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Sri Lalita

Our ancestors attained welfare by praising the Paramatma with several names. Of those names, the *Sahasranamas* are very well known. Of those *Sahasranamas*, *Lalita Sahasranama* is something special.

The *Lalita Sahasranama* describes the Paradevata's *saguna roopa* (aspect with form), the ways of worshipping her, the manner in which she blesses people and the broad enunciation of Vedantic truths. In particular the *Advaita siddhanta (monism)* which Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada taught, has been clearly stated in many places in *Lalita Sahasranama*.

Names, such as *mithya jagad adhishtana*, *dwaita vargita*, *tattvamartha swarupini*, bring out the Advaitic concept. The name,

Namaparayana preetha, indicates that we should chant her names to get her blessings. The name, *sadhya prasidhini*, says that we can quickly acquire what we desire by worshipping her with devotion.

Similarly, the name, *Nirvana Sukhadhayani*, means that those who chant her names to get moksha (salvation) could also have their wish fulfilled.

May all devotees gain their well-being by reciting the *Lalita Sahasranama* that serves as a Kalpa Vriksha in granting their desires.

ओंकारपञ्चशुकीं

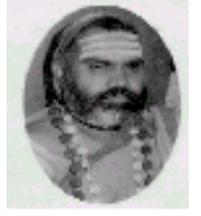
उपनिषदुद्धानकेलीकलकण्ठीम् ।

आगम विपीन मयूरी

आर्यामन्तर्विभावये गौरीम् ॥

श्री श्री जगद्गुरु शंङ्कराचार्य महासंस्थानम्

दक्षिणाम्नाय श्री शादापीठम् शृङ्गेरी



Sri Sri Jagadguru Shankaracharya Mahasamstanam

Dakshinamnaya, Sri Sharada Peetam, Sringeri.

V.R. GOWRI SHANKAR, BE. DIISC, AMIMA

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S/18 / 2587

Camp: **SRINGERI**

Date: **16:09:99**

Message

Hinduism, the mother of all religions, is the most ancient among the living religions of the World, as well as the most modern, putting forth new forms, new interpretations and new expressions. In the religious activity of a Hindu today, you see not only the most ancient Vedic hymns recited, the most ancient sacraments like initiation (Upanayanam) gone through but also the adoration of most recent saints and their teachings. Hinduism combines the most abstract philosophy of the highest order with the worship of manifold forms of divinity - Siva, Vishnu, Goddess Devi and so on and has a variety of spiritual practices to suit the spiritual needs of seekers who are at different stages of spiritual evolution. It is this vitality that imparts to Hinduism the character of Sanatana Dharma - perennial religion or philosophy. Blessed are we to have taken birth as Hindus. We should be proud of our religion and our glorious heritage.

The Sringeri Vidya Bharathi Foundation was established on July 13, 1995 at Stroudsburg in the idyllic Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania, USA, in order to spread and promote the sublime principles of Sanatana Dharma among the one million strong Hindu community in USA and Canada, as well as non-Hindus interested in Hinduism. It is the first affiliated Shankara Math of Sringeri outside India and is an international extension of the world famous and revered Sri Sharada Peetam of Sringeri, the first and foremost of the monasteries established by Adi Shankara in India, 1200 years back.

For inculcating knowledge and reverence for Hindu philosophy, culture and tradition, the Foundation has started the Sringeri Sadhana Center and a Temple of Goddess Sharada, where worship in the Vedic tradition is being offered. The center regularly conducts Vedic rituals, retreats, camps, seminars and classes on Sanskrit, Hindu philosophy, Mantra chanting, Puja,

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Yoga, meditation and every aspect of Hinduism to make Indian devotees realize their precious religious heritage and understand the rich traditional ideals and values of Hinduism. Many have benefited immensely from their spiritual programs over the last four years.

For universal welfare and prosperity, the most auspicious Athi Rudram Maha Yagna was conducted in USA for eleven days from August 22, 1997. This mega event was a spectacular success and greatly benefited thousands of Indian devotees who participated in it.

Recently started, Paramaatha Tattvam, Eternal Truth a quarterly Journal of Sringeri Vidya Bharati Foundation, Inc., is becoming very popular for its contents.

In future, we plan to conduct many more important activities, which will spiritually enrich the lives of all Indians living abroad. The Foundation has drawn up impressive plans to construct a spectacular Temple for Goddess Sharada in the near future. Upon completion, this Temple will become a pilgrimage spot for all Indians living abroad who will find spiritual solace in its holy confines.

I wish to place on record my deep appreciation of the exemplary work being done by our Trustees, staff and the hundreds of volunteers for SVBF. Thanks to their selfless, sincere, dedicated services, SVBF has become a beacon light of hope and provides spiritual succor to lakhs of devotees living abroad.

Today, Hindus settled abroad have become very prosperous due to hard work and are highly respected for their immense contributions to society. With material wealth we must combine spiritual wealth. Only through a harmonious blend of the East and the West can one become a complete human being. Hinduism is the greatest of all religions. By imbibing its profound philosophy and inculcating spiritual values into our lives, we can acquire what we lack in today's materialistic world that is true mental peace and happiness. Hinduism shall guide the world in the years to come. This is for certain. Since we are most fortunate to have taken birth as Hindus, we should make full use of this Golden Opportunity and evolve to a higher plane of existence.

I convey the Gracious Blessings of His Holiness and Goddess Sharadamba for granting you the strength to embark on the most exciting journey of your life - the spiritual journey into Yourself. With their Blessings you are bound to succeed in your efforts and become a pure noble person and make your life and other lives, a Heaven on earth.



(V. R. GOWRISHANKAR)

From the Editorial Board....

Paramaartha Tattvam will be completing its first year with this issue ! Goddess Sharadamba has carried us along through the first year of the Journal! With Her Grace, with the blessings of His Holiness as the source of inspiration, and with the encouragement from well wishers around the globe, we are sure that Paramaartha Tattvam is on a very strong growth track in the years to come !!

This being the first annual issue, we include a special message from Sri. V. R. Gowrishankar, Administrator, Sringeri Mutt and Founder-Trustee of SVBF. As the timing of the issue coincides with the Navaratri celebrations, special articles on Lalita Sahasranamam are included from Tattvaloka.

Our children/youth column seems to be gaining more popularity as evidenced by the overwhelming response through essay contributions.

Please note that the address of our web-site is changed to reflect our Foundation's name. The new web address is

<http://www.svbf.org>

We are in the process of including more features to the web site and will keep you posted.

Jaya Jaya Shankara

From the President and Chairman

Greetings.

On behalf of SVBF, we wish all our readers, a very happy, healthy and prosperous New Year 2000. Paramaartha Tattvam successfully completes its first year of publication with this issue. From a modest mail-list of 1,500 devotees for the first issue of the Journal in January 1999, our data-base has increased to over 4,000 devotees during the year, thanks to the extremely overwhelming response by the global community ! Several of you have given us very positive feedback and have expressed the enthusiasm with which you look forward to receiving every next issue !! The Journal has given us the opportunity to reach fellow devotees across the world, and to propagate the mission of this International Foundation and Sadhana Center. We are going ahead in full stream to reach our goal and to accomplish our mission. Such a phenomenal growth within such a short time was possible only with the Grace of Sri Sharadamba and the sampurna anugraha of His Holiness. We submit our pranams at the lotus feet of His Holiness and pray for Their anugraham to be with us always, and to guide us in our efforts to realize our goal. On this happy juncture, we would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to all our fellow devotees, to the large group of highly dedicated volunteers, fellow members of the Board of Trustees and the members of the Executive Committee, whose commitment is the greatest asset to the Foundation!! We seek your support in whatever way you can, so that we can take pride in growing together. Our special gratitude is to Sri Gowrishankar, for his valuable guidance and immense support. Several of you help us to defray the cost of printing and shipping, for which we are grateful. We request such voluntary contributions in larger numbers, which will enable us to feel more at ease in meeting the costs. We are gearing up to the millineum and look forward to an even more productive Year 2000 !!

With Pranams at the Lotus Feet of His Holiness,

S. Yégnasubramanian
President, SVBF

Ravi Subramanian
Chairman, SVBF

॥ श्रीः ॥

॥ मन्त्रमातृकापुष्पमालास्तवः ॥

Mantra Matraka Pushpamala Stvam

ADI SHANKARACHARYA

This hymn of rare charm and beauty, composed by Sankara Bhagavatpada on Sri Tripura Sundari, describes the *shodasa upacharas*—the types of services a devotee fondly renders to the deity. It has a total of 17 verses. Each of the first 15 verses begins with one letter of Panchadasi mantra; the first verse with KA, the second verse with AE, the third with EE, and so on. The 16th verse indicates the merit that accrues to the votary who chants this loud every day regularly. The 17th verse is an eulogy on the hymn with the masterly command and confidence of the poet in the quality and efficacy of his composition.

कल्लोलोल्लसितामृताब्धिलहरीमध्ये विराजन्मणि-द्विपे कल्पकवाटिकापरिवृते कादम्बवाट्युज्ज्वले ।
रत्नस्तम्भसहस्रनिर्मितसभामध्ये विमानोत्तमे चिन्तारत्नविनिर्मितं जननि ते सिंहासनं भावये ॥१॥

*KallolollasitAmrutAbdhi laharI madhye virAjanmani -
Dvipe kalpakavAtikA parivrute kAdambavAtyujjvale |
Ratna stambha sahasra nirmita sabhamadhye vimAnottame
CintAratnavinirmitam janani te simhAsanam bhAvaye ||*

1. In a bejewelled island set in the sea of nectarine waves, in the midst of shining gardens of Kadamba trees surrounded by wish-fulfilling fern, in the court of a thousand emerald pillars, I conceive, O Mother, your diamond studded throne.

एणाङ्गानलभानुमण्डलसच्छ्रीचक्रमध्ये स्थितां बालार्कद्युतिभासुरां करतलैः पाशाङ्कुशैः बिभ्रतीम् ।
चापं बाणमपि प्रसन्नवदनां कौसुम्भवस्त्रान्वितां तां त्वां चन्द्रकलावतंसमकुटां चारुस्मितां भावये ॥२॥

*ENANkAnalabhAnu maNdalalasad sri cakramadhye sthitAm
BALArkadyuti bhAsurAm karatalaih: pasaNkusau bibhratim |
CApam bANamapi prasannavadanAm kausumbhavastrAnvitAm
TAm tvAm chandrakalAvatam samkutAm carusmitAm bhAvaye ||*

2. I meditate on your benign face wreathed in an enchanting smile. Draped in a garment of saffron, you are radiating lusture like a rising sun. Your diadem is fixed with the curved digit of the moon. Seated in the midst of Sri Chakra which dazzles like the orbs of the sun, moon and fire, you hold in your hands, the bow, the arrow, the goad and the noose.

ईशानादिपदं शिवैकफलदं रत्नासनं ते शुभं पाद्यं कुङ्कुमचन्दनादिभरितैरर्घ्यं सरत्नाक्षतैः ।
शुद्धैराचमनीयकं तव जलैर्भक्त्य मया कल्पितं कारुण्यामृतवारिधे तदखिलं संतुष्टये कल्पतां ॥३॥

*ISAnAdipadam Sivaikaphaladam ratnAsanam te Subham
PAyam kumkumacandanAdi bharitair arghyam saratnAkSataih: |
Suddhair acamanIyakam tava jalair bhaktya mayA kalpitam
kArunyAmrutavAridhe tadakhilam santuStaye kalpatAm | |*

3. O Mother! Siva constitutes the plank of your couch. Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Isana serve the role of four legs. The waters to wash your feet are mixed with sandal and saffron. Precious unbroken stones are sprinkled in the waters, mingled with my fervour and devotion. May it please you to take this bow of pure water for your gargle.

लक्ष्ये योगिजनस्य रक्षितजगज्जाले विशालेक्षणे प्रालेयाम्बुपटीरकुङ्कुमलसत्कपूर्मिश्रोदकैः ।
गोक्षीरैरपि नारिकेलसलिलैः शुद्धोदकैर्मन्त्रितैः स्नानं देवि धिया मयैतदखिलं संतुष्टये कल्पताम् ॥४॥

*LakSye yogijanasya rakSitajagajjAle viSAlekSaNe
PrAleyAmbupatIra kumkumalasad karpooramiSrodakaih.: |
GOkSIrairapi nArikelasalilaih: Suddhodakair mantritaih:
SnAnam devi dhiyA mayaitadakhilam santuStaye kalpatAm. | |*

4. Thou art the final goal for the Yogins to reach. With your wide eyes, you espy the evanescent world of snares. I have collected for your bath fragrant waters mixed with saffron and camphor besides cow's milk and coconut water. To the sonorous chant of mantras, I bathe you in crystal clear waters, may it please you to accept this service.

हिकाराङ्कितमन्त्रलक्षिततनो हेमाचलात्संचितै रत्नैरुज्ज्वलमुत्तरीयसहितं कौसुम्भवर्णशुकम् ।
मुक्तासंततियज्ञसूत्रममलं सौवर्णतन्तूद्भवं दत्तं देवि धिया मयैतदखिलं संतुष्टये कल्पताम् ॥५॥

*HrinkArANkita mantralakSitatanoo himAcalAtsamcitaih
Ratnair ujjvalamuttarIya sahitam kausumbhvarNamSukam |
MuktAsamtati yajnasutramamalam sauvarNatantoodbhavam
Dattam devi dhiyA mayaitadakhilam santuStaye kalpatAm | |*

5. Your body is signified by the Mantra with triple Hrimkaras have gathered precious stones from the golden hill and fashioned a shining veil and saffron coloured blouse for your accoutrement. Your Yagna sutra is made of golden strands strung with pearls. May it please you to accept all this offered in a prayerful meditation.

हंसैरप्यतिलोभनीयगमने हारावलीमुज्ज्वलां हिन्दोलद्युतिहीरपूरिततरे हेमाङ्गदे कङ्कणे ।
मञ्जीरौ मणिकुण्डले मुकुटमप्यर्धेन्दुचूडामणिं नासामौक्तिकमङ्गुलीयकटकौ काञ्चीमपि स्वीकुरु ॥६॥

*HamsaIrapyatilObhnIyagamane hArAvlImujjvalAm
HindoladyutihIrapooritatare hemaAngade kaNkaNe |
ManjIrau maNikuNdale makutamapyardhenducoodamanim
NAsAmauktikam angulIyakatakau kAncImapi svIkuru | |*

6. Your joyful walk steals the thunder from swan's walk. Your necklace fill all directions with crimson. May it please you to accept, O Mother, all shapes of jewellery coming out of my imagination—jingling bells, anklets, pendants, pearly nose studs, bangles, bracelets, diamond crown, moonlike crest jewel, and the golden gridle.

सर्वाङ्गे घनसारकुङ्कुमघनश्रीगन्धपङ्काङ्कितं कस्तूरीतिलकं च फालफलके गोरोचनापत्रकम् ।
गण्डादर्शनमण्डले नयनयोर्दिव्याञ्जनं तेऽञ्चितं कण्ठाब्जे मृगनाभिपङ्कममलं त्वत्प्रीतये कल्पताम् ॥७॥

SarvANge ghanasArkumkumaghana SrIgandhapaNkaNkitam
KastoorI tilakamca phAlaphalake gOrOcanApatrakam |
GaNdAdarSanamaNdale nayanayor divyanjanam teNcitam
KaNtAbje mruganAbhipanNkamamalam tvatprItaye kalpatAm ||

7. I have prepared saffron mixed with sandal water as an unguent for your body. Kasturi tilak for your forehead, kajal for your eyes, musk with a heavenly fragrance for your neck. For your temples sparkling like a mirror, here is gorochana. May it please you to accept all this for your pleasure and enjoyment.

