INTRODUCTION:- The following abbreviations are used in the comments that follow. (1) Narayana Hridayam - NH. (2) Laxmi Hridayam - LH (3) Vishnu Sahasranama with the commentary of Shri Shankaracharya - VS. (4) Bhagavad Gita - BG. (5) Shrimad Bhagavatham - BH (6) Lalitha Sahasranamam - LS. (7) Vivekachudamani of Shri Shankaracharya - VC. (8) Katha Upanishad - KU. (9) Mundaka Upanishad - MU.

Narayana Hridayam stotram is unique in that it is coupled with another stotram Laxmi Hridayam to form a pair. They are found in the Atharva Rahasyam. They were given out by sage Bhargava. They belong to the category of stotram दुर्गानम्.

The appellation stotram, stuti and stavam all describe a hymn only. दुर्गानम्: दुर्गान नुितः: दुर्गान तुितः: दुर्गान तूितः: दुर्गान तह्वणम्: says Amara, the Sanskrit lexicon. They all narrate the qualities of a deity. गुणसहीतिःनम् is stotram, says Shri Shankaracharya in his commentary to Vishnu Sahasranama. The Lord in His true form is described in the scriptures as having no attributes or qualities such as name, form or qualities. यद्यदेवस्य महास्य मलयत्वयु: मर्त्यंस्मिस्य: श्रीत्र्युः तदपारण्यंपदम्: नित्यं सर्वस्य सुसुस्त्रम्यत: तद्व्ययं यत्यतंत्योनि परिपालितं धीरा: दुर्गानम्(1-1-5.)
But since such a God will be impossible for a devotee to comprehend and relate with, the scriptures say that the Lord is also available with names and forms. This makes it easy for a devotee to worship Him. The kindly Lord accepts this kind of worship also.

STOTRAM:- Customarily a stotram describes a hymn that is ancient. It is generally found in vedas, puranas or itihasas such as the Ramayana or Mahabharatha. Thus we call Vishnu Sahasranama and the Lalitha Sahasranama as stotras. So also we call Aditya Hridayam as stotram. They were narrated by some sage, but the sage himself is not the author. He had heard it or got it from some one. Thus the origin is not known and is lost in antiquity. Generally the sage who narrates it says something about its glory in the beginning. He also appends a list of benefits one will get by reciting it or using it in some specific manner as in a sacrifice or homa. This is known as phalashruti (फलशृणुः) ।

Thus, we find these parts or components in these two stotras (NH) and (LH). But some hymns composed by great acharyas or saints later on that were outpourings of intense devotion also carry the appellation stotram. The popular Kanakadhara Stotram by Shri Shankaracharya and Hayagriva Stotram by Shri Vedanta Desika are examples of this kind. But the borderline has become grey with the result that nowadays any hymn is being called a stotram.

WHY RECITE STOTRAM? :- Let us briefly discuss as to why should one listen to and recite stotras. Our scriptures repeatedly state that the birth as a human being is very rare and so immensely valuable. Rarer still are the desire for liberation and association of noble souls They urge us to appreciate the fact and make best use of our birth as humans । दुरःस्य त्रयमेवेत्तद्वानुशग-ङ्गक्षमः । मनुष्याश्वम मुमुश्रुत्वं महापुरुषसंशयः : ॥ VC(No.3)

The reason for saying that a human birth is great should be obvious. Animals may be stronger, faster and have capabilities such as very acute hearing, keen eye sight etc.,
which we do not possess. Still we claim to be superior to them because
we humans are endowed with the power of reasoning and common sense.
With these gifts we can plan our future intelligently, set goals and do
all that is needed to attain the goals. Our scriptures say that if, after
being born as a human being, one fails to exploit these gifts properly
and achieve the goals, then that person is no different from an animal.

GOALS - The goals may vary from one person to the other and so can
be numerous. But our sages have analysed these numerous goals and
divided them into four categories. They are (1) dharma, (2) artha or
material acquisitions like wealth, house, family etc., (3) kama or
sense pleasures that wealth and other material acquisitions mentioned
earlier can provide and finally (4) mokSha or liberation. These are known
as पुरुषार्थ्यः: since they are sought after by people. अर्थः: = goal.
(1) Dharma - Performing actions as prescribed by our scriptures
is called dharma. One who wants to move up the spiritual path is enjoined
to follow the injunctions, though they may superficially appear to be
illogical or inconvenient. Going against them is termed as a sinful
act and will lead to one’s downfall. Krishna states this clearly in BG (16-23,24).

