॥ सार्थ त्रिपुरसुन्दरी अष्टक ॥

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Introduction:

“tripurasundari aShTakaM is an octal hymn, praising Goddess tripurasundari, composed by Adi shankara, in a group of eight shlokams, all set in prithvi metre consisting of 17 syllables to each line, with a yati (pause) at syllable 8 and 17. (Note that the hymn, Saundaryalahari, also has 17 letters to each line, but the poetic metre there is shikhariNi, which is entirely different).

The feminine noun tripurasundari means beauty ‘par excellence’, in the triad (tripura). The word tripura can be interpreted in several ways. First, The kALlikA purANaM states that by the will of the pradhAna (the First Principle), the body of shiva became triple: the upper part became brahma, the middle, vishNu, and the lower, rudra. As these three puras (bodies) are in Him, shiva is called tripura, and his spouse is tripurA.

In this context, it is interesting to note the following. In Andhra Pradesh, about 20 kilometres from Kalahasthi, there is a small shiva shrine and lingam, at Gudimallam. It is believed this shiva linghaM was installed by parasurAma. The lower part bears the form of a gAndharva, the middle part, that of parasurAma with a turban, and the upper part, that of shiva lingam. Under a curse, once brahma became a gAndharwa, by name CitrasEna. Therefore, the lower part could be brahma, and the middle one vishNu, since parasurama is an avatAraM of vishNu. This fact is mentioned in the Tamil book: “Jagadguruvin Upadeshangal (Appendix, page 23, 1957).

tripura has another meaning: The dEvi’s mantra consists of three syllables; the panchadashAkShari mantraM is composed of three peaks (kUTa), namely vAgbhatakUTa, kAmarAja kUTa, and
shakta kUta. The nADis (nerves currents) where she resides are three:
sushumna, pingaLa, and ida). Her shaktis are three, ichcha, kriya, and
GYAna. Now, to the actual hymn:

ॐ

II अथ त्रिपुरसुन्दरी अष्टकम्

कदम्बवनचारिणी मुनिकदम्बकादम्बिनी
नितम्बवजितभूयारां सुरिनितम्बिनीस्वेविताम्
नवामुहलोचनां अभिनवामुहस्यामलां
त्रिलोचनकुटुम्बिनी त्रिपुरसुन्दरिमाथवे॥१॥

Meaning

अहं: I;
त्रिपुरसुन्दरी: (in/to) Goddess tripurasundari;
आौये: seek shelter in (pay obeisance to).
The remaining phrases are adjectives that qualify the accusative noun
(dvitIyA vibhakti) “tripurasundarIM”
कदम्ब: who is roaming in the kadamba forest.
Kadamba is a kind of tree (Nauclea cadamba). It is
said to put forth orange coloured fragrant buds at the roaring of
thunder clouds. A withered relic of the kadamba tree is still preserved
in the precincts of the Madurai MeenakShi temple. Here,
kadamba forest stands for the universe which devi permeates.
मुनि कदम्ब कादम्बिनी: a galaxy of clouds to the galaxy of rishis
(sages). Just as the bank of clouds quenches the thirst of the
earthly beings, so does tripurasundari quench the
spiritual thirst of the munis (sages).
नितम्ब: hip;
जित भूपर: conquering (excelling) the mountains
(whose hip excels the mountain);
सुर नितम्बिनी सेवितां: who is served by celestial damsels;
नवामुहलोचन: whoes eyes resemble fresh lotus;
अभिनवामुहस्यामलां: who is swarthy like the newly formed
nimbus.
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त्रिलोचनकुटुम्बिनी : who belongs to the family of the three-eyed one (Lord shiva);

कदम्बवनवासिनी कनकवाल्लकीधारिणी
महाहरणीहारिणी मुखसमुज्जसदरुणीमू।
दयाविभवकारिणी विशादलोचनी चारिणी
त्रिलोचनकुटुम्बिनी त्रिपुरसुन्दरीमाध्ये॥ ॥

Meaning: (अहम्) त्रिपुरसुन्दरी आश्रये : (as in the above shlokaM);
कदम्ब वन वासिनी : (as in shlokaM 1);
कनक वाल्लकी धारिणी : who holds a golden VINa;
महामणि हारिणी : who wears a garland of precious gems;
मुख समुज्जसदरुणिवारिणी : whose face glows deeply with ambrosia;
दयाविभव कारिणी : bestowing prosperity through mercy;
विशाद लोचनी : clear eyed;
चारिणी : wandering.

कदम्बवनशालया कुचमरोल्लसदरुणाय
कुपोषषितशैलया गुरुकृपाःवेद्याय।
मदरुणकपोलया मधुगीतवाचार्य
कयाःपि घननीलया कवचिता वयं लीलया॥ ॥

Meaning: वयं : we;
लीलया : by her inscrutable play;
कवचिता : (we) are arrayed in panoply.
the remaining phrases qualify the noun “IlAYA
कदम्बवन शालया : by her abode in the kadamba forest (meaning here, the entire universe);
कुचमरोल्लसदरुणाय : by the garland gracing her massive bosoms;
कुपोषषितशैलया : by her bosoms rivalling the mountains
(represents her cosmic motherhood, and eagerness to nourish the entire world).
गुरुकृपासदुरेल्याः वेद्याय : by splendid flow of Her Grace;
मदरुणकपोलया : with cheeks rudded by wine;
मधुगीतवाचार्य : by her melodious musical voice;
कयाःपि घन नीलया : by her cloud-like blue.
कदम्बवनमध्यमः कनकमण्डलोपरितः
षडमुखरुद्वासिनः सततसिद्धसीमामिनीः।
विड्डम्बितजपारूपिंच विकचचन्द्रचूडामणि
त्रिलोचनकुटुम्बिनः त्रिपुरसुन्दरीमार्गः॥४॥

