
.. navagraha stotram with meaning and commentary ..

॥ सार्थनवग्रहस्तोत्रम् ॥

॥ श्रीरस्तु ॥

॥ अथ नवग्रह स्तोत्रम् ॥

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

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

आदित्यग्रह स्तोत्रम् ॥ Hymn in praise of the Sun God.

पद्म किंजल्क- संकाशम् लोकसाक्षिं जगत्गुरुम् ।
सर्वरोगहरं देवं आदित्यं प्रणमाम्यहम् ॥ १ ॥

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

Note. Aditya is another name of the Sun God. सूरः, सूर्यः,
अर्यमा, आदित्यः says the Amara. Krishna says that
He is the sun among the bright objects. ज्योतिषां रवि-रंशुमान् (Gita. 10-20).

There are references to the Sun in Vishnu and Siva Sahasranamas. Some are:
विहायसगतिः- विहायसं गतिः आस्रयो अस्येति विहायसगतिः=one who travels

in the sky (No.876): रविः- रसानादत्त इति रविः आदित्यात्मा(No.881) and the one who goes on his path in a chariot drawn by seven horses.

(No:829) as सप्तवाहनः- सप्त अश्वा वाहनान्यस्येति सप्तवाहनः ।

सूर्यः(He is of the form of Surya or Sun. SS (64). रविःSS (630).

हर्यश्चः-हर्यः अतिवेगवाहिनः अश्वाः

यस्य सः हर्यश्चः सूर्यः तदात्मा SS(No.212). One whose horses are very fast.

Sri Rudram in Anuvakam I, Rik 7 and 8 refer to the fact that the Lord manifests Himself as the Sun so as to be visible and

easily accessible to the people for worshipping.

असौ यस्ताम्रो अरुण उत बभ्रुः सुमङ्गलः ।

ये चे मागं रुद्रा अभितो दिक्षु ।

श्रिता सहस्रशोऽवैषाँ हेड ईमहे ।

असौ योऽवसर्पति नीलग्रीवो विलोहितः ।

उतैनं गोपा अदृशन्नदृशन्नुदहार्यः ।

उतैनं विश्वाभूतानि स दृष्टो मृड्याति नः ॥

This says that the Sun, who is copper coloured when he rises, then slightly rosy-red, then golden yellow, this highly auspicious and beneficent one is verily Rudra. The sun is stated to be the visible form of God. The Lord in His true form is निर्गुणः । really without any attributes and so is formless. This pure form is extremely difficult to comprehend. In His सगुणform, as Lord endowed with attributes like form can be understood by only certain devotees who are conversant with the shastras. In His form as the sun He is visible to all. This mantra says that as the sun He is visible to the cowherds and women fetching water. These two stand as examples of people who are generally considered illiterate and naive. Really speaking, the whole world stands ignorant and on par with the cowherds and the women carrying water in the matter of understanding the Lord. But still, the kindly Lord stands easy to be seen by all as the sun. All life depend on him.

He announces the dawn of the day, vivifies all beings so that they may go about their work. So the scriptures say that He is the Self of the world. सूर्य आत्मा जगतः तस्थुषश्च । We cannot imagine a world without the sun, a world plunged into utter darkness.

It will be a veritable hell. Perhaps, keeping such a view. the Isavasyopanishad calls hell as "the sunless worlds enveloped in blinding darkness." असूर्याः नाम ते लोकाः अन्धेन तमसावृताः

लोकसाक्षि = Witness to what we do. It is said in Mahabharata (Adi parva) that one may be naive enough to think that no one knows when he perpetrates a foul deed. But the devas and the One within are watching him. Besides there are other witnesses. They are the sun, the moon, the god of wind, the god of fire, the

sky, the earth, the water, one's own mind, the god of death,
the day and the night, the two junctions of the day and
the night, and the god of Dharma.

मन्यते पापकं कृत्वा न कश्चित् वेत्ति-मामिति ।
विदन्ति चैनं देवाश्च यश्चैवान्तरपूरुषः ॥

अदित्य-चन्द्रावनिलानलौ च द्यौर्भूमि-रापो हृदयं यमश्च ।
अहश्च रात्रिश्च उभे च संध्ये धर्मश्च जानाति नरस्य वृत्तम् ॥

Manu also says something on these lines.

