LALITĀ SAHASRANĀMA

ललिता सहस्रनाम

A COMPREHENSIVE TREATISE

BY

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PREFACE

Lalitāmbikā is the embodiment of compassion as She is fondly addressed as *Śrī Mātā*, which means the mother of the universe. She is fondly worshipped through many means such as worshipping *Śrī Cakra,* meditating on Her through *japa mantra*-s such as *Pañcadaśī* and *ṣodaśī,* singing Her praise through various verses, etc. The important among the last one is Her most celebrated *Sahasranāma,* which was authored by Her very close attendants in Her presence and in Her place. Every name used in this *Sahasranāma* has got gross and subtle meaning. *Sahasra* means one thousand and *nāma* means name. *Nāma* not merely refers to names, but also Her forms and attributes. She engulfs the universe through Her delusionary influence called *māyā. Śiva* has given Her full authority for effectively administering the universe.

This edition of *Sahasranāma* contains detailed interpretation for each name with appropriate quotations from Veda-s, *Saundarya Laharī, Bhagavad Gīta, Upaniṣads*, etc in order to make the understanding better. The citations from other Veda-s and scriptures go to prove the magnificence of *Lalitā Sahasranāma.* Every attempt has been made to make the interpretations as easy as possible and no effort was spared to go into the depth of each *nāma.* Each *nāma* is not only transliterated (International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration - IAST), but also the original Sanskrit

version of the *nāma* is also used, so that the original beauty of the *nāma* is not lost. A guide to read transliterations is also provided with examples. A lot of additional informations have been provided captioned as 'further reading'. Such informations are not only needed for better understanding of *nāma-s*, but they, in general, provide additional knowledge for those who pursue the path of spirituality. This book clearly differentiates between religion and spirituality with more emphasis on spiritual pursuits. While maintaining the intended meaning of *nāma-s*, the concept conveyed has been substantiated with quotations from other sacred scriptures. This book will be of immense help for all those who pursue spiritual path.

Your comments and feedback at ravi@manblunder.com will be of immense help, while updating this book. This edition is placed at the lotus feet of *Lalitāmbikā and Śiva* seeking Their blessings for universal prosperity and peaceful co-existence.

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CONTENTS

Preface	5
Notes on transliteration	8
The Origin	14
The Presentation	15
The scene	19
Śrī Cakra	20
Śrī Vidyā	21
Pañcadaśī mantra	22
ṣodaśī mantra	26
Pūrva bhāg	28
Introduction to dhyāna verses	31
Dhyāna verses	33
Commentary on nāma-s	41
Uttara bhāg	603

Index of nāma-s 609

Bibliography 640

NOTES ON TRANSLITERATION

Pronouncing the first 25 Sanskrit consonants

Consonants

First Group

Guttural

Original characters	Transliteration	Information
क	ka	It is a u*naspirate hard letter*. In short, this letter does not reverberate (hard), and it does not need any exhalation (unaspirate) to be pronounced. It is just as "k" in "kick".
ख	kha	It is an *aspirate hard letter*. In short, this letter does not reverberate (hard), but it does need an exhalation (aspirate) to be pronounced. Just as "k" but with an exhalation of air.
ग	ga	It is *a unaspirate soft letter*. In short, this letter does reverberate (soft), but it does not need any exhalation (unaspirate) to be pronounced. It is just as "g" in "game".
घ	gha	It is an *aspirate soft letter*. In short, this letter reverberates (soft), and it needs an exhalation (aspirate) to be pronounced. Just as "g" but with an exhalation of air.

Pronouncing the first 25 Sanskrit consonants

Consonants

ङ	ṅa	It is a *nasal soft letter*. It sounds just as "n" in "bang". All nasal letters are soft.

Palatal

च	ca	It is *a unaspirate hard letter*. In short, this letter does not reverberate (hard), and it does not need any exhalation (unaspirate) to be pronounced. It is just as "ch" in "champion", but it is written "c" not "ch". Careful!
छ	cha	It is an *aspirate hard letter*. In short, this letter does not reverberate (hard), but it does need an exhalation (aspirate) to be pronounced. Just as "c" but with an exhalation of air. It does not sound like English "ch". Careful!
ज	ja	It is *a unaspirate soft letter*. In short, this letter does reverberate (soft), but it does not need any exhalation (unaspirate) to be pronounced. It is just as "j" in "Jane".
झ	jha	It is an *aspirate soft letter*. In short, this letter reverberates (soft), and it needs an exhalation (aspirate) to be pronounced. Just as "j" but with an exhalation of air.
ञ	ña	It is a *nasal soft letter*. It sounds like "nya". All nasal letters are soft.

