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॥ प्रातःस्मरणम् ॥

The Pratasmaranam consists of some verses that are to be recited in

the morning soon after waking up from the bed. प्रातः = at dawn, and स्मरणम् = remembering. They may be recited sitting in the bed itself before getting out of it. They are an aid to remembering many venerable people and auspicious things in the creation, and through them the Lord. There are many versions of this poem containing less number of verses or more. One well known version is that of Sri Sankaracharya and this consists of just four verses. These verses are highly significant as they contain thoughts about the godhead residing within us. These four can be easily memorised and are a pleasure to recite if one knows the meaning. The text of the verses is given below to help those who are interested in reciting them. Then each verse is given with its meaning. They are also followed by some comments.

॥ प्रातःस्मरणम् ॥

कराग्रे वसते लक्ष्मीः करमध्ये सरस्वती ।
करमूले तु गौरी च प्रभाते करदर्शनम् ॥ १ ॥
समुद्रवसने देवी पर्वतस्तनमण्डले ।
विष्णुपत्नि नमस्तुभ्यं पादस्पर्श क्षमस्व मे ॥ २ ॥
नमोऽस्तु प्रियदत्तायै तुभ्यं देवि वसुधरे ।
त्वं माता सर्वलोकानां पादन्यासं क्षमस्व मे ॥ ३ ॥
ब्रह्मा मुरारिस्त्रिपुरान्तकारी भानुः शशी भूमिसुतो बुधश्च ।
गुरुश्च शुक्रः शनि-राहु-केतवः कुर्वन्तु सर्वे मम सुप्रभातम् ॥ ४ ॥
सनत्कुमारः सनकः सनन्दनः सनातनो-ऽप्यासुरि-पिङ्गलौ च ।
सप्तस्वराः सप्त रसातलानि कुर्वन्तु सर्वे मम सुप्रभातम् ॥ ५ ॥
सप्तार्णवाः सप्त-कुलाचलाश्च सप्तर्षयो द्वीप-वनानि सप्त ।
भूरादिकृत्वा भुवनानि सप्त कुर्वन्तु सर्वे मम सुप्रभातम् ॥ ६ ॥
पृथ्वी सगन्धा सरसास्तथापः स्पर्शी च वायुर्ज्वलनं च तेजः ।
नभः सशब्दं महता सहैव कुर्वन्तु सर्वे मम सुप्रभातम् ॥ ७ ॥
महेन्द्रो मलयः सह्यो देवतात्मा हिमालयः ।
ध्येयो रैवतको विन्ध्यो गिरिश्वारावलि-स्तथा ॥ ८ ॥

गङ्गा सिन्धुश्च कावेरी यमुना च सरस्वती ।
 रेवा महानदी गोदा ब्रह्मपुत्रा पुनातु मम ॥ ९ ॥
 अयोध्या मथुरा माया काशी काञ्ची अवन्तिका ।
 पुरी द्वारावती चैव सप्तैता मोक्षदायिकाः ॥ १० ॥
 प्रयागा पाटलीपुत्रं विजयानगरं पुरीम् ।
 इन्द्रप्रस्थं गयां चैव प्रत्यूषे प्रत्यहं स्मरेत् ॥ ११ ॥
 अरुन्धत्यनुसूया च सावित्री जानकी सती ।
 तेजस्विनीइ च पाञ्चाली वन्दनीया निरन्तरम् ॥ १२ ॥
 वैन्यं पृथुं हैहयमर्जुनं च
 शाकुन्तलेयं भरतं नलं च ।
 रामं च यो वै स्मरति प्रभाते
 तस्यार्थलभो विजयश्च हस्ते ॥ १३ ॥
 दध्यङ् मनुर्भृगुरसौ हरिपूर्वचन्द्रो
 भीष्मार्जुन-ध्रुव-वशिष्ट-शुकादयश्च ।
 प्रह्लाद-नारद-भगीरथ-विश्वकर्म-
 वाअल्मीकयोत्र चिरचिन्त्यशुभाभिधानाः ॥ १४ ॥
 अश्वत्थामा बलिव्यासो हनूमांश्च विभीषणः ।
 कृपः परशुरामश्च सप्तैते चिरजीविनः ॥ १५ ॥
 सप्तैतान् संस्मरेन्नित्यं मार्कण्डेयमथाष्टमम् ।
 जीवेत् वर्षशतं साग्रमपमृत्युविवर्जितः ॥ १६ ॥
 पुण्यश्लोको नलो राजा पुण्यश्लोको युधिष्ठिरः ।
 पुण्यश्लोको विदेहश्च पुण्यश्लोको जनार्दनः ॥ १७ ॥
 ॥ फलश्रुतिः ॥
 इत्थं प्रभाते परमं पवित्रं
 पठेत् स्मरेद्वा शृणुयाच्च तद्वत् ।
 दुःस्वप्ननाशस्त्विह सुप्रभातं
 भवेच्च नित्यं भगवत्प्रसादात् ॥ १८ ॥

INTRODUCTION:- The following abbreviations are used in the notes.

- 1- VS - Sri Vishnu Sahasranama with Sri Sankaracharya's commentary.
- 2 - SS - Sri Siva Sahasranama (from Padma Purana) known as Vedasara Sahasram with the commentary of HH Sri Paramasivendra Saraswathi.

- 3 - LS - Sri Lalita Sahasranamam with the commentary of Sri Bhaskararaya.
- 4 - BG - Srimad Bhagavadgita with Sri Sankaracharya's commentary.
- 5 - BH - Srimad Bhagavatam.
- 6 - MU - Mundakopanishad

The Pratasmaranam is a stotram स्तोत्रम् or hymn. A stotram is defined as गुण सङ्कीर्तनम् । (VS) or stating the attributes. The Pratasmaranam may be taken as extolling the glory विभूतिः of the Lord. The glory that is extolled is His omnipresence: that He is every where and as every thing. The Upanishad says this clearly: that whatever is seen or heard of in this universe is permeated by the Lord, in and out.

यच्च किञ्चित्जगत्यस्मिन् दृश्यते श्रूयतेऽपि वा ।

अन्तर्बहिश्च तत् सर्वं व्याप्य नारायणः स्थितः ॥ (Taittiriyaanyaka, 10-II-4-6)

More on this subject is discussed later on in this article. THE MORNING TIME:- The morning time, just before the sun rise and the evening time just before the sunset are recommended for prayer because the mind is calm and fresh at these times. So, they are ideal for prayer and meditation. The practice of meditating and praying at these times have been in vogue since time immemorial. The vedas say that one should meditate on the Sun as the Supreme Being at both these times . Doing so, one will be blessed with all good things in life and attain liberation..

उद्यन्तमस्तं यन्तमादित्यमभिध्यायन्, कुर्वन्,

ब्राह्मणो विद्वान्सकलं भद्रमश्नुते

असावादित्यो ब्रह्मेति, ब्रह्मैव सन्-ब्रह्माप्येति, य एवं वेद ।

Our scriptures also say that one should use this time only for meditating on the Lord and add that one who does not, but sleeps at this time, that sleep eats into his stock of punyam (result of doing good deeds).