मन्यन्ते वै पापकृतो न कश्चित्पश्यतीति नः ।
तांस्तु देवाः प्रपश्यन्ति स्वस्यैवान्तर पूरुषः ॥

द्यौर्भूमिरापो हृदयं चन्द्रार्काग्नियमानिला ।
रात्रिः सन्ध्य च धर्मश्च वृत्तज्ञाः सर्वदेहिनाम् ॥

The Lord witnesses everything. So He is called साक्षी ।
साक्षी- साक्षात् अव्यवधानेन स्वरूप बोधेन ईक्षते पश्यति सर्वमिति साक्षी
says the (VS15). also: सर्वलोचनः one who witnesses everything. SS(820).
सर्व-रोगहरम् । (One who removes all diseases. We are told to
pray to the Sun God for good health. आरोग्यं भास्करात् इच्छेत् ।
so goes the saying. Health is the most precious possession one can have.

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

It is said that the sins committed in previous births afflict one
in the form of diseases. पूर्व जन्म-कृतं पापं
व्याधि-रूपेण बाधते । (The sage Manu gives some details of
diseases one gets because of sins committed by him.

इह दुश्चरितैः केचित्केचित् पूर्वकृतैस्तथा ।
प्राप्नुवन्ति दुरात्मानो नरा रूपविपर्ययम् ॥
सुवर्णचौरः कौनख्यं सुरापाः श्यावदन्तताम् ।
ब्रह्महा क्षयरोगित्वं दौश्चर्म्यं गुरुतल्पगः ॥
पिशुनः पौतिनासिक्यं सूचकः पूतिवक्त्रताम् ।
धान्यचौरोऽङ्गहीनत्वं आतिरेक्यं तु मिश्रकः ॥
अन्नहर्ता आमयावित्त्वं मौक्यं वागपहारकः ।

वस्त्रापहारकः श्वैत्र्यं पङ्कतां अश्वहारकः ॥

एवं कर्मविशेषेण जायन्ते सद्विगर्हिताः ।

जडमूकान्धबधिरा विकृताकृतयास्तथा ॥

Manu classifies the sins into various categories based on their gravity. He terms five as महापातकानि or great sins. He says that the cure for the diseases can be had by means of expiatory acts. These acts include taking medicines, performing special sacrifices, homas, japa, harity etc.. But in these modern times it may be difficult, if not impossible, to perform these prescribed rites. Our shastras say that in all such cases the remedy lies in chanting Lord's names or thinking of Him.

प्रायश्चित्तान्यशेषानि तपःकर्मात्मकानिवै ।

यानि तेषां अशेषाणां श्रीकृष्णनुस्मरणं परम् ॥

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

has the following names. पापनाशनः ।

कीर्तितः पूजितो ध्यातः स्मृतः पापराशिं नाशयन् पापनाशनः ।

” पक्षोपवासाद् यत् पापं पुरुषस्य प्रणश्यति ।

प्रणायाम शतेनैव तत् पापं नश्यते नृणाम् ॥

प्राणायामसहस्रेण यत् पापं नश्यते नृणां ।

क्षणमात्रेण तत् पापं हरेर्ध्यानात् प्रणश्यति ॥” इति
वृद्धाशातातपे ॥VS(992).

हरिः - स्मृतिमात्रेण पुंसां पापं संसारं वा हरतीति

हरिः ॥VS(351)

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

No.96(SA). पवित्रः- पावनः- परमस्तु पुमान् ध्यातो दृष्टः

कीर्तितः श्रुतः पूजितः स्मृतः प्रणतः स सर्वान्

पापानुन्मूलयतीति । ” पुष्करं

पवित्रमह” मिति श्रुतिः ॥SS (PP)(No 90). तीर्थः- यथा प्रयगादि

स्नानपानादिना पावयति एवं स्मृतमात्रेण सर्वन्पावयतीत्यर्थः ।

(SS)(PP)(No.224).

सोमग्रह स्तोत्रम् ॥Hymn in praise of the Moon God.

