Tripurasundari Ashtakam

Octad to tripurasundarI
by shrImad sha.nkarAchArya

Introduction
Before we begin, let us offer ourselves at the feet of the Divine Mother, mahAtripurasundarI, who as Ishvara rules the world but is none other than the indwelling spirit (Atman) within us and which pervades us all that exists. This introduction deals with the background on the name of tripurasundarI. It is one of the best epithets to describe the Devi meaning that she is the belle of all the three worlds. The word tripura can be interpreted variously. The kAlikA purANa says that by the will of pradhAna, the body of Lord Shiva became triple: the upper part became Brahma, the middle part became ViShNu and the lower part became Rudra. As these three pura-s (bodies) are in Lord Shiva, he is called Tripura (three bodied) and his wife is known as tripurA. In the kAmakAlA vilAsA (13,14), the honored sage, abhiyukta, mentions that Devi created all the three forms and she is before all (purobhava), because she is in the form of all the three (trayImayi) and exists even after the dissolution of the three worlds and recreates them again. In the brahmANDa-purANa, it is mentioned that the Goddess tripurasundarI rules over the entire universe and She is the supreme empress, and Brahma, ViShNu and Shiva are mere functionaries in her empire. The LalitA SahasranAma portrays Her as being attended by LakShmi and Saraswati on either side.
Shankaracharya, in his saundrayalahirI, mentions that Brahma, ViShNu and Shiva started their cosmic processes when the Supreme Shakti knitted Her brow for a split second.

The Devi mantra consists of three syllables, and her fifteen lettered mantra panchadashAkShari is composed of three kUTa-s (peaks). She resides in three nADi-s (nerve channels), namely suShumnA, pingalA, and iDA. She is the ruler of the three Shaktis - ichchA (will), kriyA (action), and j nAna (knowledge). She pervades all the three worlds - heaven, earth and the nether world. She is the controller of all the three bodies - sthUla (gross), sUkShhma (subtle), and kAraNa (causal). She is the self which is present through the three states of existence - jAgrat (waking), svapna (dream), and suShupti (deep sleep). Though she is above all guNa-s, She pervades the three modes of energy- sattva (purity), rajas (mobility) and tamas (inertia).

Love and joy are the inherent qualities of beauty. SundarI means belle and beauty. Shankaracharya, while explaining Chandogya upaniShad 7, 31:1, mentions that all longing and desire is a source of pain, and in what is finite there is no bliss. He mentions that the Infinite alone can produce bliss. When bliss takes on a form, it is sundarI: sarvA.nga sundarI (lalitA trishati, verse 130) and Shankara comments on this name of the Devi as the one who possesses all the marks of beauty and has all the qualities of perfection and is thus the source of Bliss. The translation and commentary on this text can be found in http://www.geocities.com/RodeoDrive/1415/tripura8-itx

May the Divine Mother guide us in our every action and thought, and may She confer upon us the greatest gift of all, mokSha (liberation) by removing the veil of maya which She weaves.

At Her feet, OM tatsat.
अथ त्रिपुरसुन्दरी अष्टकम ।
कदम्भवनचारिणी मुनिकउक्कादयिनीं
नित्यघटित भूमरं सुरनितिमनिंसेविताम ।
नवामुखहोलोचनामनिनवामुखद्वारप्रत्यां
त्रिलोचनकुटुंबिनी त्रिपुरसुन्दरीमार्मये। १॥
कदम्भवनवासिनी कनकवलकीधारिणीं
महार्मणिहारिणीं मुकवसमुखस्वारुणी।
द्वाबिभक्तिकारिणी विश्वलोकनी चारिणीं
त्रिलोचनकुटुंबिनी त्रिपुरसुन्दरीमार्मये। २॥
कदम्भवनशालया कुचभरोढसम्मलं
कुजोपियवशेषोऽगुरुकृपालसेद्याय।
मदारुणकपोलं मधुरगीतवाचालया
कपाल्पि घनीकलं कविता वर्ष लीलया ॥ ३॥
कदम्भवनमध्वाणं कनकमण्डलोपरिधातं
षड्मुखवासिनीं सततसंसद्वोद्भामीनी।
विक्रमितज्ञपारुति विक्रमेन्द्रचामणीं
त्रिलोचनकुटुंबिनी त्रिपुरसुन्दरीमार्मये। ४॥
कुआधिकितविपचिकां कुटिलकृपलालकृंजूं
कुस्तेश्वरनिवासिनीं कुटिलकृपलालअद्भुतीं।
मदारुणविलोचनं मनसजारिसंमोहिनीं
मत्रामुनिकन्यां मधुरभाविक्षणीमार्मये। ५॥
स्मरप्रथमपुष्पिणीं रुढिरविन्दुनीलाल्कां
गृहीतमयपावित्रां मद्विघूर्णनेत्रार्कलं।
घनस्तमभोरेश्वरां महितचूक्षिकां ध्यामला
त्रिलोचनकुटुंबिनी त्रिपुरसुन्दरीमार्मये। ६॥
सकुकुकुकुविलेखनामाश्वकुकुबिकरतिकां
समन्दुहस्तितक्षणं सदाचारपापशाहुंशाम।
अरोपजनमोहिनीमणमाल्य भूषाम्वरं
जयकुकुकुप्रभासुरं जपिवियो स्मराम्बिकाम। ७॥
पूर्वद्वरप्रिवंचिकुरवन्यारंगिकां

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िपुरायकं पितामहपतिवरं पटपटीरचर्चरताम् ।
मुकुन्दरमणीमणीलसदलंभजामि भुवनांविकं सुरवधूटिकाेतिकाम् ॥ १॥
॥ इति श्रीमद्वं शंकराचार्यविविशिनं
त्रिपुरसून्दरयं समाजाम् ॥
कदम्ववनवासानिः स्तोत्रम् ॥

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