(2) Artha - We need wealth and other
material comforts to enable us to lead a worry-free life. Besides, money
is required to perform religious duties like, going on pilgrimages,
pujas, charity etc. So, seeking wealth, per se is not evil. Kalidasa,
in his famous poem Raghuvamsam says (1-7) that the kings of the dynasty
of Raghu amassed wealth for giving away to the needy and worthy and not
for enriching themselves. त्यागाय सम्मुन्तार्थाःनाम्। Working to
acquire wealth and saving for a rainy day are recommended. It is not decried as long the means by which the wealth is obtained is legal and does not involve injury or harm to others. (3) Kama - Our scriptures allows one to enjoy the benefits of artha (i.e) wealth earned. They include house, family, friends etc. But, as said in the case of artha above, the enjoyments sought and indulged in should not be illegal or against the dictates of the shahstras. They should not be such that will lead to attachments and moral degradation. Having desire is natural and allowed. In fact, Krishna says that He is behind such proper desires in all beings. धमाविरुद्ध भूतेषु कामोदिर्मि भरतपरम। BG(7-11). Our scriptures talk of special prayers and rituals by which one can obtain immense riches and pleasures including life among gods in the heavens and even the highest world - that of the creator Brahma. This shows that they allow us to entertain desires as long as they are proper as said above. But attachment binds and so is dangerous. Our scriptures warn us to be wary of developing attachment to money, property, relations, people etc. (4) MokSha or liberation - means liberation from rebirth.

REAL GOAL - It is to be noted that our scriptures do not consider the first three goals as real goals at all. The logic is this. All actions produce results. If one does actions that are dharmic he gets the fruits of the actions in the form of merit or punyam. If one acts contrary to dharma, he gets the results in the form of sins or papam. One enjoys these results in this birth or one may have to be born again once or many times for the purpose. The fruits of punyam may be a better and more comfortable birth in this world or higher worlds. The results of adharmic actions may be inferior births as animals and plants or a human birth full of sufferings and misery in the form of sickness etc. Thus one gets entangled in the cycle of repeated births and deaths. Krishna points out that even if one gets a place in the heavens, he should remember that that place is got as the reward for his good deeds. As soon as the stock of punyam is exhausted he will necessarily have to come down to
This is awful. So, our scriptures do not consider the three goals as commonly understood as real goals. Only liberation or mokSha is said to be the real goal since after attaining mokSha one escapes the agony of samsara. Therefore it is known as the supreme goal or घर्षनपुरुषाध्य:।

Samsara implies being born, growing up, going through the ups and downs of life, growing old and dying only to be born again. Liberation is freedom for ever. So it becomes the duty of every intelligent person to work for liberation and not keep on wallowing in samsara. Keeping the above facts in mind, the scriptures define the purpose of the goals in a very different manner. They ask us to use these three goals for achieving spiritual progress in order to escape samsara. One should do dharma to earn wealth which should be used to earn religious merit and not for enjoying sensuous pleasures. The goal of dharma should be kept as spiritual progress. The aim of kama should not be taken as enjoying sense pleasures but should just be keeping the body and soul together. The aim of keeping the body and soul together should be to strive and learn about the way to liberation and not strive to attain transient pleasures like the enjoyment in heaven etc.

The devotees of the Lord were very clear about the above facts. For example, Kulasekhara declares that he is not interested in the three goals - dharma, artha and kama. He says that let events, good or bad, happen according to karmas he had done. He prays to the Lord to grant
him unavering devotion to His lotus like feet in this and in future births. (Mukundamala).

नारायणः प्रभृति न वसुनिष्ठेऽऽेव कामोपोर्य यथाद्वेयं भवतु भगवन् पूर्वकर्मान्तुत्पर्यः
पति उपाध्यायः मम वर्तमतं जन्मजन्मान्तरेऽपि
त्वत्यादाम्योरुत्त्यागता निश्चल्या भक्तिरस्त्त॥

LIBERATION:- Liberation, as said earlier, means liberation from cyclic birth. It is spoken as attaining the lotus feet of the Lord in the puranas. According to upanishads liberation means dropping one’s identification with the body/mind complex and realising his/her divine nature. The scriptures assert that one is distinct from the body/mind complex and is indeed divine in nature and so is not subject to sorrows and rebirth. The wrong identification with the body/mind complex is due to wrong knowledge or nescience known as ajnanam (अज्ञानम्). Thus, liberation implies settling down in our true or real nature which is divine and thus be free from problems for ever afterwards.