क्षीरोदारणव-संभूतं अत्रिनेत्र-समुद्भवम् ।

नमामि शशिनं देवं शंभोर्मकुट भूषणम् ॥ २ ॥

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

The moon is called शशिन् because we can see a mark like a

शशि or hare or rabbit in it. So it is also known as
 शशधरः or मृगांगः as some say
 that the mark resembles a deer. One of the names of the Lord (VS
 No.285) is

शशबिन्दुः- शश इव बिन्दुः लाञ्छनमस्येति शशबिन्दुः चन्द्रः
 तद्वत् प्रजाः पुष्पातीति शशबिन्दुः and चन्द्रः SS (No-63)
 ” पुष्पामि चौषधीः सर्वाः सोमो भूत्वा
 रसात्मकः” *gFA* 15. 13 इति भगवद्वचनात् ।

The moon said to have come out of the ocean of milk
 (क्षीरोदः) when it was churned by the devas and asuras to get the nectar.

अत्रिनेत्र-समुद्भवम् It is said in the Puranas that the sage Atri
 produced the moon from his eye, while he was practising penance. The
 poet Kalidasa refers to this in his Raghuvamsa (2-75). While describing

Queen Sudakshina's conception he says

अथ नयनसमुत्थं ज्योतिरत्रेतिव द्यौः

सुरसरिदिव तेजो वह्निनिष्टृतमैशम् ।

नरपतिकुलभूत्यै गर्भमादत्त राज्ञी

गुरुभिरभिनिविष्टं लोकपालनुभावैः ॥ ७५ ॥

The commentator Mallinatha says: अत्रि महर्षेः नयनयोः

समुत्पन्नं नयनसमुत्थम् । ज्योतिरिव । चन्द्रमिवेत्यर्थः । चन्द्रस्य

अत्रिनेत्रोद्भवत्वमुक्तं हरिवंशे- ” नेत्राभ्यां वारि सुस्राव दशधा

द्योतयद्दिशः । तद्गर्भविधिना हृष्टा दिशो देव्यो दधुस्तदा ॥

समेत्य धारयामासुर्न च ताः समशक्नुवन् । स ताभ्यः

सहसैवात दिग्भ्यो गर्भः प्रभावितः ॥ पपात भासयं लोकान्

शीतांशुः सर्वभावनः ॥ इति ॥

शंभोर्मकुट भूषणम् The moon looks like an ornament on

the matted locks of Siva. So He has the names: शशिशेखरः †

शशाकारो लाञ्छनविशेषः शशः, सोऽस्यास्तीति शशी,

स शेकरो यसेति ततोक्तः SS(108), SA(5), and

सोमविभूषः । - विशिष्टा भूषा - विभूषा, सोमः विभूषा

भूषणं यस्य स सोमविभूषः चन्द्रधरः ।

” चन्द्रललाटाय कृत्तिवाससे नम” इति श्रुतिः ॥ SS (PP) (26).

Krishna says (Gita-10-21) that He is the moon among the stars.

नक्षत्राणा-महं शशी

अङ्गारक स्तोत्रम् Hymn in praise of Angaraka.

धरणी-गर्भ-संभूतं विद्युत्पुंजं जगत्पतिम् ।
कुमारं शक्ति-हस्तं च मंगलं प्रणमाम्यहम् ॥ ३ ॥

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

बुध ग्रह स्तोत्रम् Hymn in praise of Budha.

प्रियंगु कनका-भासं रूपेणाप्रतिमं शुभम् ।
सौम्यं सौम्य-गुणोपेतं तं बुधं प्रणमाम्यहम् ॥ ४ ॥
अत्रिः SS(70). He is of the form of Budha - descendant of Atri.

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

बृहस्पति स्तोत्रम् Hymn in praise of Brihaspathi.

देवानां च ऋषीणां च गुरुं कनकसन्निभम् ।
बुद्धिपूर्णं त्रिलोकेशं तं गुरुं प्रणमाम्यहम् ॥ ५ ॥

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

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

पुरोधसां च मुख्यं मां विद्धि पार्थ बृहस्पतिम् ।
The name Brihaspathi is synonymous for one who is very intelligent and is skilled in oratory. Amara gives his names as follows:

बृहस्पतिः सुराचार्यः गीष्पतिः धिषणो गुरुः ।
जीवाङ्गिरसो वाचस्पतिः चित्रशिखण्डिजः ॥

शुक्र स्तोत्रम् Hymn in praise of Sukra.