कल्हारोत्पलमल्लिकामरुवकैः सौवर्णपङ्केरुहै-र्जातीचम्पकमालतीवकुलकैर्मन्दारकुन्दादिभिः ।
केतक्या करवीरकैर्बहुविधैः कलसाः स्रजो मालिकाः संकल्पने समर्पयामि वरदे संतुष्टये गृह्यताम् ॥८॥

KalhArOt palamallikAmaruvakaih: sauvarNapaNkeruhaih-
jAtI campakmAlatIvakulakair mandArakundAdibhih :|
KetakyA karavIrakair bahuvidhaih: kLuptah: srajO mAlikah:
Samkalpane samarpayAmivarade samtustaye gruhytAm ||

8. I offer garlands made of lilies, lotuses, jasmines, hibiscus blooms and variety of other sweet smelling flowers, such as marua, ketaki, karavira, champak, malati and vakula. O Giver of boons! May it please you to accept this floral tribute.

हन्तारं मदनस्य नन्दयसि यैरङ्गैरनङ्गोज्ज्वलै- यैर्भृङ्गावलिनीलकुन्तलभरैर्बन्धासि तस्याशयम् ।
तानीमानि तवाम्ब कोमलतरण्यामोदलीलागृहा- ण्यामोदाय दशाङ्गुगुलुतैर्धूपैरहं धूपये ॥९॥

HantAram madanasya nandayasi yairANgairanANgOjjvalair
YairbhraNgAvali nIlkuntalabharaIr badnasi tasyaASayam |
TanI mAni tavAmba kOmala tarANyA modalILAgruhANyAmodAya
DaSANga guggulughrutair dhoopairaham dhoopaye ||

9. You delight the cockles of the heart of Sive, the destroyer of Cupid, by the shining love of your limbs. Your dark tresses are adorned with flowers. May it please you to accept my offer of incense from myrrh.

लक्ष्मीमुज्ज्वलयामि रत्ननिवहोद्भास्वत्तरे मन्दिरेमालारूपविलम्बितैर्मणिमयस्तम्भेषु संभावितैः ।
चित्रैर्हाटकपुत्रिकाकरधृतैर्गर्व्यैर्वर्धितैर्दिव्यैर्दिपगणैर्धिया गिरिसुते संतुष्टये कल्पताम् ॥१०॥

*Lakshmi mujjvalayAmi ratnanivahOdbhAsvattare mandire
MALAroopavilambitair manimaya stambheSu sambhAvitaih: |
Citraitr haTakaputrikAkaradhrutair gavyair ghrutairvardhitaih-
Divyair dipagaNaihr dhiya girisute samtustaye kalpatAm ||*

10. In your mansion of precious stones, jewelled pillars and festooned arches, may all prosperity flourish. The lamps borne in the hands of golden damsels emit a divine glow from the wicks saturated with ghee. May my service be pleasing to you.

ह्रींकारेश्वरि तसहाटककृतैः स्थालीसहस्रैर्भृतं दिव्यान्नं घृतसूपशाकभरितं चित्रान्नभेदं तथा ।
दुग्धान्नं मधुशर्करादधियुतं माणिक्यपात्रे स्थितं माषापूपसहस्रमम्ब सफलं नैवेद्यमावेदये ॥११॥

*HrInkAreSvari tapta hATakakrutaih: sthAlIsahasrairbhrutam
DivyAnnam gruta soopa Sakabharitam citrAnnabhedam tathA |
Dugdhanam madhuSarkarAdhiyutam mANikyapatre sthitam
MASApoopasahasramamba saphalam naivedyamAvedaye ||*

11. O Ruler of Hrimkara! In a thousand bowls of burnished gold I offer, celestial food-lentils, vegetable, milk, curds, honey, sugar, fruit and a thousand cakes of black gram dal for your delectation.

सच्छायैर्वरकेतकीदलरुचा ताम्बूलवल्लीदलैः पूगैर्भूरिगुणैः सुगन्धिमधुरैः कर्पूरखण्डोज्ज्वलैः ।
मुक्ताचूर्णविराजितैर्बहुविधैर्वक्त्राम्बुजामोदनैः पूर्णा रत्नकलाचिका तव मुदे न्यस्ता पुरस्तादुमे ॥१२॥

*SacchAyair varaketaki dalaruca tAmboolavallIdalaih:
Poogair bhoorigunaih sugandhimadhuraih karpoorkhaNdOjjvalaih: |
MuktAcoorNavirajitair bahavidhair vaktrAmbujAmodanaih:
PoorNA ratnakalAcika tava mude nyasta purastAdume ||*

12. I place before you, O Mother, a jewelled box of betels of lush green, camphorated araca nuts, lime made out of shells of pearls, for your relishment.

कन्याभिः कमनीयकान्तिभिरलंकारामलारतिका पात्रे मौक्तिकचित्रपङ्क्तिविलसत्कर्पूरदीपालिभिः ।
तत्तत्तालमृदङ्गीतसहितं नृत्यत्पदाम्भोरुहं मन्त्राराधनपूर्वकं सुविहितं नीराजनं गृह्यताम् ॥१३॥

*kanyaAbhih: kamanIyakAntibhi alaNkArAmalArArtika
pAtre mauktika citrapaNktivilasat karpoora dIpAlibhih: |
tattathAtala mrudaNga gItasahitam nrutyatpadAmbhOruham
mantrArAdhana poorvakam suvhitam nIrAjanam gruhyatAm ||*

13. Pretty girls to the accompaniment of lauds and muttering of mantras wave lighted camphorated wicks arranged like a string of pearls in shining plates. Their nimble feet dance to the tune of drum beats and joyous songs. May it please you to accept their offering of lights.

लक्ष्मीमौक्तिकलक्षकल्पितसितच्छत्रं तु धत्ते रसा-दिन्द्राणी च रतिश्च चामरवरे धत्ते स्वयं भारती।
वीणामेणविलोचनाः सुमनसां नृत्यन्ति तद्रागव-द्भवैराङ्गिकसात्त्विकैः स्फुटरसं मातस्तदाकर्ण्यताम् ॥१४॥

*LakSmIrmauktika lakSakalpitasitacchatram tu dhatte rasAd-
IndrANiCa ratiSca cAmaravare dhatte svayam bharati |
VInameNavilOcnA: sumanasAm nrutyanti tadrAgavad-
bhavairANgika sAttvikaih: sphuTarasam mAtastadAkarNyatam ||*

14. Lakshmi herself bears over the head, a sparkling white umbrella adorned with pearls. Indrani and Rati wave the fans and Bharati strums the strings of lyre. Celestial beauties with doe-like eyes for joy for your diversions.

ह्रींकारत्रयसंपुटेन मनुनोपास्ये त्रयीमौलिभि-र्वाक्यैर्लक्ष्यतनो तव स्तुतिविधौ को वा क्षमेताम्बिके।
सल्लापः स्तुतयः प्रदक्षिणशतं संचार एवास्तु तेसवेशो नमसः सहस्रमखिलं त्वत्प्रीतये कल्पताम् ॥१५॥

*HrimkArA trayasamputena maunOpAsye trayImaulibhir-
VAkyairlakSyatanO tava stutividhau ko vA kSametAmbike |
SallApAh: stutayah: pradakSiNSatam samcAra evAstu te
SamveSO namasah: sahasramakhilam tvatprItaye kalpatAm ||*

15. Your body is composed of the Panchadasi mantra divided in three sentences, each of which concludes with Hrimkara. Who can extol you in hymn or laud? Let my prattle therefore be your praise. My wanderings, a hundred circumambulations. My wayward mind going in thousand directions, an instrument of meditation.

श्रीमन्त्राक्षरमालया गिरिसुतां यः पूजयेच्चेतसा संध्यासु प्रतिवासरं सुनियतस्तस्यामलं सयान्मनः।
चित्ताम्भोरुहमण्डपे गिरिसुता नृत्तं विधत्ते रसा-द्वाणी वक्त्रसरोरुहे जलधिजा गेहे जगन्मङ्गला ॥१६॥

*Sri mantrAkSaramAlyA girisutAm yah: poojyecetasA
SandhyAsu prativAsaram suniyatas tasyAmalam syAnmanah: |
CittAmbhOruhamaNtape girisutA nruttam vidhatte rasAd-
vANi vaktrasaroruhe jaladhijA gehe jaganmaNgalA ||*

16. Whosoever worships mentally the Mother with this garland of letters everyday at the junction of night and day with restrained mind, to him this will happen: Gauri will dance on the stage of his devoted mind, Saraswati in his fluent utterances, Lakshmi in his auspicious abode.

इति गिरिवरपुत्रीपादराजीवभूषा भुवनममलयन्ती सूक्तिसौरभ्यसारैः।
शिवपदमकरन्दस्यन्दिनीयं निबद्धामदयतु कविभृङ्गान्मातृकापुष्पमाला ॥१७॥

*Iti girivaraputrIpAdarAjIvabhooSA
bhuvanamamalayantI sooktisaurabhyasAraih: |
SivapadamakarandasyandinIyam nibaddha
Madayatu kavibhruNgAn mAtruka puSpamALA ||*

17. This garland of mantric flowers fashioned by me adorns the lotus feet of the daughter of the Himavan, the mountain lord, by the fragrance of its good utterances, it purifies the worlds. Trickling with the honey from Siva's lotus feet, it inebriates the bee like poets with spiritual madness!

इति श्रीमत्परमहंसपरिव्राजकाचार्यस्य श्रीगोविन्दभगवत्पूज्यपादशिष्यस्य
श्रीमच्छंकरभगवतः कृतौ मन्त्रमातृकापुष्पमालास्तवः संपूर्णः ॥

Translated by M. V. B. S. Sarma, Bombay

TATTVALOKA OCT/NOV 1990

Golden Words

His Holiness Sri. Chandrasekhara Bharati Maha Swamiji

Faith in Guru

❖ *Do not be disheartened by the spiritual darkness over-running the world. When the sun sets and the darkness of night envelops the land, we do not stop our work saying that the sun has set. Do we not light a lamp and get on with our normal activities with the aid of that lamp? If we feel that there is an urgency, do we not walk miles and miles together during the darkest of nights guided by the flickering light of a torch?*

If you feel earnestly and keenly the urgency for escaping from the cycle of birth and death, you will ignore the spiritual gloom prevailing in the land and seek out a guiding torch which will dispel the gloom for you. Such a guiding torch is the guru, your spiritual master, who is waiting to help you.

Navaratri at Sringeri

V. R. GOWRISHANKAR

Dating back to the ancient times, this spectacular nine day festival is a tribute to the traditions of the Sharadha Peetham and its illustrious Acharyas.

Sharannavaratri is one of the most auspicious festivals when the Supreme, worshipped as Universal Mother, is adored in the form of Mahakali, Mahalakshmi and Mahasarasvati. This festival is celebrated during the bright half of *Aswayuja* (September - October) in every *Samavatsara* (year) of the traditional Hindu calendar. It marks the victory of Goddess Mahakali over the powerful asuras led by the demon Mahishasura.

It is believed that the Goddess fought the demon for nine days, starting from the *Pratipat* (first day of the bright half). On the tenth day of Vijaya Dasami, she killed the demon, putting an end to his reign of evil and terror. The celebration on this day symbolizes the victory of righteousness over evil. Even the great warrior Arjuna set out for the battle against the Kauravas on this day after worshipping the Goddess.

Sringeri Celebrations

At Sringeri, Karnataka, the *Shrannavaratri Mahotsava* of Goddess Sharadamba, the presiding deity of Sri Sharadha Peetham, is celebrated with all grandeur by Jagaduru Sankaracharya. Following the tradition set by sage Vidyananya in the 14th century, the celebrations have been a continuing saga of

worship to the Goddess by the succeeding Acharyas and devotees.

On all the ten days, the entire town of Sringeri wears a festive look. The Sri Matha entrance, the courtyard and the gopuram of Sri Sharada temple are brilliantly illuminated. Thousands of devotees from all over India and abroad come to attend the pujas.

The Devi is beautifully decorated and richly adorned with precious jewels. Special ornaments used for her decoration during the festival include a gold crown studded with diamonds, pearls and emeralds, necklaces, breast and waist plates, wristlets, armlets and a host of other gold ornaments. Most of these ornaments are in the possession of the Matha from very early times.

Vahana Alankaras

On the *Mahalaya Amavasya* (new moon day), *Sharadamba*, after the *mahabhishekam*, is adorned with *Jagat Prasutika Alankara*, signifying her unique role as Universal Mother. The commencement of the *utsava* (festival) is marked by the Sri Sharadha *Prathishtha* on the day following the new moon.

From this day the Goddess is decorated on a different *vahana* (mount), identifying the same Goddess in different forms, such as the *Brahmi* (Hamsa or swan), *Maheswari* (bull), *Kaumari* (peacock), *Vaishnavi* (garuda), *Indrani* (elephant), *Chamundi* (lion), and *Ashwvahini* (horse). The Goddess is also adored as *Sarasvati*

(*Veena Sharada*), *Mohini* and *Rajarajeshwari* on different days.

Adi Sankara has given a full description of her resplendence in his *Sharada Bhujangam*. His Holiness *Sri Sacchidhananda Sivabhinava Narasimha Bharati*, the 33rd Jagadguru, in his poem *Bhakti Sudha Tarangini*, has explained the significance of each of these *vahanas*.

Jagadguru's Programme

After *anushtunam* in the morning, His Holiness performs the *Ganga puja* at the holy river Tunga and then visits all the shrines in the vicinity of the Matha.

During mid-day, he performs special *puja* to Sri Sharadamba at the *sanctum sanctorum* — an exhilarating experience for the devotees to watch. He also performs *Lalita Sahasranama archana*, *Gaja Puja*, and *Paduka Puja*.

After the regular night *puja* to Sri Chandramouliswara, the Jagadguru goes to Sri Sharada temple, wearing a colorful durbar dress and an impressive gold crown and sits in splendor facing Sri Sharadamba.

Conceived in Moghul style, this heavy crown, studded with precious stones together with an ornamental chain in the rear, was presented by one of the former Nizams of Hyderabad as a token of his reverence for the Jagadguru.

Among the precious ornaments used on this occasion, the *Muttina sara* necklace deserves special mention. This is one of the ancient ornaments in the possession of the Matha. The pendant of gold depicts Gandaberunda, the

mythical bird, which for centuries, has been ensign of the Mysore kingdom.

Makara kanti (a necklace in the shape of a crocodile, made out of diamonds and emeralds) presented by Tippu Sultan to the Jagadguru, *Jamakhandi Kanti* (a necklace of diamonds) presented by the Raja of Jamakhandi, and the *Katani Sara* (a seven-string necklace of pearls, diamonds and other gems) are other noteworthy jewels because of their uniqueness and antique value. It is only during the *Navaratri* festival that the entire jewels in the Matha are taken out for adorning the Goddess.

Special Pujas

On the Chaturthi (fourth day), an *ashtadravya homa* is offered to Lord Ganapati. Starting from Panchami, the fifth day, *Saptashati Parayana* (recital) is performed with *Chandi homa*. *Purnahuti* takes place on Navami (ninth day). *Gaja Puja* and *Ayudha Puja* are also done on that day.

His Holiness recites the *Pattabishekam* canto from the *Ramayana* on the Vijayadasami (tenth day) to mark the coronation of Sri Rama. Various *parayanas* from the *Devi Bhagavata*, *Harivamsha*, *Lalitopakhyana*, *Lakshminarayan Hridaya*, *Suta Samhita* and the *Vedas* also take place during the *Navaratri*.

