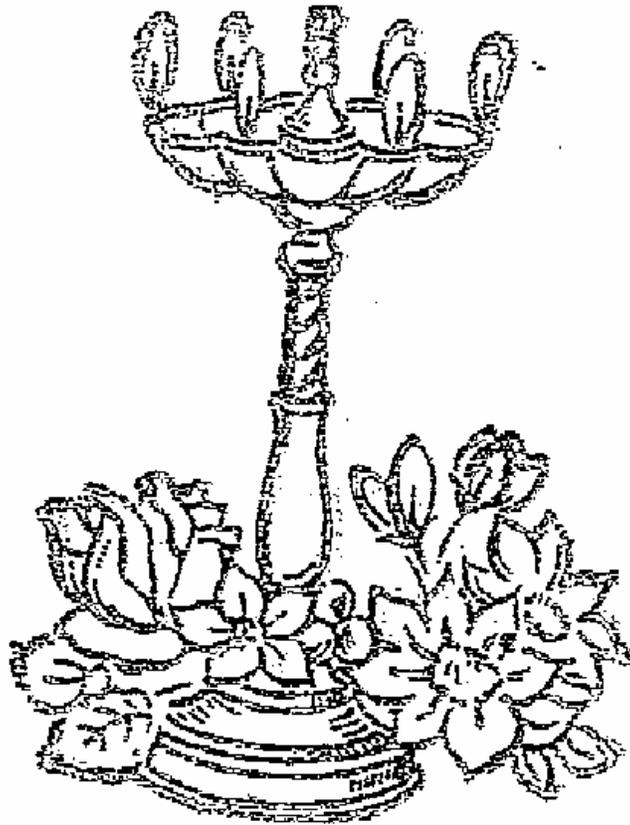


CHAPTER ONE



SLOKAS

(PRAYERS)

LORD GANESHA



सूषिकवाहन मोदकहस्त चामरकर्ण विलम्बितसूत्र ।
वामनरूप महेश्वरपुत्र विघ्नविनायकपाद नमस्ते ॥

१.

ॐ एकदन्ताय विद्महे वक्रतुण्डाय धीमहि ।
तन्नो दन्ती प्रचोदयात् ॥

२.

***Mooshika-vaahana modaka-hasta Chaamara-karna vilambita-sootra
Vaamana-roopa Maheshvara-putra Vigna-vinaayaka paada namaste. 1.***

Gayatri (It is the Vedic mantra that tells the different manifestations of God in few words)
***Om Ekadantaaya Vidmahe Vakratundaaya Dheemahi,
Tanno Danti Prachodayaat. 2.***

Meaning:

1. He who has the mouse as his vahana (vehicle); who always keeps Modhakam (a traditional type of sweet); who has ears that resemble a hand held fan; who wears a chain-like ornament around his waist; who is short in stature; who is the son of Parameshwar, O Lord Vinayaka who is all the above and he who always removes our obstacles, We worship your Divine feet.
2. Om! We meditate on elephant-headed Lord who has a huge body, and single tusk, may Ganesha remove all obstacles in our path and bestow wisdom on us. (Danti=one with tusk/Ganesha).

DEVEE (GODDESS PARVATI)



(Parvati as Lalita Tripurasundari)

- या देवी सर्वभूतेषु बुद्धि रूपेण संस्थिता ।
नमस्तस्यै, नमस्तस्यै, नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः ॥ १.
- या देवी सर्वभूतेषु लक्ष्मी रूपेण संस्थिता ।
नमस्तस्यै, नमस्तस्यै, नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः ॥ २.
- या देवी सर्वभूतेषु शक्तिरूपेण संस्थिता ।
नमस्तस्यै, नमस्तस्यै, नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः ॥ ३.

*Yaa devee sarva-bhooteshu buddhi-roopena samsthitaa,
Namastasyai, namastasyai, namastasyai namo namaha. 1.*

*Yaa devee sarva-bhooteshu Lakshmee-roopena samsthitaa,
Namastasyai, namastasyai, namastasyai namo namaha. 2.*

*Yaa devee sarva-bhooteshu Shakti-roopena samsthitaa,
Namastasyai, namastasyai, namastasyai namo namaha. 3.*

Meaning:

1. We bow again and again to the goddess who abides in all beings in the form of intelligence.
2. We bow again and again to the goddess who abides in all beings in the form of good fortune.
3. We bow again and again to the goddess who abides in all beings in the form of power.

