DAKSHINAMURTI STOTRAM

(1)

उपासकानां यदुपासनीयमुपातवासं वदशाखिमूले ।
तद्वाम दक्षिण्यजुषा स्वमूर्य्या जागर्तु चित्ते मम बोधरूपम् ॥

May that Supreme Spirit that has taken its abode under the banyan tree taking an anthropomorphic form facing south in an act of great condescension and which is the object of meditation for the devotees remain in my mind activising my intellect.

(Dakshinamurti is one of the radiant human forms which Lord Siva the Supreme Spirit takes out of his infinite mercy (dakshinya) to uplift the ripe soul from deluge. The banyan tree under which he is seated typifies the microcosm and macrocosm in the tiny seed of the tree and the vast expanse of its branches, leaves and roots that evolve from it respectively thereby illustrating how the Universe evolves out of the Supreme Spirit who willed in the Upanishadic words hushyam, 'May I multiply'. The banyan tree which outlives several other living species also stands for the eternity (sat) associated with the Supreme. The devotees who meditate on Him have their consciousness (cit) illumined and experience bliss (ananda). Thus Dakshinamurti is none other than Sat-citananda).

(2)

आद्रक्षमक्षीणदयानिधानाचार्यमााथं वदमूलभागे ।
मोनेन मन्तस्मितभूषितेन महर्षिलोकजय सम नुद्वकन्तम् ॥

I beheld under the banyan tree the Primordial Preceptor, the receptacle of undiminishng compassion driving away the darkness of ignorance of great sages by mere silence that is ornamented by a gentle smile.

(Sankara Bhagavatapada records his experience in beholding the graceful form Dakshinamurti, who as a true 'Guru', a term which means 'dispeller of ignorance', enlightens the great sages by His mere silence that radiates light. A Guru is totally instrumental in drawing out the inherent powers of the soul. The mere presence of the Supreme in this benign form of a Guru would suffice to efface the ignorance of the soul and lit the flame of true knowledge that leads to liberation.)
(3)

विद्याविताशेषतमोगुणेन युद्धविशेषेन मुहुर्षुनीनाम्।
निरस्य मायां दया विधते देवो महास्तत्त्वसीति बोधम्॥

The Great Lord endowed as he is with compassion drove away often and on, the quality of ignorance of the sages in entirety by his jnanamudra (the pose of fingers that confers true knowledge) and thus destroyed their nescience and ushered in the profound knowledge 'That thou art.'

The power of maya is such that the thick veil of ignorance has got to be stormed more than once before it is annihilated. The truth of the Mahavakya dawns on a person only when the Lord out of His abundant grace enables him to perceive it. The cinmudra is an index of this grace. It is also taken to signify the non-duality of jiva and Isvara represented by the joining of the thumb and the fore finger. The two together stand for the pure Consciousness or cit. The mudra that enables one to comprehend this truth is therefore called Cinmudra.

(4)

अपारकारूण्यसुधातर्कृ अपाजपातैरवलोकन्तम्।
कठोरसारसारनिदाघतसानु मुनीनां हृदि गुरूं गुरुणाम्॥

I offer my obeisance to that Preceptor of preceptors who, by His ambrosial glances marked by unlimited grace, was looking at the sages afflicted by the intense heat of that fierce misery of worldly existence.

(Dakshinamurti is the path finder and arch preceptor in disseminating true knowledge to the successive. Acaryas that walked on the globe. He is therefore the Adi-guru. The only way in which a 'guru' can transmit right knowledge to his disciple is kindness and compassion. As an ideal guru, Dakshinamurti sets an example. His gleaming eyes shed nectar that soothes the intense sufferers of the aspirants. The healing touch works miracles. The sweltering heat of Samsara is no more. The cool breeze of ananda has begun to blow in the mind of the sages.)

(5)

ममाद्यदेवो वटमूल्यवासी कृपाविशेषालकृतसत्रिधानः।
ओकारूपापुष्पदिश्य विद्याः आविध्वक्त्वान्तमपाकरोतु॥
May my Primordial Lord, dwelling at the foot of the banyan tree, out of divine mercy appear before me, offer instruction in the mystic lore 'Om' and dispel the darkness of nescience.

(6)

कलाभिरिन्दोरिव कल्पिताङ्गः मुक्ताकलापैरिव बद्धपूर्वत्इः ।
आलोकेऽदेशिकमप्रमेयमः अनाद्विद्यात्मिनिप्रभातम् ॥

I behold with my eyes the incomprehensible form of the Divine preceptor, the veritable dawn that dispels the beginningless darkness of nescience, a form that appears, to be made as though with the digits of the Moon or perhaps with a collection of pearls.