ब्राह्मे मुहूर्ते या निद्रा सा पुण्यक्षयकारिणी । In addition to losing

punyam the person incurs sin. This is said by Bharata in Ramayana. He states that he who had any part in making Rama abdicate the kingdom and go to the forests should incur the sin of a person who sleeps at either of the junctions (of the day and night). Valmiki Ramayana (2-75-44).

उभे सन्ध्ये शयानस्य यत् पापं परिकल्पते । तच्च

पापं भवेत् तस्य यस्वार्योऽनुमतो गतः ॥

Later on, when Bharata met Rama at Chitrakoot, Rama enquired about the welfare

of his father and others. He then gave instructions in judicature. One of the questions he put to Bharata was ॥hope you do not fall a prey to excess of sleep and wake up early in the morning.॥कच्चिन्निद्रावशं नैषि कच्चित् कालेऽवबुध्यसे । (2-100-17).

The junction of the day and night, (i.e) the time of sun rise and the sun set (the twilight hour) is known as सन्ध्या (sandhya). There are two sandhyas ; the morning one and the evening one. They are known as the प्रातः सन्ध्या and the सायं सन्ध्या. We have to dedicate the sandhya time for prayers only and not for any other activity like eating and, much less for sleeping.

ब्राह्मे मुहूर्ते उत्थाय चिन्तयेदात्मनो हितम् ।

गुरुं विष्णुं नमस्कृत्य मातरं पितरं तथा ।

One should wake up before sunrise and think of his own welfare. He should salute his guru, Lord Vishnu, mother and father. We may recall that Rama and Lakshmana accompanied the sage Viswamitra to the forests and rested for the night on the bank of the Sarayu river. Just when the day was about to break, the sage woke them up saying that the twilight सन्ध्या has set in and it is time for prayer.

कौसल्या सुप्रजा राम पूर्वा संध्या प्रवर्तते ।

उत्तिष्ठ नरशार्दूल कर्तव्यं दैवमान्हिकम् ॥

This verse is from Ramayana (1-23-2) and is very popular. It is recited as part of the Suprabhatam. We learn that Sri Krishna too used to get up very early in the morning and meditate on the Supreme Being. Then, He had bath and performed sandhya vandanam. He silently chanted the Gayatri mantra. BH(10-70-4,6).

ब्राह्मे मुहूर्ते उत्थाय वार्युपस्पृश्य माधवः ।

दध्यौ प्रसन्न करण आत्मानं तमसः परम् ॥

अथाप्लुतोऽम्भस्यमले यथाविधि क्रियाकलापं परिधाय वाससी ।

चकार संध्योपगमादि सत्तमो हुतानलो ब्रह्म जजाप वाग्यतः ॥

These facts establish the importance of praying at the sandhya times. Why should we recite such verses as the first thing in the morning instead of going about our routine morning ablution? If we study our life we will find that it was not all smooth, but it had some stretches of happiness and also of sorrow. What is happiness

and gives us joy and what is sorrow and causes pain and grief depends on time, place and circumstances. Thus there is no uniform definition of joy and sorrow. But our aim is to avoid sorrow in any form as much as possible and have happiness and happiness only. The question is whether such a condition is possible? It seems to be a dream like situation. Though the condition appears to be fanciful and impractical to achieve, our scriptures assert that such a life which is full of pure, unalloyed joy is achievable. The way to achieve to attain such a life is through devotion or bhakti. Sorrow is the result of the doing (prohibited) sinful actions and failing to do prescribed duties we have committed in this and earlier human births. Sage Yagnavalkya says this:

विहितस्याननुष्ठानात् निन्दितस्य च सेवनात् ।

अनिग्रहाच्चेन्द्रियाणां नरः पतनमृच्छति ॥

The big bundle of sins we

have accumulated in so many births is to be expended by experiences in the form of sorrow and pain by us. Sorrow afflicts the mind and pain affects the body. Since the stock of sins is huge, this one birth may not suffice to work it out. So one has to go through painful experiences in this birth and in addition, one may have to be born again and again many times to clear off the debt. The way out of this dreadful situation is to resort to bhakti. In the introduction to Shri Vishnusahasranamam the king Yudhishtira asks Bhishma the easiest way for one to get rid of sorrows and attain happiness. Bhishma replies that the way is to chant the glories of the Lord.

अनादिनिधनं विष्णुं सर्वलोकमहेश्वरम् ।

लोकाध्यक्षं स्तुवन्नित्यं सर्वदुःखादिगो भवेत् ।

So, the Lord has the names पुण्यः - स्मृतिमात्रेण

कल्मषाणि क्षपयतीति पुण्यः । VS(687). He removes the sins of those

who just think of Him. and हरिः - स्मृतिमात्रेण पुंसं पापं

संसारं वा हरतीति हरिः । VS(359) and SS(542). पापनाशकरः -

लौकिकवैदिकनामभिः कीर्तितः, तथा लौकिकवैदिकैः स्तोत्रैः स्तुतः,

तथा पञ्चाक्षरादिभिर्जप्तः पूजितश्च उमासहायत्वादिरूपेण स्मृतो

ध्यानन वा पापनाशकरः । SS(355). He destroys the sins of those

who repeat His holy names or chant hymns or chant mantras such as the panchakShara.

As children, we were taught to worship God in pictures and idols in the

home and in temples. This is necessary to get the mind fixed on the Lord. This form of worship is relevant to the beginners and also all through the life and is very important. One cannot view this as mere idol worship. In addition, we also listened to stories from puranas. We were told that God created the world. He first created Brahma who then created the world. He resides in places like Vaikunta and Kailas; but will come to rescue His devotees as He did in the case of Prahlada and Gajendra. Listening to such stories made us know more about God and His qualities. In this way listening draws our minds to Him and sows the seeds of bhakti or devotion. It is said that bhakti wells up in the heart of one who listens to the exposition of sacred texts like Bhagavatam. Such devotion dispels grief and fear. BH(1-7-7)

यस्यां वै श्रूयमाणायां कृष्णे परमपूरुषे ।

भक्तिरुत्पद्यते पुंसां शोकमोहभयापहा ॥

Please note the usage of

the word भक्तिरुत्पद्यते meaning that devotion springs up in the hearts of people. This implies that devotion sprouts up in the hearts even where the seeds are absent earlier. Such is the glory of listening to the holy texts. Because of this fact chanting and listening to the glories of the Lord is highly recommended. The many hymns available to us are of great help to us in this matter. They elaborately describe the glorious attributes of the Lord. Since one has his own duties to perform throughout the day our tradition has introduced the practice of prayers at different times of the day, like the Pratasmaranam right from the time one wakes up in the morning till one retires to bed. This helps us to keep remembering the Lord. Our minds will not stray away from Him and

so will remain pure and calm. Just as we take food at regular intervals to remain healthy and ward off pangs of hunger, similarly by indulging in small doses of bhakti at regular intervals in between our activities we can mitigate the adverse effects of past karma. This will cushion our journey through life. GOD'S NATURE:- If we want to think more of God we would like to know more of His form and nature. The question, then, is what is His form and nature? Is His nature the ones stated above, namely those available in the idols and pictures and available in Vaikunta and Kailasa? The answer to this is discussed in detail in

chapters 7 to 11 of Bhagavat Gita. God has two aspects. In His higher nature He is without form or any other attributes. He is therefore known as निर्गुणः । VS(840).

