

॥ श्रीसुब्रह्मण्य षोडशनामानि ॥

.. 16 names of Lord SubrahmaNya ..

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## ॥ श्रीसुब्रह्मण्य षोडशनामानि ॥

ज्ञानशक्तिधरः स्कन्दः देवसेनापतिस्तथा ।  
सुब्रह्मण्यो गजारूढः शरकाननसम्भवः ॥ १ ॥  
कार्तिकेयः कुमारश्च षण्मुखस्तारकान्तकः ।  
सेनानीर्ब्रह्मशास्ता च वल्लीकल्याणसुन्दरः ॥ २ ॥  
बालश्च क्रौञ्चभेत्ता च शिखिवाहन एव च ।  
एतानि स्वामिनामानि षोडश प्रत्यहः नरः ।  
यः पठेत् सर्वपापेभ्यः स मुच्यते महामुने ॥ ३ ॥

### COMMENTS:

In the following comments some abbreviations are used. They are -

- (1) VS - Vishnu sahasranama. (2) SS - Siva sahasranama (Padma Purana).
- (3) BG - Bhagavad Giata (4) BH - Shrimad Bhagavatam
- (5) LS - Lalita sahasranamam.

Our religion lays great emphasis on the purificatory power of the Lord's name.

Our vedas talk about this. The following verse from the Yajur Veda will serve

as an instance.

प्रतप्ते अद्य शिपिविष्ट नामार्यः शंसांमि वयुनानि विद्वान् ।  
तं त्वा गृणामि तव समतवीयान् क्षयन्तमस्य रजसः पराके ॥

This prayer addressed to Lord Vishnu says [?]specially extol Your name[?] Swami Bodhendra, who was a great advocate of chanting of the Lord's name points out that शंसांमि indicates repeating the name several times.

The vedas themselves contain many hymns that extol the Lord. Shri Rudram,

Shrisuktam etc., give the names of the Lord. The puranas also contain many compilation of names (nAmAvali) which are very suitable for recitation.

Among

these the Vishnu sahasranamam, Shiva sahasranamam and Lalita sahasranAmam

are popular. Their recitation with devotion is guaranteed to confer immense benefits to the person. The Vishnu sahasranamam has the following

verse towards the end. This says that the one who listens to it or recites it daily will not encounter misfortunes in this life or the life hereafter.

य इदं शृणुयान्नित्यं यश्चापि परिकीर्तयेत् ।

नाशुभं प्राप्नुयात् किञ्चित् सोऽमुत्रेह च मानवः ॥

Similarly the Kaivalyopanishad says that one who recites Shri Rudram is absolved from great sins.

यः शतरुद्रीयमधीते सोऽग्निपूतो भवति। सुरापानात्पूतो भवति।

ब्रह्महत्यात्पूतो भवति। कृत्याकृत्यात्पूतो भवति।

Sage Naradha told sage Vyasa (BH 1-5-22) that wise men declare that the abiding

purpose of man's austere penance, sacred knowledge, sacrificial performances,

recitation of the Vedas with correct intonation, enlightenment and offering of gifts is to recount the virtues of the Lord.

इदं हि पुंसस्तपसः श्रुतस्य वा स्विष्टस्य सूक्तस्य च बुद्धिदत्तयोः ।

अविच्युतोऽर्थः कविभिर्निरूपितो यदुत्तमश्लोक-गुणानुवर्णनम् ॥

In view of such statements many have the habit of reciting these hymns daily after completing their worship. But in these days, when time has become a scarce commodity, many have given up performing daily puja and even sandhyavandanam. For the benefit of such people, our kindly sages have

provided shorter version of the hymns. In addition to sahasranamas that contain 1000 names, they have given us trishatis that contain 300 names, ashtottarashatams that list 108 names and even lists containing 16 and 12 names. If someone was to claim that he has not the time even to say these abridged versions, our puranas suggest repeating any of Lord's names that one prefers. Towards the end of the Vishnu sahasranama stotram, there is a verse in which Parvati asks Lord Shiva if there is an easy method to recite the lengthy sahasranamam. In reply Lord Shiva says that repeating the name Rama is equivalent to reciting the entire sahasranamam!