शुद्ध-स्पटिक-संकाशं दैत्यानां प्रणतं गुरुम् ।
सर्वशास्त्र-प्रवक्तारं भार्गवं प्रणमाम्यहम् ॥ ६ ॥

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

देवासुरगुरुः । SS(937) - He is of the form of preceptor of devas

and asuras (i.e.) Brihaspathi and Sukra.

Krishna says in Gita (10-37) that amongst those with sharp intellect

He is Sukracharya. कवीन-मुशना कविः ।

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

शनैश्चर स्तोत्रम् Hymn in praise of Shani.

नीलांजन समाकारं रविपुत्रं महाग्रहम् ।
छाया-मार्ताण्ड-संभूतं तं नमामि शनैश्चरम् ॥ ७ ॥

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

शनिःSS(65). He is of the form of Shani.

राहु स्तोत्रम् Hymn in praise of Rahu.

अर्धकायं महावीर्यं चन्द्र-भास्कर-मर्दनम् ।
सिंहिका-गर्भ-संभूतं तं राहुं प्रणमाम्यहम् ॥ ८ ॥

I salute Rahu who has half the body, who has great valour, who hides the sun and the moon and who was born of Simhika.

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

देवलिङ्गप्रतिच्छन्नः स्वर्भानुर्देवसंसदि ।
प्रविष्टः सोममपिबत् चन्द्रार्काभ्यां च सूचितः ॥ २४ ॥
चक्रेण क्षुरधारेण जहार पिबतः शिरः ।
हरिस्तस्य कबन्दस्तु सुधया प्लावितोऽपतत् ॥ २५ ॥
शिरस्त्वमरतां नीतमजो ग्रहचीकूपत् ।
यस्तु पर्वणि चन्द्रार्कावभिधावति वैरधीः ॥
ग्रहःSS(67). He is of the form of Rahu who seizes.

केतु स्तोत्रम् Hymn in praise of Ketu.

पलाल धूमसंकशं तारक-ग्रह-मस्तकम् ।
रौद्रं रौद्रतरं घोरं तं केतुं प्रणमाम्यहम् ॥ ९ ॥

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

केतुःSS(66). He is of the form of Ketu.

समष्टि स्तोत्रम् प्रार्थना च Hymn in praise of all and prayer.

कल्याणानि नभोमणिः सुललितं कीर्तिं कलानां निधिः
शौर्यं क्षमातनयः बुधश्च बुधतां जीवश्च-चिरं-जीविताम् ।
साम्राज्यं भृगुजो-ऽर्कजो विजयितां राहुः बहूकर्षतां
केतुर्यच्छतु वांचितं मम फलं सर्वं ग्रहाः सादराः ॥ १० ॥

Let the Sun give me all prosperity, the Moon excellent fame, Angaraka valour, Budha wisdom, Guru long life, Sukra kingdom, Shani victory, Rahu attractive nature and Ketu all desires. Let all the planets give me support.

उद्वासन् क्षमापणं च Giving leave and praying for forgiveness.

न्यूनातिरिक्ता-न्यपरिस्पृष्टानि कर्माणि यानीह मया कृतानि ।
सर्वाणि चैतानि मम क्षमध्वं प्रयातु तुष्टाः पुनरागमाय ॥ ११ ॥

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

प्रार्थना । Prayer.

अन्यथा शरणं नास्ति यूयं मे शरणं सदा ।
तस्मात्कारुण्य भावेन रक्षध्वं गृह-नायकाः ॥ १२ ॥

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

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

The nine planets mentioned here are said to give auspicious or inauspicious results to one as per the individual's karma or past actions. By propitiating them, it is said that one can either get favourable results in enhanced form or malefic effects with reduced severity. So we have the practice of worshipping them in the temples regularly

and particularly on certain days dedicated to them, like Saturday is the day specially chosen to worship god Saturn.

Let us now look at what is said about such worships in our shastras.