ISHVARA:- In His other aspect He is known as Ishvara and is accompanied by His power of maya. As Ishwara He is the cause of the universe. This is the topic of discussion in this article. The universe which is the effect or product is born or made of Him - the cause. It is like saying the ornaments are made of gold - the cause. One may say that that to make the ornaments out of gold we require two causes - a goldsmith to fashion the ornaments. Thus we have the gold - the material cause and the goldsmith - the intelligent cause (the one who provides the expertise necessary to make the ornament using the gold). But in the case of the universe God is both the material and the efficient cause. He is known as कारणम् - उपादानं निमित्तं च कारणम् । VS(379). He does not need the help of

any external agency in this process. We have the example of the humble spider which is able to spin the thread from its mouth and withdraw it back into itself without any external help. यथोर्णनाभिः सृजते

गृह्णते च । . MU (1-1-7) We may ask one question here. When we say that an ornament, say bangle, is made of gold - the cause, what is Bangle? Is it something different from the gold? The answer is No? We can say that gold is bangle. This is because of the fact that what we call Bangle is only the name given to a particular form of gold. If we take the gold away from the Bangle by melting it, we will be left with gold and no Bangle. Such a thing that seems to exist, but does not indeed exist separately is called मिथ्या or unreal. We have the familiar example of the mirage. In these Mithya cases we should note that gold only is seen as bangle and sand as water. Vedanta texts give the example of one seeing a Snake in a rope and getting frightened at the Snake. Thus the mithya objects can produce effects: but they do not exist. Things like the rope or gold that support the appearance of mithya objects like the snake and ornaments are known as अधिष्ठानम् । or substratum. For this reason, God, who is the substratum of the mithya universe has the name अधिष्ठानम् - अधितिष्ठन्ति भूतानि उपादानकारणत्वेन ब्रह्मेति अधिष्ठानम्,

स्रित्स्थानां सर्वभूतानि (गीता ९-४) इति भगवत्त्वचनात् ।

VS(324). This is said more explicitly by the name

मिथ्याजगदधिष्ठाना - मिथ्यारूपस्य जगतोऽधिष्ठानं
भानाधिकरणं रजतस्येव शक्तिः । LS(734).

She (Lalitha) is the support of the unreal world, like the shell of silver. A shell shines like silver in the sun light and one may indeed mistake it for silver. Thus the real shell supports the appearance of the unreal silver. We said that God is the cause of the universe. This means that God is only seen as the universe, just as gold is seen as bangle. Thus the Lord has the name:- विश्वम् -

कार्यरूप जगतः कारणत्वेन विश्वं इत्युच्यते ब्रह्म ।

He being the cause is seen as the product universe. VS(1).

The ornaments are many and different, but the gold is one and the same. Gold permeates the ornaments and gives them substance. So also, the whole world made up of numerous objects is permeated by the Lord. He gives them

substance Every object is in Him but He is not in them. This is because the objects are only mithya and have no existence apart from the cause - the Lord Krishna says this clearly. BG(9-4).

मया ततमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना ।

मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थितः ॥

The fact that the universe is the form of God implies that all objects or products with names and forms, from Brahma the creator to an insignificant insect, are all His forms only. This is expressed in His name विश्वरूपी - विश्वानि सर्वाणि चेतनाचेतनात्मकानि रूपाणि अस्य सन्तीति विश्वरूपी He has the forms of all the animate and inanimate objects in the universe. SS(75). Arjuna, with the grace of Krishna, sees this form. The description of this form and Arjuna's reaction to this is described in BG-Ch11. But as is the case with the rope snake, the objects in the world make us believe they are real. We see the cause and the product as separate things. We are beguiled by the forms of the ornaments to such an extent that we overlook the content - gold. In like fashion, we are so thoroughly lost in the world of names and forms that we miss the Lord who is really the substance behind them. This makes us see multiplicity. We see individuals as separate entities and as different from us. From this arises a variety of emotions such as, likes, dislikes, jealousy, hatred etc. These feelings affect us. We express love for some,

dislike for some and so on. We love some items - like wealth, very much because we feel they have some special qualities in them and work very hard to get them. We love our family more than other's family. These actions lead to conflict and strife. The result is sorrow.

BENEFITS OF THE NEW UNDERSTANDING: But when we are understand that what

all we see is His forms only our outlook changes totally. We do not notice differences among them, but see only the substance God. We cannot hate any thing because every thing is divine. We can have only love for all beings. Further, love takes a special meaning and is replaced by devotion. This idea is impressed in our minds even as we are young by teaching us to respect our mother, father, acharya and the elders who may visit our house as God. The Taittiriyaopaniṣad (1-11) instructs us in this matter. मातृ देवो भव । पितृ देवो भव । आचार्य देवो भव । अतिथि देवो भव । We were asked to worship our text books as Sarasvathi, the Goddess of learning. Every thing in the creation, be it animate or inanimate becomes an object of worship, since it is His form only. Thus we have the custom of worshipping trees, rivers, cows, etc., since we see divinity in them.

The great devotee Prahlada had this vision. He said that because the Lord is

every where and in the form of every thing it becomes very easy to worship Him. BH(7-6-27).

न ह्यच्युतं प्रीणयतो बह्वयासोऽसुरात्मजाः ।

आत्मत्वात् सर्वभूतानां सिद्धत्वा-दिह सर्वतः ॥

The seers of ancient India had this wonderful vision. The famous vedic hymn Sri Rudram salutes the Supreme Being as Lord Rudra not by names as in a Sahasranama but as being resident in various objects and beings. It salutes Rudra as being dogs, the lowly outcasts, the cheat, the robber, the trees, the sand dunes and so on. Thus there can

be nothing bad in the creation but the Lord only and so they all deserve our respect. Saint Ramakrishna Paramahansa had such a vision. When some

prostitutes were introduced into the room to test his character, he rose and prostrated to them as he saw them as the images of Devi only.

Since everything is divine, we cannot destroy or pollute the environment because it will amount to showing disrespect to the Lord. Naturally, this is a very high stage in spiritual progress. Rarely one will find people who have got such a vision. However we have to understand this fact clearly, take it seriously and try to develop such a vision. But if we fail to do so and confine our worship of God to images and pictures in our houses and temples, we will stagnate. Lord, in His incarnation as Kapila, says this. BH(3-30-21 to 27).

Some select verses are given below.

अहं सर्वेषु भूतेषु भूतात्मावस्थितः सदा ।

तमवज्ञाय मां मर्त्यः कुरुतेऽर्चाविडम्बनम् ॥ २१ ।

यो मां सर्वेषु भूतेषु सन्तमात्मानमीश्वरम् ।

हित्वार्चां भजते मौढ्याद्भस्मन्येव जुहोति सः ॥ २२ ।

The Lord says that He resides in all beings as their inner soul. Disregarding this fact, people make a show of worshipping Me through images. If one disregards My presence in all, but ignorantly offers worship only to images, such worship is wasteful as the sacrificial offerings poured into ashes. The worship of God in pictures and images is important. It should continue as this is the stepping stone to higher forms of worship. But we should not forget the fact that God is present not only in images but also as all things.