These prayers, called Devi namaskar slokas, are taken from, Devi Mahatmyam, a hymn to the Divine Mother of the Universe. The hymn, well known as the 'Aparajitastotra', praises her as the 'unconquered'. Her immanence in all the living beings is the main theme of this hymn. The powers and activities of all beings are manifestations of only her power.

GODDESS DURGA



दुर्गात् शन्त्रा यते यस्मात् देवी दुर्गेति गत्यते ।
प्रपद्ये शरणं देवीं त्वं दुर्गे दुरितम् हर ॥ १.

ॐ कात्यायन्यै विद्महे कन्याकुमार्यै धीमहि ।
तन्नो दुर्गा प्रचोदयात् ॥ २.

*Durgath Shantraayate yasmaath Devee Durgeti gathyate
Prapadye Sharanam Deveem tvam Durge duritam hara. 1.*

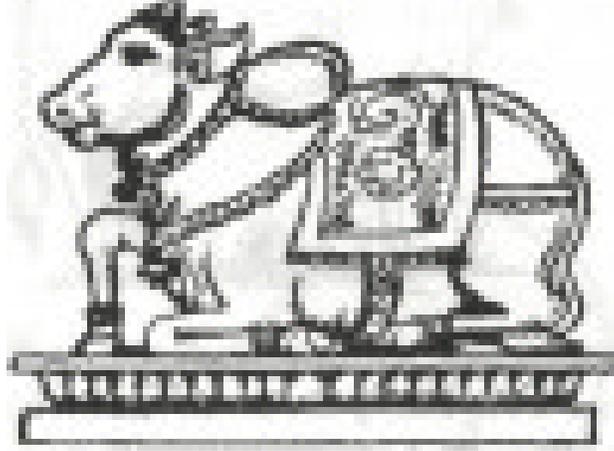
Gayatri
*Om Kaatyaayanyai Vidmahe Kanyaakumaaryai Dheemahi,
Tanno Durgaa Prachodayaat. 2.*

Meaning:

1. Salutations to Devi Durga who removes all our miseries and troubles very quickly, as soon as we remember her and pray for help.
2. Om! We meditate on the Virgin goddess, the goddess who was the daughter of Sage Kata, may Durga remove all our miseries and troubles.

Durga, the terrible aspect of Parvati, is the personification of all wealth, power, beauty and virtues. She is usually shown as riding a lion or a tiger armed with weapons. She destroyed the demon Mahishasura, the he-buffalo, and hence she is also shown as standing on a buffalo's head. Durga destroyed Mahishasura and hence she is called Mahishasuramardini. Almost all Shiva temples have a niche in the northern wall for Goddess Durga and her image is worshipped everyday.

NANDIKESVARA



नन्दिकेश महाभाग शिवध्यानपरायण ।
महादेवस्य सेवार्थमनुज्ञां दातुमर्हसि ॥

१.

ॐ तत्पुरुषाय विद्महे नन्दिकेश्वराय धीमहि ।
तन्नो वृषभः प्रचोदयात् ॥

२.

*Nandikesha Mahaabhaaga Shivadyaana-paraayana
Mahaadevasya sevaartham-anugnaam Daatumarhasi.*

1.

Gayatri

*Om TatpuruShaaya Vidmahe Nandikesvaraaya Dheemahi,
Tanno Vrishabhah Prachodayaat.*

2.

Meaning:

1. Nandikesvara! The most fortunate and who is always meditating on Shiva, grant me permission to offer my salutations to Parameshvara.
2. Om! We meditate on the Supreme Purusha Nandikesvara, the bull, may he inspire us.

Nandi, meaning joyful, is the sacred bull whose image is usually placed in front of the central shrine, in all Shiva temples. Nandi is the head of the Ganas (attendants) of Shiva and also his vahana (carrier-vehicle).

LORD SHIVA



नमस्ते अस्तु भगवन्विश्वेश्वराय महादेवाय त्र्यम्बकाय त्रिपुरान्तकाय
त्रिकालाग्निकालाय कालाग्निरुद्राय नीलकण्ठाय मृत्युञ्जयाय
सर्वेश्वराय सदाशिवाय श्रीमन्महादेवाय नमः ।

१.

ॐ तत्पुरुषाय विद्महे महादेवाय धीमहि ।
तन्नो रुद्रः प्रचोदयात् ॥

२.