Religious Significance

The Absolute Reality is Being, Consciousness, Bliss. It is formless, eternal and infinite. However, such an abstract conception may not be comprehended by most people. The Supreme Lord, therefore, out of compassion,

assumes not only the forms of *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Siva* but also the form of the Devi for the sake of devotees. The goal is to satisfy devotees of all tastes and temperaments and gradually turn their minds towards God.

The Mother is the prime cause of the Universe. This conception forms the basis of the Navaratri festival. When a potter wants to make a pot, he first entertains a clear conception of the pot to be made. This is followed by a desire to create it and then he exerts himself to transform the idea into reality. We can find these three stages of knowledge, desire and action in every kind of activity, ranging from the simplest to the most complicated.

These three stages are present in the creation, maintenance and dissolution of the Universe as well. The holy Mother, who is none other than pure cosmic energy, is invested with knowledge, desire and action on a cosmic scale.

When emphasis is laid on the aspect of knowledge, she is *Jnana Sakti*; when it is desire, she is known as *Ichha Sakti*; and when it is respect of action, she becomes *Kriya Sakti*.

All the three are merely different aspects of the one and the same divine Mother who in essence, is beyond all these aspects.

Spiritual Evolution

These three stages are of special significance in the seekers of spiritual evolution. On the first three days, the seeker worships Mother Durga, the Terrible, as the embodiment of supreme power and force. He prays to her to remove all his defects, impurities and vices.

Once this is accomplished, the devotee's next task is to pray to Mother Lakshmi to bestow on him pure, divine qualities. As *Ichha Sakti*, Lakshmi is the wealth giving aspect of God. She is the repository of pure and good qualities. It is for this reason that Lakshmi is worshipped during the next three days.

Once the evil qualities are destroyed and pure qualities developed, the aspirant becomes competent for the light of divine knowledge. In this third and last stage, the devotee must propitiate Mother Sarasvati to bestow on him supreme wisdom. Therefore, worship of Sarasvati is done on the last three days of *Navaratri*.

Sarasvati is *Jnana Sakti*, being the embodiment of knowledge of absolute reality, or divine knowledge personified. The sound of her celestial *Vina*, awakens the notes of the sublime utterances of the Upanishads which reveal the truth and the significance of the sacred mystic sound, *Om*. She then gives complete knowledge of the Self, as represented by her pure, dazzling, snow-white appearance.

The tenth day, Vijaya Dasami, celebrates the triumphant victory, the achievement of the goal, the unity of the *Atman* with *Brahman*, through the descent of wisdom by the grace of Sarasvati.

The Spiritual journey is now complete. The soul rests in its own Supreme Self as *Sacchidananda Brahman*.

Mother's Grace

Devotees deem it a privilege to offer special *seva* (*worship*) to the Goddess during

the *Navaratri*. They come to Sringeri in thousands to worship her during these days. Goddess Sharada's grace is boundless; her mercy unlimited; her knowledge infinite; her power immeasurable; her glory ineffable and her splendor indescribable.

May we pray that every devotee worshipping the Universal Mother according to

tradition will become free from sins and sorrows, that his ignorance will vanish and that he will gain not only supreme happiness but also liberation in the end from the ocean of *samsara*.

V. R. Gowrishankar is the Administrator of Sri Sringeri matha and its properties, Sringeri 577139, Karnataka.

Golden Words

His Holiness Sri. Chandrasekhara Bharati Maha Swamiji

Faith in Guru

❖ *True gurus are available in every religion. They may not be in the ordinary world of strife, for such a world does not want them nor have they any use for such a world. They may sometimes be found even in the midst of strife, as strife cannot injure them.*

Go, therefore, in search of a true master. He is ever available and is only waiting for a symptom of real earnestness in you. If you have true humility and earnestness to see God, he will solve all your doubts and show you god in no time at all.

❖ *For the purpose of trade and money, we cross the vast oceans and explore the air, but for the purpose of Truth we make no effort. We want the teachers to come to our door and solve our doubts for us. We have no time or desire to learn and practise our dharmas.*

❖ *Religious teachers are guided by the needs and the competency of the people who come to them for guidance. That is why a teacher gives different pieces of advice to different seekers, just as a doctor prescribes different medicines for different patients.*

The Veda-Upaangas (Subsidiary Organs of the Vedas)

Dr. S. Yegnasubramanian

The four *Veda-Upaangas* (subsidiary organs of the *Vedas*) are glorified as an essential subset of the 14 *Vidyasthanas* – the abode of true knowledge and wisdom, as was mentioned in the first of the series of articles, "*The Vedas*", in *Paramaarth Tattvam* Vol. 1.1. As *Vedaangas* (Vol. 1.2) they help to supplement the understanding of the *Vedas*. For the *Veda Purusha*, the four subsidiary organs or limbs are :

1. मीमांसा - *Meemaasa* – Analysis / Enquiry
2. न्याय - *Nyaaya* – Logic / Expediency
3. पुराण - *Puraanam* – Puraana
4. धर्मशास्त्रं - *Dharmasaastram*– Dharmasaashtra

1. मीमांसा - Meemaasa – Analysis / Enquiry

As *Nirukta* gives the etymology of the *Veda mantras*, *Meemaasa* deals with their significance and purport through analysis. *Veda mantras* can be broadly classified as *Karma Kaanda* or *poorva bhaaga* (dealing with rituals) and *Jnaana Kaanda* or *uttara bhaaga* (dealing with Knowledge). Correspondingly in *Meemaasa* also, we have *poorva meemaasa* and *uttara meemaamsa*. *Uttara meemaamsa* is usually known as *vedaanta*, as expounded in the *Upanishads* and *Brahma Sutras*. The term *Meemaasa* by itself refers to *poorva meemaasa* !

For every *saastra*, there is a *sutra* (aphorism) *abhaashya* (commentary) and a *vaartika* (explanation). *Poorva meemaasa sutra* is written by Sage Jaimini, the *bhaashya* by Sabara and the *vaartika* by *Kumaarila Bhatta* (called *Bhatta Deepika*) and *Prabhaakara*. Jaimini's work contains 12 chapters divided into *padas* and into *adhikaranas*. Each *adhikarana* deals with one subject and there are 1000 *adhikaranas* dealing with 1000 different subjects such as social systems, justice, creation, government, etc. *Poorva Meemaamsakas* give importance only to the rituals as mentioned in the *karma kaanda* of the *vedas* and do not acknowledge the role of *Isvara* or god in creation. According to them *Isvara* is not the *phala daata* (फल दाता) – the bestower of the fruits of the actions! They argued that every act carried with it its fruit, and for any action there is a corresponding reaction regardless of *Isvara*. Thus, according to *Saankhyas*, God is not the creator (since they believed that God is attributeless and is Pure Consciousness alone), and to the *Meemaamsakas*, He is not the bestower!

Uttara meemaamsa deals with the subject of *Vedaanta* – the *paramaatman* – as expounded in the *Upanishads*. Sage *Vyaasa* condensed the

meaning of the *Upanishads* through his *Brahma Sutra* (there are over 500 *sutras* divided into 192 *adhikaranas*).

2. न्याय - Nyaaya – Logic

Nyaaya or *tarka saastra* was composed by Sage Gautama. Another Sage, called Ganata, had also written a *Nyaaya Saastra*, known as *Vaisheshika*. *Nyaaya* establishes the existence of *Isvara* through its chief instrument of deduction. Since peculiarity (*visesha*) is the main basis of differentiation between two objects, this system came to be generally known as *vaisheshika*. They discuss fundamental Truth through the aid of four devices (*pramaanas*) - a) *pratyaksha*; b) *anumaan*, c) *upamaana* and d) *sabda*.

Pratyaksha pramaana – direct perception - is what is experienced by our sense organs. *Anumaana* is proof arising from deduction based on certain reasoning – eg. if there is smoke, there should be a fire even if fire cannot be seen directly. *Upamaana* is to know a new thing based on the knowledge of similarity with an already known thing. *Sabda pramaana* is Vedic Scriptures and the sayings of great people like Rishis. These four *pramaanas* and two more – *arthaapatti* and *anupalabdhi* – form part of the *Meemaamsa* doctrine of *Kumaarila Bhatta*. *Arthaapatti* is an inference used to account for an apparent inconsistency – for example – in the statement

'fat Devadatta does not eat in the day' , the apparent inconsistency between 'fatness' and 'not eating in the day' is interpreted as 'eating in the night'. *Anupalabdhi* is knowledge that comes to be known in the absence of an object. However, *nyayaayikas* (of the *nyaaya* school) do not recognize the last two.

According to the *nyaaya* school, the world and soul are separate from *Isvara*. Through further inquiry as to where these came from etc. one reaches the non-dual, *advaitic siddhanta* that all these are various manifestations of the *Paramaatman*. To reach this conclusion, *nyaaya* provides the intermediary step!

3. पुराणं - Puraanam :

Puraanas serve as the "magnifying glass" of the vedas! The crisp and subtle Vedic injunctions are magnified and explained in the form of anecdotes / stories in the *Puraanas*. For example, vedic statements like सत्यं वद (*satyam vada* – speak the truth) is very elaborated in the story of Harishchandra; similarly, धर्मं चर (*dharmam cara* - follow the path of *dharma*), in the epic *Mahabharata*; मातृ देवो भव, पितृ देवो भव - through the epic *Raamaayana*, etc. The word "pura" refers to the "past". Those that narrate events of the past are *Puraanas*; they are written long time ago for all times !

The *Puraanas* mainly deal with the kings of the *Surya* (Solar) dynasty or *Candra* (Lunar)

dynasty. In addition to the state of government then existing, they reveal to us our culture, arts and sciences. Their main focus though, is *dharma* and meta-physics and emphasize the path of devotion - bhakti, surrender to the Lord.

There are 18 *Mahaa Puraanas* comprising 400,000 *granthas* (a *grantha* is a sloka with 32 syllables) composed by Sage Veda Vyaasa. Of these, nearly a quarter (100,000 slokas) has been taken by *Skaanda Puraanam* itself ! The 18 *Puraanas* are *Brahma, Padma, Vishnu, Siva, Bhaagavata, Naarada, Maarkandeya, Agni, Bhavishyat, Brahma Vaivarnya, Linga, Varaha, Skanda, Vaamana, Koorma, Matsya, Garuda and Brahmaanda Puraanas*. (Actually, the author of *Vishnu Puraana* is Sage Paraasara, father of Vyaasa.. However, Vyaasa is the one who edited and presented it in the form known to us). In addition Vyaasa is the author of the epic *Mahaa Bhaarata* (100,000 *granthas*)! The popular texts - *Durga Sapta Sati* (700 slokas) or *Devi Maahaatmyam* is found in *Maarkandeya Puraana*; *Lalitopaakhyaana* and *Lalita Sahasranama* are contained in *Brahmaanda Puraana*; *Vishnu Sahasranaama* and *Bhagavad Gita* are given in *Mahaa Bhaarata*. Sage Vaalmiki rendered the epic *Raamaayana* in which stotras like *Aaditya Hridayam* are found. *Sahasranaamas, ashtotras, trisati* etc. are all found in various *puraanas*. (some mantras like *rudra trisati* etc. are vedic in origin).

A *puraana* has to contain five main elements - 1) *Sarga* - the initial creation; 2) *prathi sarga* - growth of world with time after creation; 3) *Vamsa* (geneology); 4) *Manvantrara* (history of 14 Manus from whom all humankind descended covering a period of 1000 *catur-yuga* cycles (4,320,000 years) 5) *Vamsaanucarita* (history of rulers).

The word *Itihaasam* (epic) - *iti-ha-asam* (इतिहासम्) - means, "it happened thus" . This implies that they were written at the time when they happened - *Ramaayana* was written at the time of Sri Raam and Vyaasa witnessed the incidents of *Maha Bhaarata*.

In addition to the 18 *Mahaa Puraanas*, there are also 18 *upa puraanas* or auxiliary *puraanas* such as *tulaa puraana, naaga puraana, vaisaaka puraana* etc. Additionally we have *sthala puraanas* and other *puraanas*.

Scholars interpret *Vedas* as "*prabhu sammitam*" - like a command of the king; the *puraanas* as "*suhrit sammitam*" - like the advice from a friend who gives the reason as to what will happen if certain things are done; and the *kaavyas* (poetry like *shaakuntalam, kumaara sambhavam* etc.) as *kaantaa sammitam* - reasoning and suggesting with the love and freedom of a spouse !

4. धर्मशास्त्रं -**Dharmasastram**

They can be regarded as the path to realize the *puraanic* goal! The *puraanas* and *itihaasas*

depict noble characters whom we aspire to keep as role-models, and in a way, the goal of our lives. The way to reach this goal is through a sincere practice of life using the prescribed *karma-anushtaanas*. To this effect, what the *Vedas* have mentioned as our duties, the *dharma saastras* have arranged them systematically and elaborated for us to follow, in such minute details like household duties, personal work, bathing, eating etc.

Dharma Saastras are known as *Smritis* and are in the form of *slokas*. (the *Vedas* are called *Sruti*). The word *Smriti* means an aid to memory (to remember the Vedic doctrines). Sages who are knowledgeable in the *Vedas*, complied the injunctions (*dharma*) and the procedural details of how to follow them (*karma*) and presented in an orderly manner through these *Saastras*. There are 18 main *Smritis* named after the rishis, and they are Manu, Yajnavalkya, Paraasara, Gutama, Atri, Angiras, Brihaspati, Daksha, Apastamba, Samvarta, Pracetas, Satatapa, Harita, Yama, Vishnu, Sanka, Likhita, and Asanas. Also, there are 18 supplementary *Smritis* called *upa smritis*. In addition, *Bhagavad Gita* is regarded as a *Smriti* also!

To avoid any doubts that might arise from the study different *Smritis*, there are certain texts called *Nibandhana Granthas*. Thus, each

region of the country followed a certain *nibandhana grantha*. For example, the people of Tamil Nadu follow *Vaidyanaatha Dikshitiyam*; of Maharaashtra follow Kaasi Naatha Upaadhyaya's *Dharma sindhu*. These are essentially for house-holders. Sannyasis, follow the *nibandhana* called *Visweswara Samhita*.

From the time of conception of life-form in the womb of the mother, until cremation, the *Smritis* lay down all the rituals in minute detail. They give us a chart of daily duties from the time one wakes up in the morning till retiring to bed !

The *karmas* that are prescribed in the *Vedas* are known as *Srouta Karmas* and those outlined in the *Smritis* are called *Smaarta Karmas*. For conducting the *Smaarta Karmas* also, the rishis have prescribed the use of *Veda mantras*! The *Vedas*, *Puraanas* and the *Smritis* are all integrated with a common goal of spiritual advancement and they all focus on *dharma*.

ओम् शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

Reference: "The Vedas", Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay 1988.

Feature article of next issue -

The Upanishads

Lalita Sahasranama: Prologue

M.V.B.S. SARMA

The holy conversation between a Vedic seer and a deity blessed by the Devi sets the stage for the world to receive the secret names of the Divine Mother.

The thousand names of the goddess is popularly known as *Lalita Sahasranama*. But the name by which it is referred to in the Tantra is *Rahasya Nama Sahasra, guhya nama sahasra*: the thousand secret names; the occult names of thousand.

The central characters in the prologue of *Lalita Sahasranama* are Hayagriva and Agastya. Knowing their greatness makes one appreciate the grandeur of this unparalleled hymn, which is a sequel to the *Lalitopakhyana* forming part of the *Brahmanda Purana*.

