஹுருப: | SS(393). Every object right from Brahma - the creator to a plant is His form only. The Kaivalyopanishad says that He is Brahma, Shiva, Indra, the immovable, the supreme, the Self luminous. He is Vishnu, Prana, the Time, the Fire and the Moon.

ஸ ப்³ரஹ்மா ஸ ஸிவ: ஸேந்த்³ர: ஸோ⁵கூர: பரம: ஸ்வராட் |

ஸ ஏவ விஷ்ணு: ஸ ப்ராண: ஸ காலோ⁵க³நி: ஸ சந்த்³ரமா: || 8 ||

The famous hymn Siva Mahimna Stotram (26) says that those people who consider themselves to be wise hold the opinion that the Lord is the Sun, the Moon, the Fire, the Air, the Water, the Space, the Earth and the Self. But all these opinions are only limiting the Lord. The poet exclaims that one does not know His real nature as He is all pervading.

த்வமர்கஸ்த்வம் ஸோமஸ்த்வமஸி பவநஸ்த்வம் ஹுதவஹு-
ஸ்த்வமாபஸ்த்வம் வ்யோம த்வமு த⁴ரணிராத்மா த்வமிதி ச |
பரிச்சி²ந்நமேவம் த்வயி பரிணதா பி³ப⁴ரதி கி³ரம்
ந வி³மஸ்தத்தத்த்வம் வயமிஹ து யத் த்வம் ந ப⁴வஸி ||

The names mentioned here may be found in the list of names of the Lord. For example, one of His names is ப்³ரஹ்மா - ப்³ரஹ்மாத்த்மநா ஸர்வம் ஸ்ரு³ஜதீதி ப்³ரஹ்மா VS(663). He creates everything as Brahma. He is புரந்த³ர: - ஸுரஸுத்த்ரணாம் புராணம் தா³ரணாத் புரந்த³ர: | VS(335) SS(45). புரத்ரயவிதா⁴தீ - புரத்ரயம் விஹந்தீதி புரத்ரயவிதா⁴தீ SS(104). He destroyed the three cities of the asuras. and so on.

ஸந்தக்குமார: ஸநக: ஸநந்த³ந: ஸநாதநோ-⁵ப்யாஸுரி-பிங்க³ஸௌ ச |
ஸப்தஸ்வரா: ஸப்த ரஸாதலாநி குர்வந்து ஸர்வே மம ஸுப்ரபா⁴தம் || 5 ||

Meaning:- Sanatkumara, Sanaka, Sanadana and Sanatana (whom Brahma, the creator, begot by wish); Rsi Asuri (a disciple of Rsi Kapila, the founder of the Samkhya system of philosophy), Rsi Pingala (the author of Hindu Prosody); the Seven Svaras (tones) (i.e. Shadja, Rsabha, Gandhara, Madhyam, Panchama, Dhaivata and Nisada); and the seven nether-worlds (Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talatala, Rasatala, Mahatala and Patala) —may all these make the morning auspicious for me !

Notes:- The four sages Sanatkumara etc., are said to be born of the mind of Brahma in the very beginning of creation. They were not interested in taking to the life of a householder. So, they took to a life of renunciation. They were great devotees and jnanis. They, being the first born, are senior to all, but they remain ever youthful. They move around the worlds unhindered teaching people about devotion and wisdom. Being great devotees they keep uttering the name of the Lord. ஹரி: ஸரணமேவம் ஹி நித்யம் தேஷாம் முகே² வச: | (Sri Bhagavata mahatmyam.(2-48). We know that sage Narada was the guru of great devotees like Prahlada, Dhruva and sages like Vyasa and Valmiki. But, it seems, that the great Narada himself felt unhappy and missing a feeling of fulfilment. He approached Sanatkumara who

taught him the famous Bhuma Vidya. It is said Sanatkumara is the incarnation of Lord Skanda. தஃ ஸ்கந்த³ இத்யாசக்ஷதே தஃ ஸ்கந்த³ இத்யாசக்ஷதே | Chandogyopanishat. (7-26-2). The story appears in the Chandogyopanishat. Such is the greatness of the four sages. Krishna says that these four sages are His manifestations only. BG(10-6)