(Again the blessed Acarya exults in the divine vision that was vouchsafed to him by the Adi Guru. The white sheen of brilliance of the vision of that Divine form is fancied by the poet philosopher as being fashioned out of the white digits of the Moon and a collection of white pearls. Not satisfied with these fancies he draws a metaphor picturing the radiant Dakshinamurti as the dawn that drives away the darkness.)

(7)

स्वदक्षाजातिस्थितवामपादं पाददेशिकलंकृतयोगपद्मः ।
अपस्मृतेशरतिपादपन्ध्रे प्रणौमि देवं प्रणिधानवन्त्म ॥

I adore that Lord in his meditative aspect, whose left foot is placed on His right thigh, who wears the yoga vastra adorned by a serpent and who has his (right) foot placed over the body of apasmarapurusha.

The 'apasrama-purusha’ represents the evil nescience that is stamped out by the Lord. In this connection we may recall the ‘dhyana sloka’ is Sri Dakshinamurthi Upanisad which seeks to confer on the meditator freedom from nescience. 'Ajnanapaham adim adimagiram artham Bhavanipatim nyagrodhant anivasinam para gurum dhyayamyabhistap taye. - 'I meditate on the Supreme Preceptor who dwells under the banyan tree, who is none other than the Lord of Bhavani, the import of Vedic words, the first God who destroys nescience' (v.14)
(8)

तत्त्वार्थमन्त्रे कस्तामृषीणां युवाधिपि यः सवर्पदेहूः।
प्रणोमि तं प्राक्तनपुण्यजाले: आचार्यमार्थयुगाधिविवासम्।

I offer my obeisance, thanks to my past accumulated merit,
to that Preceptor, the abode of marvellous qualities, who despite
his youthful appearance yearns to instruct His disciples, the
Sages, the Supreme Spiritual Truth.

True knowledge would arise only when there is earnestness and competence
both in the teacher and the taught. Here the sages, the Brahmavadins are the
disciples and Lord Siva in His youthful aspect of Dakshinamurti is the Preceptor.
The former are the ‘antevasinah’ who dwell in the residence of the preceptor under
the banyan tree and the latter who is anxious to teach them (upadestum iste) is
Himself, "the very embodiment of Consciousness who leads His devotees to the
realisation of the Consciousness".

(9)

एकेन मुद्रां परशु करेण करेण बायःनेन पृगं दधानः।
स्वजानुविन्यस्तकरः पुरस्तादू आचार्यचूडामणिराविरस्तु।

May the crest jewel among the Preceptors who holds one
of his hands in the cin-mudra pose, holds in another an axe, in
yet another a deer and keeps the (fourth hand on his thigh
present Himself before me.

The "cinmudra" indicates that He is the be-all and end-all of knowledge par
excellence. The axe stands for his skill in destroying ignorance. The deer held in
his hand is suggestive of His control of the senses as a master Yogan.

(10)

आलेपवन्तं मद्याज्ञभूत्या शार्दुलकृत्या परिधानवन्तम्।
आलोकये कञ्चन देशिकेन्द्रे अज्ञानवाराकरबालाप्रिम।

I behold an extraordinarily great prince among preceptors
who is the very submarine fire (capable of consuming) the ocean
of nescience. I see Him besmeared with the ash of the limbs of
cupid and clad in tiger's hide.
(11)

रुस्मितं सोमकलावर्तसं वीणाधरं व्यक्तजातकलापम्।
उपासते केवल योगिनिः उपात्तनादातुभयप्रमोदम्॥

Only a few among the Yogins worship Thee of smiling countenance and waving tresses wearing the digit of the moon as a crest jewel holding the lute in a hand and exuding joy arising from the sweet notes of the lute played on.

Sankara bhagavatpada conjures up a vision of the "Saumya" or benign aspect of the Vinadhara Dakshinamurti that was worshipped by a few sages, only by a few, because such a vision is vouchsafed only to those even among the learned sages who are the recipients of His special grace. Has it not been said "Yam eva esha Vrnete tena labhyah, Tasyaisa atmavivrrnte tanum svam (K athoponisad, II.33.)

(12)

उपासते यं मुनयः शुकाय्या निराशिषतो निर्मितधारिवासः।
तं दक्षिणामूर्तिनः महे हृशम् उपास्याहे मोहमहातिशान्यः॥

I meditate on Mahesvara in the form of Dakshinamurti with a view to obtain the peace arising from the removal of the suffering caused by delusion. It is that very form which was meditated upon by sages Suka and other who are free from attachment and a sense of possession.

