॥ રીનહરગણેશસ્તોત્રમ् ॥

.. RiNaharagaNeshastotram ..
There are many hymns in praise of Lord Ganesha. He is to be worshipped at all times and in particular at the start of
any new venture to ensure its success. But the worship of the Lord need not be limited only to warding off obstacles in our life. He is indeed the Supreme Being waiting to bless us with all we want. One of His names (No.298) that appears in the popular Vishnu sahasranama stotram is कामदः meaning He grants in plenty the desires of His devotees. 

This means that one may ask Him for anything that is ‘proper’ - that is not against the mandates of the shastras and be sure it will be granted. In Gita (7-11) He mentions that He indeed is behind all such ‘proper’ desires.

So, we may seek any thing that is ‘proper’ from Him. This includes even mokSha. But true devotees seek only devotion to Him. The best example of this kind of unalloyed devotion is the prayer by Kulashekara in his Mukundamala. Please read this moving prayer.

Our sages have categorised all the desires the humans can possibly have into four types. They are called as goals of life or पुरुषार्थः. They are called dharma, artha, kama and finally mokSha. The first three pertain to the life here. Dharma means performing the duties as ordained by the shastras. The result will be punyam or merit. This will yield better quality of life here and even life in higher worlds. Artha means material possessions and includes money, houses, family and friends. Properly earned and used these should yield happiness. Kama means enjoyment resulting from the previous goal artha. MokSha means liberation from the cycle of births and deaths. In the above poem Kulashekara says that he is not interested in the first three goals as said above. He says let anything happen as ordained by fate or according to the past karma. What he wants from the Lord is only unwavering devotion to His lotus feet. Then it becomes His responsibility to take care of the devotee’s wants. He had given this assurance in Gita (9-22).
However, most of us are not so mature as Kulashekara and are troubled with day-to-day problems. So we pray to Him and seek His help. There is nothing wrong in this. Krishna classifies devotees into four types. The first one is the one who is troubled. (Gita - 7-16). Can anyone claim to be free from troubles? God helps such people also. In fact He terms these people as good ones since they have turned to Him on some pretext.

This particular hymns is one such and prays to Him for relief from debt. Debt means money etc., owed to some one. But the word debt has another meaning. It may be surprising or even shocking to know that according to our shastras everyone is born a debtor with three debts. This said as follows:-

\[ \text{Taittariya samhita (VI.3.10)} \]

One is a debtor to rishis, devas and pitrus or the manes. These debts can be cleared by brahmacharyam - celibacy, yagna - sacrifices and praja - progeny. So it is said that :-

\[ \text{Kalidasa says in his Raghuvamsa (8-30)} \]

that the king Aja freed himself from these debts as said here.

It is to be noted that these debts will pursue us as long as we continue to take births. And the cycle of birth and death is said to be indeed endless. CF. Gita (2-27) that the person is freed from this sinister cycle of births and deaths.

The method to reach Him has been given in detail in Gita and other scriptures. By intense devotion to God one purges his mind of all bad tendencies lurking in the mind. Once the mind is thus made pure God
provides a suitable guru who will guide him further in the spiritual path towards liberation. Thus we should worship Lord Ganesha with devotion and He will take care of our spiritual progress by giving us all we need including the spiritual wisdom. He had vouchsafed in Gita (10-10).

The following vedic prayer says this.

The above mantra salutes Lord Ganapathi and describes Him as the chief of the hosts of the gods. He is the omniscient and behind the wise. He is of infinite glory and lord of the vedas, The hymn given in the beginning tells that Ganesha was worshipped by Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Devi, Kumara, Vishvamitra the sage etc. This shows that Ganesha who is talked about herein is verily the Supreme Being. So by being devoted to Him we can rest assured that He will take care of all our needs, both secular and spiritual.

The last verse (No.10) is the इतष्ठुति gives the benefit of reciting the verses. It says that one who recites the verses with sincerity for one year will become as rich as Kubera the god of wealth. It may be difficult to believe this statement. But the great acharya Shri Vedanta Desika, when he was invited to the court of a ruler to be the poet there, said that he will never seek the patronage of the rich or kings who rule over a small piece of land for few years; but would prefer to serve the Lord. He cites the story of Kuchela who was too poor to offer any present to Krishna who was the king of Dwaraka. He carried a small quantity of hand pounded rice with him and offered it to Krishna. Krishna accepted it with great pleasure and relished it. In return for this meagre offering He made Kuchela as rich as Kubera. Please read the verse given below.

शीर्षकोशलशतानि बालन कलानुवारगर्वानतः
शृणुवाचकस्वरेन यात्रार्थानु ध्यानं न मन्यामहे ।
देवं सेवितमेव निश्चितमहे योकसौ श्रमायुः पुरा
Krishna says this clearly in Gita (7-23). He says that those who worship Him get unlimited benefit while those who seek to worship others get benefits that are short lived. This is because of the fact that those whom we approach for some benefit themselves suffer from many limitations including limited lives. So people who seek favours from others and not from the Lord cannot be called as intelligent because the effort involved in the worship is the same in both cases.

So we should worship Him the Supreme Being who is here depicted as Ganesha.

Encoded, proofread, and commentary N.Balasubramanian bbalu@sify.com

Please send corrections to sanskrit@cheerful.com