ஸப்தார்ணவா: ஸப்த-குலாசலாஸ்ச ஸப்தர்ஷயோ த்³வீப-வநாநி ஸப்த | பூ⁴ராதி³க்ரு³த்வா பு⁴வநாநி ஸப்த கு³ர்வந்து ஸர்வே மம ஸுப்ரபா⁴தம் || 5 ||

Meaning:- The seven oceans (Lavanabdhhi, Iksu, Suravarpa, Ajay, Dadhi, Ksira and Svadu-jala); the seven mountains (Mahendra, Malaya, Sahydri, Suktiman, Rkasavan, Vindhya and Pariyatra): the seven Rsis (Kasyapa, Atri, Bharadvaja, Visvamisra, Gautama, Jamadagni and Vasishta): the seven dvipas (Continents) (i.e. Jambu, Plaksa, Salmala, Kusa, Kroncha, Saka and Puskara): the seven vanas (forests) (i.e. Dandakaranya, Khandaranya, Champakaranya, Vedaranya, Naimisaranya, Brahmaranys and Dharmaranya); and the seven bhuvanas (heavens) (i.e.) Bhuh, Bhuvah, Svah, Mahah, Janah, Traph and Satyam) —may all these make the morning auspicious for me !

Notes:- Rishi is one who has these seven qualifications. (1) long life (2) should have divined mantras (3) power of lordship (4) divine vision (5) senior by personal qualities, wisdom and age (6) who conduct himself strictly according to dharmic ways and thus sets an example to others and (7) who founded a gotra. Vayupurana (61-93,94).

ஸப்ததே ஸப்தபி⁴ஸ்சைவ கு³ண: ஸப்தர்ஷய: ஸம்ரு³தா: |

த்³ர்கா⁴யுஷோ மந்த்ரக்ரு³த ஈஸ்வரா தி³வ்யசக்ஷுஷ: |

வ்ரு³த்³தா⁴ஸ்ச ப்ரத்யக்ஷத⁴ர்மாணோ கோ³த்ரப்ரவ்ர்தகாஸ்ச யே ||

The rishis whose names are said here are known to us. Atri was the son of Brahma, the creator and is as great as Brahma Himself. ஜாதஸ்யாஸீத் ஸுதோ தா⁴தூர்த்ரி: பித்ரு³ஸமோ கு³ண: | BH(9-14-2). Soma, the Moon (mentioned in an earlier verse) was born to him. He was the embodiment of nectar. Brahma appointed him as the chief of brahmins, herbs, plants and of the stars. விப்ரெளஷத⁴யு³க்³ணநாம் ப்³ரஹ்மண கல்பித: பதி: | BH(9-14-3). This verse mentions the higher worlds (above our

world). The world we reside in is the Bhu loka (பூ:4). The previous verse mentioned the seven nether worlds (below ouworld). One reaches these worlds as a result of his deeds. By doing more of good than evil acts one earns more merit or punyam and goes to the higher worlds. Similarly by indulging in prohibited acts , one earns papam and goes to the nether regions.BG(15-18).

ஊர்த்⁴வம் க³ச்ச²ந்தி ஸத்வஸ்தா² மத்⁴யே திஷ்ட²ந்தி ராஜஸா: |

ஜக⁴ந்ய-கு³ண-வ்ரு³த்திஸ்தா² அதோ⁴ க³ச்ச²ந்தி தாமஸா: ||

ப்ரு²த்²வீ ஸக³ந்தா⁴ ஸரஸாஸ்ததா²ப: ஸ்பர்ஸீ ச வாயுர்ஜ்வலநம் ச தேஜ: |

நப:4 ஸஸப்³த³ம் மஹதா ஸஹைவ குர்வந்து ஸர்வே மம ஸுப்ரபா⁴தம் || 6 ||

Meaning:- The Earth with its quality of smell , Water with its quality of taste, Air with its quality of touch, Fire with its quality of teja (glow), Akasa (space) with its quality of sabda (sound)— may all these elements along with the element of Buddhi (intellect) make my morning auspicious for me !