पार्वत्युवाच -

केनोपायेन लघुना विष्णोर्नामसहस्रकम् ।

पठ्यते पण्डितैर्नित्यं श्रोतुमिच्छम्यहं प्रभो ॥

ईश्वरोवाच -

श्रीराम राम रामेति रमे रामे मनोरमे ।

सहस्रनाम तत्तुल्यं रामनाम वरानने ॥

The stotram that is given herein contains sixteen names of Lord Subrahmanya who is a very popular deity worshipped in the country. The last verse says that one who recites these names daily will be absolved from all sins. So, the Lord has the name पापनाशनः - कीर्तितः पूजितो ध्यातः स्मृतः पापराशिं नाशयति। VS(992). Reciting a short poem that contains few names looks very easy and because of this reason one may entertain some doubt if repeating few names can free one from sins. Shrimad Bhagavatam gives the example of one taking a medicine. A tablet may weigh only few milligrams, but it can work even in the body of a burly person and can give great relief. Also a medicine will do its work even one takes it by mistake! (Eg.) a laxative tablet even when swallowed by mistake will make the person run to the toilet within a short time. Similarly, the Lord's names will purify a person in whatever manner it is uttered. The Padma Purana says this as follows.

आश्चर्यं वा भये शोके क्षुते वा मम नाम यः ।

व्याजेन वा स्मरेद्यस्तु स याति परमां गतिम् ॥

That is why in the introduction to Vishnu shasranama stotram Shri Bhishma says that worshipping the Lord by reciting hymns (stotras) is the best and easiest form of worship by which one can get over the problem of samsara or cyclic births.

एष मे सर्वधर्माणां धर्मोऽधिकतमो मतः ।

यद्भक्त्या पुण्डरीकाक्षं स्तवैरर्चयन्नरः सदा ॥

We should note an important point here. The stotras may be named after different forms of gods such as Vishnu or Shiva or Lalita Devi etc. But when we go through the names we find that there are some that clearly say that the god that is praised is the Supreme Being. So, there is no question of one being superior or inferior to the others. They all are in praise of one and the same Being.

Where is the Supreme Being and how to worship it - one may wonder. It is everywhere and every thing according to the scriptures.

सर्वः - सर्व स्वरूपः । क्षिति-सलिल-हुतवह-पवन-गगन-हिमकर-  
दिनमणि-यजमानात्मभिर्मूर्तिभिः सर्वं व्याप्य व्यवस्थितः ॥

“सर्वो वै रुद्र” इति श्रुतिः । SS(802)

We find the name in the Vishnu sahasranama (25) also. For the convenience

of those who want to worship the Lord, He has assumed various forms such as Rama, Krishna, Shiva, Devi etc. We may worship Him in anything as He is every thing. So, we have the habit of worshipping Ashwattha tree, rivers like Ganga, books like the Gita or Ramayana and so on. But for the sake of convenience we have the practice of worshipping Him in idols, shaligrama and lingam. It is known that the mind is wavering by nature and so is difficult to concentrate for a long time during the worship. This kind of worship is easy and most suitable for those who require an external object to help them to focus their mind during the worship. After proper installation with mantras the idol is no more an inanimate idol, but the living presence of the Lord. As the worship of the Lord in such a consecrated idol has to be done with great deal of devotion the external object helps in paying attention to the Lord in the object. So, one may say that it is most suited during the early stages of worship for one whose mind is not steady. But as one continues with the worship he progresses steadily on the spiritual path. Devotion swells in the heart and the Lord slowly creeps into his mind. The mind is gradually purged of undesirable traits such as likes, dislikes, anger, lust that pollute and distract the mind. In such a mind that is pure and steady the Self within reveals Itself. Such a devotee who has made great progress on the spiritual path may worship the Lord within himself - in the space (called 'cave' or गुहा). The Katha upanishad (1-2-20)says this as follows.