When we understand the fact that God is in every thing and every where, we find that we can never be alone at any time, but are always surrounded by Him.

Krishna makes this very clear. BG(6-30).

यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति ।

तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न प्रणश्यति ॥

A bird flying in the air is surrounded by air in all directions. Similarly we are surrounded by the Lord who is all pervading. He is before, behind, to the right, to the left, below and above - manifests Himself in all forms.

ब्रह्मैवेदममृतं पुरस्ताद्ब्रह्म पश्चाद्ब्रह्म दक्षिणतश्चोत्तरेण ।

अधश्चोर्ध्वं च प्रसृतं ब्रह्मैवेदं विश्वमिदं वरिष्ठम् ॥

MU (2-2-11).

Because of this reason, we have His company at all times and so we should feel immensely secure .

Though we hear that every thing in the creation is divine, but because our minds are not pure, but are coloured with likes and dislikes we feel some things are pure and holy and some are dirty or lowly. So we are not able to see Him in such objects. We want a way out of this awkward situation. Arjuna too, who had love towards some and hatred for some, had the same problem and puts the question to Krishna. He asked Him in which forms He can be meditated upon or worshipped. BG(10-17).

कथं विद्यामहं योगिंस्त्वां सदा परिचिन्तयन् ।

केषु केषु च भावेषु चिन्त्योऽसि भगवन्मया ॥

Krishna understands Arjuna's predicament and gives a list of items in which He may be worshipped or meditated upon. But He makes a significant observation. He says that the list is not exhaustive but whatever there is that has some special glory or strength etc., is part of His manifestation only. BG(11-41).

यद्यद्विभूतिमत्सत्त्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेव वा ।

तत्तदेवावगच्छ त्वं मम तेजोऽंशसंभवम् ॥

Uddhava, the friend of Krishna, puts the same question to Krishna and Krishna gives a list of items (BH 11- Chapter 16) in which He may be meditated upon. He concludes with a similar statement saying Wherever there is power, beauty, fame, prosperity, modesty, sacrifice, agreeableness, luck, strength, fortitude or knowledge, there am I manifested. BH(11-16-40).

तेजः श्रीः कीर्तिश्रयं ह्रीस्त्यगः सौभगं भगः ।

वीर्यं तितिक्षा विज्ञानं यत्र यत्र स मेशकः ॥

From this we understand that any special quality or glory, like beauty, strength, talent etc., we observe any where or in any one, really belongs to God only. Because of this reason, whenever we think of an item or person with some special quality or greatness we should realise that we are thinking of a repository of His glory only. The hymn Pratasmaranam mentions a list of such items that have some special glory. These includes a wide assortment including rivers, mountains, kings, sages etc..The greatness we observe in them really belongs to Him only and so we marvel at His glory and feel humble. Therefore by the remembrance of these items we learn to remember the Lord as being

inherent in every thing. We can no more ask as to how to see God, because we are seeing Him all the time. It is said that once some one told Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi that he wants to see God and requested Bhagavan to help him. Bhagavan said that he cannot help the visitor in this task since what he is seeing is God only.

Accepting these facts takes us one step higher than worshipping Him in idols and images. With this kind of thinking permeating our mind, we can go out and face our day with confidence. It can only be auspicious. A popular verse says this and asks how can one who has made his heart as the abode of the Lord face failure?

लाभस्तेषां जयस्तेषां कुतस्तेषां पराभवः ।

येषां हृदिस्थो भगवान् मङ्गलायतनं हरिः ॥

Let us now proceed to the stotram proper. The translations given are not exact, but will help to understand the meaning of the verses. Some comments are also provided. The comments are confined to some items only since many of the names and items mentioned in the stotra will be familiar to all.

कराग्रे वसते लक्ष्मीः करमध्ये सरस्वती ।

करमूले तु गौरी च प्रभाते करदर्शनम् ॥ १ ॥

Meaning:- Laksmi (the goddess of wealth) resides in the upper part of hands, Sarasvati (the goddess of learning) resides in the middle, and Gauri (the goddess of valour) in the lower part. Therefore, every morning one should respectfully have a look at one's hands.

Notes:- We have five **Organs of action** पञ्च कर्मेन्द्रियाणि ।

These are speech, the hands, the legs, the anus and the

genitals. वाक्-पाणि-पाद-पायूपस्थानीति पञ्च कर्मेन्द्रियाणि ।

(Tattva Bodah). The **Organs** are not the physical ones but the power behind them. Thus one may have his leg in tact, but may be unable to move it about because of some disease and the power is gone. This power resident in the organ is derived from the Lord only. This is said in the scriptures.

श्रोत्रस्य श्रोत्रं मनसो मनो यद्वाचो ह वाचं स उ प्रणस्य प्राणः ।

चक्षुषश्चक्षु-रतिमुच्य धीराः प्रेत्यास्माल्लोका-दमृता भवन्ति ॥ Kenopanishat (1-2).

The devotee Dhruva said this in praise of the Lord. BH(4-9-6).

योऽन्तः प्रविश्य मम वाचमिमां प्रसुप्तां

सञ्जीवयत्यखिलशक्तिधरः स्वधाम्ना ।
अन्यांश्च हस्त-चरण-श्रवण-त्वगादीन्
प्रणान् नमो भगवते पुरुषाय तुभ्यम् ॥

He salutes the Lord saying that He had entered into him through His intelligent power and roused his dormant power of speech. Being the Lord of all powers, He had also kindled to activity also all his other organs. Though He is the Lord of all powers, He weilds it through various deities. This is like saying that the President is the head of the country, but he exercises the power through many officers. It is so with the powers resident in the organs of the body. The power in an organ is called the presiding deity or अधिष्ठाता देवता । Each of the organs have its own presiding deity. Even though all these organs are all equally important for leading an active and happy life, the hands are considered more equal than the other organs. They are needed for performing the obligatory duties known as the five great yagnas पञ्च महा यज्ञानि । They include worship of God, the manes, the rishis, the guests and the animals and plants. Because of this reason, the deity presiding over the hands is Indra. Indra in this case means the Supreme Being. तस्मादिदन्द्रो नामेदन्द्रो ह वै नाम तमिदन्द्रं सन्तमिन्द्र इत्याचक्षते परोक्षेण । (Aitareyopanishad 1-14). He is the One who sees all. He helps us to use the hands and do the enjoined duties. He is on the other side accepting them and blesses us with the fruits of these actions. Thus, by discharging our duties we can achieve all the goals of life known as पुरुषार्थाः । So, the vedic hymn Sri Rudram says the hands are greatly blessed, in fact more blessed than the other organs. The reason is simple. It has the fortune to come into contact with the auspicious body of the Lord (in the form of idols) during His worship. He is called the universal physician. By worshipping Him one may get rid of his sorrows and achieve all the goals of life including the most prized one - salvation (mokSha) itself.