DESIRE FOR LIBERATION:- For this reason, liberation does indeed sound immensely attractive. But the sad truth is that it has very few takers. Only a minuscule minority is interested in seeking liberation. Krishna ruefully says this in Gita. मनुष्याणां सहस्रेष्ठो
कथित्यतिति सिद्धैः। वृणीते। यृणादयादि विचालित्वे॥

Wrong knowledge can be righted only by right knowledge called...
jnanam just like darkness can be removed only by bringing in light. The way to gain jnanam is described in a very systematic manner in our scriptures. However, our scriptures never tire of warning that the path to gain wisdom is extremely difficult. The wise men say it is as difficult as walking on the razor's edge said Yama to his disciple Nachiketas. The reason that this path is very difficult for most people is that their minds are sullied by negative qualities like desires, anger, attachments, jealousy etc. These qualities cloud the intellect and often distort judgement. Impelled by anger or greed one may turn selfish and indulge in illegal or immoral acts. Our scriptures declare that people who have such weaknesses, will always be distracted and so cannot comprehend the subtle spiritual wisdom. Even after hearing about liberation repeatedly, their minds will not be excited enough to take a step in that direction. This is very unfortunate. So it is said that one with the desire for liberation, known as mumushudram is a rare phenomenon.

The first thing to do for one who desires liberation is to purge the mind of such distracting traits and steady it. This is achieved by regular performance of prescribed karma or duties. However we saw earlier that karmas produce results and lead to rebirth. The way to escape the results is to blend karma with devotion or bhakti. One continues to engage himself in all regular activities, but escapes the results by offering the results to the Lord. The results having been offered to God will not attach to the performer of the action. Krishna says this in BG(9-27, 28).
He tells Arjuna: whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever sacrifices you perform, whatever you give by way of charity, whatever austerities you engage yourself in do it as as offering to Me. By doing so, you will be liberated from the bonds of action that result in good or evil results.

In this way, actions done, but without any desire for results, lead to purification of the mind. विचित्रस्य शुद्धेऽकर्मः VC(11). and योगिनः कर्म कुर्वन्ति सज्ज त्यत्वात्मशुद्धेऽम BG(5-11).

ASSOCIATION OF SAINTS:- As the mind sheds its impurities and gets pure, God’s grace slowly reveals itself like the full moon emerging from behind the clouds. The kindly Lord arranges for him to come into contact with noble souls, like sadhus or saints. Our shastras describe them as the messengers of God. They move around the world telling people about the weaknesses of the life one normally leads and explaining the need for treading the spiritual path. They do this without any expectations. They have found the source of happiness. They have the noble desire that others too should take to the spiritual path and find everlasting happiness. Shri Shankaracharya says this.

शान्ता महान्तो निवसस्ति सन्त: वसन्तव्यऽकोहितं चरन्त: ।
तीणां स्वयं भीमभवार्षेव जना- नेहेतुनान्यानिप तार्यन्त: ॥ VC (37).

We, normally will not be able to identify a saint, because he will look like anyone else and will shun publicity and crowds. It is only God’s grace that can lead to a meeting with a mahatma and make us listen to his words. Thus, a human birth is a rarity in the first place and rarer still is the meeting with a saintly person. King Nimi says this when he gets a chance to meet the nine yogis. BH(11-2-29).

दुर्भो मानुषो देहो देहिना श्यमभुजः ।
तथा पि दुर्भो मन्ये वैकुण्ठप्रियदर्शनम् ॥

As the minds of saints are imbued with devotion, they take delight in talking about the Lord - who is none other than their inner self - and not about mundane matters.
The words of such God intoxicated devotees have great power. They go to the heart and so can work wonders. As one comes into contact with them and listen to their nectar like words, they strengthen the devotion.

The mind slowly turns away from the world and towards the Lord. The worldly attractions and worries gradually lose their hold. Mind becomes calm and peaceful. It acquires qualities required to for spiritual progress. These qualities are said to be four in number and are known in the vedantic parlance as साधन चतुर्यम् or four means of attainment. They are described in texts like Viveka Chudamani and Tattva Bodha. They are more elaborately described by Krishna in chapter 16 of Bhagavat Gita. He calls them as दैवी सम्पत्ति, or divine qualities

They are necessarily to be acquired by one stepping on to the path of liberation. दैवी सम्पद्यमोक्षाय। says Krishna. BG(16-5).