*Namaste astu bhagavan-vishveshvaraaya mahaadevaaya tryambakaaya
tripuraantakaaya trikaalaagnikaalaaya kaalaagnirudraaya neelakantaaya
mrtyunjayaaya sarveshvaraaya sadaashivaaya shreeman-mahaadevaaya
namaha.*

1.

Gayatri

*Om Tatpurushaaya Vidmahe Mahaadevaaya Dheemahi,
Tanno Rudrah Prachodayaat.*

2.

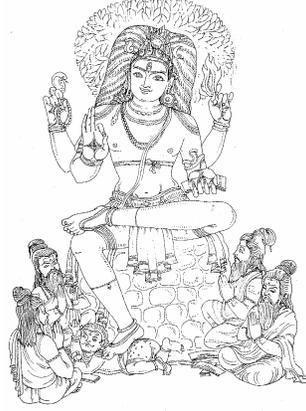
Meaning:

1. Salutations to Thee, O Lord, the master of the universe, the great Lord, the three-eyed one, the destroyer of Tripura, the extinguisher of the Trikala fire and the fire of death, the blue-necked one, the victor over death, the Lord of all, the ever-auspicious one, the glorious God of Gods.

This Vedic prayer is taken from Rudram, which is a hymn to Lord Shiva. This prayer should be learned and recited using the three svaras or notes that are used in Vedic chanting. Shiva's third eye symbolizes wisdom, that wisdom by which adharma is destroyed and the apparent limitation of mortality is overcome.

2. Om! We meditate on the great Lord, the Supreme Purusha, the possessor of the Supreme Power, may Shiva inspire us.

LORD DAKSHINAMURTI (GURU)



- निघये सर्वविद्यानां भिषजे भवरोगिणाम् ।
 गुरवे सर्वलोकानां दक्षिणामूर्तये नमः ॥ १.
- ॐ नमः प्रणवार्थाय शुद्धज्ञानैकमूर्तये ।
 निर्मलाय प्रशांताय दक्षिणामूर्तये नमः ॥ २.
- ॐ दक्षिणामूर्तये विद्महे ध्यानस्थाय धीमहि ।
 तन्नो धीराः प्रचोदयात् ॥ ३.

***Nidhaye sarvavidyaanaam bhishaje bhavaroginaam
 Gurave sarvalokaanaam dakshinaamoortaye namaha. 1.***

***Om namah pranavaarthaaya shuddha-jnaanaika-moortaye
 Nirmalaaya prashaantaaya Dakshinaamoortaye namaha. 2.***

***Gayatri
 Om Dakshinaamoortaye Vidmahe Dhyaanasthaaya Dheemahi,
 Tanno Dheesah Prachodayaat. 3.***

Meaning:

1. Salutations to Lord Dakshinamurti, who is the abode of all learning, who is the remover of all sorrows born of limitations (namely samsara) and who is the teacher of all worlds.
2. Salutations to Sri Dakshinamurti, who is the meaning of the Pranava (Om), who is in the form of pure knowledge, who is taintless, who is silence, to that Sri Dakshinamurti, my salutations.
3. Om! We meditate on Lord Dakshinamurti, the Parameshvara who is on meditation in yogic pose, may he inspire us.

Lord Shiva as a universal teacher is called Dakshinamurti. He is a great master of Yoga and spiritual sciences. Since Shiva was seated facing south (dakshina=south), when he taught Atmavidya (Self-knowledge) to sages, in a secluded spot on the Himalayas, he is called Dakshinamurti. He is the very model of the perfect Guru. Shiva (as Dakshinamurti) is the embodiment of Highest Wisdom (Jnana). He sat under a banyan tree facing south in supreme silence, arising out of such wisdom. His mere presence dispelled all doubts and darkness from the minds of the sages who sat before Him and the light of Truth shone in their hearts. Almost all Shiva temples have a niche in the southern wall for Lord Dakshinamurti and his image is worshipped everyday.

LORD GARUDA



कुडकुमाङ्कितवर्णीय कुं न्तेन्दु धवलायच
विष्णु वाह नमस्तुभ्यं पक्क्षि राजायते नमः ॥

१.

ॐ तत्पुरुषाय विद्महे सुवर्णपक्षाय धीमहि ।
तन्नो गरुडः प्रचोदयात् ॥

२.

*Kungkumaangkitha-varnaaya kundendu Davalaayacha
Vishnu-vaaha namastubhyam Pakshiraajaaya the namaha.*

1.

Gayatri

*Om Tatpurushaaya Vidmahe Suvarnapakshaaya Dheemahi,
Tanno Garudah Prachodayaat.*

2.

