

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.*