It is difficult to acquire these virtues by practice. But one need not despair and refrain from making any attempt in this direction. Our shastras are aware of this problem and provide an attractive solution to the seemingly difficult problem. They say that one who worships the Lord regularly and practises devotion to Him gets over the difficulties with His grace and acquires the qualifications as by-products. He will, therefore progress without much effort on the spiritual path. Krishna makes this assurance. BG(18-55).

and again in BG(18-58) मश्ति: सवंदुर्गाणि मत्रसादातरिष्टि।

The easiest methods of worship are listening to His glories as described in stotras, puranas etc., or chanting stotras or repeating His names by way of doing japa. That is why in the introduction to Vishnu Sahasranama we find Yudhistira asking Bhishma for a simple method that will give one freedom from samsara. कि जपन्मुच्यते जन्मः जन्मसंसारं वन्धनात।
Bhishma answers that the best and also the simplest method to tide over all kinds of sorrows, including samsara, is reciting the hymns that sing the praise of the Lord. लोकाभ्यासः स्न्यासित्यः सर्वंदुः खातिगो भवेत्। and एष में सर्वंधमीण्डायिङ्कतमो मतः। यद्रत्वा पुंडरिकाक्षेः स्तवेर्चैवः सदा॥

Shri Shankaracharya, in his commentary to the above line, explains why Bhishma said this is the best method. He says हिंसादि-पुरुषान्तर-द्रव्यान्तर-देवाखलादि-नियमानपेशत्व आधिक्ये कारणम्। That is, this method does not involve causing injury to other beings as in animal sacrifices, does not require help from another person, or money, or depend on a particular time as Ekadasi or Amavasya or travel to holy places such as Kasi or Rameshvaram. It can be practised by any one irrespective of age, sex, status in society etc. The sage Naradha emphasises the importance when he told Shri Vyasa that reciting the hymns which enumerate the virtues of the Lord is the abiding purpose of doing austere penances, rituals, recitation of vedas etc. इदं हि पुंसस्ततसः श्रुतस्य वा स्विद्धस्य सृक्ष्यं च बुध्दिदत्त्योः। अविच्छयतोधः कविविभन्निश्चितो यदुसमशोकङ्गणानुवर्णनम्॥ BH(1-8-22).

The reason is, that by practising devotion to God one gets the four qualifications necessary to progress on the spiritual path that culminates in wisdom or jnanam as by-products. Shri Shankaracharya says this in his AparokShanubhuti thus। स्व-वर्णोश्रुम्धर्मण तपसा हरिर-तोषणात्। साधनं प्रभवेत् पुंसों वेदांत्यादि-चतुष्ययम्॥

Shri Bhagavatam also says this. BH(1-2-8)। वासुदेवे भगवित् भक्तियोऽः प्रशोधितः। जनयत्वाशू वेदान्य ज्ञानं च यद्वैतुकम्॥

Thus, it is necessary to perform our prescribed duties and in addition, make listening to and reciting stotras an essential part of our daily routine to intensify the devotion. The scriptures contain hymns that narrate the qualities of
God with name and form. Shri Rudram is a well known example of a vedic hymn. The Kaivalyopanishad says that reciting Shri Rudram will purify one of all sins. यः शतस्त्रीयमधीते, सोऽिपूतो भवति, सुरापानाूतो भवति, ब्रह्महत्यात्पूतो भवति, कृत्याकृत्यात्पूतो भवति, तस्मादविमुक्तमाधित्यो भवति। In addition, we have hymns in puranas. Our acharyas and other devotees have also contributed many hymns. The recital of such hymns is the easiest and best method of worshipping Him and acquire purity of mind by purging it of sins. Because of these reasons, the Lord has the name पुयः एवम ् रुद्रणािद कुवतां सवषां पुयं करोतीित पुयः। VS(925) Thus reciting hymns or just listening to them is eminently suitable for people in this modern age as they are pressed for time.