Meaning:

1. One who has the complexion of Kumkum, one who shines like the bright moon I pray to the Vahana of Vishnu, who is the king of the birds.
2. Om! We meditate on Lord Garuda, the Supreme Purusha, who is the bird with the complexion of Kumkum, may he inspire us.

Garuda, meaning 'wings of speech', is the King of birds. The Vedic knowledge has come down to earth from God on his wings. His image is usually installed right opposite the central shrine in all Vishnu temples. He is the vehicle of Lord Vishnu. The first sloka is usually said at the moment when one sees Garuda.

LORD VISHNU



- अनादिनिधनं विष्णुं, सर्वलोक महेश्वरम् ।
लोकाध्यक्षं स्तुवन् नित्यं, सर्वदुःखातिगो भवेत् ॥ १.
- कायेन वाचा मनसेन्द्रियैर्वा बुद्ध्यात्मना वा प्रकृतेस्वभावात् ।
करोमि यद्यत् सकलं परस्मै नारायणायेति समर्पयामि ॥ २.
- ॐ नारायणाय विद्महे वासुदेवाय धीमहि ।
तन्नो विष्णुः प्रचोदयात् ॥ ३.

***Anaadinidhanam Vishnum, Sarvaloka Maheshvaram,
Lokaadhyaksham stuvan nityam, sarvadukhaatigo bhavet. 1.***

Samarpanam (Dedication to the Lord)

***Kaayena vaachaa manasendriyairvaa buddhyaatmanaa vaa prakruteh
svabhaavaat***

Karomi yadyat sakalam parasmai naaraayanaayeti samarpayaami. 2.

Gayatri

***Om Naaraayanaaya Vidmahe Vaasudevaaya Dheemahi,
Tanno Vishnuh Prachodayaat. 3.***

Meaning:

1. Lord Vishnu, who has no beginning and no death, is the Supreme Lord in all the worlds. All the miseries and troubles can be overcome by worshipping Vishnu daily, who presides over all the worlds.
2. Unto Lord Narayana, I dedicate all the acts that I perform with my body, speech, mind, senses, and intellect which are born of deliberation and natural tendencies.
3. Om! We meditate on Lord who dwells in the casual waters, who is the son of Vasudeva and who is all pervasive, may Vishnu inspire us.

LORD VENKATESHWARA



- विना वेङ्कटेशं न नाथो न नाथः हरे वेङ्कटेशं प्रसीद प्रसीद
सदा वेङ्कटेशं स्मरामि स्मरामि । प्रियं वेङ्कटेशं प्रयच्छ प्रयच्छ ॥ १.
- अज्ञानिना मया दोषानशेषान् विहितान् हरे ।
क्षमस्व त्वं क्षमस्व त्वं शेषशैलशिखामणे ॥ २.
- श्रियःकान्ताय कल्याणनिधये निधयेऽर्थिनाम् ।
श्रीवेङ्कटनिवासाय श्रीनिवासाय मङ्गलम् ॥ ३.

*Vinaa Venkatesam na naadho na naadha Sadaa Venkatesam smaraami
smaraami*

Hare Venkatesa praseeda praseeda priyam Venkatesa prayacha prayacha 1.

*Agnaaninaa mayaa doshaana-seshaan vihitaan hare
Kshamasva tvam kshamasva tvam Seshasila -sikhamane. 2.*

*Shriya Kaantaaya kalyaananidhaye nidhayerthinaam
SriVenkata-nivaasaaya Srinivaasaaya mangalam. 3.*

Meaning:

1. There is no God other than Sri Venkateshwara. I always meditate, meditate on Sri Venkateshwara. Sri Hari, Venkatesa! Bless us, bless us. Sri Venkatesa! Grant, Grant our wishes.
2. Sri Hari, the jewel of Sri Venkata Hills in Tirupati! Please forgive, forgive me for all my ignorant acts and bless me.
3. O auspicious Lord Srinivasa, the consort of Sri (Lakshmi), the depository of the treasure of auspiciousness, the wealthy treasure of beseechers, resident of Sri Venkatagiri, salutations to that Lord Srinivasa.

Lord Venkateshwara is Vishnu on earth during Kali Yuga. Ven means 'sin' and Kata means 'burn', hence Venkateshwara is the Lord who can burn away our sins when we worship him. Lord Venkateshwara temple at Tirupati in the Tirumala Hills is the oldest and richest Venkateshwara temple in the world.