Notes:-The five elements are the constituents of the universe and the beings that inhabit them. They are the manifes- tations of the Lord

only. He has the name பஞ்சபூ⁴தாத்மா - பஞ்சஸங்க்²யாகாநி பூ⁴தாநி

ஆகாஸாதீ³நி ஆத்மஸ்வரூபம் யஸ்ய ஸ பஞ்சபூ⁴தாத்மா | தத்ஸ்ரு³ஷ்ட்வா ததே³வாநுப்ரவிஸத் | தத³நு ப்ரவிஸ்ய | ஸச்சத்யச்சா ப⁴வத் இதி ஸ்ருதே: | SS(352).

மஹேந்த்³ரோ மலய: ஸஹயோ தே³வதாத்மா ஹிமாலய: |

த்⁴யேயோ ரைவதகோ விந்த்⁴யோ கி³ரிஸ்சாராவலி-ஸ்ததா² || 7 ||

Meaning:- Mahendra (in Orissa), Malaya (in Mysore) Sahydri (Western Ghats), Himalaya (the soul of numerous gods—in Northern India), the adorable Raivataka (Giranara - in Kathiawad), Vindhyaachala (from Gujarat to Bihar) and Aravali (in Rajasthan)—al these mountains are to be remembered with veneration. Notes:- The mountais are great as they are the birth place of many rivers. They also have many holy places located in them. Great rivers like the Ganga, Sindhu are born in the Himalaya mountain. Holy places like Amarnath, Badrinath, Kedarnath,

Rishikesh and mount Kailas - the abode of Lord Siva, are located in the Himalaya mountain. So it very holy and is தே³வதாத்மா. Kalidasa uses the term in the opening verse in his classic Kumarasambhava to describe the Himalaya. அஸ்த்யுத்தரஸ்யாம் தி³ஸி தே³வதாத்மா ஹிமாலயோ நாம் நகா³தி⁴ராஜ: | He describes the glory of the Himalaya in several verses that follow the opening verse. Similarly the Vindhya-chala is reputed to be the abode of Devi Lalitha. She has the name விந்த⁴யாசலநிவாஸிநீ - விந்த⁴யாக்²யே அசலே பர்வதே நிவஸதீதி ததா² | LS(336). The mountains are also the abode of many sages who perform penance there.

க³ங்கா³ ஸிந்து⁴ஸ்ச காவே¹ யமுநா ச ஸரஸ்வதீ |

ரேவா மஹாநத³ கோ³தா³ ப்³ரஹ்மபுத்ரா புநாது மம் || 8 ||

Meaning:- Ganga, Sindhu, Kaveri, Yamuna, Sarasvati, Reva (Narmada) Mahanadi, Godavari, and Brahmaputra- may all these rivers consecrate me.

Note:- The sacredness of these rivers are well known. So we think of them before taking our daily bath. It is said that thinking of them is enough to wash our sins. We invite their prescence during pujas also. We recite the following verse and pray to them to be present in the water

to be used in the puja. க³ங்கே³ ச யமுநே சைவ கோ³தா³வீ ஸரஸ்வதீ |

நர்மதே³ ஸிந்து⁴ காவே¹ ஜலே⁵ஸ்மிந் ஸந்நிதி⁴ம் குரு || ஆயாந்து தே³வ்யூஜார்த²ம் து³ரிதக்ஷயகாரகா: ||

அயோத்⁴யா மது²ரா மாயா காஸீ காஞ்சீ அவந்திகா |

பு¹ த்³வாராவதீ சைவ ஸப்தைதா மோக்ஷதா³யிகா: || 9 ||

Meaning:- Ayodhya, Mathura, Maya (Haridwar), Kasi, Kanchi, Avantika (Ujjain), and Dwarika Puri all these seven puries (cities) bestow moksha (emancipation) on human beings. Note:- These cities are holy since they are associated with the Lord. Rama was born in Ayodhya and later He ruled over it. Mathura is linked with Krishna. It is said that the Lord is ever present there. மது²ரா ப⁴க³வாந் யத்ர நித்யம் ஸந்நிஹிதோ ஹரி: || BH(10-1-28).