Meaning: (अहम) त्रिपुरसुन्दरी स्वादेशः (as in shlokam 1);
कदम्ब वन मध्यमः who is in the midst of kadamba forest;
कनक मण्डलोपरितः seated on the golden disc;
षडमुख रुद्वासिनः who resides in six lotus flowers;
सतत सिद्ध सीमामिनीः a lightning to the constant siddhas;
विड्डम्बित जपारूपिंच : splendourously mocking the scarlet (red) Hibiscous flower;
विकच चन्द्रचूडामणि : with cloudless moon for her crest jewel;
त्रिलोचन कुटुम्बिनः (as in shlokam 1).

कुचाभितिविपिधिका कुरित्कुन्तलालंकरः
कुर्णेशयनविपिधिका कुरित्कुन्तलालंकरः।
मदारुणविलोचना मनसितजारिरसमोहिनः
मत्तमुनिकन्यः मधुरभाषिणीमार्गः॥५॥

Meaning: (आहे) : I;
आदेशः seek shelter in (Her, who is);
कुचाभिति विपिधिका : with a Vina gracing her bosom;
कुरीत्र कुन्तलालंकरः : adorned with curly tresses of hair;
कुर्णेशय विपिधिका : residing in lotus;
कुर्णेशय चित विद्विषणिः : scorning the evil-minded ones;
मदारुण विलोचना : reddish eyed from nectar;
मनसितजार समोहिनः : captivating the enemy of Cupid (shiva);
मत्तमुनि कन्यः : daughter of sage matanga;
मधुर भाषिणिः mellifluously conversing.

समप्रथमपुष्पिणी रूधिरविपिनविनीलाल्यः
गृहीतामधुपा�ırlकां मदविधण्नवाचारः।
चन्द्रमन्दरोत्रांगधितचुळिका श्यामालः
त्रिलोचनकुटुम्बिनः त्रिपुरसुन्दरीमार्गः॥६॥

Meaning: (अहम) त्रिपुरसुन्दरी स्वादेशः (as in shlokam 1);
स्मर प्रथम पुष्पिणीः: who bears the first flower of manmatha
(Cupid);
रूढिर विन्दु नीतामः: clad in blue garments spotted
sanguine (red);
गृहीत मद्व पात्रिका: holding a bowl of wine;
मद विद्य नेत्रावलं: eyes inebriated languishing at the ends;
चन स्तन भरोऽसः: close set with high and heavy bosom;
गलित चूळिका: with locks dishevelled;
ञ्ज्याळाः: swarthy one;
त्रिलोचन कुतुम्बिनीः: (as in shlokaM 1).
सञ्जुक्कुमचिलेपनाः अलकचुरुकस्तुरिका
समन्दहसितश्रणा सचाप्पाशाकुशाम्।
अशोपजनमोहिनीः अरुणमाल्यभूषाञ्चािरां
जपाकुसमभासुरां जपिवधौ स्मरम्यिका ॥ ७॥

Meaning: (अहं) : I;
अम्मकाः: ambikA Mother (dvitIya vibhakti);
जपिवधौ: in (during) Japa (meditation);
स्मरामि: remember;
The remaining phrases qualify the noun: ambikAM::
स कुङ्खुम विलेपनाः: smeared with vermillion;
अलक चुरुक तुरिका: forelocks grazing the dot of musk;
स मन्द हसितश्रणा: with looks soft and smiling;
स शाप पाशाकुशाः: bearing arrows, bow, snare and goad;
अशोप जन मोहिनीः: deluding the entire people;
अरुण माल्य भूषाम्बाराः: wearing (decorating her body with)
red garments;
जपाकुसुम भासुराः: shining with the japA flower
NOTE: This particular shlokaM is considered very sacred,
and it
is included in the भयानM segment of both lalitA
sahasranAmaM, as well as lalitA trishati.

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भजामि भुजानालिकां सुरवधूटिकाचेटिकाम् ॥ ८॥

Meaning: (अहं) : I;  
भुजामिः: mother of the entire world (dvitIya vibhakti);  
भजामि: worship (salute) The remaining words qualify the noun अमिबिकAः;  
पुरुद्द पुरंिीकां: ruling over the entire srI puraM;  
विचुर बन्ध सैरिविक्रिकां: who has the celestial queen for plaiting tresses;  
पितामह पतिब्रतां : consort of Lord brahma;  
पट पटीर चर्चां रतां : skilful for anointing sandal paste;  
मुकुन्द रमणी मनी: gem of vishNu’s spouse;  
लसद् अलंकृयाया कारिणी: adorning with lustrous gems;  
सुरवधूटिकाचेटिकाः: having heavenly damsels for servant maids.

॥ इति त्रिपुरसुन्दरि अष्टकम् सम्पूर्णम् ॥

Thus ends the octal hymn on Tripurasundai  
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