LORD RAMA



- आर्तानामार्तिहन्तारं भीतानां भीतिनाशनम् ।
द्विषतां कालदण्डं तं रामचन्द्रं नमाम्यहम् ॥ १.
- श्री राम राम रामेति रमे रामे मनोरमे ।
सहस्रनाम तत् तुल्यं रामनाम वरानने ॥ २.
- ॐ दाशरथये विद्महे सीतावल्लभाय धीमहि ।
तन्नो रामः प्रचोदयात् ॥ ३.

***Aartaanaam aarti-hantaaram bheetaanaam bheetinaashanam
Dvishataam kaaladandam tam raamachandram namaamyaham. 1.***

***Shree-raama Raama Raameti Rame Raame Manorame
Sahasranaama tat-tulyam Raama-naama varaanane. 2.***

***Gayatri
Om Daasarathaye Vidmahe Seetaavallabhaaya Dheemahi
Tanno Raamah Prachodayaat. 3.***

Meaning:

1. I bow to that Ramachandra who puts an end to the distress of the distressed persons, who takes away the fear from the people who are terrified and who is the instrument for causing death of enemies.
2. Lord Shiva told this sloka to Parvati, "I meditate upon Sri Ram, the charmer of mind, as Sri Rama Rama Rama; the thrice recital of Rama's name is equal to recitation of the thousand names of Lord Vishnu (Vishnu Sahasranama)".
3. Om! We meditate on Lord Rama who is the son of Dasaratha and whose consort is Sita, may he inspire us.

LORD KRISHNA



- कृष्णाय वासुदेवाय देवकी नन्दनाय च ।
नन्दगोप कुमाराय गोविंदाय नमो नमः ॥ १.
- ॐ देवकीनन्दनाय विद्महे वासुदेवाय धीमहि ।
तन्नः कृष्णः प्रचोदयात् ॥ २.
- अच्युतं केशवं रामनारायणं ।
कृष्ण दामोदरं वासुदेवं हरिम् ।।
श्रीधरं माधवं गोपिकाबल्लभम् ।
जानकी नायकं रामचन्द्रं भजे ।। ३.

***Krishnaaya Vaasudevaaya Devakee -nandanaaya cha
Nandagopa-kumaaraaya Govindaaya namo namaha. 1.***

Gayatri

***Om Devakee-nandanaaya Vidmahe Vaasudevaaya Dheemahi,
Tannah Krishnah Prachodayaat. 2.***

***Achyutam Keshavam Raama -Naaraayanam
Krishna Daamodaram Vaasudevam Harim
Shreedharam Maadhavam Gopikaa -Vallabham
Jaanakee-Naayakam RaamaChandram Bhaje. 3.***

Meaning:

1. Salutation again and again to Lord Krishna, son of Vasudeva and Devaki, Nandagopa's son and Govinda.
2. Om! Let us realize Lord Krishna and meditate upon him, the son of Devaki and Vasudeva, may he enlighten us.
3. I sing in praise of Achyutha, Keshava, Rama, Narayana, Krishna, Damodara, Vasudeva, Hari, Sridhara, Madhava, Gopika- vallabha (the lord of the Gopis), Janaki's consort Ramachandra.

GODDESS ANNAPURNA



अन्नपूर्णे सदापूर्णे शंकरप्राणवल्लभे ।
 ज्ञानवैराग्य सिद्धयर्थं भिक्षां देहि च पार्वती ॥
 माता च पार्वती देवी पिता देवो महेश्वरः ।
 बांधवाः शिवभक्ताश्च स्वदेशो भुवनत्रयम् ॥ १.

ॐ भगवत्यै च विद्महे महेश्वर्यै च धीमहि ।
 तन्नोऽन्नपूर्णा प्रचोदयात् ॥ २.

***Annapoorne Sadaapoorne, Shankara Praanavallabhe
 Jnaana Vairaagya Siddhyartham, Bhikshaam Dehi cha Paarvati
 Maataa cha Paarvatee Devee, Pitaa Devo Maheshvarah a
 Baandavaa Shiva Bhaktaascha, Svadesho Bhuvanatrayam. 1.***