SUMMARY: To summarise the above, we should first realise that the human birth is an invaluable asset. Our scriptures say that one gets it after many births as other beings as birds, beasts, plants etc., depending on our karma stock. So, we should grab the opportunity with both hands and work assiduously for liberation. If we fail to do so, then the loss is immense since we do not know what our next and subsequent births will be and when we will get another birth as a human being again and will be able to work our way up. At this point there may be an argument. One may say that he will do lot of good karmas, earn plenty of merit or punyam and as a result gain birth in higher worlds. This may be in the world of gods such as Indra and may be even in that of Lord Brahma the creator. There one can have a great time, full of enjoyment and also work for liberation in such a wonderful environment. This is not a wise argument, say our acharyas. The upanishad says that the vision of the Self can be had clearly in the mind, as in a mirror, only in this world. It cannot be had clearly in the world of Gandarvas, manes and gods like Indra. These worlds are meant for enjoyment of pleasures got as a result of many good karmas. The mind that is behind the senses will, therefore, be pulled in many directions. The image of the Self will
consequently be scattered like the reflection on the surface of water that is agitated by the wind and so not clear. One will be unable to concentrate on the spiritual progress. KU(II-III-5)

यथादशैं तथासत्त्वनि यथा स्वप्ने तथा पितृलोके ।
यथा प्रपुर परीव ददशे तथा गन्धर्वलोके छायातपयिरिव बहालोके ॥

If one misses the chance to attain liberation in this world, then he can get a chance to get vision of the Self clearly only in the Brahma Loka. But that world is the highest one and very difficult to attain. It can be reached only by numerous special kinds of rites and meditation. Therefore one should leave no stone unturned to attain liberation in this world itself. Krishna tells Uddhava that, sense-enjoyments can be had in any body, but realisation can be had only with the human body. So, keeping in the mind the fact that the human body is fragile, one should make haste and strive for liberation here itself. BH(11-9-26).

लक्ष्या सुदुर्लभमित बहुसन्भवाते
मानुषयमर्थदमनित्वमपिह धीरः ।
तूण यतेत न पतेदनुमृत्यु याव-
निश्च्येयसाय विषय: खलु सर्वं: स्यात् ॥

Shri Shankaracharya, in his commentary to the above verse quoted from the KU (II-III-5) makes a subtle observation. The upanishad says that the vision of the Self may be had distinctly, as in a mirror, in our intellect in this world. The idea, he says, is that the reflection will be distinct in a mirror, only when it is spotlessly clear. Similarly, the mind, in order to be able to reflect the Self clearly, should first be made absolutely clear by the performance of prescribed duties, prayers, meditation etc. स्ववुद्धो आदर्शविद्यमित्व-भूतानं चिनितमात्मनो
दर्शनं भवतीत्यथः: । Then, with the guidance of a guru and following his instructions one can progress towards liberation.

NARAYANA HRIDAYAM AND LAXMI HRIDAYAM:- Narayana Hridayam (NH) and Laxmi Hridayam (LH) form a pair of very valuable and sacred hymns. NH is the
shorter one. It consists of only 37 verses. LH is longer and consists of 108 verses. The word (हृदयम) hridayam is popularly taken to mean the heart. The word also is used to mean secret, true or divine knowledge. Being hymns found in the Veda the Narayana Hridayam and Laxmi Hridayam Stotras are highly efficacious. They are sanctifying as was said of Shri Rudram earlier. They also contain recondite vedantic truths which may be found in the upanishads, puranas, Bhagavad Gita etc. These truths are also to be seen in other stotras and in the hymns of later acharyas. लक्ष्मीहृदयके स्तोत्रेऽ सर्वभाव्यते प्रकाशितम् | (NH - 33).

So, to describe them as hridayam is very apt. They are, therefore, very precious. For these reasons they are considered very sacred and therefore secret - not to be easily given out. गोपश्मेतात्सद्युपूर्यत्वान सर्वं प्रकाशपैत् | says Narayana Hridayam (34) in its later part. Because of this restriction these stotras were handed down from a worthy guru to deserving disciples only. They were not freely available like Vishnu Sahasranamam.

Only some noteworthy features of this stotram (NH) could be mentioned in this brief introduction. The reader is requested to read the comments given to the LH also (available in this site under the heading Laxmi in the category DEVI) as these two stotras are linked.

The Narayana Hridayam stotram contains sixteen verses in the beginning that narrate the glory of the Lord. Verses No. 1 and 2 describe the Lord with form. This is suitable for meditation. This form is to be retained in the mind when reciting the NH.