Agastya was a Vedic seer and reputed revealer of several hymns in Rig-Veda. He is said to be the offspring of Mitra and Varuna. He is also called Kalasisuta, Kumbha Sambhava and Ghatodbhava. As he was very small when he was born, he was called Mana. The Puranas represent him as the son of Pulastya, the sage from whom the Rakshasas sprang. He was one of the narrators of *Brahma Purana*. He is also the authority on medicine, not to speak of *Nadi Sastra* which goes by his name.

In *Mahabharata* we have the following legend. One day while walking through a forest, Agastya saw his ancestors suspended by their heels in a pit. They told him that they could be rescued from their miserable plight

if he married and begot a son. Thereupon he created a beautiful girl out of the most graceful parts of different animals. He combined the distinctive beauties of the animals, such as the eyes of the deer, the gait of the lion and so on, in her manifestation. She was named Lopamudra because the animals were subject to loss (*lopa*) when the sage created her. He then passed her into the palace of King of Vidarbha, who had had no issues.

The child grew up into a fine woman. One day Agastya came to the king's court and demanded that she be given to him in marriage. The king was in a fix. When Lopamudra herself consented to be the sage's wife, the king was obliged to consent. Agastya and Lopamudra figure as two famous exponents of Sri Vidya. Agastya's exploits are famous. He was living in Kasi and was asked to go to South to solve a problem created by the mountain Vindhya. Vindhya had become envious of Mount Meru, the highest peak. Not to be outdone, Vindhya majestically grew to an equal height and obstructed the movement of the sun and the moon. As a result the world was plunged into chaotic darkness.

When Agastya had to go down to South, he had to cross Vindhya. He ordered the mountain to bend down and stay so until his return to Kasi. But Agastya chose to settle down in the South, so poor Vindhya had to stay put. Agastya derived his name by this exploit - a stayer of the mountain. *Agam sthayati iti Agastya*.

The demons Kalakeyas hid themselves in the ocean and troubled the gods by occasional forays. When the devas implored his help, Agastya drank the ocean in one gulp. Caught in the dry ocean bed the demons were annihilated by the devas. According to the Puranas, Agastya was the incarnation of Fire.

Hayagriva - Vishnu Himself.

Vishnu keeps continually awake in order to protect the world. Once he was tired and fell asleep, resting his head on his mighty bow. Brahma, Rudra and others wished to wake him up. They induced the white ants to bite through the bow string promising them in return a portion of the sacrifice. When the white ants did their job the bow went off with a bang and took off the head of Vishnu. They searched all over for Vishnu's head but in vain. Upon worshipping Tripurasundari, she appeared to them and directed that a horse's head be joined to the trunk, there by Vishnu would revive. That was Hayagriva, a deity blessed by the Devi.

Agastya said: "O Horse-faced Lord! You are an adept in all sastric lore. You have related to me the wondrous story of Lalita. You have told me in detail the birth of the Mother, the episode of her coronation and her slaying of Bhandasura. You have described in detail the glory of *Sripura (Sri Chakra)*. You have also expounded the greatness of the 15-syllabled mantra, Panchadasakshari. In the *Nyasakanda* you have delineated the inner and outer methods of worship. In the *Pujakanda* you have described the great worship, the Mahayaga. In the chapter on *Purascharana (repetition)* you have told us the rules of Japa".

"You have also briefed us well in the performance of Homa. In the *Rahasyalanda*, you have taught us the fundamental identity between Chakraraja, Panchadasakshari, Devi, Guru and the disciple. You have blessed us with various sets of prayers and revealed the thousand names of Mantrini and Dandini. But the names of Lalita, you have refrained to reveal. There lingers a doubt in me. Is it a lapse of memory or a deliberate neglect? Am I not worthy to hear those blessed names of the Divine Mother? May I know the reason for this omission?"

Glories of Sahasranama

Hayagriva, greatly delighted at this persistent disciple, addressed him as follows: "O Agastya, Consort of Lopamudra! Listen to me attentively. I did not speak to you of those thousand names because I consider them a secret. Now that you have asked me with such devotion, I shall surely impart them to you. If a disciple is devoted, the teacher should impart it even if it is a secret. But it should not be taught by you to anyone who has no devotion. This is not to be revealed to a rogue or a wicked man or at any time to one who is devoid of faith."

"This Sahasranama may be given to one who is pure, who is a devotee of the Divine Mother, and who is initiated into Sri Vidya. There are many thousands of powerful names of Lalita in the Tantras. But among them, this is the best. Among the mantras, Sri Vidya is the best. And in Sri Vidya, the Kadi Vidya is the best. As the Sripura is the greatest among cities; among the Shaktis, Lalita reigns supreme. Among the Sri Vidya Upasakas, Para Siva is the prime devotee!

Lalita Sahasranama

Among the various litanies on Devi, the Lalita Sahasranama, or the thousand names of Lalita, is considered the best.

"A chanting of this hymn pleases Lalita to no end. Nothing pleases her more. Therefore this hymn should be continually chanted to gain the favor of Lalitambika."

"Worship Mother Lalita, invoking her in Sri Chakra. Offer her bilva, tulasi and lotus and recite the thousand names. At the end of the worship, recite the 15-syllabled mantra. The worship and japa are conducive to Mother's instantaneous grace. At the end of the japa recite the thousand names once again. In case it is not possible to do the ritual worship or japa, recite the names. This is equally meritorious. "

"In order to do good to her seekers, Lalitamba commanded her servitor goddesses headed by Vasini, the Goddess of Speech, to compose a laud with a thousand names which would delight her. The goddesses then created this hymn."

Elated with the hymn, Lalita said:

"The goddesses of speech have composed this incomparable hymn at my command. It is replete with names pleasing to me. Declare them to my devotees. He who chants this hymn is dear to me. I shall grant him all his desires. Let him worship me in Sri Chakra and do the japa of Panchadasakshari. Whether he worships me in Sri Chakra or not, whether he does japa or not let him recite these names with utmost reverence."

After recounting this to Agastya, Hayagriva proceeded to initiate him into the peerless *Lalita Sahasranama*.

It is a grand hymn extolling the Divine Mother in a thousand scintillating ways. The chant thrills the votary and uplifts his consciousness to sublime heights. Admittedly, it should be done with fervor and a fair understanding of the meaning.

Lalita Sahasranama is not only grand poetry but also a practical philosophy as well. The superlatives that apply to the Lord in *Vishnu Sahasranama* equally apply to Lalita. While the *Vishnu Sahasranama* is a terse composition with two or three syllabled words, the *Lalita Sahasranama* is mellifluous and rich in imagery. We find beautiful combinations of compound words strung as a garland of flowers. There is no verbal austerity.

In a short composition, such as a *Sahasranama*, it is difficult to have a logical build-up and coherent treatment of the subject. The poet limits himself to a fixed number of 1,000 names. Within the confines of this framework, he has to express his religious feelings, philosophy of life, and theological beliefs. In such a straight jacket, many flounder, but not so Vasini, the Vagdevi herself, the creator of *Lalita Sahasranama*.

In general, the names of the goddess fall into the following categories: 1. Descent of the Divine 2. Her Divine Form 3. Sri Chakra 4. Destroyer of Bhandasura 5. Mantra rupa 6. The division of *Kshetra* and *Kshetrajna*

7. Kundalini 8. Her grace towards devotees
9. The formless aspect 10. The Yoginis and
Shatchakras 11. Pancha Brahma Swarupa
12. Her Vibhuti 13. The two ways of worship
14. The Finale - Oneness of Sakti and Siva.

The world of alphabet consists of 51 letters. The *Suta Samhita* says that out of these, only 32 letters are chosen in the composition of *Lalita Sahasranama*. The names, beginning with each of the 32 letters, describe the qualities, functions and manifestations of the Omnipresent.

Forms of Transcendent Reality

The Reality is One. The wise men speak of it variously. In the Vedic pantheon, we have divinities, such as Indra, Agni, Varuna, Mitra, Aryama, Brihaspati and so on. The flame of aspiration for Godhead is Agni, the mystic Fire. The luminous Intelligence is Indra. The God of vastness of consciousness is Varuna. The God of love and friendship is Mitra. The names are many, but the God is One.

With the passage of time, the Gods too have changed. Their names, forms and relevance have metamorphosed over the millennia. When we come to the age of Puranas, we hear more of Siva, Vishnu, Ganesa, Subramanya, Surya, Devi and a host of others.

Sankara Bhagavatpada brought coherence into the conflicting approaches of the Divinity by systematizing the rules of worship. Common to all the disciples were three great principles. One is the deity which is a formed conception of the Formless Divine. This Deity

can be worshipped either in the form of an image - *pratika* or in the form of a diagram - Yantra or in the form of sound - *mantra*.

The anthropomorphic form, conceived of as the Divinity with hands and feet is image - *pratika* or *murti*.

Yantra is a diagram in the form of circles, squares and triangles. It is a configuration of the forces representing the chosen Divinity.

The sound form of the Deity may be a single syllable or a group of syllables. It may be a word or combination of words. They are revealed to the seers in their meditation while exploring their consciousness in the bosom of infinity. The idea when articulated becomes the *mantra*.

Through the worship of the Divinity in *Murti*, or *Yantra*, or *Mantra*, the seeker tries to establish a rapport between God, man and the Universe and his own identity in the scheme of spiritual phenomena.

(1) The Descent of Divine Mother

We bring down the one reality into form and name for the convenience of worship. We press into service all that is congenial and efficacious to realize our oneness with the Divine. Besides mantra japa, we take recourse to the Stotra literature, such as *Ashtakas*, *Ashtottara Satanamas* and *Sahasranamas*.

The *Lalita Sahasranama* commences with the description of the descent of Divine Mother into the world of plurality.

Salutations to the Divine Mother, the Mother of all.

Salutations to the Great Empress of the Universe.

Salutations to the Sovereign Lady seated on the tawny back of the Lion.

Salutations to her who came out, radiant like a thousand rising suns, from the altar fire of pure consciousness of Para Siva.

Thus the hymn liltingly rolls on, like the singing ripples of a cascading mountain stream.

Generally in all *Sahasranamas*, there is, in the beginning, a flood of alliterations and an extravagance of verbal jugglery. Here there are no such flights of imagination. The descriptions are simple expressions. But they are soulful, moving and ethereally enchanting. They transport the chanter into the portals of that awesome Sovereign, fortunately our own loving Mother.

(2) Her Divine Form

The four-armed Deity holds in her lower left hand, a noose representing the power of love. The goad in the other hand is meant to restrain the forces of evil. The sugarcane bow in yet another hand stands for the mind. The five arrows stand for the subtle elements, such as sound, touch, sight, taste and smell. They are capable of exciting, maddening, confusing, stimulating and causing even hard boiled ascetics to fade out. No wonder, the senses are compared to unbridled horses.

The rosy hue of her magnificent body bathes the whole universe in an enchanting crimson. Her forehead shines like the crescent moon of the eighth lunar digit. Her face is

adorned with *kasturi* tilak and brings to mind the autumnal moon with its proverbial dark spot.

Her sparkling eyes move like the swishing fishes in a stream of beauty. Her nasal ornament dazzles like the morning Venus in the heaven. She is radiant and charming, with a bunch of *kadamba* flowers tucked over her ears. The orbs of the moon and the sun are her ear pendants. Her ruby lips parted in a voluptuous half smile inundate her Lord Siva in a sea of reverie.

Salutations to the blemishless beauty seated on the lap of Siva - the conqueror of desire.

(3) The Sri Chakra

Lalita Tripurasundari dwells in the mid peak of Mount Meru; also in the Bindu, the central circle of bliss in Sri Chakra. Her abode is in a forest of lotuses in Mandvipa, the island of wish-yielding gems. She rests on a couch formed of the five Brahmanas - Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Isana, and Sadasiva. In the Bindu in Sri Chakra known as Sarva Anandamaya, she goes by the name Tripurasundari - the united form of Kameshvara and Kameshvari.

If the *Panchadasakshari mantra* is a revelation of the Mother in sound, the Yantra is a revelation in lines and circles. It is the symbol not only of Devi but also the Universe of *mahabhutas* and the miniature universe of the human body, and the alphabet of articular speech, the garland of letters.

(4) Episode of Bhandasura

When Manmatha, the God of love, was reduced to ashes by Siva's flaming third eye,

Ganesa, the skillful worker formed a beautiful person out of the ashes. On seeing him, Brahma said "Bhanda, Bhanda" meaning "Well done, Well done". Hence he was called Bhanda. Since Bhanda sprang from the fire of Rudra's ire he was terrible in nature and started afflicting the worlds. In order to slay him, Devi, though One, became many.

In an esoteric sense Bhanda represents the fettered soul. The Bhanda Sainya, of which the *Lalita Sahasranama* makes mention, are the multitudinous ideas of duality. When all thoughts of duality converge inwardly to the seat of mind and are annihilated, one becomes conscious of one's real self.

(5) The Mantra Rupa

The most celebrated mantra of Devi is *Panchadasakshari*. It consists of 15 syllables divided into three sections called kutas. The first one is *Vagbhava kuta*. This is presided over by Agni. The second one is called *Kamaraja kuta*; presided over by Surya. The last one is *Sakti kuta*; presided over by Soma or Chandra. The mantra is the subtle form of Devi. It may be called the Gayatri of Saktas.

The Gayatri is called *Tripada Gayatri*. There is also a fourth pada which is given to a seeker at an advanced stage. Similarly the *Panchadasakshari* is also three footed. One single letter is added to the *Panchadasakshari* to make it (*Shodasakshari*) which is given to adepts at a higher stage.

(6) Kshetra and Kshetrajna

Three names used in the *Lalita Sahasranama* are particularly significant:

Kshetra svarupa, Kshetresi, Kshetra Kshetrajnopalini.

She is of the form of Kshetra, the field. *Kshetra* represents the 36 categories from Earth to Siva. *Kshetra* or the matter is her body. The Death of deaths, Siva, is the knower of field, the *Kshetrajna*. The name *Kshetra Kshetrajnopalini* indicates that She is not only the protector of matter, but also the protector of the knower of matter.

The *Linga Purana* says, "The wise call the 24 categories as *Kshetra*. The enjoyer thereof is *Kshetrajna*".

Prakriti is unconscious activity and Purusha is inactive consciousness. The body is called the field in which events, such as growth, decline and death, take place. The conscious principle is detached and inactive. It is behind all active states as the witness. He is the *Kshetrajna*, the knower of the field. He is the light of awareness.

The *Kshetrajna* is the Supreme Lord. From the blade of grass to Brahma, the creator, he is all the manifold fields. There is limitation to the fields, but not to their knower. *Kshetrajna* is the Universal in the individual.

Who is *Kshetrapala*? Kali was created by Siva in order to slay Darukasura. Though Daruka was destroyed, Kali's anger, fierceness and insatiability for the gore did not abate. To dispel her anger, Siva assumed the form of a crying infant. When Kali saw the child, her motherhood overcame her. She took the babe into her lap and suckled the child. Siva drank up all her anger along with the milk. This child

Siva is called *Kshetrapala*. He is the protector of the precincts of sacrificial ceremonies. The Devi is worshipped by *Kshetrapala*. Hence she is called *Kshetrapala Samarchita*.

(7) Kundalini

The Divine dwells in the human body. It also dwells in the sounds of speech as well as the subtle aspect of the elements. One way of realizing the Divine is by Kundalini Sadhana. There are six symbolic lotuses in the human body. They are not physical centers although they do have physical correspondences in the various plexuses of the body. They are intricate vortices of energy.

The human being is a miniature of the universe. All that is found in cosmos is also found in the individual. The potential energy is said to be at the base of the spinal cord. This energy called Kundalini is described as a coiled sleeping serpent. It is the static support of the body and its energy forces. By Hatha Yoga exercises, pranayama, stabilization of senses, and meditation which includes japa, the Kundalini can be aroused and made to flow through the plexuses to the head center.

