navagraha stotram with meaning and commentary

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We need the blessings of the nine planets known as Navagraha’s to have a life that is free from various types of problems that may trouble us from time to time. The following verses are in praise of the planets. The planets are not the planets we talk about normally, but the word refers to the presiding deities or devatas. The verses were found in an old palm-leaf manuscript. Rough translations of the verses are given to enable the reader to recite the verses with the knowledge of the meaning. It is said that reciting a stotra with an understanding of the meaning is more beneficial than mere reading of the text. Some explanatory notes are given.

In these notes VS stands for Vishnu Sahasranama Stotram and SS for Siva Sahasranama Stotram (Mahabarata version) and SS (PP) stands for Siva Sahasranama Stotram (Padma Purana version) and SA for Siva 108 Namavali. Those who want to know more about the nine planets may like to go through the songs by the great carnatic composer Muthuswamy DikShitar. He was an expert on our traditions and a veritable store house of knowledge. He gives a wealth of details about the planets in his Navagraha songs. There is another Navagraha Stotram by Vyasa which is popular. This is available with meaning in this web site. Many other stotras are available under the heading Navagraha in this site. All are informative and give details about the planets.

Hymn in praise of the Sun God.
I bow to Aditya, whose complexion resembles the filament of a lotus flower, and who is a witness to all our actions, who is a preceptor to the entire world, and who can remove all diseases.

Note. Aditya is another name of the Sun God. సప్సంగ్యాం సప్సంయాం అయ్యషం యసుషాం యసుషాం అయ్యషం అయ్యషాం అయ్యషం అయ్యషం (Gita. 10-20).
There are references to the Sun in Vishnu and Siva Sahasranamas. Some are:
అయ్యషం అయ్యషం అయ్యషం అయ్యషం =one who travels in the sky (No.876): అయ్యషం అయ్యషం అయ్యషం (No.881) and the one who goes on his path in a chariot drawn by seven horses. (No:829) as అయ్యషం అయ్యషం అయ్యషం అయ్యషం (He is of the form of Surya or Sun. SS (64).అయ్యషం అయ్యషం అయ్యషం (SS (630).
అయ్యషం అయ్యషం అయ్యషం అయ్యషం (No.212). One whose horses are very fast.

Sri Rudram in Anuvakam I, Rik 7 and 8 refer to the fact that the Lord manifests Himself as the Sun so as to be visible and easily accessible to the people for worshipping.

This says that the Sun, who is copper coloured when he rises, then slightly rosy-red, then golden yellow, this highly auspicious and beneficient one is verily Rudra. The sun is stated to be the visible form of God. The Lord in His true form is అయ్యషం really without any attributes and so is formless. This pure form is
extremely difficult to comprehend. In His form, as Lord endowed with attributes like form can be understood by only certain devotees who are conversant with the shastras. In His form as the sun He is visible to all. This mantra says that as the sun He is visible to the cowherds and women fetching water. These two stand as examples of people who are generally considered illiterate and naive. Really speaking, the whole world stands ignorant and on par with the cowherds and the women carrying water in the matter of understanding the Lord. But still, the kindly Lord stands easy to be seen by all as the sun. All life depend on him. He announces the dawn of the day, vivifies all beings so that they may go about their work. So the scriptures say that He is the Self of the world. We cannot imagine a world without the sun, a world plunged into utter darkness. It will be a veritable hell. Perhaps, keeping such a view. the Isavasyopanishad calls hell as the sunless worlds enveloped in blinding darkness. = Witness to what we do. It is said in Mahabharata (Adi parva) that one may be naive enough to think that no one knows when he perpetrates a foul deed. But the devas and the One within are watching him. Besides there are other witnesses. They are the sun, the moon, the god of wind, the god of fire, the sky, the earth, the water, one’s own mind, the god of death, the day and the night, the two junctions of the day and the night, and the god of Dharma.

Manu also says something on these lines.
The Lord witnesses everything. So He is called ɑɧ. One who witnesses everything. He also: says the (VS15). One who removes all diseases. We are told to pray to the Sun God for good health. so goes the saying. Health is the most precious possession one can have.