The scriptures talk of this subject at two different levels. One is at the

व्यावहारिक or transactional level or the level at which we do

our work or go about doing business in this world. The other

is at the पारमार्थिका level or at the level of reality or truth.

Let us call them as level 1 and 2.

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

कविर्मनीषी परिभूः स्वयंभूः यथातथ्यतोऽर्थात् व्यदधात्
शाश्वतीभ्यः समाभ्यः ।

(Isavasyopanishad.No.8). The various deities perform their assigned duties diligently as the Lord is

keeping a close watch over them. This is also said in the Kathopanishad.

भयादस्याग्निस्तपति भयात् तपति सूर्यः । भयादिन्द्रश्च वायुश्च
मृत्युर्धावति पञ्चमः ॥

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

भीषस्माद्वातः पवते । भीषोदेति सूर्यः ।
भीषास्मादग्निश्चेन्द्रश्च । मृत्युर्धावति पञ्चम इति ।

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

महादेवः and महेश्वरः ।

The Upanishads to some extent and the Puranas to a greater extent talk about the deities. They say they have supernatural powers to bless us with health, wealth and such material benefits.

Because of this people have developed the habit of worshipping different deities.

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

Similarly, one may worship

Goddess Lakshmi to get wealth or Sarasvathi to gain knowledge.

The puranas and other scriptures give the method of worship also.

It is also possible that one is attracted to a particular deity

because of past tendencies called vasanas.

जन्मर्जित संस्कार विशेषेण says Sankara in his commentary on Gita.

The Lord Krishna reveals a secret in Gita (Chapter 7) about worshipping various deities. He says that He is Himself in the form of all deities (not only planets). But some people are not aware of this truth and as a result of this ignorance they worship different deities, assuming that

one is different from the other. So worship offered to a deity in any form is in fact worship offered to

Him only. Only the names and forms are different.

येऽप्यन्य-देवता-भक्ता यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः ।
तेऽपि मामेव कौन्तेय यजन्तिवधि-पूर्वकम् ॥(Gita-9.23)

The results one gets as the fruit of the worship is, in fact given by Him only,

and is channelised through the particular deity. (Gita-Chap-7)

कामैस्तैस्तैर्हृतज्ञानाः प्रपद्यन्ते-ऽन्यदेवताः ।
तं तं नियम-मास्ताय प्रकृत्या नियताः स्वया ॥ २० ॥
यो यो यां यां तनुं भक्तः श्रद्धयार्चितु-मिच्छति ।
तस्य तस्याचलां श्रद्धां तामेव विदधा-म्यहम् ॥ २१ ॥

स तथा श्रद्धया युक्त-स्तस्याराधन-मीहते ।
लभते च ततः कामान् मयैव विहितान् हि तान् ॥ २२ ॥

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

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

says this:

आब्रह्म-भुवनाल्लोकाः पुनरावर्तिनोऽजुन ।

So, the rewards they offer cannot be permanent either. They will necessarily be ephemeral or

limited by time.

अन्तवन्तु फलं तेषां तद्भव-त्यल्पमेधसाम् ।
देवान् देवयजो यान्ति मद्भक्ता यान्ति मामपि ॥ २३ ॥

Krishna terms these people who worship such deities as people endowed with limited intelligence. This is because the effort they put in to perform the worship, in the form of gathering materials, the time and money spent is the same as required to worship the Lord; but the result they get is limited. The reason is that their vision is limited.

The remedy lies in understanding what is said in Gita and other scriptures and get a broader picture. One may worship any deity but with the understanding that the deity worshipped is only the Supreme Being that has no limitations. To facilitate such an understanding the stotras contain names that reveal this fact. For example, one of the 108 names of Lakshmi (अष्टोत्तर शत नामावलिः)

is ब्रह्म विष्णु शिवात्मिका (That is, She is of the form of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva).

One of the 108 names of Subrahmanya is परब्रह्म (This is also one of the 108 names of Krishna. It also says सर्वग्रहरूपी । That is, Krishna is of the form of all planets. This fact is stated clearly in the Upanishads about the Supreme Being.