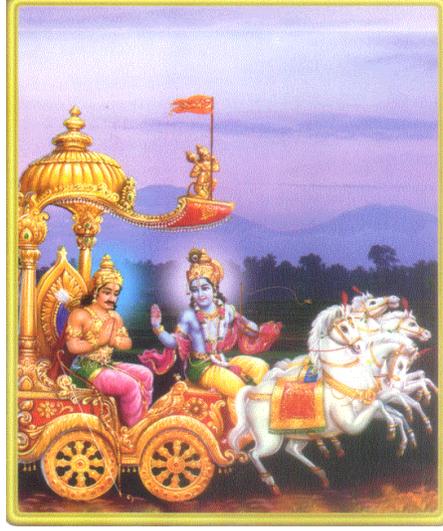
***Gayatri
 Om Bhagavatyai cha Vidmahe Maheshvaryai cha Dheemahi
 Tanno Annapoornaa Prachodayaat. 2.***

Meaning:

1. O' Annapurna (the wife of Lord Shiva; She who is full of food), who is always full of resources, the beloved life-force of Lord Shankara (Shiva), O' Parvati, grant me alms (food) that I be firmly established in Knowledge and attitude of Renunciation. Mother is Shakti, father is Shiva, relatives are the devotees of Shiva and own country is all the three worlds.
2. Om! We meditate on Goddess Annapurna (Parvati), the consort of Maheshvara (Shiva), may she inspire us.

Annapurna is the goddess of food and cooking. We pray to Goddess Annapurna before taking our meals.

Before meal prayers from BHAGAVAD GITA



ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म हविः ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणा हुतम् ।
ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्म समाधिना ॥ १.

अहं वैश्वानरो भूत्वा प्राणिनां देहमाश्रितः ।
प्राणापान समायुक्तः पचाम्यन्नं चतुर्विधम् ॥ २.

*Brahmaarpanam brahmahavih i brahmaagnau brahmanaa hutam
Brahmaiva tena gantavyam brahmakarma -samaadhinaa (IV: 24) 1.*

*Aham vaishvaanaro bhootvaa praaninaam dehamaashritah a
Praana-apaana-samaayuktaha pachaamyannam chaturvidham (XV: 14) 2.*

Meaning:

1. Any process of offering is Brahman, the oblation is Brahman, the fire in which the offering is made is Brahman, and the one who offers is also a Brahman. Such a person who abides in Brahman indeed gains Brahman.
2. Residing in the body of living beings as the digestive fire and being supported by the vital air (ingoing and outgoing breath), I (Lord Krishna) digest the four-fold (masticated, drunk, licked and sucked) food.

Bhagavad Gita, the sacred book of Hindus, is a dialogue between Lord Krishna and the warrior Arjuna. The above two slokas are said by the Lord. These prayers are traditionally chanted before meals and by doing so, the food that is eaten is offered to Brahman, the Lord who also abides within oneself.

LORD SUBRAHMANYA



षडाननं कुङ्कुमरक्तवर्णं
 महामतिं दिव्यमयूरवाहनम् ।
 रुद्रस्य सूनुं सुरसैन्यनाथं
 गुहं सदाऽहं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥ १.

ॐ तत्पुरुषाय विद्महे महासेनाय धीमहि ।
 तन्नः स्कन्दः प्रचोदयात् ॥ २.

***Shadaananam kungkuma-raktavarnam
 Mahaamatim divya-mayoora-vaahanam
 Rudrasya soonam sura-sainya-naatham
 Guham sadaaham sharanam prapadye. 1.***

***Gayatri
 Om TatpuruShaaya Vidmahe Mahaasenaaya Dheemahi
 Tannah Skandah Prachodayaat. 2.***

Meaning:

1. I always take refuge in Lord Guha (another name of Subrahmanya) of six faces, who is deep red in color and knowledge infinite, who has the divine peacock to ride on, the son of Lord Shiva and the leader of the army of devas.
2. Om! We meditate upon Lord Skanda (another name of Subrahmanya), the Supreme Being, and the Supreme general of the great deva army: May he enlighten us and lead us to be one with him.

Lord Subrahmanya is the son of Shiva and Parvati and the younger brother of Ganesha.

LORD AYYAPPA



भूतनाथ सदानन्दा सर्व भूत दया परा ।
रक्ष रक्ष माहा बाहो शस्त्रे तुभ्यं नमो नमः ॥

*Bhootanaatha sadaanandaa sarva -bhoota dayaa-paraa
Raksha raksha mahaabhaaho Shastre tubhyam namo namaha.*

Meaning:

The Lord who is ever joyful, who is kind to all beings, who protects all the living beings, and who is worshipped by Shastras, to that Lord Shasta (Ayyappa), I offer my salutations.