अयं मे हस्तो भगवान्, अयं मे भगवत्तरः ।
अयं मे विश्वभेषजोऽयं शिवाभिमर्शनः ॥

The benefits one may get from the worship of the Lord include knowledge, wealth, stamina etc. These are very essential for living happily and to do our duties, both secular and religious. These are got by the

blessings of the Goddesses LakShmi, Sarasvathi and Gauri - who are all the Lord's manifestations only. So all the Devis also said to reside in the hands. Thus, by looking at the hands we get to remember the Lord; and this in turn is equivalent to looking at the three Devis. Here too, we should remember that the Devis are one only. Thus we find the the names LakShmi, Sarasvathi and Gauri in the 1008 names of LakShmi.

समुद्रवसने देवी पर्वतस्तनमण्डले ।

विष्णुपत्नि नमस्तुभ्यं पादस्पर्श क्षमस्व मे ॥ २ ॥

Meaning:- O Devi! You are wearing the ocean as a clothing on your body. The mountains are your breasts! O Consort of Visnu! I salute you and beg your pardon for having to set foot on your body for my routine activities.

Notes: - This verse is addressed to the goddess of earth, called Bhu Devi. She sustains all life on this earth and is verily the mother of all living beings, including the plants and animals. Like the saree worn by a lady, the oceans cover most of the Goddess Earth. Like the milk flowing from the breasts of a mother provides nourishment to her child, the waters flowing down the mountains provide nourishment to the land and the people. Her glory is sung by the vedic hymn भू सूक्तम् and by many poets. Acharya Vedanta Desika's poem Bhustuti is very popular In one of the verses he says that the Bhu Devi is very close to the Lord. This is evident from the fact that when we start reciting the Gayatri mantra the word भू: which represnts Bhu Devi immediately follows ॐ which represents the Lord. त्वं व्याहृतिः प्रथमतः प्रणवः प्रियस्ते

संवेदयत्यखिल मन्त्र गणास्तमेव । In fact the Lord Himself

is in the form of the earth . भू: . VS(437, 942) and मेदिनीरूपी

- मेदिनी पृथिवी रूपं - स्वरूपं अस्य अस्तीति मेदिनीरूपी । श्लो

वै रुद्रस्स भगवान् या च भूस्तस्मै नमो नमः इति श्रुतिः ॥

SS(360). So, it is natural that we should hesitate to put our feet on

Her. But we cannot avoid doing so also. So we request Her to pardon our act. She being the embodiment of forbearance will, we may be sure, tolerate and allow it. The following verse is also in praise of Bhu Devi. नमोऽस्तु प्रियदत्तायै तुभ्यं देवि वसुन्धरे ।

त्वं माता सर्वलोकानां पादन्यासं क्षमस्व मे ॥ ३ ॥

Meaning:- O Devi! I salute you and beg your pardon for having to set foot on your body for my routine activities. You are the giver of all that is dear to us. You are the mother and repository of all wealth.

Notes:- Earth is called the mother as She bears all like a fond mother bearing her child in her lap. In addition She sustains all living beings by giving food items in many forms like grains, fruits etc., besides water in abundance. These are most needed by all and so dear to us. वसुः = wealth, riches. The mother who gave birth to us may not be with us till our end and look after us, but may leave us any day before it. But the mother Earth bears and sustains us all through our life. Further, we may, without being aware of Her greatness, treat Her lightly. She bears all the abuses patiently and so is the very embodiment of patience. Narada describes Rama as the counterpart of Mother Earth in forbearance. क्षमया पृथिवीसमः । Ramayana (1-1-18). The question is, how the earth which itself is suspended in space is able to bear all beings and also make plants grow? The Lord says that it is He who is behind the earth and provides the necessary support. BG((15-13).

गामाविश्य च भूतानि धारयाम्यहमोजसा ।

पुष्णामि चौषधीः सर्वाः सोमो भूत्वा रसात्मकः ॥

ब्रह्मा मुरारि-स्त्रिपुरान्तकारी भानुः शशी भूमिसुतो बुधश्च ।

गुरुश्च शुक्रः शनि-राहु-केतवः कुर्वन्तु सर्वे मम सुप्रभातम् ॥ ४ ॥

Meaning:- Brahma (the Creator), Murari (Visnu), Tripurantakari (Siva, the slayer of Tripuras), the nine planets, Sun, the Moon, Mars the son of Bhumi, Budha (Mercury), Brihaspati (Jupiter), Sukra (Venus), Sani (Saturn), Rahu and Ketu; may all these make the morning auspicious for me.

Notes:- It was pointed out earlier that every thing in the universe that has a name or form is His manifestation only. Because of this reason, He is known as बहुरूपः - ब्रह्मादि स्थावरान्तकरण बहुरूपः ।

SS(393). Every object right from Brahma - the creator to a plant is His form only. The Kaivalyopanishad says that He is Brahma, Shiva, Indra, the immovable, the supreme, the Self luminous. He is Vishnu, Prana, the Time, the Fire and the Moon.

स ब्रह्मा स शिवः सेन्द्रः सोऽक्षरः परमः स्वराट् ।

स एव विष्णुः स प्राणः स कालोऽग्निः स चन्द्रमाः ॥ ८ ॥

The famous hymn Siva Mahimna Stotram (26) says that those people who consider themselves to be wise hold the opinion that the Lord is the

Sun, the Moon, the Fire, the Air, the Water, the Space, the Earth and the Self. But all these opinions are only limiting the Lord. The poet exclaims that one does not know His real nature as He is all pervading.

त्वमर्कस्त्वं सोमस्त्वमसि पवनस्त्वं हुतवह-
स्त्वमापस्त्वं व्योम त्वमु धरणिरात्मा त्वमिति च ।
परिच्छिन्नमेवं त्वयि परिणता विभ्रति गिरं
न विद्वस्तत्त्वं वयमिह तु यत् त्वं न भवसि ॥

The names mentioned here may be found in the list of names of the Lord. For example, one of His names is ब्रह्मा - ब्रह्मात्मना सर्वं सृजतीति ब्रह्मा VS(663). He creates everything as Brahma. He is पुरन्दरः - सुरशत्रूणां पुराणां दारणात् पुरन्दरः । VS(335) SS(45). पुरत्रयविधाती - पुरत्रयं विहन्तीति पुरत्रयविधाती SS(104). He destroyed the three cities of the asuras. and so on. सनत्कुमारः सनकः सनन्दनः सनातनो-ऽप्यासुरि-पिङ्गलौ च । सप्तस्वराः सप्त रसातलानि कुर्वन्तु सर्वे मम सुप्रभातम् ॥ ५ ॥

Meaning:- Sanatkumara, Sanaka, Sanadana and Sanatana (whom Brahma, the creator, begot by wish); Rsi Asuri (a disciple of Rsi Kapila, the founder of the Samkhya system of philosophy), Rsi Pingala (the author of Hindu Prosody); the Seven Svaras (tones) (i.e. Shadja, Rsabha, Gandhara, Madhyam, Panchama, Dhaivata and Nisada); and the seven nether-worlds (Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talatala, Rasatala, Mahatala and Patala) —may all these make the morning auspicious for me !

