This short but sweet hymn appears in Skanda Purana - Kasi Kanda. It is said that a brahmin, by name Vishvanara prayed to the Lord with this stotra and got the Lord Himself as his son Vaishvanara. This shows that this prayer is capable of fulfilling one’s desires if recited with fervor and sincerity. Since it is capable of yielding the desires of the devotee, it has got its name Abhilashashtakam. Abhilasha (अभिलाषा) means desire. The stotra is replete with vedantic truths that are revealed by the upanishads. Hence a student of vedanta will be able to enjoy reciting it. The upanishads declare that God is without a name and form. But He may also be worshipped as one with form. Here the Supreme Being known by the name of Brahman is also addressed as Rudra in the first verse and later in the last verse identified as the Lord of Gowri.

It is the one brahman which is without a second and is in the form of everything. There are no different things. This is really the truth. And that brahman is Rudra. In view of this, I always surrender to You who is the One without a second.

Oh Sambho! You alone are the creator of every thing. You are without a form.
Yet You appear in many forms in one form. Just as the same sun is seen as many suns in many collections of water, You also appear as many. So, I will not surrender to any one else.

On coming to know You, what appeared as the world earlier is seen as the Lord only, just as what appeared to be a snake earlier is understood to be a rope only, what appeared as silver is understood to be a pearl oyster only and what appeared as a stream is understood to be a mirage only. I surrender to You the Lord.

The coldness in the water, the intense heat in the fire, the heat in the sun, the joy in the moon, the fragrance in the flower and the ghee in the curd are all aspects of You. Therefore I surrender to You.

You hear but are without ears, You smell but are without nose, You come from a distance but are without feet, You see but are without eyes and taste but are without a tongue. Who can know You properly?

Such a One, I surrender to You.

O Lord! the veda itself has not known You properly. Nor have Vishnu,
Brahma the creator of all the worlds, the best among the yogis or the gods like Indra have understood You properly. Only Your devotee knows You. Therefore I surrender to You.

O Lord! You have no lineage. You have no birth, no name, no form also. You have no manner of conducting Yourself or splendour. Even though You are like this You are the lord of the three worlds. You fulfil everyone’s desires. Therefore I worship You.

O the enemy of the god of love! everything originated from You. You are everything. You are the lord of Gouri. You are naked. You are very peaceful. You are old, young, infantine. What are You not? Therefore I prostrate before You.

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