Cerebral (Cacuminal)

ट	ṭa	It is *a unaspirate hard letter*. In short, this letter does not reverberate (hard), and it does not need any exhalation (unaspirate) to be pronounced. It is just as "t" but with the tongue rolled slightly backward (pressing against the roof).

Pronouncing the first 25 Sanskrit consonants

Consonants

ठ	ṭha	It is an *aspirate hard letter*. In short, this letter does not reverberate (hard), but it does need an exhalation (aspirate) to be pronounced. Just as "ṭ" but with an exhalation of air.
ड	ḍa	It is *a unaspirate soft letter*. In short, this letter does reverberate (soft), but it does not need any exhalation (unaspirate) to be pronounced. It is just as "d" but with a slight rolling back of the tongue.
ढ	ḍha	It is an *aspirate soft letter*. In short, this letter reverberates (soft), and it needs an exhalation (aspirate) to be pronounced. Just as "ḍ" but with an exhalation of air.
ण	ṇa	It is a *nasal soft letter*. It sounds like a "n" but with a slight rolling back of the tongue (as in "turn"). All nasal letters are soft.

Dental

त	ta	It is *a unaspirate hard letter*. In short, this letter does not reverberate (hard), and it does not need any exhalation (unaspirate) to be pronounced. It is just as "t" in "time", with the tongue pressing the back of the teeth.
थ	tha	It is an *aspirate hard letter*. In short, this letter does not reverberate (hard), but it does need an exhalation (aspirate) to be pronounced. Just as "t" but with an exhalation of air.
द	da	It is *a unaspirate soft letter*. In short, this letter does reverberate (soft), but it does not need any exhalation (unaspirate) to be pronounced. It is just as "d" in "doubt".

Pronouncing the first 25 Sanskrit consonants

Consonants

ध	dha	It is an *aspirate soft letter*. In short, this letter reverberates (soft), and it needs an exhalation (aspirate) to be pronounced. Just as "d" but with an exhalation of air.
न	na	It is a *nasal soft letter*. It sounds like "n" in "name". All nasal letters are soft.

Labial

प	pa	It is *a unaspirate hard letter*. In short, this letter does not reverberate (hard), and it does not need any exhalation (unaspirate) to be pronounced. It is just as "p" in "pink".
फ	pha	It is an *aspirate hard letter*. In short, this letter does not reverberate (hard), but it does need an exhalation (aspirate) to be pronounced. Just as "p" but with an exhalation of air.
ब	ba	It is *a unaspirate soft letter*. In short, this letter does reverberate (soft), but it does not need any exhalation (unaspirate) to be pronounced. It is just as "b" in "boat".
भ	bha	It is an *aspirate soft letter*. In short, this letter reverberates (soft), and it needs an exhalation (aspirate) to be pronounced. Just as "b" but with an exhalation of air.
म	ma	It is a *nasal soft letter*. It sounds like "m" in "make". All nasal letters are soft.

More consonants

Second Group

The 4 Semivowels

More consonants

Second Group

Original characters	Transliteration	Information
य	ya	It is a *palatal soft letter*. The sound is just as "y" in "yet". All Semivowels are soft, that is to say, they reverberate.
र	ra	It is a *cerebral soft letter*. "r" is not just as English "r" at all. The tongue rolls slightly backward till it presses against the roof, but not the soft palate. And the sound is slightly stronger than the English "r" sound.
ल	la	It is a *dental soft letter*. The sound is just as "l" in "land", but with the tongue fully pressing the back of the teeth.
व	va	It is a *labial soft letter*. The sound is just as "v" in "vain", but sometimes, when it comes after a consonant it is usually pronounced as "u" (Sanskrit "u", not English "u"... in English it would be "w"). For example: "svāmī" (master) is generally articulated as "swāmī". However, you can also pronounce "svāmī", and it is correct too.

Third Group

The 3 Sibilants

श	śa	It is a *palatal hard letter*. The sound is just as "sh" in "show". All Sibilants are hard, that is to say, they do not reverberate.
ष	ṣa	It is a *cerebral hard letter*. The sound is just as "ś", but with a slight rolling back of the tongue.
स	sa	It is a *dental hard letter*. The sound is

More consonants

Second Group

		just as "s" in "surf".

Fourth Group

Sonant Aspirate

ह	ha	It is a *guttural soft* l*etter*. The sound is just as "h" in "hello".