ப்ரயாகா³ பாடஸீபுத்ரம் விஜயாநக³ரம் பு¹ம் |

இந்த்³ரப்ரஸ்த²ம் க³யாம் சைவ ப்ரத்யூஷே ப்ரத்யஹம் ஸ்மரேத் || 10 ||

Meaning:- Prayaga, Pataliputra (Patna), Vijayanagara (Hampi-south)

Jagannathapuri, Indraprastha (Delhi) and Gaya — all these holy places are to be remembered everyday in the morning

அருந்த⁴த்யநுஸூயா ச ஸாவித்ரீ ஜாநகீ ஸதீ ।

தேஜஸ்விநீஇ ச பாஞ்சாலீ வந்த³நீயா நிரந்தரம் ॥ 11 ॥

Meaning:- Arundhati (wife of Vasistha), Anusuya (wife of Rsi Atri), Savitri (wife of Satyvan), Janaki (Sita ji), Sati (daughter of Daksa, wife of Siva), and the noble - spirited Panchali (Draupadi) — all these great women deserve our reverence for ever.

வைந்யம் ப்ரு²தும் ஹைஹயமர்ஜுநம் ச ஸாகுந்தலேயம் ப⁴ரதம் நலம் ச ।

ராமம் ச யோ வை ஸ்மரதி ப்ரபா⁴தே தஸ்யார்த²லபோ⁴ விஜயஸ்ச ஹஸ்தே ॥ 12 ॥

Meaning:- He who remembers Prthu (Son of King Vena), Arjuna of Haihaya dynasty (known as Kartavirya), Bharata (son of Sakuntala), Raja Nala, and the ideal king Sri Rama the morning acquires affluence and always comes out successful in his endeavours. Note:- King Prutu was the son of king Vena - a descendant of the the great devotee Druva (mentioned in the next verse). Prutu was an part incarnation of Lord Hari. யேஷ விஷ்ணோ: ப⁴க³வத: கலா । BH(4-15-3) He got the name because soon after his birth sages foretold that he will be the foremost among rulers and will be very famous. BH(4-15-5). The earth got the name Prithvi from him.

அயம் து ப்ரதமோ ராஜ்ஞாம் புமாந் ப்ரத²யிதா² யஸ: ।

ப்ரு²த²-ர்நாம் மஹாராஜோ ப⁴விஷ்யதி ப்ரு²துஸ்ரவா: ॥

Arjuna, also known as Kartavirya was the king of Hehaya. He worshipped Lord Dattatreya and became very powerful and invincible. He acquired immense wealth and supernatural powers etc. He could defeat Ravana and became very proud. He was killed by Parasurama. His story is mentioned in BH(9-15-17 and 18).

ஹைஹயாநாமதி⁴பதி-ரர்ஜுந: கூக்தரியர்ஷப:⁴ ।

த³த்தம் நாராயணஸ்யாம்ஸமாராத்ய பரிகர்மபி:⁴ ॥

பா³ஹூந் த³ஸஸதம் லேபே⁴ து³ர்த⁴ர்ஷத்வமராதிஷு ।

அவ்யாஹதேந்த³ரியௌஜ:ஸ்ரீ-தேஜோ-வீர்ய-யஸோ-ப³லம் ॥

த³த்யங் மநுர்ப்⁴ரு³கு³ரஸௌ ஹரியூர்வசந்த³ரோ

பீ⁴ஷ்மார்ஜுந-த்⁴ருவ-வஸிஷ்ட-ஸுகாத³யஸ்ச |

ப்ரஹ்லாத³-நாரத³-ப⁴கீ³ரத²-விஸ்வகர்ம்-

வால்மீகயோத்ர சிரசிந்த்யஸுபா⁴பி⁴தா⁴நா: || 13 ||

Meaning:- Rsi Dadhichi , Manu, Bhrgu, the truthful King Harischandra, the iron - willed Bhisma, Arjuna (the wielder of the famous bow Gandiva), Bhakta Dhruva, Rsi Vasistha, Sukadeva (son of Vyasa), Bhakta Prahlada, Muni Narada, Bhagiratha (one who brought the Ganga from the Heaven to the Earth), Visvakarma (the first architect), Valmiki (the first poet)—all these sacred names are worth remembering for ever.