These plexuses are technically called *Muladhara*, *Svadhishthana*, *Manipura*, *Anahata*, *Visudha Ajna* and *Sahasrara*.

The *Muladhara* is at the end of the spinal column in the pelvic region. The *Svadhishthana* is a little above the genitals. These two form the Agni Khanda. The knot above this group is known as *Brahma Granthi*.

The *Manipura* is near the navel. *Anahata* is near the heart. These two constitute the Surya Khanda. Above them is the knot *Vishnu Granthi*.

The *Visuddha* is near the throat. *Ajna* is between the eye brows. These two form the Chanda Khanda. Above them is the knot called *Rudra Granthi*.

Above these six chakras is the *Sahasrara*, the thousand petalled lotus, the seat of Siva and Sakti.

The Kundalini is aroused and made to pass through the six lotuses, piercing each knot on its way up to the *Sahasrara* where it unites with Siva. This is the realization of the Sakta – the goal of his Sadhana.

(8) Devi's Grace

The Consort of Bhava, the Bhavani, is realized through devoted meditation. She acts like an axe in the jungle of individual's transitional existence. A lover of the auspiciousness, she advances the devotee both materially and spiritually. She is a tower of strength. She dispels our fears and bestows unalloyed happiness on her devotees. Her grace towards devotees is unbounded.

(9) The Formless Aspect

In her formless aspect, she is the part less united whole, beyond the triple qualities of Prakriti, viz., *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. She is serene, untouched by desires, free of afflictions, changeless, independent, beyond the sphere of multiplicity, flawless, free, unlimited and eternal. She is Pure Consciousness. The deathless Mother destroys the fear of death to her votary.

She is difficult to attain but not to the devoted. She puts an end to our sorrows and

blesses us with joy. Untouched by wickedness, she ends our evil propensities. Salutations to the compassionate Mother who has neither an equal nor a superior.

(10) Yoginis in Shatchakras

In Visuddhi chakra, she is known as Daakini having a face with three eyes. She is armed with a club and other weapons. She presides over the skin which gives the sensation of touch. She is frightful to the ignorant. She is pleased with the offering of milk pudding. She is surrounded by 16 saktis beginning with Amrita.

In Anahata, she is in the form of Yogini, called Ragini with dark complexion, two faces, shining fangs and wearing a rosary. She presides over blood in living beings. She is attended by Kalaratri and other saktis. She loves an offering of rice mixed with ghee. She grants boons to great heroes.

In Manipura, she is known as Lakini with three faces. She holds a thunderbolt and other weapons in her hand. She is attended by Saktis beginning with Damari. She is ruby-hued. She presides over flesh in living creatures. She likes rice cooked with jaggery. She is the bestower of happiness on all her devotees.

In Svadhishatana, She is Kakini with four fascinating faces. She is armed with a trident and is golden in color. She has a dignified countenance. She presides over fatty substances in living bodies. She is pleased with the offering of rice with curds. She is attended by Bandhini and other saktis.

In Muladhara, she has five faces. Her name is Sakini. She presides over bones in living creatures. She is attended by Varada and three other saktis. She is armed with a goad and other weapons. She is pleased with boiled pulse mixed with rice.

In Ajna, she is Hakini with white complexion and six faces. She presides over marrow of living beings. Her saktis are Hamsavati and others. She loves saffron flavored rice as an offering.

In Sahasrara, the thousand petalled lotus, she shines with all colors, is armed with all weapons, with all faces around and seeing in all directions. She presides over the vital fluids in all creatures. All kinds of food are pleasing to her. She is known as Yakini here.

She is *Svaha*, the sacred exclamation with which oblations are offered to gods in sacrificial fires. She is also the *Svadha*, the sacred exclamation uttered while making oblations to pitris, the manes.

(11) The Pancha Brahma Svaroopas

The five Brahmas are *Isana*, *Tatpurusha*, *Aghora*, *Vamadeva* and *Sadyojata*. Through the play of Maya the unconditioned Brahman has become these five forms. All these are her forms only.

As creator, she is Brahma. As sustainer and protector, she is Govinda. As destroyer, she is Rudra. As eliminator of all the worlds, she is Isvara. And when she bestows her grace for recreation and rejuvenation, she is Sada Siva.

She is the transcendent word, the *Para*. As speech in the inaudible stage, she is *Pasyanti*. As speech in the middle stage of external expressions, she is *Madhyama*. As the uttered audible speech, she is *Vaikhari*.

She is Vishnumukhi at the holy shrine of Jalandhar. This is equated to Visuddhi chakra in the body. She is present in the *odyana peetha*, which is the Ajna chakra in the body. She is worshipped by secret rites in the *Bindu mandala*. She bestows her grace immediately and brings joy to those who suffer from the triple miseries on account of physical, mental and supramental causes.

(12) The Vibhutis

It is at the behest of the Divine Mother that every thing happens. Eternally pleased and ever content, she gives us contentment. It is by being cheerful at all times that we can please her and attain her. There are four cardinal virtues we have to practice for pleasantness of mind: Friendship, compassion, complacency and indifference. Let us show friendship to the happy, compassion to the miserable, complacency at the virtuous and indifference to the sinful. Such conduct not only purifies the mind, but also enables us to distinguish Prakriti from Purusha and reach a transcendental state of meditation.

She is the wild wind that drives away the flakes of our misfortune. Her effulgence removes our gloom in the age of our infirmity. Our good fortune tides will swell by the full moon of her grace. Our hearts will dance like peacocks sighting water bearing clouds. She

is the thunderbolt to shatter the mountains of our misfortunes, the Bhadrakali. She is the all-consuming Time, the Devourer. Salutation to Kali of lolling tongue, disheveled hair, strident steps and shining scimitar.

As she is not subject to cause and effect, we too can escape the trammels of karma by seeking her feet. The artless beauty and innocence is easily perceived by those who turn their gaze inward. Extroverts are unable to worship her.

(13) Samayachara and Vamachara

There are two broad divisions among the Saktas. One follows the Vedic Path and the other the Tantric Path. The former belong to Dakshinachara, also called Samayachara. The latter belong to the Vamachara, also called the Kaula marga.

The followers of Dakshinachara believe in the absolute equality of Siva and Sakti. This equality is analyzed into 1. Adhithana (Abode); 2. Anushtana (Conduct); 3. Avastha (Condition); 4. Rupa and Nama (Form and Name). The relationship of *Sesha* and *Seshi* subsists mutually between Siva and Sakti.

This means that Siva, the Transcendent Bliss, is identical with Sakti, the Transcendent Consciousness. Neither is more nor less than the other. The two together for the whole. They cannot be separated from one another. It is a mutual relationship of the Essential and Accessory subsisting between them.

During the creation and maintenance of the world the Sakti element predominates. After *Pralaya*, until creation starts again, Siva

predominates. This is the view of Samayins, or the followers of Samayachara.

On the other hand, the Vamacharins believe that Sakti is always predominant. They do not recognize a separate Siva *tattva*. The prostrate figure of Siva under the feet of Sakti symbolizes this concept.

To the Samayins the Sahasrara is the goal. They worship her internally. The followers of Vamachara believe that the Kundalini, after reaching Sahasrara and conferring bliss on the sadhaka, returns to Muladhara to sleep again. They externally worship in the two lower centers of Muladhara and Svadhishtana. The Muladhara is called Kula. The Devi occupying Muladhara is called Kaulini. Her worshippers are Kaulas.

For the Samayins the authoritative scriptures are the *Samhitas* of Sanaka, Sananda, Sanatkumara, Suka and Vasishtha. For the Kaulas, the authorities are the 64 *Tantras* and *Parasurama Sutras*. The *rishi* for Samayins is Dakshinamurthi and the devatas are Kameshvara and Kameshvari. For the Kaulas the *rishi* is Bhairava and the devatas are Ananda Bhairava and Ananda Bhairavi.

The Samayins follow the Vedic method for worship, according to *Kalpa Sutras*, with offerings of fruit and milk. The Kaulas follow the Tantric method of worship. Their rites involve the *pancha makaras*, such as wine, meat, fish, mudra and sex.

According to *adhikara bheda*, i.e., fitness of the aspirant, the *Lalita Sahasranama* recognizes both methods of worship. The

names *Samayachara tatpara*, *Sama rasya parayana*, *Dakshinamurthi rupini* are indicative of the Samayachara.

The Kaulas also are equally recognized, as indicated by the names, *Kaula marga tatpara sevita*, *Kaula sanketa palini*, *Kaulini*, *Kevala*, *Vira*, *Vira goshti priya*, etc. The names of *Rahoyaga kramaradhya*, *Rahastarpana tarpita* are indicative of the secret rites of the Kaulas.

The names, *Dakshina adakshinaradhya*, *Savyapasavya margasta* refer to the legitimacy of both the cults. The Goddess can be reached either way – the right or left path of worship.

This *Sahasranama* is a great aid in contemplating the Universal Spiritual Energy, the Supreme in the most adorable form of Divine Mother, who is gracious, benevolent and compassionate to the needs of her supplicants.

(14) The Oneness of Siva-Sakti

Salutations to Her who comprehends and transcends all Cosmic categories. Salutations to the Protectress of the Universe. Salutations to the utterly passionless damsel with large eyes, surprisingly daring, and supremely joyful. Salutations to the Charmer of Sambhu and dispeller of our darkness. Salutations to Lalita Tripura Sundari united with Siva.

Lalita Sahasranama: Epilogue

In the Kaliyuga, when delinquency and sin vie with each other, there is no better

armor with which to protect oneself than the inestimable Sahasranama.

Hayagriva said:

"Thus I have proclaimed to you, the thousand names, O Pot-born Sage, which are most pleasing to the Deity. This esoteric doctrine has to be held in utmost privacy. No other hymn can equal this in conferring prosperity and warding off diseases. It removes pain and averts untimely death. It bestows longevity and blesses the childless with progeny. It is the harbinger of all *Purushartas*."

"A devotee of *Lalita*, after his bath and sandhya rituals, should worship the Sri Chakra, followed by chant of the Panchadasakshari mantra, and thousand, or three hundred, or in the least, one hundred times, as convenient. He then should recite the *Sahasranama*."

"The result of such a virtue is equal to bathing in the Ganga and other holy waters a number of times, installing crores of lingas in Avimukta Kshetra, giving gold in charity, performing horse sacrifice, digging wells in arid tracts, and feeding the needy. This hymn is capable of warding off all sins of omission of prescribed rites and commission of prohibited actions. Anyone who wants to cleanse himself of his sins by other means is like hapless one who goes to the Himalayas to escape from biting cold."

"If the devotee repeats this Sahasranama daily, Lalitamba is pleased and confers on him all that he cherishes. If one is unable to repeat this daily, he can at least recite this on

auspicious days, such as Fridays, ninth and fourteenth day of the bright fortnight. It can be chanted on one's own asterism (nakshatra), also on the preceding and the succeeding asterisms."

"On a full moon day, the devotee is advised to meditate on Lalita in the disc of the moon followed by the chant of Sahasranama. Five kinds of worship, such as offering sandalwood paste, flowers, scent, light and food can be rendered to the deity".

Giver of Long Life

There is a ritual called Ayushkara Prayoga to produce longevity.

On an auspicious full moon day, observe fast for the whole day. After bath, go through the evening rituals. When the full orb of the moon is visible, choose a pure place for worship, spread your asana (seat), face the East and do *pranayama* with the Panchadasakshari mantra. Then make the following determination: "To get rid of disease and gain health and longevity, I, (name), belonging to gotra, shall invoke *Ayushkara Prayoga* by reciting the *Lalita Sahasranama*."

After this gaze at this moon steadily and meditate on Tripurasundari at its center, as surrounded by the group of 15 Nitya deities and your Guru. Realize this as your own self.

With your eyes fixed on the moon, recite the first 50 verses of this *Sahasranama*. Then chant the Dhyana Sloka. Follow this up with Omkar. Then repeat the thousand names distinctly, slowly, intent on the meaning of

each name. When this is over, pronounce Omkar, perform *nyasa* and close with the recital of *Phalasaruti*.

During the *japa*, let your mind and eyes be steady, fixed on the Devi identified with the moon. When the ritual is over, receive the benediction by a Prayer:

"Let this ritual of mine be efficacious and fruitful. May Goddess Tripurasundari be pleased with my devotion."

Abundance of Favors

Fever and headache can be eliminated by touching the head of the person and reciting the *Sahasranama* and smearing the patient with ashes sanctified by the Panchadasakshari. Any one who suffers from the elemental (evil spirits) can be relieved by pouring a pot full of water on his head after sanctifying the water with a chant of the *Sahasranama*. The elementals will leave him. Barren women will beget children if they are given butter consecrated with the *Sahasranama*.

Any black magic performed against the chanters of *Lalita Sahasranama* rebounds on the perpetrators. The *kshetrapala* (guardian angel) takes care of the property of Lalita devotees. If one chants this canticle with devotion continuously for six months, the Goddess of wealth will stay with him for ever. The Goddess of Speech is bountiful.

If one desires to endow anyone with a gift, it is better given to a knower of Panchadasakshari mantra and a worshipper of Sri Chakra with the chant of Lalita Sahasranama. Otherwise the gift is wasted.

If one writes the *Sahasranama* with devotion in a book and worships it as an emblem of Devi, Tripurasundari will be pleased with that individual.

"Why so many words?," said Hayagriva. "Listen O Pot-born! In all tantras, there is no hymn to match this one. He who worships the Supreme in the Sri Chakra becomes one with Lalita. There is no difference between the Deity and the disciple, even to differentiate is a sin. He who chants this without any expectation of rewards gains Brahma Jnana and is freed from all miseries."

"In this Kaliyuga, when delinquency and sin vie with each other, there is no better armor to protect oneself than this inestimable hymn. One is attracted to Sri Vidya only in his last birth. Those who take to this hymn as a daily ritual have no more births. Just as Sri Vidya Upasakas are rare in this world, so are the chanters of this hymn. It requires an extraordinary merit to become an initiate in Sri Vidya. Can anyone see objects without vision or assuage their hunger without taking food? Similarly, no one can attain Siddhi, or please the Deity, without the help of this hymn."

"So, wise Sage! Be discreet in imparting this hymn. Be sure he is a devotee first and initiate in Sri Vidya next. Do not promulgate this hymn to anyone with animal propensities. The yogins will curse you for such carelessness. I have initiated you into this esoterism not of my own accord, but at the express command of the Divine Mother. Be sincere and devoted. The Great Mother will be gracious to you".

Having thus spoken, Hayagriva slipped into such a meditational mood of ecstatic beatitude that he at once became one with the World Mother, Bliss Incarnate.

M.V.B.S. Sarma is the author of "Sringeri Bharati" (in Telugu), a translation of R. Krishnaswamy Aiyer's booklet on H. H. Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati Mahaswami.

Tattvaloka Oct/Nov 1990

Golden Words

His Holiness Sri. Chandrasekhara Bharati Maha Swamiji

Faith in Guru

- ❖ *Just as we need a doctor to cure us of our illness, a guru is necessary to know what the sastras prescribe and to teach us the particular course of action suited to our qualifications.*
- ❖ *Surrender yourself entirely to a guru. He will take you by the hand and lead you to the goal. He is not blinded by the enveloping darkness of ignorance and is sure to guide you properly. But you must have true faith in him.*
- ❖ *If you wish for a guru in all earnestness, he will be before you in no time. But if you require his presence only to enable you to test his competence of a guru, he will be farther off than before.*
- ❖ *Have implicit faith in the words of your guru and earnestly follow his instructions for the realisation of God and you shall certainly see God.*
- ❖ *None should disobey the authority of the guru in the matter of religion.*
- ❖ *A guru is bound to teach only those who do not know, but seek to know. If people prefer to remain in ignorance, the teachers are not to blame at all for not attempting to teach them.*
- ❖ *Doubts can never be solved unless you approach the persons who have not merely studied their religion but are daily living it.*

Festivals and Vratas for Lakshmi

Y.S.P. THORAT

Religious observances and personal restraints have gone hand in hand from puranic days to inculcate and foster devotion among people.