In its absence one cannot be happy even though he has other good things of life like money at his disposal. Not only it makes him unhappy but it affects him in other ways too. A sick body cannot house a healthy mind. said Swamy Vivekananda. A sick man cannot work efficiently. He cannot even concentrate and say his prayers properly. Keeping all this in mind Kalidasa said in his Kumarasambhavam that the foremost requisite for the performance of dharma is a sound body:

It is said that the sins committed in previous births afflict one in the form of diseases. The sage Manu gives some details of diseases one gets because of sins committed by him.
Manu classifies the sins into various categories based on their gravity. He terms five as great sins. He says that the cure for the diseases can be had by means of expiatory acts. These acts include taking medicines, performing special sacrifices, homas, japa, harity etc.. But in these modern times it may be difficult, if not impossible, to perform these prescribed rites. Our shastras say that in all such cases the remedy lies in chanting Lord’s names or thinking of Him.

This is a verse we say daily with our prayers and says that repeating Sri Krishna’s names is the expiation for all sins. So the Lord has the following names. 

For this reason, Siva has the name Hari. SS (PP) (No.542) and also No.96(SA). 

Hymn in praise of the Moon God.
I bow down to the God of Moon who was born from the ocean of milk and once appeared from the eyes of sage Atri and is is an ornament to the head of Lord Siva.

The moon is called శశ్ర because we can see a mark like a శుం or hare or rabbit in it. So it is also known as శశ్రం 1 or మృదుం 1 as some say that the mark resembles a deer. One of the names of the Lord (VS No.285) is శశ్రం 1. It is said in the Puranas that the sage Atri produced the moon from his eye, while he was practising penance. The poet Kalidasa refers to this in his Raghuvamsa (2-75). While describing Queen SudakShina’s conception he says:

The commentator Mallinatha says:

The moon said to have come out of the ocean of milk (శుం 1) when it was churned by the devas and asuras to get the nectar.
The moon looks like an ornament on the matted locks of Siva. So He has the names: శ్రీమతి శ్రీమతి శ్రీమతి శ్శః, శ్రీమతి శ్రీమతి శ్రీమతి. SS(108), SA(5), and

I salute the God Mangala (Mars) who was born of earth, who shines like a cluster of lightning, who is the Lord of the earth and is the same as the Kartikeya bearing the weapon known as Shakti.

I prostrate to Budha - the son of Soma or Moon - who is effulgent like the saffron and gold, who is incomparably handsome, and who has charming qualities.

I bow down to Guru (planet Jupitar) who is the preceptor of gods and sages, who is radiant like gold, who has complete wisdom and is the Lord of
the three worlds.

Krishna says in Gita (10-24) that He is Brihaspati amongst priests.

The name Brihaspathi is synonymous for one who is very intelligent and is skilled in oratory. Amara gives his names as follows:

I salute Sukra (the planet Venus), the son of Bhrugu, who is sparkling like a pure crystal, who is the foremost preceptor of the asuras and who is adept in explaining all the shastras.

Sukra was the son of sage Bhrugu. He was an expert in yoga shastra and knew the art of reviving the dead, known as Sanjivini Vidya.

I bow down to Shani (Saturn) whose complexion resembles the dark pigment, the son of Sun God who is a prime planet, and who was born of Chaya Devi to Sun God.

He is of the form of Shani.

I am bowing to Rahu. He is of the form of Rahu.
I salute Rahu who has half the body, who has great valour, who hides the sun and the moon and who was born of Simhika.

Rahu was a demon, son of Viprachitti and Simhika. At the time the nectar, that was got by churning of the ocean was being served, he disguised himself and tried to get a share of it. But he was detected by Surya and Chandra. They informed Vishnu who as Mohini was serving the nectar. Vishnu severed the head. But since he had tasted a little of the nectar, the head became immortal. It is said to wreck its revenge by seizing them at the time of their conjunction and opposition which causes the eclipse. This is said in Sri Bhagavata Purana. (8-9-24,25,26).