Notes:- The four sages Sanatkumara etc., are said to be born of the mind of Brahma in the very beginning of creation. They were not interested in taking to the life of a householder. So, they took to a life of renunciation. They were great devotees and jnanis. They, being the first born, are senior to all, but they remain ever youthful. They move around the worlds unhindered teaching people about devotion and wisdom. Being great devotees they keep uttering the name of the Lord. हरिः शरणमेवं हि नित्यं तेषां मुखे वचः ।

(Sri Bhagavata mahatmyam.(2-48). We know that sage Narada was the guru of great devotees like Prahlada, Dhruva and sages like Vyasa and Valmiki. But, it seems, that the great Narada himself felt unhappy and missing a feeling of fulfilment. He approached Sanatkumara who

taught him the famous Bhuma Vidya. It is said Sanatkumara is the incarnation of Lord Skanda. तँ स्कन्द इत्याचक्षते तँ स्कन्द इत्याचक्षते । Chandogyopanishat. (7-26-2). The story appears in the Chandogyopanishat. Such is the greatness of the four sages. Krishna says that these four sages are His manifestations only. BG(10-6)

सप्तार्णवाः सप्त-कुलाचलाश्च सप्तर्षयो द्वीप-वनानि सप्त ।

भूरादिकृत्वा भुवनानि सप्त कुर्वन्तु सर्वे मम सुप्रभातम् ॥ ५ ॥

Meaning:- The seven oceans (Lavanabdhi, Iksu, Suravarpa, Ajay, Dadhi, Ksira and Svadu-jala); the seven mountains (Mahendra, Malaya, Sahydri, Suktiman, Rkasavan, Vindhya and Pariyatra): the seven Rsis (Kasyapa, Atri, Bharadvaja, Visvamitra, Gautama, Jamadagni and Vasishta): the seven dvipas (Continents) (i.e. Jambu, Plaksa, Salmala, Kusa, Kroncha, Saka and Puskara): the seven vanas (forests) (i.e. Dandakaranya, Khandaranya, Champakaranya, Vedaranya, Naimisaranya, Brahmaranyas and Dharmaranya); and the seven bhuvanas (heavens) (i.e.) Bhuh, Bhuvah, Svah, Mahah, Janah, Traph and Satyam) —may all these make the morning auspicious for me !

Notes:- Rishi is one who has these seven qualifications. (1) long life (2) should have divined mantrs (3) power of lordship (4) divine vision (5) senior by personal qualities, wisdom and age (6) who conduct himself strictly according to dharmic ways and thus sets an example to others and (7) who founded a gotra. Vayupurana (61-93,94).

सप्तैते सप्तभिश्चैव गुणैः सप्तर्षयः स्मृताः ।

दीर्घायुषो मन्त्रकृत ईश्वरा दिव्यचक्षुषः ।

वृद्धाश्च प्रत्यक्षधर्माणो गोत्रप्रवर्तकाश्च ये ॥

The rishis whose names are said here are known to us. Atri was the son of Brahma, the creator and is as great as Brahma Himself. जातस्यासीत् सुतो धातुरत्रिः पितृसमो गुणैः । BH(9-14-2). Soma, the Moon (mentioned in an earlier verse) was born to him. He was the embodiment of nectar. Brahma appointed him as the chief of brahmins, herbs, plants and of the stars. विप्रौषव्युडुगणानां ब्रह्मणा कल्पितः

पतिः ।BH(9-14-3). This verse mentions the higher worlds (above our world). The world we reside in is the Bhu loka (भूः). The previous verse mentioned the seven nether worlds (below our world). One reaches these worlds as a result of his deeds. By doing more of good than evil acts one earns more merit or punya and goes to the higher worlds.

Similarly by indulging in prohibited acts , one earns papam and goes to the nether regions.BG(15-18).

ऊर्ध्वं गच्छन्ति सत्वस्था मध्ये तिष्ठन्ति राजसाः ।

जघन्य-गुण-वृत्तिस्था अधो गच्छन्ति तामसाः ॥

पृथ्वी सगन्धा सरसास्तथापः स्पर्शी च वायुर्ज्वलनं च तेजः ।

नभः सशब्दं महता सहैव कुर्वन्तु सर्वे मम सुप्रभातम् ॥ ६ ॥

Meaning:- The Earth with its quality of smell , Water with its quality of taste, Air with its quality of touch, Fire with its quality of teja (glow), Akasa (space) with its quality of sabda (sound)— may all these elements along with the element of Buddhi (intellect) make my morning auspicious for me !

Notes:-The five elements are the constituents of the universe and the beings that inhabit them. They are the manifes- tations of the Lord

only. He has the name पञ्चभूतात्मा - पञ्चसङ्ख्याकानि भूतानि आकाशादीनि आत्मस्वरूपं यस्य पञ्चभूतात्मा । ऋत्सृष्ट्वा तदेवानुप्राविशत् । तदनु प्रविश्य । सच्चत्यच्चा भवत् इति श्रुतेः । SS(352).

महेन्द्रो मलयः सह्यो देवतात्मा हिमालयः ।

ध्येयो रैवतको विन्ध्यो गिरिश्वारावलि-स्तथा ॥ ७ ॥

Meaning:- Mahendra (in Orissa), Malaya (in Mysore) Sahydri (Western Ghats), Himalaya (the soul of numerous gods—in Northern India), the adorable Raivataka (Giranara - in Kathiawad), Vindhya-chala (from Gujarat to Bihar) and Aravali (in Rajasthan)—al these mountains are to be remembered with veneration. Notes:- The mountais are great as they are the birth place of many rivers. They also have many holy places located in them. Great rivers like the Ganga, Sindhu are born in the Himalaya mountain. Holy places like Amarnath, Badrinath, Kedarnath, Rishikesh and mount Kailas - the abode of Lord Siva, are located in the Himalaya mountain. So it very holy and is देवतात्मा. Kalidasa

uses the term in the opening verse in his classic Kumarasambhava to describe the Himalaya. अस्त्युत्तरस्यां दिशि देवतात्मा हिमालयो नाम नगाधिराजः । He describes the glory of the Himalaya in several verses that follow the opening verse. Similarly the Vindhya-chala is reputed to be the abode of Devi Lalitha. She has the name विन्ध्याचलनिवासिनी -

विन्ध्याख्ये अचले पर्वते निवसतीति तथा । LS(336). The mountains

are also the abode of many sages who perform penance there.

गङ्गा सिन्धुश्च कावेरी यमुना च सरस्वती ।

रेवा महानदी गोदा ब्रह्मपुत्रा पुनातु मम् ॥ ८ ॥

Meaning:- Ganga, Sindhu, Kaveri, Yamuna, Sarasvati, Reva (Narmada) Mahanadi, Godavari, and Brahmaputra— may all these rivers consecrate me.