(Information courtesy http://www.sanskrit-sanscrito.com.ar)

Further guide to pronunciation:

Sanskrit plural is difficult to understand. Let us take the example of *nāma,* the origin of which is *nāman*. *Nāma* means name. The correct plural of *nāma* is *nāmāni.* In order to avoid confusion plural of *nāma* is used in this book as *nāma-s.* All the words in hyphenated form mean plural.

Let us take another word *sahasrāra*. It is generally pronounced as *sahasrārā.* The actual Sanskrit word is *sahasrāra* (सहस्रार). Only actual Sanskrit words in transliterated forms are used in this book.

LALITĀ-SAHASRANĀMA

THE ORIGIN

Sahasra means thousand and nāmā means name. *Lalitā Sahasranāma* means one thousand names of *Lalitāmbikā*. This *Sahasranāma finds* a place in *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*, one of the eighteen *purāṇa*-s or epics scripted by *Vedavyāsā* who is popularly known as *Mahaṛṣi Vyāsā* (*maha* means great and *ṛṣi* means sage). *Vyās* also means arranger or compiler. He was the son of the sage *Parāśara* and *Satyavatī*, and half-brother of *Vicitra-vīrya* and *Bhīṣma*. *Vyāsa* is also said to be an incarnation of Lord *Viṣṇu* (*Śrīmad Bhāgavata* I.iii.20). There are seven celebrated sages known as *sapta ṛṣi-s* (*sapta* means numeric seven) and they are *Gotama, Bharadvāja, Viśvāmitra, Jamadagni, Vasiṣṭha, Kaśyapa* and *Atri* (however there are differences in the names. This *Sahasranāma* in the form of 183 verses finds a place in the second part of *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*. These 183 verses are converted into 1000 nāma-s. *Purāṇa-s* are told like stories making the reading

interesting and at the same time convey the teachings of *Veda-s*. Hindu philosophy mainly revolves around the four *Veda-s*. Since *Veda-s* are difficult to understand for a commoner, the crux of the *Veda-s* is provided in the form of *Upaniṣad-s*. *Upaniṣad-s* make attempts to interpret the Brahman, the God. Such interpretations are only by means of affirmations and negations as any attempt to interpret or describe the Brahman becomes an ineffectual exercise. The Brahman that *Upaniṣad-s* talk about is formless divine energy beyond the comprehension of normal human brain. The philosophy of self-realization revolves around these *Upaniṣad-s*. Self-realization is the logical conclusion of spiritual quest. It is the final step of understanding the Brahman. In modern times, Self-realisation is also known as God realization and *Kṛṣṇa* consciousness.

Though this *Sahasranāma* finds a place in *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* scripted by *Vedavyāsa* originally this was composed by eight *Vāc* (वाच्) *Devi-s* (also referred as *Vāg Devi-s*. *Vāc* means speech, voice, language). In the presence of *Lalitāmbikā*, the Supreme Goddess and affectionately called as 'the Supreme Mother' in whose praise and at whose command this *Sahasranāma* was composed was recited. The names of these eight *Vāc Devi*-s are: *Vaśinī, Kameśvarī* (not to be confused with *Kameśvarī*, the wife of *Śiva*), *Modhinī, Vimalā, Arunā, Jainī, Sarveśvarī* and *Koulinī*. These *Vāc Devi-s* reside in *Śrī Cakra* (please refer nāma 996) in the seventh *āvaraṇa* (*āvaraṇa* can be interpreted as rampart or roundabout), in the middle of which *Lalitāmbikā* resides. *Śrī Cakra* has nine *āvaraṇa-s* and its worship is known as *navāvaraṇa pūja. Lalitāmbikā* has conferred on these *Vāc Devi-s* the art of speech to be passed on to Her devotees. *Lalitāmbikā* called these *Vāc Devi-s* personally and asked them to compose a verse, the recitation of which endows Her blessings. The verse was recited by *Vāc Devi-s* in Her royal court in Her presence, where all gods and goddesses had already assembled.

THE PRESENTATION

This *Sahasranāma* contains three parts. First is the *pūrva bhāg*, (*pūrva* means first, former, prior, preceding, and *bhāg* means part) which is like an introduction. This part consists of fifty one verses. Second is *stotra* (hymn) known as *stotra bhāg* or *madhya bhāg* or the middle part, which is the main part containing 183 verses of this *Sahasranāma*. This part is converted into one thousand nāma-s. The last part is known as *uttara bhāg*, or concluding part consisting of 86 verses. There are certain variations in the number of verses in each *bhāg*, however the total number of verses remain the same at 320 (51+183+86). The first part is in the form of conversation between Lord *Hayagrīva*, an avatar of *Viṣṇu* with horse's head and the great sage *Agastya*, which is being elaborated later in this book.