People of ordinary type generally pray for wealth, health, fame etc. But an ideal aspirant like Suka will seek nothing of a mundane nature for himself. Being free from the sense of "I" and "mine" our Acarya following the footsteps of Suka seeks peace and the consequent bliss and thus shows the way to us to follow.

(13)

कान्त्या निन्दितकुन्दकन्दलवल्पुर्यं श्रोधमूले वसन्।
कारणामूर्तिवारिप्रिणिनं संभाव्यन्विविहिते।।
मोहव्यावहिर्भेदवस्मिन्यवूढेपन तत्तताहशा।
दैवस्तत्तिवत्सित्यो धयतु मां मुद्रावत्ता पाणिना॥

9
May the Lord, with his palm showing cinmudra, endowed with a body that surpasses in lustre the jasmine flower, staying under the banyan tree, gracing the sages with looks that exude nectarine compassion, break asunder the darkness of delusion and instruct me in that Supreme Truth embedded in the scriptural text "That-thou-art'.

The Acarya prays for the grace of the Adi Guru to impart the import of the Mahavakya which proclaims the non-duality of the Brahman and Jiva. Once this Advaitic knowledge is received the veil of avidya is sundered and there is no more the cycle of births and deaths in this ocean of transmigratory existence.

(14)  
अगीरग्रान्तःअललाटनेत्रः: अशान्तवेषः: अभुजस्तेभू: ।  
अबोधसुभल्लापास्तन्द्रे: अपूर्णाकामेः: अपरेलतं न: ॥

I have no need for any God whose body is not white, who does not have an eye on his forehead, who is not quietistic in appearance, who does not wear the jewel of serpent, who does not show the cin-mudra, who has not abandoned sleep and who has not his will fulfilled.

This verse illustrates how one should have implicit faith and devotion to his istadevata in a particular form which alone is a sure means aiding meditation and earning His grace, that ultimately confers liberation.

(15)  
देवतानि कति सन्ति चावनो नैव तानि मनसो मतानि मे ।  
दीक्षितं जडधियामनुग्रहे दक्षिणाभिमुखेव देवतम् ॥

Many indeed are the Gods on this earth; but none of them are agreeable to my mind. The only God I adore is the One with His face turned to south who has resolved to extend his grace to the dullard.

Acarya’s unassailable and abiding devotion to Dakshinamurthi is again emphasised here. In, His infinite mercy He has taken upon Himself to help the lowliest to attain beatitude.
Obeisance to that Great God dwelling under the banyan tree filled with joy, wearing the digit of the Moon as a crest jewel and bearing a form pleasing with the holy ash smeared over it. He is indeed an adept in creating this magic show of this everchanging world.

The holy ash smeared over his body is the remnant of the Universe that is destroyed by Siva at the time of the Mahapralaya and it is indicative of the impermanence of the phenomenal world. This world is illusory like the product of magic and the causality of this world is to be acquitted for in the indeterminable maya grounded in Isvara. He is filled with joy (mudita) that arises from a sense of fulfilment.

Thou with the long matted tresses hanging around (your face) adorned with the digits of the Moon that is not full, an eye on the forehead and a face that is beautiful like the full Moon shine in the minds of men of purity.

Citasuddhi is a sine qua non for an aspirant to Self-realisation. It is only in the pure mirror of mind of such a person will reflect the radiant form of the prince of preceptors, Dakasinamurti revealing true knowledge.

Thou with Uma as Thy consort reveal to Thy devotees the nature of a Full-Moon. For now as I have a vision of Thee, that vision makes my mind melt as though it is moon-stone.

The Murti of Umapahesvara is a favourite of devotees. This is seen in one of the verses addressed to this form by Sankara Bhagavatpada in his Umapahesvara
stotram: "Namaskratabhista-varapra-dabhyam" 'Who grants the boons desired by the devotees'. This form, unlike some others marked by a bundle of oddities such as ashes, skull garlands etc. is quite pleasing associated as it is with the compassionate mother, Uma. No wonder that the mind of the ripe soul melts at the delightful sight of Umasahaya.)

(19)

यस्ते प्रसन्नामनुसन्धानो मूर्तिः मुदा मुन्धशशाङ्कमोऽले ।
एक्षर्यमायुर्लभते च विद्याम् अन्ते च वेदान्तमहारहस्यम् ॥

Those who constantly mediate with great exultation on Thy form with a head marked by the digit of the moon will obtain prosperity, longevity of life, true knowledge and ultimately the great secret of Vedanta.

End of the Dakshinamurti Stotram