Note:- The sacredness of these rivers are well known. So we think of them before taking our daily bath. It is said that thinking of them is enough to wash our sins. We invite their presence during pujas also. We recite the following verse and pray to them to be present in the water to be used in the puja. गङ्गे च यमुने चैव गोदावरी सरस्वती ।

नर्मदे सिन्धु कावेरी जलेऽस्मिन् सन्निधिं कुरु ॥ आयान्तु देवपूजार्थं
दुरितक्षयकारकाः ॥

अयोध्या मथुरा माया काशी काञ्ची अवन्तिका ।

पुरी द्वारावती चैव सप्तैता मोक्षदायिकाः ॥ ९ ॥

Meaning:- Ayodhya, Mathura, Maya (Haridwar), Kasi, Kanchi, Avantika (Ujjain), and Dwarika Puri all these seven puries (cities) bestow moksa (emancipation) on human beings. Note:- These cities are holy since they are associated with the Lord. Rama was born in Ayodhya and later He ruled over it. Mathura is linked with Krishna. It is said that the Lord is ever present there. मथुरा भगवान् यत्र नित्यं सन्निहितो

हरिः ॥ BH(10-1-28).

प्रयागा पाटलीपुत्रं विजयानगरं पुरीम् ।

इन्द्रप्रस्थं गयां चैव प्रत्यूषे प्रत्यहं स्मरेत् ॥ १० ॥

Meaning:- Prayaga, Pataliputra (Patna), Vijayanagara (Hampi-south) Jagannathapuri, Indraprastha (Delhi) and Gaya — all these holy places are to be remembered everyday in the morning

अरुन्धत्यनुसूया च सावित्री जानकी सती ।

तेजस्विनीश्च पाञ्चाली वन्दनीया निरन्तरम् ॥ ११ ॥

Meaning:- Arundhati (wife of Vasistha), Anusuya (wife of Rsi Atri), Savitri (wife of Satyvan), Janaki (Sita ji), Sati (daughter of Daksa, wife of Siva), and the noble - spirited Panchali (Draupadi) — all these great women deserve our reverence for ever.

वैन्यं पृथुं हैहयमर्जुनं च शाकुन्तलेयं भरतं नलं च ।

रामं च यो वै स्मरति प्रभाते तस्यार्थलभो विजयश्च हस्ते ॥ १२ ॥

Meaning:- He who remembers Prthu (Son of King Vena), Arjuna of Haihaya

dynasty (known as Kartavirya), Bharata (son of Sakuntala), Raja Nala, and the ideal king Sri Rama the morning acquires affluence and always comes out successful in his endeavours. Note:- King Prutu was the son of king Vena - a descendant of the the great devotee Druva (mentioned in the next verse). Prutu was an part incarnation of Lord Hari. येष विष्णोः भगवतः कला । BH(4-15-3) He got the name because soon after his birth sages foretold that he will be the foremost among rulers and will be very famous. BH(4-15-5). The earth got the name Prithvi from him.

अयं तु प्रतमो राज्ञां पुमान् प्रथयिथा यशः ।

पृथु-नाम महाराजो भविष्यति पृथुश्रवाः ॥

Arjuna, also known as Kartavirya was the king of Hehaya. He worshipped Lord Dattatreya and became very powerful and invincible. He acquired immense wealth and supernatural powers etc. He could defeat Ravana and became very proud. He was killed by Parasurama. His story is mentioned in BH(9-15-17 and 18).

हेहयानामधिपति-रर्जुनः क्षत्रियर्षभः ।

दत्तं नारायणस्यांसमाराध्य परिकर्मभिः ॥

बाहून् दशशतं लेभे दुर्धर्षत्वमरातिषु ।

अव्याहतेन्द्रियौजःश्री-तेजो-वीर्य-यशो-बलम् ॥

दध्यङ् मनुर्भृगुरसौ हरिपूर्वचन्द्रो

भीष्मार्जुन-ध्रुव-वशिष्ट-शुकादयश्च ।

प्रह्लाद-नारद-भगीरथ-विश्वकर्म-

वाअल्मीकयोत्र चिरचिन्त्यशुभाभिधानाः ॥ १३ ॥

Meaning:- Rsi Dadhichi , Manu, Bhrgu, the truthful King Harischandra, the iron - willed Bhisma, Arjuna (the wielder of the famous bow Gandiva), Bhakta Dhruva, Rsi Vasistha, Sukadeva (son of Vyasa), Bhakta Prahlada, Muni Narada, Bhagiratha (one who brought the Ganga from the Heaven to the

Earth), Visvakarma (the first architect), Valmiki (the first poet)—all these sacred names are worth remembering for ever.

अश्वत्थामा बलिव्यासो हनूमांश्च विभीषणः ।

कृपः परशुरामश्च सप्तैते चिरजीविनः ॥ १४ ॥

सप्तैतान् संस्मरेन्नित्यं मार्कण्डेयमथाष्टमम् ।

जीवेत् वर्षशतं साग्रमपमृत्युविवर्जितः ॥ १५ ॥

Meaning:- Asvatthama (son of Drona), Raja Bali , Vyasa (the first spiritual preceptor), Hanuman (a devotee of Rama), Vibhisana (a favourite of Rama) Krpacharya and Parasurama –all these seven are immortal beings. He who remembers them everyday along-with Markandeya (a devotee of Siva) will live for a hundred years. He will never meet with an untimely death.

पुण्यश्लोको नलो राजा पुण्यश्लोको युधिष्ठिरः ।

पुण्यश्लोको विदेहश्च पुण्यश्लोको जनार्दनः ॥ १६ ॥

कार्कोटकस्य नागस्य दमयन्त्या नळस्य च ।

ऋतुपर्णस्य राजर्षेः कीर्तनं कलिनाशनम् ॥ १७ ॥

Meaning:-Raja Nala, the truthful Yudhisthira, Janaka the king of Videha, and Janardana (i. e.) Lord Krishna -the very utterance of these names sanctifies the tongue.

Notes:- In this and the preceding verses the names of several great seers and kings are mentined. Some of them, like king Nala, Harischandra and Rama had gone through severe ordeals. But they did not get despondent and swerve from the path of righteousness. For example, when Rama was told that he would not be made the king but will have to go to the forest his countenance did not show any change, nor was he upset.

न वनं गान्तुकामस्य त्यजतश्च वसुंधराम् ।

सर्वलोकातिगत्येव लक्ष्यते चित्तविक्रिया ॥

Ramayana. (2-19-23). These men were great, because they did not act according to their own likes and dislikes. But they did what they thought was proper. Such an act may produce results that are not pleasant but they were willing to accept it as God's gift. What is proper and not is given in the shastras. What the shastras say is dharma. The shastras are given out by the Lord. The Lord's words are supreme and are to be followed implicitly without consideration of the results. The Lord had said the above clearly. BG(2-47).

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।

मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥

These great men were confident that dharma will protect them and were convinced that one should not stray from the path of dharma under any circumstance. They surrendered to the God's will as expressed in the

shastras. It is said in Mahabharata that dharma is eternal and so one should never give that up . On the other hand, joy and sorrow are not lasting. So, one should not give up dharma under any circumstance: from desire, fear, greed or even for the sake of one's life.

न जातु कामान्न भयान्न लोभाद् धर्मः त्यजेज्जीवितसापि हेतोः ।

नित्यो धर्मः सुखदुःखे त्वनित्ये जीवो नित्यो हेतुरस्य त्वनित्यः ॥

Such people, Krishna says are wise (jnanis) and are qualified to attain immortality (mokSha) BG(2-15).