It is held by certain authorities that the Hindu system of *vratas* (restraints) or religious observances developed in the early centuries of the Christian era in response to challenges posed by Buddhism and Jainism, particularly their hostility to the ancient sacrificial system propounded in the Vedas. The theory that merit can be attained by aspirants on the path by a voluntary imposition of internal and external restraints took root with great rapidity and was extolled by the Puranic redactors.

Thus while the *Brahmapurana* states that the merit to be secured by the worship of Sun for a single day cannot be obtained even by performing hundreds of Vedic sacrifices, the *Padmapurana* goes a step further and explains that in the age of Kali, *vratas* should be performed in lieu of Vedic sacrifices. In course of time, specific *vratas* became attached to the main *sampradayas* and these have been passed down through the centuries.

With the admittance of Lakshmi into the Vaishnava pantheon, different *vratas* and rituals evolved recommending her worship along with Vishnu. However, even on date, certain *vratas* exist where she is worshipped together with deities other than Vishnu and the antiquity of these *vratas* is evident from

the fact that they are out of alignment with the Vaishnava pantheon.

The rituals and observances connected with Lakshmi are obligatory and recommended for observance during specific months of the year together with certain ritualistic paraphernalia as in the case of other observances. For the sake of convenience, some of the festivities associated with Lakshmi are dealt with below.

Asunyasayana Dvitiya Vrata

According to the *Vamana Purana* Sri Vishnu retires to deep slumber during Asadha particularly on the 12th day of its bright fortnight. Vishnu's retirement is a signal for other gods, Gandharvas and Yakshas to retire one by one. Viswakarma goes to sleep on the second day of the dark half of Sravana.

The version given by the *Matsya Purana*, however, is slightly different. On the day of the *vrata*, Vishnu along with Lakshmi is worshipped with fragrant flowers, sandal paste and other puja materials. It is enjoined that Sri Vishnu's image have four arms, that he bear Srivatsa mark on his chest and be shown lying on a couch.

It is interesting to note that when the *naivedyam* is offered to the deity the prayer uttered is: "O Lord, just as you never remain apart from your consort, similarly let the case be with me and just as your abode is never bereft of the Mother so also let mine never be devoid of my wife". After due obeisance and

propitiation, the devotee has to take food at night without oil and salt. On the next day gifts are distributed to Brahmins.

According to the *Vamana Purana*, this *vrata* appears to have two purposes underlying it. On the one hand, it secures *Aviyoga* to the male devotee, i.e., the absence of a loss of wife and grants *Avaidhavya* (*no widowhood*) to the female. This *vrata* falls in *Sravana* (July/August).

Visoka Dwadashi Vrata

Every *vrata* confers certain material and spiritual merits on the devotee. Out of the *vratas* where joint worship of Vishnu and Lakshmi are prescribed, the *Visoka Dwadasi Vrata* is an important one. This *vrata* is observed for gaining beauty, health and happiness and is observed on the 12th day of the bright fortnight of *Asvina*. In a beautiful verse in the *Matsya Purana*, the devotee prays to Lord Vishnu: "Just as Lakshmi always remains by your side, similarly let beauty, health and happiness always be with me". The *vrata* is so named because Lakshmi is designated as *Visoka*, the deity who frees the devotee from sorrow.

The worship starts from the 12th day of *Asvina* (*Shukla*) though the ancillary functions start two days earlier. On the tenth day devotees resolve to fast on the eleventh day and worship *Kesava*. On the day of the *vrata*, a four-colored altar is constructed on a *Mandala* and an image of Lakshmi (*Visoka*) made of river sand is placed on a winnowing fan and ceremonially worshipped. Worship is also offered to the Lord with the famous litany of a thousand names. The *vrata* involves *kirtanas*, *bhajans* and the feeding and honoring of Brahmin couples.

At the close of the observance the devotee has to donate a bed, a cow made of molasses and the winnowing fan together with the image of Sri Lakshmi.

Kojagiri Purnima

Also known as *Kaumudi Mahotsava*, *Kojagiri Purnima* is one of the important festivals in honor of Sri Lakshmi. It is observed on the full moon day of *Asvina*. This is the time when the moon is seen in all its glory. *Kojagiri* is probably an abbreviation of *Kaumudi Jagara*. The period of observance of this ritual differs from text to text.

While the *Bhavisyottara Purana* and *Padma Purana* put the time of the festival on *Kartika Amavasya* or on *Deepavali day*, *Sabdakala padruma* citing the *Brahma Purana* and the *Linga Purana* maintains that *Kaumudi Purnima* is to be celebrated on *Asvina Purnima* and this is accepted by the majority of the texts as the period of the festival. During this night, people are advised to wear beautiful clothes and spend the night playing dice. It is also enjoined that the manes (*pitrs*) and the gods should be propitiated by offering coconuts.

It is believed that on this night, Lakshmi in her beneficent aspect as *Varada Lakshmi* roams the world and offers wealth and happiness to those worshippers who are watchful throughout the night. The festival is predominantly in honor of Lakshmi and those who observe the rites are promised the blessings of offspring, wealth and a long and prosperous life.

Vara Lakshmi Vrata

The *Vara Lakshmi vrata* occurs on the last Friday of the bright fortnight of the Tamil

month of Adi (corresponding to the lunar month Ashad / Shravana).

The Vara Lakshmi *vrata* and *puja* of Lakshmi are done by *sumangalis* (married women). On the previous day, worship is offered in the evening at the *Godhuli* lagnam. Lakshmi is invoked in a *kalasa* in which a few coins have been placed. The *kalasa* is covered in the usual manner with mango leaves and coconut smeared with turmeric and sandal. The cotton thread is wound round the *kalasa* which is then placed near a wall and a picture of Lakshmi drawn near the base of it with *kumkum* and turmeric sandal. Knotted cotton threads are placed across the *kalasa* and decorated with jewels, trinkets and clothes.

The Goddess is invoked with Sri Sukta and the Lakshmi Gayatri mantras. Lakshmi is then invited into the house and the *kalasa* placed on a silver platter is taken to the porch of the house for beckoning the Mother. Thus welcomed, Lakshmi enters the house which has been neatly cleaned and decorated.

It is curious to note that the floral offering for the day is *durva* which is favorite to Lord Siva and Ganapati. The usual *naivedyam* and *arghya* are offered. When the *puja* is over, the turmeric smeared threads are worn around the neck by all *sumangalis*, married girls and unmarried girls and tied as an amulet on the right hand by men. For the next day women visit each other, sing songs in praise of Lakshmi and receive the customary flowers and betelnut when they depart.

Deepavali

Few proofs of the essential oneness and solidarity are more convincing than the festival

of Deepavali. The period of observance of the festival extends from three to five days according to different authorities. While the *Padma Purana* puts the number of days of observance at five, the *Nirnaya Sindhu* and *Skanda Purana* indicate that the festival should be celebrated for three days.

The story goes that the demon king Bali gave *tripada dana* (gift of land by three steps) to Sri Vishnu in his incarnation as *Vamana* and was ultimately allowed to rule the nether world. However, in view of the great offering made by him, the Lord also permitted him to rule his erstwhile kingdom on earth for three days every year beginning on the 14th day of the dark fortnight of *karthika* upto *Suklapratipada* of the same month. These are the three days on which Deepavali is observed throughout the land.

The first day of Deepavali is called *Naraka Chaturdasi*. The earliest mention of the story of Naraka is to be found in the *Sabhaparva* of the *Mahabharata* and with slight variations in the *Bhagavatam*.

Naraka, the son of Bhumi and Vishnu in his *Varaha Avatara*, oppressed the gods and was ultimately killed by Sri Krishna. This, in brief, is the legend. And it is this deliverance of the earth from the oppression of the demon that is celebrated with joy and happiness by the grateful people.

Like the All Soul's Day, it is on Naraka Chaturdasi that the spirits of the manes (pitr) who were freed to receive the offerings made by their descendants on *Mahalaya Sradha* and were since wandering on the earth, return to their abodes.

Necessary Rituals

On the morning of *Naraka Chaturdasi* people take oil bath at day break. The belief goes that on this day Lakshmi dwells in the oil and the Ganga in water. Thereafter, *tarpanam* is done to Yama with water mixed with sesame seeds. In the evening a lamp is offered to Naraka and bright illuminations are made at home, temples and assembly halls.

The second day of the festival is *kartika amavasya*. The day is designated as *yaksaratri* by Vatsyayana.

The day is significant in two ways: Firstly, Lakshmi, the consort of Vishnu, rises from her sleep before Vishnu and, on this analogy, it has become customary for Hindu wives also to rise before their husband and look to their comforts. This is why it is called *Sukhasuptika*.

Secondly, this is the day on which Lakshmi is said to have been released from the prison of Bali by Vishnu together with other gods (skanda purana). In commemoration of this incident the *Sukhasuptika Vrata* is observed on this day. The presiding deity of the *vrata* is Lakshmi.

Early in the morning oil bath is taken and worship is offered to the gods and manes (*Parvana Sraddha*) followed by feeding of Brahmins. In the afternoon, the people give themselves to enjoyment. In the evening they illumine their houses in the belief that lighting of lamps during Bali's domination will make Lakshmi stable in their homes. At midnight Alakshmi (*misfortune*) is expelled from the house by beating winnowing fans. In certain other places *Karisini* i.e. cow dung is worshipped as

embodiment of Lakshmi, reminding us of the *Sri Sukta* reference in which she is said to be ever nourished in cow dung.

This *vrata* is observed only by the ladies of the house with due permission of their husbands. Sweets are prepared for the Goddess and four kinds of food are offered to her. Wreaths of betel leaves are hung on the house and the main road is decorated with lotus flowers. At night ladies play dice with their husbands to incur the goodwill of the Goddess. Another feature of this day is the worship of Kubera, the God of wealth.

Fitting Finale

The last day of the festival falls on *Balipratipada*. On this day Bali, his wife Vindhyaavati and their attendants whose images are drawn with colored powder, are worshipped in a *mandala* and are offered flowers, incense and *naivedhyam*. It is believed that those who give gift on this day are blessed by the Lord with ever increasing flow of wealth.

Deepavali is a festival of many facets and consists of many strands. It is difficult to say with any degree of certainty how the various strands have evolved in the course of time. It represents one of those ultimate common denominators which have unified this land from time immemorial. The little lamps which light up the darkness are perhaps symbolic of the rising of *sattva* and the waning of *tamas*.

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संस्कृत भाषा परिचयः
An Introduction to Sanskrit : Unit – III

M. R. Dwarakanath

१) श्लोक (Sloka)

रामो रक्षतु मां चराचरगुरुः रामं भजेऽहं सदा

रामेणामरशत्रवो विनिहिताः रामाय तस्मै नमः ।

रामादेव समुद्भवोऽस्य जगतः रामस्य दासोऽस्म्यहं

रामे भक्तिरचञ्चलास्तु भगवान् हे राम तुभ्यं नमः ॥

पदच्छेद (Word decomposition)

चर-अचर-गुरुः रामः मां रक्षतु । अहं रामं सदा भजे । अमर-शत्रवः रामेण विनिहिताः । तस्मै रामाय नमः । रामात् एव अस्य जगतः समुद्भवः । अहं रामस्य दासः अस्मि । रामे अचञ्चल भक्तिः अस्तु । हे भगवान् राम तुभ्यं नमः॥

अर्थ (Meaning)

Rama, the preceptor of moving and non-moving entities, may he protect me. I always pray [to] Rama. The foes of Gods are destroyed by Rama. Salutations to that Rama. This world has sprung from Rama alone. I am Rama's servant. Let there be unwavering devotion in Rama. Oh! Lord, Rama salutations to you.

२) सम्भाषण (Conversation)

किमिदम्	What is this?
इदमेकम् फलम्	This is a fruit
कीदृशम् फलम्	What kind of fruit?
इदम् आम्रफलम्	This is a mango
मधुरं वा	Is it sweet?
आम् अतिमधुरं	Yes, very sweet
कियत् मूल्यमस्ति	What is the price?
एकैकं द्वे रूप्यकाणि	Two rupees each
त्रीणि आप्राणि पञ्च रूप्यकाणि करोतु	Make it 3 for 5 rupees
अस्तु द्वादशं गृह्णन्तु	Ok, please take 12
न षट् पूर्यति	No, 6 will do
अपि इमानि मधुराणि द्राक्षाफलानि स्वीकरोतु	Also, please try these sweet grapes
भोः तानि क्षालितव्यानि	Sir, they have to be washed
अथ क्षालितानि	Now it is washed

अतीव अम्लमस्ति	It is very sour
तर्हि तदन्यत् किम्	Then, what else?
पूर्णं कियत्	What is the total
दशरूप्यकाणि ददातु	That will be 10 rupees

३) शब्द कोशः (Vocabulary)

३-अ) सुबन्ताः (Nouns, Adjectives, etc.)

मस्तकः	Head	ललाटः	Forehead
भ्रूः	Eye brow	कपोलः	Cheek
कण्ठः	Throat	उरस्	Chest
स्कन्धः	Shoulder	बाहु	Arm
कुक्षिः	Belly	जठरः	Stomach
कक्षा	Waist	कटिः	Hip
जानुः	Knee	जङ्घा	Shin
गुल्फः	Ankle	ऊरुः	Thigh
ऐरावतः	Elephant	मृगः	Deer
महिषः	Buffalo	वृषभः	Bull
रक्त	Red	नील	Blue, Dark
विनय	Modesty	विवेक	Judgement
दृढ	Firm	विकल्प	Doubt

३-इ) तिङन्ताः (Verbs) : The roots and (stems) of more Sanskrit verbs:

अर्ज् (अर्ज)	to earn	ईक्ष् (ईक्ष)	to see
काश् (काश)	shine	क्षिप् (क्षिप)	throw
क्षुध् (क्षुध्य)	hungry	गण् (गणय)	count
घट् (घट)	happen	चम् (चम)	sip
चुर् (चोरय)	steal	त् (तर)	cross
त्यज् (त्यज)	abandon	दिश् (दिश)	show
दीप् (दीप्य)	light	नी (नय)	lead
प्रच्छ् (पृच्छ)	ask	बाध् (बाध)	bother
मन् (मन्य)	think	रक्ष् (रक्ष)	protect
स्म् (स्म)	sport	लुभ् (लुभ्य)	covet
वह् (वह)	carry	सद् (सीद)	sit
सह् (सह)	endure	ह् (हर)	take

३-उ) अव्ययपदानि (**Indeclinables**)

च	And	वा	Or
यावत्	As long as	तावत्	Till then
तूर्ण	Quickly	तूष्णीं	Silently
नीचैः	Low	उच्चैः	High
पुरतः	In front	पृष्ठतः	Behind
शनैः	Slowly	आशु	Speedily
अधुना	Now	पुरा	Old

४) सरलानि वाक्यानि (**Simple Sentences**)

शान्तिः अस्तु	Let there be peace
आर्यपुत्रः जयतु	May the prince be victorious
आयुः वर्धताम्	May life increase
पितरौ तृप्यताम्	May the parents be pleased
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु	May all see good
देवाः तृप्यन्ताम्	May the Gods be pleased
सत्यं वद	Speak the truth
क्षमस्व पुरुषोत्तम	Forgive me, Lord
हे माणवकौ पठतम्	You two boys study
युवां दुर्गतान् सेवेथाम्	You two serve the needy
हे छात्राः धर्मं चरत	Students, follow dharma
विवादं मा कुरुध्वं	Do not argue
अहं अदानि	Let me eat
अहं भाषे	Let me speak
नगरं प्रविशाव	Let us enter the city
आवां मोदावहै	Let us rejoice
भद्रं कर्णेभिः श्रुणुयाम	May we hear auspicious sounds with the ears
वयं लभामहै	May we benefit

५) सन्धिः **Sandhi**

५-अ) विसर्ग सन्धिः **Aspirate Sandhi**

The Visarga or Aspirate sandhi is a very common sandhi. In this sandhi the transformation of the Visarga is governed by the sound that immediately precedes (पूर्वः) and follows (परः) it. The sounds that precede, follow and the result (आदेशः) of the change of the Visarga are summarized in the table below:

[In the table, a dash implies that sound as not being relevant. अच् is any vowel, हल् any consonant, ह्रस्व any semi-vowel or soft consonant. लोप means

loss of Visarga. This table lists only the more common forms of this sandhi.]

