16 names of Lord SubrahmaNya

श्रीसुब्रह्मण्य षोडशनामानि

Document Information

Text title: subrahmaNyaShoDashanAmastotram 1 with Commentary
File name: subrahmaNyaShoDashanAma.itx
Category: subrahmanya, ShoDasha, stotra
Location: doc_subrahmanya
Transliterated by: N.Balasubramanian bbalu at satyam.net.in
Proofread by: N.Balasubramanian bbalu at satyam.net.in
Translated by: N.Balasubramanian bbalu@satyam.net.in
Description-comments: See corresponding nAmAvaliH
Latest update: June 10, 2024
Send corrections to: sanskrit at cheerful dot c om

This text is prepared by volunteers and is to be used for personal study and research. The file is not to be copied or reposted without permission, for promotion of any website or individuals or for commercial purpose.

Please help to maintain respect for volunteer spirit.

Please note that proofreading is done using Devanagari version and other language/scripts are generated using sanscript.

June 10, 2024

sanskritdocuments.org
16 names of Lord SubrahmaNya

श्रीसुब्रह्मण्य पोडशानामानि

ज्ञानशक्तिधरः सकन्दः देवसेनापतिस्तथा ।
सुब्रह्मण्यो गजारुः शरकाननसम्भवः ॥ १॥
कारिकेयः कुमारश्च षणमुखस्तारकान्तकः ।
सेनानीर्विभाषास्तः च बहुक्लित्याणसुन्दरः ॥ २॥
बाठश्रृंगोष्टि तेथ शिष्वाहने पवस ।
एताति स्वामिनामानि पोडश्र अव्यः ॥
यः पंढतेत सर्वपपेभ्यः 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.

This prayer addressed to Lord Vishnu says I specially extol Your name. Swami Bodhendra, who was a great advocate of chanting the Lord’s name points out that शांसामि indicates repeating the name several times. The Vedas themselves contain many hymns that extol the Lord. Shri Rudram, Srisuktam 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.

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

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.

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 विष्णोनामसहभस्कम्।
पद्धतेऽपि रामणिं श्रीमुखमेव यथेऽपि प्रगोऽ॥

ईश्वरेयुवाच -
श्रीराम राम रामाति रमे रामे मनोरमे।
सहभस्कम् 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 पापराशि 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.

आध्य वा भये शोके श्रुते वा मम नाम यः ।
व्याजेन वा स्मर्यस्तु स या ति 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 सर्वधृष्टिः धर्माधिकृतां मतः ।
यद्यक्ष्या पुण्डरीकांक स्तब्धेवर्च्छन्ने 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.

सर्वं - सर्व स्वरूपः । क्षिति-सिलित-हृदवाल-पवन-गगन-हिमकारः
दिनमणि-यज्ञानात्मभिमूर्तिः सर्वं व्याप्य व्यवस्थितः ॥

“सर्वो च रूढः” 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 महीयान्म आत्मादस्य जन्तोनिनित्तु गुहायाम् ।
तमक्तु: पजयति वीतशोको धातुपादान्महिमानमात्मनः ।

For this reason, Lord Subrahmanya is also known as Guha (गुहा:1). SS(865).

गुहः सन्नदः: तृत्वत्वात्। यद्य गुहा बुझःः,
सास्त्राभिव्यक्तिस्थानवेवासात्तीत मत्त्वीयान्यात्यान्त: शब्दः।
“ यो वेद निनित्तु गुहाया” मिति श्रुति:।
“ यो वै रूढः स भगवान्यान्ध सन्नद” इति श्रुति:।

Devi Lalita also has the name Guhya (गुह्या - गुहा प्रविर्घ गुह्या II) 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).

भक्त्वश यः कार्तिके मूकुत्थ मुवि मानवः।
आयुमान पुत्रपौत्रेश्च सन्नद्सालोक्तं ब्रजेत्॥

4 sanskritdocuments.org
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.

देवसेनापितः 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.

ॄयः - "तस्येव आत्मा विवृणौति तनूम्।" तेन्यो 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).

ब्रह्मण्यः ज्ञानिनां हितकारी ब्रह्मण्यः।
"तस्येव आत्मा विवृणौति तनूम्।" इति श्रुति:।
ज्ञानीत्वात्मेऽमे मतमिति भगवद्भजनाच। (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 ग्न्यानिर्भवति भारत।
अभ्युदयनः धर्मस्य तदात्मानं सुजात्ययहम्। ७।।

परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम्।
धर्मं संस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगो 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 भक्तिभाजामभीषणः। सन्ति सर्वन देवता:।
Let us pray to Lord Subrahmanya and seek His grace.

Encoded, proofread, and commentary by N.Balasubramanian bbalu@satyam.net.in

16 names of Lord SubrahmaNya

pdf was typeset on June 10, 2024

Please send corrections to sanskrit@cheerful.com