यं हि न व्यथयन्त्येते पुरुषं पुरुषर्षभ ।

समदुःखसुखं धीरं सोऽमृतत्वाय कल्पते ॥

The kings are known as rajarshis or royal sages. Thus, Valmiki calls king Dasaratha as महर्षिकल्पो राजर्षिः । (1-6-20) rajarshi, as great as a maharshi. So, showing respect to such persons is equivalent to showing respect to God. Even uttering their names is as good as uttering the names of God and so is purifying as was seen earlier. Because of this reason, we will see that our puranas give in some places a long list of names of kings who were royal sages in the solar or lunar dynasty. The Brihadaranyopanishat gives a list of names of gurus who were jnanis and transmitted their knowledge to their disciples.

Further, our scriptures say that those who praise, serve and worship the wise person (jnani) get the results of the meritorious actions (punyam) done by the wise man. Those who criticise, hate or cause pain to the jnani get the results of sinful actions (papam) done by the wise man. (Tattva Bodha).

किञ्च ये ज्ञानिनं स्तुवन्ति, भजन्ति, अर्चयन्ति तान्प्रति

ज्ञानिकृतं आगामि पुण्यं गच्छति ।

ये ज्ञानिनं निन्दन्ति, द्विषन्ति, दुःखप्रादानं कुर्वन्ति,

तान्प्रति ज्ञानिकृतं सर्वमागामि

क्रियमाणं यद्वाच्यं कर्म पापात्मकं तद्गच्छति ।

सुहृदः पुण्यकृत्यं, दुर्हृदः पापकृत्यं गृह्णन्ति ।

In view of this, we, by mentioning the names of the great people listed in the above verses with reverence, stand to gain much because we will get a share of the punyam from their account.

As an aside we may take a scene in Ramayana - the one wherein the

queen Kausalya, mother of Rama blesses Rama before he departs to the forest. This is narrated in canto 25 of the Ayodhya Kanda. In her blessings she prays that the seven rishis, Indra and the gods subordinate to him, the seasons, the moon god, Brihaspati, the seven principal mountains, the oceans etc., should protect Rama. Some verses forming the prayer are given below. चकार माता रामस्य मङ्गलानि मनस्विनी ॥ १ ॥ The high minded mother Kausalya performed the rites conducive to the welfare of Rama (and said as follows).

स्वस्ति साध्याश्च विश्वे च मरुतश्च महर्षिभिः ।

स्वस्ति धाता विधाता च स्वस्ति पूषा भगोऽर्यमा ॥ ८ ॥

लोकपालाश्च ते सर्वे वासवप्रमुखास्तथा ।

ऋतवः षट् च ते सर्वे मासाः संवत्सराः क्षपाः ॥ ९ ॥

दिनानि च मुहूर्ताश्च स्वस्ति कुर्वन्तु ते सदा ।

श्रुतिः स्मृतिश्च धर्मश्च पातु त्वां पुत्र सर्वता ॥ १० ॥

स्कन्दश्च भगवान् देवः सोमश्च सबृहस्पतिः ।

सप्तर्षयो नारदश्च ते त्वां रक्षन्तु सर्वतः ॥ ११ ॥

ते चापि सर्वतः सिद्धा दिशश्च सदिगीश्वराः ।

स्तुता मया वने तस्मिन् पान्तु त्वं पुत्र नित्यशः ॥ १२ ॥

शैलाः सर्वे समुद्रश्च राजा वरुण एव च ।

द्यौरन्तरिक्षं पृथिवी वायुश्च सचराचराः ॥ १३ ॥

नक्षत्राणि च सर्वाणि ग्रहाश्च सह देवतैः ।

अहोरात्रे तथा संध्ये पान्तु त्वां वनमाश्रितम् ॥ १४ ॥

ऋतवश्चापि षट् चान्ये मासा संवत्सरास्तथा ।

कलाश्च काष्ठाश्च तथा तव शर्म दिशन्तु ते ॥ १५ ॥

ऋषयः सागरा द्वीपा वेदा लोका दिशश्च ताः ।

मङ्गलानि महाबाहो दिशन्तु शुभमङ्गलम् ॥ ३६ ॥

Kausalya prays to many divine beings and many other things (animate and inanimate) to protect Rama when he is in the forest. Those whom she prays to in the above verses include the following: the Sadhyas and the Viswedevas (two different classes of gods), the wind-gods, eminent rishis, the Cosmic Person, the creator, gods Pusha, Bhaga, Aryama, the guardians of the spheres headed by Indra, the deities presiding over the six seasons, the months, years, nights, days, and hours,

the Vedas, the smriti texts, dharma, Lord Skanda, the moon god, sage Brihaspati, the seven rishis, sage Narada, siddhas, the four quarters along with their guardians, the seven principal mountains, the oceans, Varuna the king of the oceans, heaven, earth, the intervening region, the atmosphere, the animate and inanimate creation, the stars, the sun, planets along with their gods, deities presiding over the day and night, morning and evening twilights, deities presiding over the six seasons, the intercalary months and the years containing such months, divisions of time such as minutes and seconds, the rishis, the seven oceans, Dwipas (principal divisions of the globe), the four Vedas, the three spheres and the four quarters also. What can be Kausalya's idea in praying to so many beings as listed above? If we read the above carefully we may notice that this prayer, sounds similar to the prayer contained in the Pratasmaranam. Evidently Kausalya was aware of the fact that God is present everywhere and in every thing. The sage Valmiki carefully uses the adjective **मनस्विनी** meaning **wise** or **jnani** to describe her in the first verse above. She knew the fact not only in theory but also from experience. This implies that she knew that Rama, while in forest, will always be surrounded by the Lord in one form or the other and so she prayed to such an omnipresent Lord to offer him protection. The prayer may be different but when we look at it from the right perspective appears sensible as emanating from a pious person.

। फलश्रुतिः ।

इत्थं प्रभाते परमं पवित्रं

पठेत् स्मरेद्वा शृणुयाच्च तद्वत् ।

दुःस्वप्ननाशस्त्वहं सुप्रभातं

भवेच्च नित्यं भगवत्प्रसादात् ॥ १८ ॥

Meaning:- Any one who reads, remembers or hears this superior and purifying Pratasmaranam early in the morning every day, in that manner, will, by God's grace, have an auspicious day and be free from disturbing dreams. Notes: This verse states the fruits of reciting or hearing the Pratasmaranam. **फलम्** means fruit. The stotram is said to be superior and purifying because it talks about the glory of the Lord. It gives the benefits stated when it is read or heard with proper understanding of the meaning. So, it is said **तद्वत्** (i.e) in the proper manner. Bad dreams are the results of latent tendencies,

known as vasanas. Thinking of the Lord destroys these latent tendencies and the bad dreams that come up from them. So, the Lord has the name

दुःस्वप्ननाशनः - भाविनोऽनर्थस्य सूचकान् दुःस्वप्नान् नाशयति
ध्यातः, स्मृतः, कीर्तितः, पूजितश्चेति दुःस्वप्ननाशनः ।

VS(926). The verses in the Pratasmaranam help to keep alive the thought of the Lord all through the day and as a result there is no place for vasanas to hide in the mind and disturb our peace.

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.. prAtaHsmaraNam ..

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