	पूर्वः		परः	आदेशः
१	-	:	क्, ख्	:
२	-	:	प्, फ्	:
३	-	:	श्	: वा श्
४	-	:	ष्	: वा ष्
५	-	:	स्	: वा स्
६	-	:	च्, छ्	श्
७	-	:	ट्, ठ्	ष्
८	-	:	त्, थ्	स्
९	अ	:	अ, ह्रस्व	उ
१०	अ	:	आ-औ	(लोप)
११	आ	:	अच्	: वा (लोप) १२
आ	:	ह्रस्व	(लोप)	
१३	इ-औ	:	अच्, ह्रस्व	र्
१४	अ, इ, उ	:	र्, ऌ	दीर्घ-(लोप)
१५	स	:	हल्	(लोप)
१६	एष	:	हल्	(लोप)
१७	भो	:	-	: वा (लोप)

Some examples:

अन्तः करणम् - अन्तःकरणम्

अन्तः पुरम् - अन्तःपुरम्

शान्तिः शान्तिः - शान्तिःशान्तिः वा शान्तिश्शान्तिः

देवाः षट् - देवाःषट् वा देवाष्षट्

सर्पः सर्पति - सर्पःसर्पति वा सर्पस्सर्पति

हरिः चन्द्रः - हरिश्चन्द्रः

रामः टीकते - रामष्ठीकते

संज्ञः तेषु - संज्ञस्तेषु

व्यानः अपानः - व्यानो अपानः - व्यानोऽपानः

रामः गच्छति - रामो गच्छति

भुवः इति - भुव इति

जनाः गच्छन्ति - जना गच्छन्ति

भूः इति - भूरिति, गुरुः ब्रह्मा - गुरुर्ब्रह्मा

विष्णुः रक्षति - विष्णू रक्षति

सः एकः - स एकः

एषः पुरुषः - एष पुरुषः

भोः हरे - भो हरे वा भोः हरे

६ सुबन्तप्रकरणम् - **Declension**

As we have noted earlier, a Sanskrit sentence revolves around the verb or action. Many

nouns may be associated with a verb, with each noun having a specific relationship to the verb. In English these relationships are expressed through the use of prepositions or by appropriate syntax or word order. In Sanskrit, syntax plays only a minor role thus allowing a great deal of latitude for display of poetic beauty and expression.

The relationship between the verb and the various nouns is expressed through inflections of the primitive noun called प्रातिपदिक . The inflections are called विभक्ति प्रत्ययाः ।

६-१ विभक्तयः – Cases

प्रथमा च द्वितीया विभक्ती – Nominative / Accusative cases:

In the sentence "Siva saw Uma" the action is seeing, the seer is Siva and the seen is Uma. The seer is the agent of the action and is the कर्त्तृ । The seen is the direct object of the action the कर्मन् ।

Let's examine the following sentences:

शिवः उमां अपश्यत् । शिवः अपश्यत् उमां । उमां अपश्यत् शिवः । उमां शिवः अपश्यत् । अपश्यत् उमां शिवः । अपश्यत् शिवः उमां । In the above, although the word order is different, all sentences mean exactly the same. This is not true in English as "Siva saw Uma" is quite different from "Uma saw Siva." In English, the seer and seen are distinguished through word order. In Sanskrit the relationship is built into the words through inflection and therefore the word order is immaterial. To express "Uma saw Siva," we would say: उमा शिवं अपश्यत् ।

The words शिवः and उमा are in the nominative case or प्रथमा विभक्ति distinguishing them as the agents of action – the seers. The words शिवं and उमां are in the accusative case or द्वितीया विभक्ति denoting them as the direct objects of the action – the seen. Consider the following:

तपस्वी शिवः सुन्दरं उमां अपश्यत् ।

In the above sentence we have added two adjectives. The adjectives also take case

endings. The adjective for शिवः is तपस्वी meaning an ascetic, and the adjective for उमा (उमां) is सुन्दर (सुन्दरं) meaning beautiful. The noun and the adjective that modifies the noun have to be in the same case thus clearly establishing the relationship between the modifier and the modified. There can be no confusion about what modifies who. In the sloka at the beginning of this lesson चराचरगुरुः is an adjective for रामः and they are both in the nominative case. There are 8 cases in Sanskrit. The sloka uses राम the प्रातिपदिक in all 8 cases. We will study the other 6 cases in the next unit.

७ तिङन्तपकरणम् Verbs - Conjugation

७-अ) आज्ञार्थे लोट् – Imperative Mood

The Imperative mood in Sanskrit is used to express a wish or prayer, a command or advice, or granting / seeking permission. Generally in the second person it is a command, in the third person it is a wish or blessing and in the first person it seeks or grants permission. The Imperative uses only a suffix and is added to the stem of the verbal root.

परस्मैपद (आत्मनेपद) आज्ञार्थे लोट् तिङन्ताः

	एक वचन	द्वि वचन	बहु वचन
प्रथम पुरुष	तु (ताम्)	(ताम्) (इताम्)	अन्तु (अन्ताम्)
मध्यम पुरुष	(स्व)	तम् (इथाम्)	त (ध्वम्)
उत्तम पुरुष	आनि (ऐ)	आव (आवहै)	आम (आमहै)

Please review the sloka in Unit II for examples of Imperative mood usage. Also, the sentences in section 4 are examples for the use of this mood.

Study Tip: You may wish to make flash cards using index cards. Cut each index card into halves or quarters. Write a Sanskrit word on one side of a card and the English meaning on

the other. Add more cards as you encounter new words. Review the words regularly; especially the ones which seem less familiar.

Exercises

1. Rewrite the sentences in section 4 using the vowel and aspirate सन्धि rules.
2. Do पदच्छेद in the following sentences:
रामो वनं गच्छति । बुधा वदन्ति । गुरुर्विष्णुः । देवास्तुष्टा अभवन् ।
रामश्च लक्ष्मणश्च द्वौ वीरौ । स नृपोऽजयत् । रवी राजति ।
3. Change the imperative mood into present tense or vice-versa. Note the pada!

गोविन्दं भज	Praise Govinda
शिष्यः वदतु	May the pupil speak
बुधौ ध्यायतः	Two scholars meditate
नृपाः भषन्ते	Kings speak
क्षमावहै	We two forgive
त्वम् शिक्षसे	You learn
मङ्गलानि भवन्तु	May good happen
ऋषी मञ्चुतः	Two sages let go
पठनम् आरभेथाम्	You two start reading
वीरौ विजयेताम्	Let the two heroes win
युवाम् भाषेथे	You two speak

Sanskrit Crossword #3

(One syllable per box)

Clues Across:

- 1 Poet
- 4 Enemy
- 5 Moonface [face like a moon]
- 6 Om
- 8 Axe (Hint: 6th avatara of Vishnu)
- 10 Clever or four
- 11 Mother (giver of life)
- 12 Of mother
- 13 As appropriate

Clues Down:

- 2 Able, clear sighted
- 3 Gold
- 4 Immediate
- 6 Use
- 7 Censure
- 8 Ultimate knowledge
- 9 Auspicious

१	२		३		४	
	५					
६		७		८		९
		१०				
११				१२		
		१३				

Solutions to Exercises from Unit -2

1. विश्वेशः । महोरगः । वसन्तर्तु । एकैक । सप्तर्षयः । गङ्गौघः ।
इत्याह । देव्यौपासनम् । गुर्वाज्ञा । कर्त्रिति । अग्रेऽस्मि ॥
 2. उप इन्द्र । महा उदधि । ब्रह्म ऋषि । च ऐरावतः । एकदा एव । पश्यामि
अहम् । भवतु अर्यमा । पितृ अंशः । ते अयोनिजाः ॥
 3. स्तेनः चोरयति । बालिके अस्निह्यताम् । वयम् ह्यामः । पार्थिवाः
गर्हन्ति । यूयम् वन्दध्वे । त्वम् अजायथाः । अध्वर्युः जुहोति । ऋषी
अमुञ्चताम् । आवाम् यतावहे । अहम् अपठाम् । युवाम् अभाषेथाम् ॥
 4. Solution to Crossword #2 :
- १ ब्रज । ४ गज । ५ नामकरण । ६ विनय । ८ अथवा । १० जयति ।
११ परमा । १२ चरण । १३ नगर ॥ २ जनार्दन । ३ मकर ।
४ गणनाथ । ६ विज्ञापन । ७ यजमान । ८ अतिचर । ९ वारणसी ॥

Guru Bhakthi

(Excerpt from Br. Sri. B. Sundarakumar's Upanyasam on Mahabharata -
cast in English by Manikantan Srinivasan)

According to our scriptures, Guru occupies a very high position among those one should worship, next only to one's Parents. Since Guru is the one who helps us realize God, he is to be revered more than the almighty Himself. The great epic *Mahabharatha* illustrates both what Guru-bhakthi can bring us and what *Guru-shaapam* can do to us. Ekalavya's *Guru-bhakthi* was so great that he mastered those archery skills that Arjuna learnt from Dronacharya, merely by drawing inspiration from an idol of Dronacharya that he had made. The valorous Karna, an equal match for Arjuna, lost to the latter in the crucial battle between the two, because of his Guru Parasurama's *shaapam* that he would forget the mantra to invoke an *astra* when he would direly need it.

Perhaps not so well known role models of devotion to Guru were the *shishyaas* of the Rishi *Ayodadhomya*. Aaruni, a young boy, was one of his very devoted disciples. Once, due to a nasty flood, the crops in *Ayodadhomya's* fields were in danger of getting destroyed. He assigned to Aaruni, the responsibility of guarding them. Aaruni came over to the fields

alone and was quite helpless looking at the gush of water heading towards the fields. But he had no second thoughts about one thing - that his Guru has assigned him some task and that he has to get it done, come what may. He noticed that the gap through which water would have to enter the fields was about as wide as his size. He immediately laid himself down at that place, fully covering the gap. As evening set in, the Guru grew anxious when he didn't see Aaruni return yet. He then went over to the fields with some of his other disciples. When he saw Aaruni lying down to prevent the inflow of water, he was moved by the sacrifice he had made. Overcome by love and affection for young Aaruni, he blessed him with all knowledge. And so did it happen. With *Guru's krupa*, Aaruni mastered not only what was taught to him by *Ayodadhomya*, but also the *Saastras* and *Dharmas* that he was not taught.

Upamanyu, was yet another disciple of *Ayodadhomya*. He had been assigned the task of grazing the cattle in the woods everyday. Leaving at sunrise and returning at sunset, he was surprisingly very brisk even at the end of

the day. When the Guru asked him about it, he responded that he did *Bhikshacharanam* everyday. To test Upamanyu, the Guru disapproved this and said that he must first hand over all his *Bhiksha* to him. Upamanyu immediately promised to obey. When the Guru found him with the same *Tejas* the next day and questioned, Upamanyu replied that he did *Bhikshacharanam* once for the Guru and did it a second time for himself. Ayodyadhomya, however disapproved Upamanyu's *Bhikshacharanam* more than once. At the end of next day also the Guru found Upamanyu with the same strength and *tejas* and questioned him about it. This time Upamanyu's response was that he drank the milk of the cattle that he grazed. The Guru ruled out this as well, saying the cattle belonged to him. The following day, Upamanyu thrived on the froth of the milk left in the vessel used for milking the cows. When the Guru did not approve of this as well, Upamanyu immediately abided, without a second thought about what else he could eat. Such was the devotion of the disciples of the olden days in the *Gurukula Vaasam*. Finding nothing to eat in the forest and overcome by hunger, he gobbled some leaves from a nearby plant. (Tamil: Yerukka Ilai). Unfortunately they poisonous and he lost his sight. Roaming around blind, he fell into an abandoned old well. When the Guru came looking for him

late in the evening, he heard a faint voice from deep within the well. He then learnt what had happened and asked Upamanyu to pray to the Ashwini *devatas* for sight. Barely having the strength to pray, Upamanyu just thought of them in the mind. Ashwini *devas* appeared and offered him an antidote for the poison. But Upamanyu refused saying he wouldn't take anything without his Guru's approval. It is difficult to even imagine that anyone in his position would do that. Ashwini *devas* then said that his Guru himself had such a stringent test in his childhood and had taken the medicine and so he also can take it. However. Upamanyu replied saying that he did not care about how his Guru reacted in his childhood and still refused to take the medicine without his guru's approval. Upamanyu had reached new heights with this extreme devotion to his Guru! Ashwini *devas* were so pleased that they granted him vision even without the medicine. Guru Ayodadhomya blessed Upamanyu with all merits and knowledge instantaneously

May we all be blessed by Dhakshina-murthi, the foremost Guru !

Br. Sri B. Sundarakumar has been giving discourses on almost all our puraanas/ithihaasas for more than a decade and is a disciple of Sri Sengalipuram Anantarama Dikshitar.

ESSAY CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OUR YOUNG READERS.....

Ages 7 - 12: Our Temples: What I like about them

Rajeev Rajanarayanan (12)

Our religion teaches us that God is present in all things living or otherwise. That means God is in every one of us, too. Since we live in a society full of distractions, worries, and materialistic pursuits, we tend to forget that fact. Worshiping God is a central aspect of our religion. One might think, if God is everywhere, why go to a temple? Why not do it from home? My answer is 'why go to a school to learn?'. You can always do it from home, but few people would choose to do so!

The stress from modern life is certainly relieved by the right perspective about yourself and how you fit in the world around you. This is what Hindu philosophy teaches us. Temples are focal points for practicing our religion. I love to look at the architecture outside of our temples. One can appreciate the inherent beauty and also learn about the stories that are embodied in the architecture.

Inside our temples, you can worship Gods in various forms, each representing a different function. You can witness and participate in the elaborate rituals that are performed at various times of day, which puts God in the center of our lives. Offering prayers right in front of the idols brings me peace of mind that is indescribable.

Temples also serve as a place for social interaction. It provides a way for the younger generation to imbibe our culture and religion from the elders. I am grateful that there is such a place as a temple that offers a unique and much needed service.

Rajeev is an 8th grader at Cross Roads Middle School, S.Brunswick. In addition to academic excellence, he learns Vedas, Music and Sanskrit.

Raj Subramanian (11)

What I like about our temples is that they are so ancient and big. When I walk into a temple I feel like I am in to god's home. You should go to a temple at least every week. I have been at many temples around the world. My most favorite temples are the ones in Sringeri. I like them so much because they are amongst the oldest temples in the world. What I also like about our temples are the big Statues and Pictures of different gods. The carvings inside and outside the temples are very beautiful. When I go to temples I always meet my friends there and it is fun because I play with them .My most favorite temple occasion is the Gayatri Homam because it is fun using ghee, sticks and fire. I like all the gods in the temple but my most favorite one being Ganesh.