அஸ்வத்தா²மா ப³விர்வ்யாஸோ ஹநுராமம்ஸ்ச விபீ⁴ஷண: |

க்ர[ு]ப: பரஸுராமம்ஸ்ச ஸப்தைதே சிரஜீவிந: || 14 ||

ஸப்தைதாந் ஸம்ஸ்மரேந்நித்யம் மார்கண்டே³யமதா²ஷ்டமம் |

ஜீவேத் வர்ஷஸதம் ஸாக்³ரமபம்ரு[ு]த்யுவிவர்ஜித: || 15 ||

Meaning:- Asvatthama (son of Drona), Raja Bali , Vyasa (the first spiritual preceptor), Hanuman (a devotee of Rama), Vibhisana (a favourite of Rama) Krpacharya and Parasurama –all these seven are immortal beings. He who remembers them everyday along-with Markandeya (a devotee of Siva) will live for a hundred years. He will never meet with an untimely death.

புண்யஸ்லோகோ நலோ ராஜா புண்யஸ்லோகோ யுதி⁴ஷ்டி²ர: |

புண்யஸ்லோகோ விதே³ஹம்ஸ்ச புண்யஸ்லோகோ ஜநார்த³ந: || 16 ||

கார்கோடகஸ்ய நாக³ஸ்ய த³மயந்த்யா நளஸ்ய ச |

ரு[ு]துபர்ணஸ்ய ராஜர்ஷே: கீர்தநம் கலிநாஸநம் || 17 ||

Meaning:-Raja Nala, the truthful Yudhisthira, Janaka the king of Videha, and Janardana (i. e.) Lord Krishna -the very utterance of these names sanctifies the tongue.

Notes:- In this and the preceeding verses the names of several great seers and kings are mentined. Some of them, like king Nala, Harischandra and Rama had gone through severe ordeals. But they did not get despondent and swerve from the path of righteousness. For example, when Rama was

told that he would not be made the king but will have to go to the forest his countenance did not show any change, nor was he upset.

ந வநம் கா³ந்துகாமஸ்ய த்யஜதஸ்ஸ வஸுந்த⁴ராம் |
ஸர்வலோகாதிக³த்யேவ லக்ஷயதே சித்தவிக்ரியா ||

Ramayana. (2-19-23). These men were great, because they did not act according to their own likes and dislikes. But they did what they thought was proper. Such an act may produce results that are not pleasant but they were willing to accept it as God's gift. What is proper and not is given in the shastras. What the shastras say is dharma. The shastras are given out by the Lord. The Lord's words are supreme and are to be followed implicitly without consideration of the results. The Lord had said the above clearly. BG(2-47).

கர்மண்யேவாதி⁴காரஸ்தே மா ப²லேஷு கதா³சந |
மா கர்மப²லஹேதுர்பூ⁴-ர்மா தே ஸங்கோ³ஸ்த்வகர்மணி ||

These great men were confident that dharma will protect them and were convinced that one should not stray from the path of dharma under any circumstance. They surrendered to the God's will as expressed in the shastras. It is said in Mahabharata that dharma is eternal and so one should never give that up . On the other hand, joy and sorrow are not lasting. So, one should not give up dharma under any circumstance: from desire, fear, greed or even for the sake of one's life.

ந ஜாது காமாந்ந ப⁴யாந்ந லோபா⁴த³ த⁴ர்ம: த்யஜேஜ்ஜீவிதஸாபி ஹேதோ: |
நித்யோ த⁴ர்ம: ஸுக²து: ³கே² த்வநித்யே ஜீவோ நித்யோ ஹேதுரஸ்ய த்வநித்ய: ||
Such people, Krishna says are wise (jnanis) and are qualified to attain immortality (mokSha) BG(2-15).