I salute Ketu whose complexion is of the colour of smoke emanating from burning of straw, who is the chief of the stars and planets, who is very cruel and of frightful appearance.

I salute SS(66). He is of the form of Ketu.

I salute SS(67). He is of the form of Rahu who seizes.
Let the Sun give me all prosperity, the Moon excellent fame, Angaraka valour, Budha wisdom, Guru long life, Sukra kingdom, Shani victory, Rahu attractive nature and Ketu all desires. Let all the planets give me support.

Giving leave and praying for forgiveness.

There might have been deficiencies or excesses or lack of clarity in the rites I have performed. Kindly bear with them. Please go happily and return.

I have no other refuge. You are always my protection. Therefore, may you, the lords of the planets kindly protect me.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

The nine planets mentioned here are said to give auspicious or inauspicious results to one as per the individual’s karma or past actions. By propitiating them, it is said that one can either get favourable results in enhanced form or malefic effects with reduced severity. So we have the practice of worshipping them in the temples regularly and particularly on certain days dedicated to them, like Saturday is the day specially chosen to worship god Saturn.

Let us now look at what is said about such worships in our shastras. The scriptures talk of this subject at two different levels. One is at the संस्कृत or transactional level or the level at which we do our work or go about doing business in this world. The other is at the ऐतिहासिक level or at the level of reality or truth. Let us call them as level 1 and 2.

Speaking at level 1 first, the scriptures aver that the Lord created
The devas and assigned them their duties and conferred on them the capability necessary to perform their duties.

(Isavasyopanishad No.8). The various deities perform their assigned duties diligently as the Lord is keeping a close watch over them. This is also said in the Kathopanishad.

From Its fear; the fire burns, the sun generates heat; again from Its fear Indra, Vayu and Death run around, busy in their respective jobs. The Taittiriyopanishad (Anuvaka 8) says the same thing.

Thus, the Lord is the creator and also the controller of various devatas. Because of this, He gets the names and .

The Upanishads to some extent and the Puranas to a greater extent talk about the deities. They say they have supernatural powers to bless us with health, wealth and such material benefits. Because of this people have developed the habit of worshipping different deities.

People choose to worship a particular deity because they think that deity can fulfil their specific desires. In this way they may worship the planets to ward off evil effects predicted by an astrologer.

Similarly, one may worship Goddess Laksmi to get wealth or Sarasvathi to gain knowledge. The puranas and other scriptures give the method of worship also.

It is also possible that one is attracted to a particular deity because of past tendencies called vasanas.

The Lord Krishna reveals a secret in Gita (Chapter 7) about worshipping
various deities. He says that He is Himself in the form of all deities (not only planets). But some people are not aware of this truth and as a result of this ignorance they worship different deities, assuming that one is different from the other. So worship offered to a deity in any form is in fact worship offered to Him only. Only the names and forms are different.

The results one gets as the fruit of the worship is, in fact given by Him only, and is channelised through the particular deity. (Gita-Chap-7)

Krishna adds that He strengthens their faith in that particular deity. Such devotees, who worship like this, will also progress in course of time and reach higher forms of devotion and worship. The Lord says that He will ensure their progress.

The point to be noted here is that these deities are only Lord’s manifestations, and not eternal like the Lord. The Lord says in Gita (8-16) that even the positions of the creator Brahma and Indra are not permanent. They will go in time. Krishna says this:

So, the rewards they offer cannot be permanent either. They will necessarily be ephemeral or limited by time.
Krishna terms these people who worship such deities as people endowed with limited intelligence. This is because the effort they put in to perform the worship, in the form of gathering materials, the time and money spent is the same as required to worship the Lord; but the result they get is limited. The reason is that their vision is limited.

The remedy lies in understanding what is said in Gita and other scriptures and get a broader picture. One may worship any deity but with the understanding that the deity worshipped is only the Supreme Being that has no limitations. To facilitate such an understanding the stotras contain names that reveal this fact. For example, one of the 108 names of LakShmi (అశ్వామి శివ స్వామి) is ఔత్తర బము ఇత్తిత్తి. That is, She is of the form of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva.