But there is another form of the Lord which needs to be known. This is the form that Krishna discusses in Chapter 7 of BG. The Lord says He has two aspects. The superior one has no attributes. It is the very soul of all beings and sustains the universe. The other, namely, the inferior aspect is divided into eight categories and from that the universe of names and forms evolves. This is said to be inferior aspect since people get snared in names and
forms and overlook the Lord behind them who sustains the universe. A familiar example is that we go to a theatre and watch a movie. We get absorbed in the movie and forget to notice the screen. It is the screen that is behind the movie and sustains it, but this fact is overlooked. Similarly we are absorbed in the world of names and forms and fail to notice the Lord who bears all the names and forms. They, thus get caught in samsara. This aspect is known as Prakriti or maya. Krishna says that His maya is very powerful and difficult to cross over without His grace. BG(7-14)

The supreme Being, known as Brahman, when associated with maya is known as Ishvara or Maheshvara and becomes the cause of the universe through the agency of Maya.

He says that wise people who are well read in the scriptures say that You are Sarasvati the consort of Brahma the creator; again they say You are Laxmi the consort of Hari and also You are Parvati the consort of Siva. You are beyond the three and are the limitless One who is very difficult to reach. You are the Maya who makes the entire universe go round and round. Thus, Ishvar and Maya are inseparable and are known as the parents of the universe. This concept is depicted in our shastras as Ardhanarishwara in whom both Siva and Parvati share half of one body.

The poet Kalidasa says this in the invocatory verse to his immortal classic Raghuvamsam as follows.
salutes Parvati and Parameswara who are the parents of the Universe and who are (inseparably) united like the speech and its sense. Prakriti or maya named variously as Parvati or Laxmi is the creative power of the Lord. He indeed is the causeless cause of everything that are the products or effect. It is to be noted that the properties of the cause will be there in the products. Thus, ornaments made of gold will have the properties of gold. Gold has no form but the ornaments are many and have different forms and names. Same is the case with vessels made of clay and so on. In the same way, Lord is the cause of everything. The visible universe contains numerous items, right from Brahma the creator to insignificant insects and inanimate things. But they are all manifestations of the Lord only, but they all bear different forms and names. This is brought out in verse No. 3 to 18. These verse say that there is nothing apart from Him and all were His manifestations only. For this reason these verses are very significant.

The words used herein will sound familiar since they are same as the verses in the Narayana Suktam said along with the Purusha Suktam.

The verses are:

विश्वं नारायणं देवमक्षरं परमं पदम् ।
विश्वतः परमाृतिं विश्वं नारायणं हरिम् ।
विश्वमेवद् पुरुषस्तत्विश्वमुपजीविति ।
पति विश्वस्तत्वेऽहां शाख्यं शिवमच्युतम् ।

नारायणं महादेवं विश्वात्मानं परायणम् ॥

नारायणपरं ज्योतिरात्मा नारायणं: परः ।
नारायणपरं ब्रह्म तत्त्वं नारायणं: परः ।
नारायणपरं ध्यातं ध्यानं नारायणं: परः ।
यथो विश्वमेवद्वायते श्रृव्यतेऽपि वा ।
अन्तर्यात्मकं तत्स्वरं व्याप्तं नारायणं: स्थितः ।

These verse are eminently suitable for meditating on the Lord who is described as being the cause of the universe. From Him only even the creator Brahma and other gods were born. HE is every thing. There is none greater than Him. He is the goal and He is the one who can confer
the supreme goal of moksha and other goals spoken of earlier. So, He is the one to be meditated upon. These verse are followed by ten verses by which one surrenders to the Lord and seeks His grace.

The final part says that this stotram is to be recited first, to be followed by the recital of Laxmi Hridayam and again the recital of this stotram. This is not to be recited separately as a single piece. This is to stress the fact that Lord Narayana and Laxmi are indeed one though spoken of as two different deities.

CONCLUSION. It will be evident from what is said here that both the NH and LH are valuable hymns and like veritable mines of precious gems. An interested reader will be able to find more gems if he digs deep into them. The greater benefit will be, that by reciting them regularly, one will develop devotion to Divine Couple, Lord Narayana and Goddess Laksmi, and reap their abundant grace.