யம் ஹி ந வ்யத²யந்த்யேதே புருஷம் புருஷர்ஷப⁴ |
ஸமது: ³க²ஸுக²ம் தீ⁴ர்ம ஸோ³ம்ரு²தத்வாய கல்பதே ||

The kings are known as rajarshis or royal sages. Thus, Valmiki calls king Dasaratha as மஹர்ஷிகல்போ ராஜர்ஷி: | (1-6-20) rajarshi, as great as a maharshi. So, showing respect to such persons is equivalent to showing respect to God. Even uttering their names is as good as uttering the

names of God and so is purifying as was seen earlier. Because of this reason, we will see that our puranas give in some places a long list of names of kings who were royal sages in the solar or lunar dynasty. The Brihadaranyopanishat gives a list of names of gurus who were jnanis and transmitted their knowledge to their disciples.

Further, our scriptures say that those who praise, serve and worship the wise person (jnani) get the results of the meritorious actions (punyam) done by the wise man. Those who criticise, hate or cause pain to the jnani get the results of sinful actions (papam) done by the wise man. (Tattva Bodha).

கிஞ்ச யே ஜ்ஞாநிநம் ஸ்துவந்தி, ப⁴ஜந்தி, அர்சயந்தி தாந்³ப்ரதி
ஜ்ஞாநிக்ரு³தம் ஆகா³மி புண்யம் க³ச்ச²தி ।

யே ஜ்ஞாநிநம் நிந்த³ந்தி, த்³விஷந்தி, து:³க²ப்ராதா³நம் குர்வந்தி,
தாந்³ப்ரதி ஜ்ஞாநிக்ரு³தம் ஸர்வமாகா³மி

க்ரியமாணம் யத³வாச்யம் கர்ம பாபாத்மகம் தத்³க³ச்ச²தி ।

ஸுஹ்ரு³த:³ புண்யக்ரு³த்யம், து³ர்ஹ்ரு³த:³ பாபக்ரு³த்யம் க்³ருண்ஹந்தி ।

In view of this, we, by mentioning the names of the great people listed in the above verses with reverence, stand to gain much because we will get a share of the punyam from their account.

As an aside we may take a scene in Ramayana - the one wherein the queen Kausalya, mother of Rama blesses Rama before he departs to the forest. This is narrated in canto 25 of the Ayodhya Kanda. In her blessings she prays that the seven rishis, Indra and the gods subordinate to him, the seasons, the moon god, Brihaspati, the seven principal mountains, the oceans etc., should protect Rama. Some verses forming the prayer are given below. சகார மாதா ராமஸ்ய மங்க³ளாநி மநஸ்விநீ || 1 || The high minded mother Kausalya performed the rites conducive to the welfare of Rama (and said as follows).

ஸ்வஸ்தி ஸாத⁴யாஸ்ச விஸ்வே ச மருதஸ்ச மஹர்ஷிபி: ⁴ ।

ஸ்வஸ்தி தா⁴தா விதா⁴தா ச ஸ்வஸ்தி பூஷா ப⁴கோ³஽ர்யமா || 8 ||

லோகபாலாஸ்ச தே ஸர்வே வாஸவப்ரமுகா²ஸ்ததா² ।

ரு³தவ: ஷட்³ ச தே ஸர்வே மாஸா: ஸம்வத்ஸரா: கூபா: || 9 ||

தி³நாநி ச முஹூர்தாஸ்ச ஸ்வஸ்தி குர்வந்து தே ஸதா³ |
ஸ்ருதி: ஸம்ரு³திஸ்ச த⁴ர்மஸ்ச பாது த்வாம் புத்ர ஸர்வதா || 10 ||

ஸ்கந்த³ஸ்ச ப⁴க³வாந் தே³வ: ஸோமஸ்ச ஸப்³ரு³ஹஸ்பதி: |
ஸப்தர்ஷயோ நாரத³ஸ்ச தே த்வாம் ரகூஷந்து ஸர்வத: || 11 ||

தே சாபி ஸர்வத: ஸித்³தா⁴ தி³ஸஸ்ச ஸதி³கீ³ஸ்வரா: |
ஸ்துதா மயா வநே தஸ்மிந் பாந்து த்வம் புத்ர நித்யஸ: || 12 ||

ஸைலா: ஸர்வே ஸமுத்³ர்ஸ்ச ராஜா வருண ஏவ ச |
த்³யெளரந்தரிகூஷம் ப்ரு³திவீ வாயுஸ்ச ஸசராசரா: || 13 ||