Lord Ayyappa is the son of Lord Shiva and Mohini, the female form of Lord Vishnu. His famous temple is located at Sabarimalai, Kerala. Devotees have a darshan of 'Makarajyothi' at the top of Sabari hills on Makarasankranti (mid January) every year.

PRADAKSHINA MANTRA

यानि कानि च पापानि जन्मान्तरकृतानि च ।
तानि तानि विनश्यन्ति प्रदक्षिण पदे पदे ॥

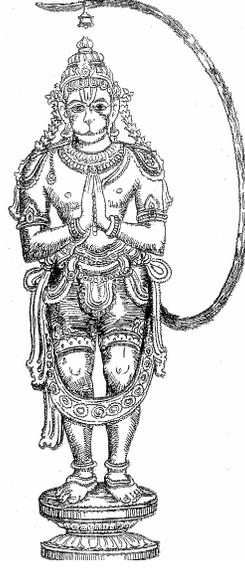
*Yaani kaani cha paapaani janmaantarakritaani cha
Taani taani vinashyanti pradakshina pade pade.*

Meaning:

May those omissions and commissions done in previous births and the resulting afflictions perish again and again with the pradakshina.

When visiting a temple, one may go around the deity clockwise three times as an act of salutation. Since the Lord also abides within, one can turn around oneself three times, in a clockwise direction, while standing in the same spot. Both these acts are known as pradakshina (circumambulation).

LORD HANUMAN



आञ्जनेयमतिपाटलाननं
 काञ्चनाद्रिकमनीयविग्रहम् ।
 पारिजाततरुमूलवासिनं
 भावयामि पवमाननन्दनम् ॥

१.

ॐ आञ्जनेयाय विद्महे वायुपुत्राय धीमहि ।
 तन्नो हनुमान् प्रचोदयात् ॥

२.

***Aanjaneyam ati-paata-laananam Kaanchanaadri-kamaneeya-vigraham
 Paarijaata-tarumoola-vaasinam Bhaavayami pavamaana-nandanam. 1.***

Gayatri

***Om Aanjaneyaaya Vidmahe Vaayuputraaya Dheemahi
 Tanno Hanumaan Prachodayaat. 2.***

2.

Meaning:

1. Anjana's son, his face deep red, His body shining like a golden mountain, Dwelling always at the root of the Parijata tree, On him, I meditate, the Wind-god's son.
2. Om! Let us realize Lord Hanuman and meditate upon him, the son of Anjana and Vayu-the wind god, may he enlighten us and lead us to be one with him.

NAVAGRAHAS



आदित्याय च सोमाय मङ्गलाय बुधाय च ।
गुरु शुक्र शनिभ्यश्च राहवे केतवे नमः ॥

*Aadityaaya cha Somaaya Mangalaaya Budhaayacha
Guru Sukra Sanibhyashcha Raahave Ketave namaha.*

Meaning:

I offer my salutations to Aditya, Soma, Mangala, Budha, Guru, Sukra, Sani, Rahu and Ketu.

The Navagrahas or the nine planets are Aditya, Ravi or Surya (sun), Soma or Chandra (moon), Mangala, Kuja or Angaraka (Mars), Budha (Mercury), Brihaspati or Guru (Jupiter), Sukra (Venus), Sani (Saturn), Rahu and Ketu. They play a significant role in astrology and are believed to influence the life of the individual as also the course of history.

The seven days of the week have derived their names from the first seven planets.

Rahu and Ketu are not planets but ascending and descending nodes of the moon.

Symbology of each planet varies in which Rahu has a snake's head whereas Ketu has a snake's tail.

The nine planets are invariably found in every Shiva temple in South India. They are housed on a platform where the images of these nine grahas are installed in such a way that no two of them will face each other. The image of Surya is always placed in the centre of the planets, facing east, with the other grahas fixed round him, each in a specified direction.

In many North Indian temples they are depicted on the lintels of doors, to protect the temple and all those who enter it.

Every planet is ruled by a particular God or Goddess.

Every planet represents a particular precious stone, color and food grain.