Now follows the NARAYANA HRIDAYAM stotram.

|| ओ तत्सत् ||

|| नारायणह्रदयम् ||

हरि: ओम् || अस्य श्रीनारायणह्रदयस्तोत्रमहामहामच्छर्य भार्गव ऋषिः:,
अनुष्ठुत्तन्द्व:, लक्ष्मीनारायणो देवता, नारायणश्रीत्वर्थ जपे विनियोगः ||

|| कर्यन्यासः ||

नारायण: परं ज्योतिरिति अहुद्याम्यां नमः,
नारायण: परं ब्रह्मति तर्जनीया नमः,
नारायण: परो देव इति मध्यमान्यां नमः,
नारायण: परं धार्मिति अनामिकायां नमः,
नारायण: परो धर्म इति कनिष्ठायां नमः,
विश्व नारायण इति करतलक्रप्रणामां नमः ||

|| अञ्जन्यासः ||

नारायण: परं ज्योतिरिति ह्रदयाय नमः,
नारायण: परं ब्रह्मति शिरसे स्वाहा,
नारायणः परो देव इति शिखाये बोष्टः
नारायणः परं धामः प्रामेति कवचाय हुमः
नारायणः परो धर्मं इति नेत्राभ्यां वौषटः
विद्वान् नारायणं इति अस्रायं फटः
भूवर्षसुवरोमिति दिव्यवनः

॥ अथ ध्यानम् ॥

उद्दाद्वदित्यसङ्गानां पीतवाङ्सं चतुर्मुखम्
शाख्चकगंधायापाणि ध्यायेऽद्रक्षमीपि हरिम्

॥ १॥

जैतोऽधा वारकं तदुपरि कमठं तत्र चानत्तपौगी
तत्मथे भूमिपदाङ्ग्यशिवसहरद्र्वघण्यैः कर्णिकाभूतमेऽसम्
तत्रत्य शान्तमूर्तिः मणिमयमकुंकु मुण्डरोऽश्रासिंहां
लक्ष्मीनारायणांस्य सरसिजनयवनं सत्ततं चिन्तयामः

॥ २॥

अस्य श्रीनारायणाहृदयस्तोत्रमहामन्वयं वद्य ऋषिः
अनुघुप्तान्वद्, नारायणो: देवता, नारायणप्रीत्यत्वः जपे विनियोगः

॥ ३॥ नारायणः परं ज्योतिरात्मा नारायणः परः
नारायणः परं ब्रह्म नारायण नमोऽस्तु ते

॥ ३॥

नारायणः परो देवो धाता नारायणः परः
नारायणः परो धाता नारायण नमोऽस्तु ते

॥ ४॥

नारायणः परं धामः ध्यायं नारायणः परः
नारायण परो धर्मचयं नारायण नमोऽस्तु ते

॥ ५॥

नारायणः परो देवो विचय नारायणः परः
विद्वान् नारायणः साधानेन नारायण नमोऽस्तु ते

॥ ६॥

नारायणाद्वि विद्विज्ञातो जातो नारायणाद्वः
जातो नारायणादिन्द्रो नारायण नमोऽस्तु ते

॥ ७॥

विद्वानरायणस्तेजः चन्द्रो नारायणो महः
वहिनरायणः साधानेन नारायण नमोऽस्तु ते

॥ ८॥

नारायण उपास्य: स्यादु मुहुणरायणः परः
नारायणः परो बोधो नारायण नमोऽस्तु ते

॥ ९॥
नारायणः फलं मुख्यं सिद्धिनारायणः सुखम्।
हरिनारायणः शुद्धिनारायणः नमोऽस्तु ॥ १०॥

निगमावदितानन्तकटप्याणागुणवारिधः।
नारायण नमस्ते अस्तु नरकार्णवतारक ॥ ११॥

जनमृत्युजरार्थवधिपारतत्वादिधिः सदा।
दोषस्तुरुपाय नारायण नमोऽस्तु ॥ १२॥

वेदाश्रयार्थविज्ञानसाध्यमत्तुकङ्गोचर।
नारायण नमस्ते अस्तु मामुः भवार्णवातूः ॥ १३॥

नित्यानन्दः महोदारः परात्यः जगित्यः।
नारायण नमस्ते अस्तु मौक्षस्मार्ज्यदायिनः ॥ १४॥

आद्राःश्मवपर्यात्मसिलात्ममहाश्रय।
सर्वभूतत्त्वभूतात्मनः नारायण नमोऽस्तु ॥ १५॥

पाठिताशेषोपकाय पुण्यश्रवणकीर्तन।
नारायण नमस्ते अस्तु प्रलयोदकशायिनः ॥ १६॥

निरस्तस्वादोपायः भक्तादिद्गुणदायिनः।
नारायण नमस्ते अस्तु त्वा विना न हि में गतः ॥ १७॥

धर्मार्थकामामोक्षार्थपुरुषार्थप्रदायिनः।
नारायण नमस्ते अस्तु पुनःस्ते अस्तु नमः ॥ १८॥

