

**Prayer Guide<sup>1</sup>**  
**with detailed explanations of several**  
**Mantras, Stotras, Kīrtans, and**  
**Religious Festivals**

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## Contents

|                                  |     |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| Foreword                         | iii |
| Preface                          | iv  |
| Key to Transliteration           | vii |
| <b>UNDERSTANDING PRAYER</b>      |     |
| The Need for Prayer              | 1   |
| The Purpose of Prayer            | 14  |
| Ritualistic Prayer               | 33  |
| Oral Prayer                      | 38  |
| Mental Prayer                    | 44  |
| Prayerfulness                    | 57  |
| <b>CULTIVATING DEVOTION</b>      |     |
| Becoming a Devotee               | 58  |
| Pūjā                             | 65  |
| Akhaṇḍa-nāma-japa                | 72  |
| Mantra Initiation                | 77  |
| <b>FORMS OF THE LORD</b>         |     |
| Forms of Worship                 | 95  |
| Lord Gaṇeśa                      | 99  |
| Lord Naṭarāja                    | 101 |
| Śrī Dakṣiṇāmūrti                 | 105 |
| Śivaliṅga                        | 111 |
| Worship of the Five Elements     | 114 |
| <b>MANTRAS AND STOTRAS</b>       |     |
| Śuklāambaradharam                | 117 |
| Agajānana padmārkam              | 120 |
| Yā kundendu                      | 123 |
| Gāyatrī-mantra                   | 128 |
| Om namo bhagavate dakṣiṇāmūrtaye | 133 |

|                                  |     |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| Maunavyākhyā                     | 137 |
| Nidhaye sarvavidyānām            | 140 |
| Om̐ namaḥ pranavārthāya          | 142 |
| Īśvaro gururātmeti               | 144 |
| Tatpuruṣāya vidmahe              | 145 |
| Rājādhirājāya                    | 148 |
| Na tatra sūryo bhāti             | 151 |
| Śrīrāma rāma rāmeti              | 154 |
| Namaste astu bhagavan            | 156 |
| Śivamānasapūjā                   | 159 |
| Saha nāvavatu                    | 174 |
| Om                               | 181 |
| Overview of Rudram and Camakam   | 190 |
| The Gist of Puruṣa Sūktam        | 200 |
| Introduction to Viṣṇusahasranāma | 211 |
| Pūrṇa-kumbha mantra              | 225 |
| <b>KĪRTANS</b>                   |     |
| Vandeham̐ śāradām                | 242 |
| Dakṣiṇāmūrte amūrte              | 249 |
| Khelati mama hṛdaye              | 256 |
| <b>RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS</b>       |     |
| Gaṇeśa-caturthī                  | 260 |
| Sarasvatī pūjā                   | 263 |
| Rāmanavamī                       | 268 |
| Śivarātrī                        | 288 |
| Gurupūrṇimā                      | 294 |
| Śrī Śaṅkara Jayanti              | 309 |
| <b>INDEX</b>                     | 321 |



## *Namaste astu bhagavan*

नमस्ते अस्तु भगवन्विश्वेश्वराय महादेवाय त्र्यंबकाय

त्रिपुरान्तकाय त्रिकालाग्निकालाय कालाग्निरुद्राय नीलकण्ठाय

मृत्युञ्जयाय सर्वेश्वराय सदाशिवाय श्रीमन्महादेवाय नमः ॥

*namaste astu bhagavan-viśveśvarāya mahādevāya  
tryambakāya tripurāntakāya trikālāgni-kālāya  
kālāgnirudrāya nīlakaṅṭhāya mṛtyuñjayāya  
sarveśvarāya sadāśivāya śrīmanmahādevāya namaḥ.*

Oh Lord, may this salutation be unto you who is the Lord of the universe, limitless and effulgent, all-knowing, the one who projects, sustains and takes back this universe, the one who is timeless and also the destroyer of time, all-pervasive, the conqueror of death, the Lord of all, and the ever auspicious one who is always a blessing.

This is a beautiful *mantra*. It is very good, especially for *prāyaścita*, and can be chanted when one feels guilty for one's omissions and commissions.

*Namaḥ, namaskār. Te, to you, astu, be. Bhagavan,*  
Oh Lord! My *namaskār* unto you Oh Lord!

*Namaḥ astu viśveśvarāya.* You have to repeat *namaḥ astu* with each name. *Viśveśvarāya. Īśvara, the*

2

Lord of the entire *viśva*, the entire *jagat*, the world. My *namaskār* unto the Lord of the entire world.

*Mahādevāya*, unto the one who is *mahān*, limitless, and a *deva*, effulgent.

*Tryambakāya*, unto the one who has three eyes. He knows the past, the present, and the future. He is all-knowing.

*Tripurāntakāya*, unto the one who is *antaka*, the one who brings an end of Tripura, the three *puras*, cities or worlds, *bhūḥ*, *bhuvah* and *svah*. *Tripurāntakāya* is the one who takes all the three worlds unto himself.

*Trikālāgni-kālāya*, unto the one who devours the three *kālas*, or time, which consists of the past, present and future. *Kāla eva agniḥ kālāgniḥ*. *Agni* means fire. *Kālāgni*, time, is such that, like fire, it distorts and devours everything, and the Lord devours time itself. In other words, he is timeless, being the creator, the sustainer, and the destroyer of time.

*Kālāgnirudrāya*. He is the *kāla-agni-rūpeṇa rudrah*, the one who in the form of the *kāla-agni*, time, makes everybody weep, or in other words, he is the chastiser, the giver of the fruits of action, *karmaphaladātā*.

*Nīlakaṇṭhāya*, unto the one who is all-pervasive and manifest in the form of the *jaḡat*, whose *kaṇṭha* or neck is the blue sky. This is a beautiful vision of the whole *jaḡat* as a manifestation of Īśvara, with the blue sky being Bhagavān's neck.

*Mṛtyuñḡajayaya*, unto the overlord of *mṛtyu*, death. The Lord of Death thought that he was the greatest, until he was made to realize that Īśvara was supreme. There are many interesting stories about this. The story of Mārkaṇḡeya is based upon this aspect of Īśvara.

*Sarveśvarāya*, unto the Lord of all the worlds, *bhūḥ*, *bhuvah* and *svah*. He is the Lord of all beings, including the various *devatās*, deities.

*Sadāśivoāya*, unto the one who, despite being the Lord of everything, is himself untouched by anything. The entire *jaḡat* is his manifestation, sustained by him and absorbed back unto him, but who is he? He is *sadāśiva*, of the nature of pure *ānandā*, the limitless Consciousness.

*Śrīmanmahādevāya namaḥ*, my *namaskār* unto the one who is *śrīman mahādeva*. *Śrīman* is *śrīmat*, which means *śrīmān*, one who is a blessing. In reciting this verse, we invoke the Lord in the form of *śrīman mahādeva* and seek his blessing.