One of the 108 names of Subrahmanya is పరమః శతం దేవి పరమః శతం దేవి. This is also one of the 108 names of Krishna. It also says సరావృద్ధి సంగము సరామి సంగము సరామి సంగము. That is, Krishna is of the form of all planets. This fact is stated clearly in the Upanishads about the Supreme Being.

For example, the Kaivalyopanishad says:

సుమూతి సుమూతి సుమూతి సుమూతి సుమూతి
సుమూతి సుమూతి సుమూతి సుమూతి సుమూతి

He is Brahma, He is Shiva, He is Indra, He is the Immutable, the Supreme, the Self-luminous. He alone is Vishnu, He is Prana, He is Time and Fire, He is the Moon. A popular verse, which we recite during our prayers says this.

సారిత్తు సాంతిత్తు సాంతిత్తు సాంతిత్తు
సాంతిత్తు సాంతిత్తు సాంతిత్తు

This verse says that just like the rain water falling in different places ultimately reaches the sea, so do the worship offered to different deities reach the Lord.

This is sufficient proof of the fact that a deity worshipped in any
form is a manifestation of the One Supreme Being only. So the Lord gets these names (VS 725 and 726) as:

Also as:

The Siva Mahimna Stotram (No.23) says this in a highly poetic fashion.

Some hold this limiting opinion about You: You are the Sun; You are the Moon; You are the Fire; You are the Air; You are the Water; You are the Space; You are the Earth; and You are the Self. But we do not know that thing which
You are not.

Worshipping any deity with such an expanded vision will bring in infinitely richer results and also take our understanding of God to a higher degree. Sri Bhagavatha says (5-7-5) that the king Bharatha performed the religious rites with this idea in his mind and offered the results of the rites to the Lord with the knowledge that the different deities are only different limbs of the Lord.

It is said that the king Bharata's mind was thoroughly cleansed through the purity of his actions and he developed intense devotion to the Lord.

Swami Rama Thirta explains this with an interesting example. A lady goes to a jeweller's shop desirous of buying, say, a gold bangle. The salesman there displays various designs of bangles available with him. She does not look at the other items, also made of gold, on display or being shown to other ladies there. She is taken by the form and the name bangle and buys it. She makes the payment and goes away happily with the bangles. A thief enters the shop at night. He collects all items of gold and makes good his escape. He does not bother whether the item is a bangle or a chain or something else.

That is, he is not taken by the form like the lady. The Swami points out that there is no such THING as bangle or chain. Bangle and chain are only gold. Bangle and chain are only names given to particular forms of gold. They do not have existence of their own. They depend on the gold for their existence but not vice versa. The gold can exist separately, independantly of the bangle and the chain. Such a thing, like gold in this case, which gives substance to other
things is called Adhishtanam 幸製室呪 1. Some more examples are: wood is the Adhishtanam for articles like chair and table made out of it. One cannot bring a chair or table without bringing wood. Or, to put it bluntly, when one is bringing a chair or table, he is bringing only wood.

Clay is the Adhishtanam for pot and other items made of clay. The names and forms like bangle and chain are not permanent as they can be changed; but not the Adhishtanam gold which gives them existence. It will continue to exist even after the bangle or chain is melted or made into a different item.

In fact what we call as bangle or chain or by any other name is only gold. Such items do not exist by themselves. The lady temporarily overlooks the Adhishtanam gold - the permanent substance - as her mind is set on the bangle. But the thief is wiser. He is after the Adhishtanam gold only. He is not fooled by the names and forms like bangle and chain and as a result becomes richer. The conclusion, the Swamiji says is, that most of us are struggling with the world of names and forms only and may be termed as ajnanis.

But the wise thief, who goes beyond names and forms is like a jnani. He strikes it rich.

So at level 2, one can worship the deity as the Supreme Being, as being behind it, as the source and sustainer of all other forms of deities. Not surprisingly, one of His names is (VS No.324)

He has also the name 幸製室呪 1. The suffix 幸製 appended to any word means made of or composed of. Thus we say the ornament is 幸製室牧.
It is gold and nothing but gold only. Gold pervades it in and through. Similarly, the Lord has the name (SS950) నవగ్రహానం 1. Any deity is nothing but a form and name of the Lord only. We have seen this said in this popular verse from Niti Sastra. 