॥ अथ पार्थना ||

नारायणः त्वमेवासि दृश्यं हृदि सिथतः।
प्रेतितः प्रेत्यं नासानं त्वा प्रेतित्वानासः ॥ १९॥

त्वदाः शिरसा कृत्वा भजामि जनपपावनम्।
नानोपासनपार्थाणां भवकृत्वा भावबोधकः ॥ २०॥

भावार्थकृत्वा भवातीतो भव सौस्थ्यप्रदृशं मम।
त्वमायामोहितं विश्रं त्वेऽव परिकल्पितम् ॥ २१॥

त्वंप्रिल्भनमात्रेण सा वै सर्वर्थार्थिनः।
त्वमेव तां पुरस्कृत्य मम कामानु समर्थय ॥ २२॥
नारायणहृदयम्

न मे त्वदन्यान्तरात्मा त्वदन्य न हि देवतम्।
त्वदन्यं न हि जानामि पालकं पुण्यवर्धनम्॥ २३॥
यावसांसारिकं भावं मनस्स्यं भावनात्तमकं।
तावतसिद्धिभिवेत् साध्या सर्वदा सर्वदा विभो॥ २४॥
पापिनामहैमेकाऽ पुरावृत्रात्मा त्वमग्राणी।
दयनीयो मदन्योरसितं तव कोद्रजगतघे॥ २५॥
त्याहं नैव सृष्ट्रेत न स्थातव दयालुः।
आयमन वा न सृष्ट्रेदीप्तृत्वृष्णोदव॥ २६॥
पापस्वायत्रित्तत्त्वापापतम पापसुप्प्रृक्त।
त्वदन्यं कोद्रजापेभ्यं आताति जगतीतः॥ २७॥
त्वमेव माता च पिता त्वमेव त्वमेव वन्यश्रु शवाः त्वमेव।
त्वमेव विधा द्रविणं त्वमेव त्वमेव सर्व मम देव देव॥ २८॥
प्रार्थनादशर्क चैव मूलाधकमतः परम्।
चः पूर्ववायुयायित्वं तस्य त्वक्षमीः सिध्या भवेत॥ २९॥
नारायणस्य हृदयं सर्वभीष्टभृद्वधम्।
लक्ष्मीहृदयं स्तोत्रं यदी चैतित्वनाकृतम॥ ३०॥
तत्तवं निष्ठत्र प्रोक्तु त्वक्षमीः कुर्म्यति सर्वदा।
पत्तस्विनिमत त्स्त्रेत सर्वभीष्टभृद्वधम॥ ३१॥
जपेत स्विनिमत कृत्वा सर्वभीष्टमवाभुवात्।
नारायणस्य हृदयं आदो जत्रवा ततः परम्॥ ३२॥
लक्ष्मीहृदयं स्तोत्रं जपेत्त्वा रायणं पुनः।
पुनर्वा रायणं जत्रवा पुनर्भेन्द्रीनुति जपेत॥ ३३॥
तद्होमादिके कुर्म्यदेतत्स्विनिमत शुभम्।
एवं मध्यें द्विवारेण जपेत स्विनिमतं शुभम॥ ३४॥
लक्ष्मीहृदयं स्तोत्रं सर्वमन्यत प्रकाशितम्।
सर्वानं कामावशोति आधिव्याधिनें हरेत॥ ३५॥
गोप्येतते पदा कुर्म्यं न सर्वं प्रकाशिवेत्।
इति गुद्धतमं शाखं प्रोक्त बह्यादित्वं पुरा॥ ३६॥
नारायणहृदयम्

लक्ष्मीहृदयप्रोक्ते विधिना साधयेत् सुधीः ।
तस्मात् सर्वप्रयोक्ते साधयेद् गोपयेत् सुधीः ॥ ३७॥
यत्रैत्तपुरस्तकं तिथितः लक्ष्मीनारायणात्मकाम् ।
भूतपैशाचवेताभ्यं नैव तु सर्वदा ॥ ३८॥
भृगुवारे तथा रात्रि पूजयेत् पुरस्तकहृदयम् ।
सर्वदा सर्वदा स्तुत्यं गोपयेत् साधयेत् सुधीः ।
गोपनात् साधनाभयों धन्यो भवति तत्त्वः ॥ ३९॥
॥ इत्यथारहस्ये उत्तरभागे नारायणहृदयस्तोत्रम् ॥

This should be chanted with the complementary Laxmihrdayam Sanskrit text.
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nArAyaNahRidayam

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