நகூஷத்ராணி ச ஸர்வாணி க்³ரஹாஸ்ச ஸஹ தே³வதை: |
அஹோராத்ரே ததா² ஸந்த⁴யே பாந்து த்வாம் வநமாஸ்ரிதம் || 14 ||

ரு³தவஸ்சாபி ஷட் சாந்யே மாஸா ஸம்வத்ஸராஸ்ததா² |
கலாஸ்ச காஷ்டா²ஸ்ச ததா² தவ ஸர்ம தி³ஸந்து தே || 15 ||

ரு³ஷய: ஸாக³ரா த்³வீபா வேதா³ லோகா தி³ஸஸ்ச தா: |
மங்க³ளாநி மஹாபா³ஹோ தி³ஸந்து ஸுப⁴மங்க³ளம் || 36 ||

Kausalya prays to many divine beings and many other things (animate and inanimate) to protect Rama when he is in the forest. Those whom she prays to in the above verses include the following: the Sadhyas and the Viswedevas (two different classes of gods), the wind-gods, eminent rishis, the Cosmic Person, the creator, gods Pusha, Bhaga, Aryama, the guardians of the spheres headed by Indra, the deities presiding over the six seasons, the months, years, nights, days, and hours, the Vedas, the smriti texts, dharma, Lord Skanda, the moon god, sage Brihaspati, the seven rishis, sage Narada, siddhas, the four quarters along with their guardians, the seven principal mountains, the oceans, Varuna the king of the oceans, heaven, earth, the intervening region, the atmosphere, the animate and inanimate creation, the stars, the sun, planets along with their gods, deities presiding over the day and night, morning and evening twilights, deities presiding over the six seasons, the intercalary months and the years containing such months, divisions of

time such as minutes and seconds, the rishis, the seven oceans, Dwipas (principal divisions of the globe), the four Vedas, the three spheres and the four quarters also. What can be Kausalya's idea in praying to so many beings as listed above? If we read the above carefully we may notice that this prayer, sounds similar to the prayer contained in the Pratasmaranam. Evidently Kausalya was aware of the fact that God is present everywhere and in every thing. The sage Valmiki carefully uses the adjective மநஸ்விநீ meaning wise or jnani to describe her in the first verse above. She knew the fact not only in theory but also from experience. This implies that she knew that Rama, while in forest, will always be surrounded by the Lord in one form or the other and so she prayed to such an omnipresent Lord to offer him protection. The prayer may be diferent but when we look at it from the right perspective appears sensible as emanating from a pious person.

। ப²லஸ்ருதி: ।

இத்த²ம் ப்ரபா⁴தே பரமம் பவித்ரம்

படே²த் ஸ்மரேத்³வா ஸ்ரு³ணுயாச்ச தத்³வத் ।

து:³ஸ்வப்நநாஸஸ்த்விஹ ஸுப்ரபா⁴தம்

ப⁴வேச்ச நித்யம் ப⁴க³வத்ப்ரஸாதா³த் || 18 ||

Meaning:- Any one who reads, remembers or hears this superior and purifying Pratasmaranam early in the morning every day, in that manner, will, by God's grace, have an auspicious day and be free from disturbing dreams. Notes: This verse states the fruits of reciting or hearing the Pratasmaranam. ப²லம் means fruit. The stotram is said to be superior and purifying because it talks about the glory of the Lord. It gives the benefits stated when it is read or heard with proper understanding of the meaning. So, it is said தத்³வத் (i.e) in the proper manner. Bad dreams are the results of latent tendencies, known as vasanas. Thinking of the Lord destroys these latent tendencies and the bad dreams that come up from them. So, the Lord has the name து:³ஸ்வப்நநாஸந: - பா⁴விநோ³நர்த²ஸ்ய ஸுசகாந் து:³ஸ்வப்நாந் நாஸயதி த்யாத:, ஸ்ம்ரு³த:, கீர்தித:, பூஜிதஸ்சேதி து:³ஸ்வப்நநாஸந: ।

VS(926). The verses in the Pratasmaranam help to keep alive the thought of the Lord all through the day and as a result there is no place for vasanas to hide in the mind and disturb our peace.

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prAtaHsmaraNam

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