For example, the Kaivalyopanishad says:

स ब्रह्मा स शिवः सेन्द्रः सोऽक्षरः परमः स्वराट् ।
स एव विष्णुः स प्राणः स कालाऽग्निः स चन्द्रमाः ॥

”He is Brahma, He is Shiva, He is Indra, He is the Immutable, the Supreme, the Self-luminous. He alone is Vishnu, He is Prana, He is Time and Fire,

He is the Moon.” A popular verse , which we recite during our prayers says this.

आकाशात् पतितं तोयं यथा गच्छति सागरम् ।
सर्वदेव नमस्काराः केशवं प्रति गच्छति ॥

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

This is sufficient proof of the fact that a deity worshipped in any form is a manifestation

of the One Supreme Being only. So the Lord gets these names (VS 725 and 726)

as एकः- परमार्थतः

सजातीय-विजातीय-स्वगतभेद-विनिर्मुक्तत्वात् एकः;

” एकमेवाद्वितीयम्” *cAŚd .up.* 6. 2.1 इति श्रुतेः । and

एकरूपः - एकमेव रूपं

वास्तवं यस्य सः एकरूपः । ” स एकः स एव रुद्र” इति श्रुतिः ॥SS(PP)(511). and

as अनेकः- मायया बहुरूपत्वात् नैकः; ” इन्द्रो मायाभिः पुरुरूप ईयते” *b.up.*2. 5.19 इति श्रुतिः ।

Also अनेकमूर्तिः- अवतारेषु स्वेच्छया

लोकानामुपकारिणीर्बह्वीर्मूर्तिर्भजत इति

अनेकमूर्तिः । (VS 721) and शतमूर्तिः- नानाविकल्पजा मूर्तयः

संविदाकृतेः सन्तीति

शतमूर्तिः । (VS 723).

सहस्रमूर्तिः - सहस्रसङ्ख्याता अनेकमूर्तयः, सर्वात्मकत्वात्,

अस्य सन्तीति सहस्रमूर्तिः ।

” यत्परं ब्रह्म सर्वात्म” ति श्रुतिः ॥SS(PP)(209) and

बहुरूपः - ब्रह्मादि

स्थावरान्ताकरेण बहुरूपः । ” इन्द्रो मायाभिः पुरुरूप” इति श्रुतिः ॥SS(PP)(393).

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

त्वमर्कस्त्वं सोमस्त्वमसि पवनस्त्वं हुतवह-

स्त्वमापस्त्वं व्योम त्वमु धरणिरात्मा त्वमिति च ।

परिच्छिन्नमेवं त्वयि परिणता बिभ्रति गिरं
न विद्वस्तत्त्वं वयमिह तु यत् त्वं न भवसि ॥

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

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

सम्प्रचरत्सु नानायागेषु विरचिताङ्गक्रियेष्वपूर्वं यत् तत्
क्रियाफलं धर्माख्यं परे ब्रह्मणि यज्ञपुरुषे सर्वदेवतालिङ्गानां मन्त्राणां
अर्थनियामकतया साक्षात्कर्तारि परदेवतायां भगवति वासुदेव एव भावयमान
आत्मनैपुण्यमृदितकषायो हविःष्वध्व र्युभिः गृह्यमाणेषु
स यजमानो यज्ञभाजो देवांस्तान् पुरुषावयवेष्वभ्यध्यायत् ।

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

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

That is, he is not taken by the form like the lady. The Swami points out that there is no such THING as "bangle" or "chain". "Bangle" and "chain" are only gold. "Bangle" and "chain" are only names given to particular forms of gold. They do not have existence of their own. They depend on the gold for their existence but not vice versa. The gold can exist separately, independantly of the bangle and the chain. Such a thing, like gold in this case, which gives substance to other things is called Adhishtanam अधिष्ठानम् । Some more examples are:

wood is the Adhishtanam for articles like chair and table made out of it. One cannot bring a chair or table without bringing wood. Or, to put it bluntly, when one is bringing a chair or table, he is bringing only wood.

Clay is the Adhishtanam for pot and other items

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

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

that most of us are struggling with the world of names and forms only and may be termed as ajnanis.