I like him because I like elephants and he protects us. In some temples they collect flowers for the god's statues. I think it is very nice when they make garlands out of them. In our temples they chant lots of slokas and do long poojas. The chanting of the slokas gives a feeling of peace and that we should visit the temple more often. That is what I think about our temples.

Raj Subramanian is a 5th grader in Rutger's Preparatory School, Somerset, NJ. In addition to academic excellence, he learns Vedas, Sanskrit, Mridangam and Karate.

Swetha Chandrasekar (7)

I love temples. There are many things I like about them. I like the Gopurams on top of them. I like how they made the idols. But most of all what I like is how many different kinds of Swamis there are and how pretty they are dressed up.

I have been to many kinds of temples like Bridgewater temple, Stroudsburg temple, Flushing temple, Toronto temple and of course, many other temples in India. Not even one of them is the same as the other. They all look different. And that is why I like all the temples.

When we go inside the temple we buy coconut to offer to Swami. I love the part when we break the coconut. I love the prasadam,

raisins and the thirtham. I also like the part when they put the crown on your head. But my most favorite part of going to the temple is to say slokas to all different Swamis.

Swetha is a 2nd grader in Lincoln School, Edison, NJ. She loves reading, writing and painting.

ESSAY CONTRIBUTIONS

AGES 13 - 19: Vegetarian Diet - My Choice

Rati Subramanian (14)

Vegetarianism is the practice of living on a diet that is made up of vegetables, fruits, grains, nuts, and dairy products. Why are you a Vegetarian? It's an everlasting question. When people ask me why I am a Vegetarian, I always wonder how to reply. There are so many reasons, amongst which the easy way out is to say, "it's my religion". Hinduism promotes the belief of equality amongst all living things and states that they should live in harmony with one another, not hurting one for the other's benefit. To some extent, it is my religion but there are many other reasons why I personally choose to remain Vegetarian. One of them is that I was raised with the concept of not eating meat, so naturally I stuck with it. I also don't know and am not curious about what I'm missing and it's a lot easier that way. Another reason I choose to be vegetarian is because now, like

anything else, it has become a habit. It's something I am accustomed to and don't want to change. It's no longer difficult to maintain a vegetarian diet because there are vegetarian options almost everywhere. It is also really upsetting that around 15,840,000 animals are killed for meat every day in the United States. That makes 475,200,000 every month and around 5,702,400,000 every year! Additionally, the amount of meat that is actually consumed is much less than that which is disposed off! Many people don't understand when you tell them you are vegetarian due to your religion; they appear confused and sometimes say "so you just do what it tells you to?" I think the best answer you could give someone is "because I want to be". More and more people are slowly turning vegetarian for many different reasons, most of which relate to being healthier. This shows that vegetarianism has always been leading us in the right direction.

Rati is a 7th grader in Rutgers Preparatory School in Somerset, NJ. She is on the tennis and volley ball teams, and plays piano and clarinet.

Krupa Guruvayurappan (13)

I am a vegetarian because I have been following my parents religious belief from childhood. As I grew up, I came to know that

my parents have been following from their ancestors - "the right choice" of being a vegetarian. I can't stand seeing or even thinking about these animals flesh are eaten by human beings, as according to the Hindu Mythology some Gods and Goddesses are worshipped in animal forms and some others keep animals as their Vahana, like Peacock is for Lord Muruga and Garuda is for Lord Narayana.

Being a vegetarian has many advantages. First, we can avoid fat from the animals flesh, and excessive fat may be harmful to our health. Second, poison and viruses - as animals also become sick like human beings and sometimes they would be sick when they are slaughtered for food, because they are not treated for sickness as much as human beings are treated. Big and strong animals like elephants, rhinos are all vegetarians. Hence we don't have to eat meat just for getting strength, as the necessary protein and other nutrients are available in plenty with many vegetables and vegetarian items.

Famous personalities like Albert Einstein the famous scientist, Paul McCartney the famous pop singer are all vegetarians and are successful in their respective fields. I have heard from my religious Gurus, Parents and from many other elders that being a vegetarian keeps our mind clear and focused

on good things and there have been possible scientific evidence for this. It is really nice to note nowadays that there are so many vegetarian dishes available in many restaurants in USA, as vegetarianism has spread all over the world now and I sincerely hope it spreads to the rest of the world also soon.

In conclusion, I can't explain how happy and proud I am to be a vegetarian because, I really care about the animals which should not be eaten, especially when there are so many other vegetables and vegetarian items available for us to eat.

Krupa is a honor-roll 8th grader in the Branchburg School system. In addition to academic excellence, she learns the violin and slokas.

Abhiram Vijayasathy (18)

Vegetarianism has been a commonly debated issue in the Hindu society for centuries. Some Hindus believe that they do not incur sin by eating meat. They advocate this belief with a slew of arguments, mainly "we are not performing the act of killing the animals ourselves, but are merely making use of that which has already been killed." However, with some thought it becomes evident that this reasoning is ineffective. By purchasing and utilizing the meat, which the

hunters provide, one encourages the hunters to continue killing. If society stopped buying cars would Ford continue to make them? If people wore only sandals, would Nike continue to make shoes? Obviously not. As a result, we can conclude that although they claim that they only eat the meat, and by doing so are not connected to the killing process, in actuality, they are primary force enticing the hunter to kill. But this is as much a sin as performing the hunter's actions itself. By forcing others to do their "dirty work," they incur the sin that is associated with the "work" in addition to the sin they incur for misleading the hunter.

Another common argument supporting non-vegetarianism is: "Since both plants and animals are considered to be living, is it not illogical to say we may eat the former without incurring sin while we cannot do the same with the latter." However, if preceding argument holds, we can extend this reasoning further: "Since plants, animals and humans are considered to be living, is it not illogical to say we may eat the former two without incurring sin while we cannot do the same with the latter." While this is exactly the same argument used by the non-vegetarians, even they do not accept the latter. So we can conclude that this justification of non-vegetarianism is also flawed. But where is the flaw? The flaw is in their misconception of

the different levels of living. While it is incontrovertible that both plants and animals are both living, it is also incontrovertible fact that animals have a consciousness unknown to plants. Animals are capable of having feelings and emotions, analyzing different aspects of the world, and understanding the concept of death. Clearly, plants can not do anything at this level. Furthermore, plants were created mainly for the sake of providing nourishment for other creatures, so we can feel free to eat plants (provided we thank God for this food!).

Through this discussion, we have learnt a crucial lesson: instead of constantly trying to convince oneself that he is right by furnishing inaccurate reasoning, a man should be open-minded and search for his faults. By bragging about one's own righteousness, man cannot progress. Instead he must be willing to seek his mistakes and take measures to rectify them. Only through this process can man attain perfection, which in turn leads him to liberation.

Abhiram is a senior at the Academy for the Advancement of Science and Technology in Hackensack, NJ. He is interning at SVBF, where he hopes to expand his spiritual knowledge. He is interested in mathematics, and attended the Mathematical Olympiad Summer Program.

Children Writers !

(Ages: under 12)

This section features contributions from our children. We invite short stories, anecdotes, poems etc. on a given theme.

Theme for next issue of Journal:

Our Festivals :

Deepaavali

(Length: Max. 250 words)

Youth Writers !

(Age: 13-19)

This section will feature articles from our young adults on a suggested theme.

Theme for next issue:

"The Book – I would like all my friends to read"

(Write about a book that you recently read on Hindu Culture/ Mythologies /Parables. Express the theme and its values to all youngstes)

(Length: 400 words)

Each selected entry will be published !!

Dead-line for submission of articles

December 1, 1999.

Send articles by email to
svbf@silverline.com

OR Mail to:

SVBF, Silverline Plaza,
53 Knightsbridge Road,
Piscataway, NJ 08854



प्रश्नोत्तर रत्न मालिका
Prasnottara Ratna MALikA
Sankara Bhagavatpada
(The Gem-Garland of
Questions and Answers)

(In this work, Adi Sankara enlightens and clears our doubts about various issues, in the form of simple question-answers. We will include some selections in each issue of the Journal.) - Ed.

- Q. को नरकः ? (kO naraka: ?)
What is hell?
- A. परवशता। (paravaSatA)
Being in another's control.
- Q. किं सौख्यम् ? (kim sauKyam ?)
What is comfort?
- A. सर्वसंग-विरतिः या।
(sarvasanga-virati: yA)
That disgust towards every kind of attachment.
- Q. किं साध्यम् ? (kim sADyam ?)
What is to be done?
- A. भूतहितम्। (bootahitam)
The good of the creatures.
- Q. प्रियं च किम् प्राणिनां ?
(priyam ca kim prANinAm ?)
And what is dear for creatures?
- A. असवः। (asava:)
Life.
- Q. को अनर्थफलः ? (kO anarthphala: ?)
What results in evil?
- A. मानः। (mAna:)
Conceit.
- Q. का सुखदा ? (kA suKadA ?)
What bestowes happiness?
- A. साधुजन-मैत्री। (sADujana-maitrI)
Friendship with good people.

- Q. सर्वव्यसन-विनाशे को दक्षः ?
(sarvavyasana-vinASE kO dksh: ?)
Who is clever in destroying all unhappiness?
- A. सर्वदा त्यागी। (sarvadA tyAgI)
One who always renounces.

सुभाषितानि
(SubhAshitAs)

सा विद्या या मदं हन्ति
सा श्रीर्याऽर्थिषु वर्षति ।
धर्मानुसरणी या चसा
बुद्धिरभिधीयते ॥

sA vidyA yA madam hanti
sA srIryArthishu varshati |
dharmAnusaraNI yA casA
dharmAnusaraNI yA casA
buddhirabhidhIyate ||

That which overcomes intoxication is true knowledge, that which showers the needy is true wealth, hat which follows Dharma is said to be intellect.

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in the SVBF Journal.**

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Book Review

"The Book of Life – Daily Meditations with J. Krishnamurti", Edited by R.E. Mark Lee, Krishnamurti Foundation of America (Harper, San Francisco, 1995)

Despite our unprecedented material well-being and life imbued in physical comforts, we, at least most of us, are suffering from insurmountable 'psychic' pain, for which we take recourse to "fast cures" in the form of books and lectures. Readers who resort to "The Book of Life – Daily Meditations with Krishnamurti" in search of quotidian answers to life's daily problems will be disappointed. This master piece contains not instant solutions but probing questions into relationship of human beings with each other – with loved ones, friends, enemies – and even creation itself. The Book of Life presents 365 timeless daily meditations culled from the beloved teacher's lectures and writings. In the words of a prominent philosopher, J. Krishnamurti (or J.K.) was to the world of philosophy what Einstein was to the realm of modern science.

Readers will be richly rewarded by the day-by-day unfolding of Krishnamurti's thought and insight. Whether for newcomers or for people already acquainted with Krishnamurti, "The Book of Life" provides a welcome new presentation of this remarkable teacher's life work. The format is simple and it can be used as a "daily reader" or, through more concentrated readings, as a provocative and accelerated introduction to his thought which will encourage many readers to delve deeper into the extensive legacy of Krishnamurti's talks and writings.

An excerpt from the book: "Have you ever sat very silently, not with your attention on anything, not making an effort to concentrate, but with the mind very quiet, really still? Approached with fresh mind each day, "The Book of Life..." will be a pearl of great price for every reader.

Book Review – "The Post Office", Vol. 1 by Rabindranath Tagore Andrew Robinson (Translator) Anita Desai (Introduction), St. Martin's Press, Inc. (1998)

One of Tagore's greatest inspirational works, "The Post Office" has been recently published in the North America in this handsomely illustrated new edition, offering pleasure for us all. Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore, the greatest writer of modern India, wrote The Post Office in 1911, following a deep personal loss. In beautiful, simple prose, Tagore tells the story of a young boy, Amal, confined to his sickbed on doctor's orders. Seated beside his window, he longs to join the world outside, where children play in the street and others scurry about, preoccupied with their daily routines. Greeting everyone who passes by his house, from the local yogurt seller, to the town watchman, to the lovely flower girl, Shudha, Amal - with his touching curiosity – teaches others life's simple but essential truths while awaiting his own spiritual liberation.

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), Indian poet, philosopher, and Nobel laureate, was born in Calcutta, into a wealthy family. He began to write poetry as a child; his first book appeared when he was 17 years old. After a brief stay in England (1878) to study law, he returned to India, where he rapidly became the most important and popular author of the colonial era, writing poetry, short stories, novels, and plays. He composed several hundred popular songs and in 1929 also began painting. Tagore wrote primarily in Bengali, but translated many of his works into English himself. He was awarded the 1913 Nobel Prize in literature, and in 1915 he was knighted by the British king George V. Tagore renounced his knighthood in 1919 following the Amritsar massacre of 400 Indian demonstrators by British troops. Two of his songs are national anthem of India and Bangladesh.

Dr. Ravi Subramanian

NEWS & EVENTS

Bhojan Sala inaugurated in Sringeri

As part of the 25th year of monkhood by His Holiness, a bhojan sala where over 3000 people can be fed simultaneously, was inaugurated at Sringeri on Nov. 3rd. Mr. Ravi Subramanian, Chairman, SVBF and representatives from all branches of Sankar Mutt in India attended the event. His Holiness appointed Mr. Ravi Subramanian as the *Dharmadhikari* for SVBF.

Vyasa Puja, Gayatri Yajnam, Navaratri, Diwali celebrated in SVBF.

A special week-end puja was observed on the occasion of Vyasa Poornima. After the puja, Vyasa Maharishi's portrait was taken on a procession with veda chanting around the Center at Stroudsburg.

The annual Gayatri Yajnam was performed on September 6th (Labor Day) by > 100 participants. Mother Gayatri's portrait was taken on a procession by brahmachari children participants with veda recitation around the Center.

Navaratri was celebrated in a grand scale with the recitation of Devi Mahatmyam on all days. Chandi Homam was performed on October 17th followed by Suvasini Puja and Kanya Puja.

Diwali was celebrated with a special Lalita Sahasranama and Lakshmi Ashtotra Puja performed by over 100 Ladies, seated in pairs on either side of rows of lamps. Prasadams blessed by His Holiness was presented to the

participants with a shawl. The event was concluded with a spectacular aerial display of fire-works for the second year in a row!!

Cultural Events

Smt. Anandhi Venkat rendered a carnatic vocal concert on the occasion of Sankara Jayanthi on April 25, accompanied by Smt. Gowri Ramakrishnan on the Violin and Sri. Narendran on the Mridangam; Smt. Jaya Bhupathy choreographed children's skit on the life of Adi Sankara.

Smt. Swarnalatha Subramanian sang devotional compositions on Sri Sharada and Sri Sannidhanam on July 9, accompanied by Sri. K.S. Mani on the Violin and Sri. Prakash Rao on the Mridangam.

Smt. Bhavani Rao and Party rendered Kamalamba Navavarana Kirtanas during Navaratri on October 17, accompanied by Sri. Prakash Rao on the Violin and Sri. Kumar Kanthan on the Mridangam.

Sri. Alleppy Venkatesan gave a carnatic vocal concert on July 23rd, accompanied by Sri. K.S. Mani on the Violin and Master Anand on the Mridangam.

Visitors from India

When you come to USA either to visit your children, or friends, or on business or pleasure, please visit the SharadaShrine in the beautiful Pocono mountains of Stroudsburg, Pa. If you let us know ahead of time of a local contact in the US, we will inform you of special programs during your visit.