OMKAARA



ओंकारं बिन्दु संयुक्तं नित्यं ध्यायन्ति योगिनः ।
कामदं मोक्षदं चैव ओंकाराय नमो नमः ॥

*Omkaaram bindu samyuktam nityam dhyayanti yoginah a
Kaamadam mokshadam chaiva Omkaaraaya namo namaha.*

Meaning:

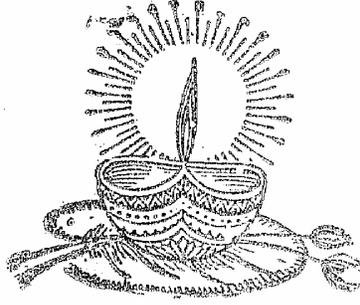
Yogis always meditate on Omkaara accompanied with Bindu (dot), as a form of God (or Paramaatma). We bow down to this Omkaara again and again, which can fulfill our desires and can set us free from our limitations and bondages and liberates us.

OM is accorded the highest divine reverence and worship and is the holiest symbol of divinity. It is the formless aspect of God. The basic fact of Hinduism is that there is only one God called Brahman or Omkar or Pranava, which adopts into so many other Gods and Goddesses.

Om is all sounds unified. The pronounced form of OM finally merges into silence of soundlessness. This soundless aspect of OM is the symbol of Brahman in its transcendental aspect*, symbolically denoted by Bindu or dot (.), in the crescent of the symbol ॐ. This symbol without dot represents unity of all sounds and it represents naada or shabda Brahman-the manifested universe. Thus, Om represents both aspects of Paramaatma (God), the manifested and unmanifested.

*The silence that follows and lurks around OM during chanting symbolizes Perfect Bliss when the Self is in complete harmony with God (called as Brahman or Ultimate Reality).

DEEPA-DARSHANAM



शुभं करोति कल्याणं आरोग्यं धनसंपदः ।
शत्रु बुद्धिविनाशाय दीपज्योति नमोऽस्तु ते ॥ १.

दीपज्योति परब्रह्म दीपज्योति जनार्दन ।
दीपो मे हर तु पापं दीपज्योति नमोऽस्तु ते ॥ २.

*Shubham karoti kalyaanam aarogyam dhana -sampadaha
Shatru-buddhi-vinaashaaya deepajyotir namostute. 1.*

*Deepajyoti parabrahma deepajyoti janaardana
Deepo me hara tu paapam deepajyoti namostute. 2.*

Meaning:

1. I salute the Deepajyoti (lamplight) that brings auspiciousness (good fortune), prosperity, good health, abundance of wealth, and the destruction of the intellect's enemy (ignorance).
2. Deepajyoti is Parabrahman, the Lord; Deepajyoti is Janardana, the sustainer of the creation. I salute this light (the Lord), may Deepajyoti wash away my sins.

Deep or Deepam (Lamp) is a symbol of knowledge. Light removes the darkness and makes it possible to see the objects. In the same manner, the self (soul or atman) is ever-present in one's experiences, but due to ignorance, its essential nature is unknown. As light removes darkness, self-knowledge (jnana) removes ignorance. We pray the lamplight (the Lord) to help us gain that knowledge.

Hindus light the lamp in the morning and in the evening in front of the altar and say the above prayers. When one light the lamp in the evening during twilight hour called sandhya kaalam, the above prayers can be said as '... sandhya deepa namostute' instead of '... .deepajyoti namostute'.

PEACE



ओं सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः ।
 सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु, मा कश्चिद् दुःखभाग्भवेत् ॥
 ओं शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः १.

ओं पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं, पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते ।
 पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥
 ओं शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः २.

*Om, Sarve bhavantu sukhinah a, sarve santu niraamayaah
 Sarve bhadraani pashyantu, maa kashchid duhkha -bhaag-bhavet
 Om, Shaantih, Shaantih, Shaantihi. 1.*

*Om, Poornamadah poornamidam, poornaat poorna -mudach-yate
 Poornasya poornamaadaaya poornamevaa -vashishyate.
 Om, Shaantih, Shaantih, Shaantihi. 2.*

Meaning:

1. Om! May all be happy, may all enjoy health and freedom from disease, may all enjoy prosperity, and may none suffer. Om, peace, peace, peace.
2. Om! That invisible Brahman is complete, this visible Brahman known as Shabda or naada Brahman is also complete. From this invisible Brahman, the visible Brahman has come. The invisible Brahman remains the same, even after the visible universe has come out of the invisible Brahman. Om, Peace, peace, peace.

The second mantra (POORNAMADAH...) is said in Isha and Brihadaraanyaka upanishads. It helps us to resolve the mystery of the source of the visible universe. It says that beyond and behind this universe is Brahman (also called Omkaara or Pranava), the Total Reality, and essentially, one is not different from the other. This basic universal reality evolves into all that we see around us in the world. This mantra is recited on completion of every yagna.