अणोरणीयान्महतो महीयान् आत्माऽस्य जन्तोर्निहितं गुहायाम् ।

तमक्रतुः पश्यति वीतशोको धातुप्रसादान्महिमानमात्मनः ॥

For this reason, Lord Subrahmanya is also known as Guha (गुहः।). SS(865).

गुहः स्कन्दः, तद्रूपत्वात्। यद्वा गुहा बुद्धिः,

साऽस्याभिव्यक्तिस्थानत्वेनास्तीति मत्वर्थ्याच्प्रत्ययान्तः शब्दः ।

“ यो वेद निहितं गुहाया” मिति श्रुतिः। “ यो वै रुद्रः स

भगवान्यश्च स्कन्द” इति श्रुतिः ॥

Devi Lalita also has the name Guhya (गुह्या - गुहां प्रविष्टा गुह्या ॥)

LS(624)

Sage Vishvamitra narrates the story of the birth of Subrahmanya to Shri Rama and Laxmana as he is taking them through the forests. In the end, he gives the benefits that will accrue to one who listens to the story and says that if one is devoted to Lord Subrahmanya he will have longevity

and an abode in the divine world of Skanda along with his sons and grandsons. (Balakanda-37-32).

भक्तश्च यः कार्तिकेये काकुत्स्थ भुवि मानवः ।

आयुष्मान् पुत्रपौत्रैश्च स्कन्दसालोक्यतां व्रजेत् ॥

The late Paramacharya of Kanchi math pointed out that the name swami (स्वामी) occurring in the third verse is unique to Lord Subrahmanya and identifies Him with the Supreme Being. He quotes the verse from Amarakosha

in support. देवसेनापतिः शूरः स्वामी गजमुखानुजः । The word swami (स्वामी) means the owner. What does the Lord own? He owns the entire universe and so is the Supreme Being. The name Subrahmanya may be split as su (सु) and brahmanya (ब्रह्मण्य). Brahmanya means protector of dharma. The name appears in the Vishnu and Siva sahasranamas. The commentators Shankaracharya define the word as follows. ब्रह्मण्यः -

“ तपो वेदाश्च विप्राश्च ज्ञानं च ब्रह्मसंज्ञितम् ।”

तेभ्यो हितत्वात् ब्रह्मण्यः । VS (661). Tapas or austerities, the vedas, those who study and abide by the vedic injunctions and have got the knowledge of the Self, and the spiritual wisdom are known as brahma (not the creator Brahma). The Lord supports them. The name is defined similarly in SS(562).

ब्रह्मरूपाणां ज्ञानिनां हितकारी ब्रह्मण्यः ।

“ तस्यैव आत्मा विवृणोति तनूम् ।” इति श्रुतिः ।

ज्ञानीत्वात्मैव मे मतमिति भगवद्वचनाच्च । (Gita-7-18)

We find from the Skanda Purana that Lord Subrahmanya incarnated to quell the asuras and bring the dharma back on its feet. This is in accordance with what the Lord said in the Bhagavad Gita in the following verses that are quite popular. (4-7 and 8).

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।

अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥ ७ ॥

परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।

धर्म-संस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे ॥ ८ ॥

But we should notice one difference with Lord Subrahmanya's fighting the asuras like Shura and Taraka. According to the puranas, He no doubt fought with them, but did not kill them (unlike in other avatars). He subdued them and made them His servants in the form of the peacock etc. This

shows His extraordinary kindness. Shri Sankaracharya points this out in his Subrahmanya Bhujanga stotram. He says that there are gods who shower their grace on the sages and their devotees. But I do not know of a god who showers His grace even on one belonging to the lowest category.


मुनीनामुताहो नृणां भक्तिभाजामभीष्टप्रदाः सन्ति सर्वत्र देवताः ।

नृणामन्त्यजानामपि स्वार्थदाने गुहाद्देवमन्यं न जाने न जाने ॥

Let us pray to Lord Subrahmanya and seek His grace.

॥ ॐ तत्सत् ॥

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