సర్వవయః

Similarly, the Lord has the name (SS950). Any deity is nothing but a form and name of the Lord only. We have seen this said in this popular verse from Niti Sastra.

మృతभు contradictions in the text, it seems there is a typographical error. The correct verse would likely resemble:

యర్థాభు మంచంబంతం నిషిధ్యం గురించి మలింగా మంచంబంతం ఉండతాడు

The vessels (made of clay) are different but the clay is one. The ornaments are many but the gold is one. The cows are many but the milk is one. (So also) the bodies are many but the Lord is one.

This understanding will bring in rich dividends in the form of material gains and also spiritual progress. Since He is in the form of all deities, the worship offered to Him flows to all deities, which are His various forms only and as a result fetches the benefits of worshipping them also.

Sri Bhagavatha (8-5-49) illustrates this with an apt example.

యర్థాభు మంచంబంతం నిషిధ్యం గురించి మలింగా మంచంబంతం ఉండతాడు

Even as pouring water at the roots of a tree nourishes the trunk and branches as well. even so worshipping the Lord Vishnu amounts to propitiating all as well as oneself.

Taking the example of bangle and chain discussed earlier, we see that when the gold is cleaned and polished, the ornaments bangle and `chain get automatically cleaned and polished. Also when we weigh the bangle and `chain, we are in fact weighing the adhishtanam gold only. This brings home the idea conveyed all along. That is, worship offered to a deity in any form is indeed
worship offered to the Supreme Being only, but unknowingly. And worship offered to the Supreme Being is equivalent to worshipping all the deities.

An incident in the life of the Tamil saint Sambandar illustrates this point. He wanted to go to Madurai, the capital of Pandyan kingdom. The kingdom was at that time, under a wave of Jainism and the king too was under the spell of that religion.

In view of this, it appears that his well wishers advised him to drop the idea of visiting that place as they feared he may be harmed there. They added that the planetary positions also were not favourable for undertaking the journey. But the saint was not discouraged by such thoughts. He recited ten verses through which he conveyed that the planets will do no harm to the devotee of the Lord;

but on the other hand they will do only good and much, much good only. His vision was very clear.

When one is under the Lord’s protection, the planets, who are His form only, will not harm him.

So Sri Bhagavatha (2-3-10) says that a wise person, whether he has many desires , or has no desires or he desires mokSha can worship the Lord and benefit.

But we are only human. We are fascinated by the worldly gains like health and lucre as we feel they are near and are tangible and no attraction to things like God’s grace and salvation which sound distant and nebulous. Yama, the god of death, mentions
this with sadness
in Kathopanishad. (1-2-2)

He adds with regret that these people will be reborn and come to him again and again.

As an aside, it is to be pointed out that some devotees may call the Supreme Being by
different names such as Siva or Krishna etc. For example, the author of Siva-mahimna
Stotram says: that is, there is no God superior to Mahesha or Siva. They may also add that they will not worship other deities who can give only petty benefits
or favours. For example we see Sri Sankaracharya saying so in his famous work Sivanandalahari.

There are thousands of gods who can give petty benefits. I will not even dream of worshipping them or seeking favours from them.
O Shambo! I seek only Your lotus feet which is difficult to attain even by Gods like Vishnu and Brahma, though they are near You.
Prima facie, it will seem that the Acharya is speaking disparagingly of Vishnu and Brahma. But, his intention becomes clear if we can see that he is taking Siva as the Supreme Lord. All other
Gods become His manifestations only and cannot give ever lasting bliss or mokSha like Him. In the same vein, Kulasekhara says in

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his Mukundamala thus.

He terms all gods including Rudra and Brahma as insignificant. The idea is that when one realises that Lord alone is supreme and real, all other gods are only names and forms and so are unsubstantial and insignificant. But all have said the one fact stated above, that is worshipping Him is the best thing to do.

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