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

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

अधिष्ठानम् । अधितिष्ठन्ति भूतानि उपादन-कारणत्वेन
ब्रह्मेति अधिष्ठानम् । " मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि" *gFtA* 9. 4 इति
भगवद्वचनम् ।

He has also the name सर्वदेवमयः [The suffix मय appended to any word means "made of" or composed of. Thus we say the ornament is स्वर्णमय. It is gold and nothing but gold only. Gold pervades it in and through. Similarly, the Lord has the name (SS950) सर्वदेवमयः । Any deity is nothing but a form and name of the Lord only.

We have seen this said in this popular verse from Niti Sastra.

मृत्पिण्डमेकं बहुभाण्डरूपं सुवर्णमेकं बहुभूषणात्मकम् ।
गोक्षीरमेकं बहुधेनुजातं एकः परात्मा बहुदेहवर्ती ॥

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

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

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

यथा हि स्कन्ध-शाखानां तरोर्मूलावसेचनम् ।

एवमाराधनं विष्णोः सर्वेषा-मात्मनश्च हि ॥

Even as pouring water at the roots of a tree nourishes the trunk and branches as well.

even so worshipping the Lord Vishnu amounts to propitiating all as well as oneself.

Taking the example of bangle and chain discussed earlier, we see that when the gold

is cleaned and polished, the ornaments "bangle" and "chain" get automatically cleaned

and polished. Also when we weigh the "bangle" and "chain", we are in fact weighing the adhishtanam gold only. This brings home the idea conveyed all along. That is, worship offered to a deity in any form is indeed worship offered to the

Supreme Being only, but unknowingly. And worship offered to the Supreme Being is

equivalent to worshipping all the deities.

An incident in the life of the Tamil saint Sambandar illustrates this point. He wanted to

go to Madurai, the capital of Pandyan kingdom. The kingdom was at that time, under

a wave of Jainism and the king too was under the spell of that religion.

In view of this, it appears that his well wishers advised him to drop the idea

of visiting that place as they feared he may be harmed there.

They added that the planetary positions also were not favourable for undertaking the journey. But the saint was not discouraged by such thoughts. He recited ten

verses through which he conveyed that the planets will do no harm to the devotee of the Lord;

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

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

So Sri Bhagavatha (2-3-10) says that a wise person, whether he has many desires ,

or has no desires or he desires moksha can worship the Lord and benefit.

अकामः सर्वकामो वा मोक्षकामः उदारधीः ।

तीव्रेण भक्तियोगेन यजेत पुरुषं परम् ॥

But we are only human . We are fascinated by the worldly gains like health and lucre

as we feel they are near and are tangible and no attraction to things like God's grace and salvation

which sound distant and nebulous. Yama, the god of death, mentions this with sadness

in Kathopanishad. (1-2-2)

श्रेयश्च प्रेयश्च मनुष्यमेत-

स्तौ संपरीत्य विविनक्ति धीरः ।

श्रेयो हि धीरोऽभि प्रेयसो वृणीते
प्रेयो मन्दो योगक्षेमद् वृणीते ॥

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

As an aside, it is to be pointed out that some devotees may call the Supreme Being by different names such as Siva or Krishna etc. For example, the author of Siva-mahimna

Stotram says: महेशान्नापरो देवः that is , there is no God superior to Mahesha

or Siva. They may also add that they will not worship other deities who can give only petty benefits

or favours. For example we see Sri Sankaracharya saying so in his famous work Sivanandalahari.

सहस्रं वर्तन्ते जगति विबुधाः क्षुद्रफलदा

न मन्ये स्वप्ने वा तदनुसरणं तत्कृतफलम् ।

हरि-ब्रह्मादीनामपि निकटभाजा-मसुलभं

चिरं याचे शंभो शिव तव पदांभोज-भजनम् ॥4—

There are thousands of gods who can give petty benefits. I will not even dream of worshipping them or seeking favours from them.

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

पृथ्वी रेणुरणुः पर्यासि कणिका फल्गुस्स्फुलिङ्गो लघुः

तेजो निश्चसनं मरुत्तनुतरं रन्ध्रं सुसूक्ष्मं नभः ।

क्षुद्रा रुद्रपितामहप्रभृतयः कीटास्समस्तास्सुराः

दृष्टे यत्र स तावको विजयते भूमाऽवधूतावधिः ॥ २२ ॥

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

॥ शुभम् ॥

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