(Further reading on *Hayagrīva*: There are many opinions about *Hayagrīva*. *Hayagrīva* is also considered an avatar of *Viṣṇu*. He is worshipped as the God of knowledge and wisdom, with a human body and a horse's head, brilliant white in colour, with white garments and seated on a white lotus. Symbolically, the story represents the triumph of pure knowledge over the demonic forces of passion and darkness.

Hayagrīva (possibly a sage with the same name) is the supposed author of the *Chāndogya Upanishad* and various other scriptures.

In *śākta* tradition, *Hayagrīva* occupies a different role. Here, a demon named *Hayagrīva* first appears as son of *Kaśyapa Prajāpati*. Through great penance the demon managed to obtain a boon from the Goddess *Durgā* (a form of *Lalitāmbikā*) that he can only be killed by another *Hayagrīva*. This instilled a sense of invincibility and he started harassing the gods. Gods turned to *Viṣṇu* for aid, but despite a long struggle he was also unable to kill *Hayagrīva*. Tired and drained after the battle, *Viṣṇu* proceeded to *Vaikuṇṭha* (the domicile of *Viṣṇu*) to rejuvenate and meditate in *padmāsna* (a yogic posture) with his head supported by the upper end of his taut bow. Gods once again approached *Viṣṇu* for help against *Hayagrīva* but were unable to rouse him from his meditation. Gods asked a swarm of termites to assist in waking *Viṣṇu* by gnawing away the string of

the bow upon which he was resting. However, the snapping of the bow string produced such a resonant sound that the universe trembled, and the broken string lashed out with such force that *Viṣṇu*'s head was severed from his body. The gods were mortified, and prayed to goddess *Durgā* for guidance. *Durgā* was pleased with their prayers and told the gods that they need not fear, as no incident in this universe happens without some purpose. She then told them of Her boon to *Hayagrīva* and asked them to attach the head of a horse to *Viṣṇu* so that he in the guise of *Hayagrīva* (that is, one with a horse's neck) could kill his foe. *Brahma* attached the head of a white horse to *Viṣṇu*'s body and the revived *Viṣṇu* entered into battle with *Hayagrīva* and eventually killed him. There is conceptual difference in the narration provided in the *pūrva bhāg.*

Another legend has it that during the creation, the demons *Madhu* and *Kaiṭabha* stole the Veda-s from *Brahma* and *Viṣṇu* then took the *Hayagrīva* form to recover them. The two bodies of *Madhu* and *Kaiṭabha* disintegrated into 2 X 6 = 12 pieces (two heads, two torsos, four arms and four legs). These are considered to represent the twelve seismic plates of the Earth. Yet another legend has it that during the creation, *Viṣṇu* compiled the Veda-s in the *Hayagrīva* form.}

The concluding part, also known as *phala śruti* conveys the benefits accruing to those who recite this *Sahasranāma*. The 183 verses in the middle part were dissevered to make 1000 nāma-s. This is the only *Sahasranāma* where none of the names is repeated and none of the unwanted names are included to make up 1000. These nāma-s were carved out not only to convey the right and intended meaning, but is also based on Sanskrit grammar. For this exclusive purpose, Sanskrit literature had *salakśara sūtra* containing twenty four aphorisms. But most of these were lost with time. In order to offset the lost treatise, *Śrī Narasiṃha Nādha* composed forty verses known as *paribhāṣā* verses, that deal exhaustively with Sanskrit literature and it is difficult to translate the same to any other language. Sanskrit has fifty one alphabets out of which only thirty two alphabets have been used to begin each nāma, thereby rejecting

the balance nineteen alphabets. The reason for rejection remains unknown. These thirty two alphabets and the nāma-s beginning with such alphabets have been allotted to each *Vāc Devi*-s in different proportions. In Sanskrit literature, there is a separate goddess for each of the fifty one alphabets. If a particular alphabet is recited, it amounts to worshipping the concerned deity presiding over that alphabet. *Lalitāmbikā* is the Supreme authority controlling all these goddesses. Such recitations also confer certain *siddhi*-s (fulfilment, complete attainment) to the practitioner. When a nāma is recited, it amounts worshipping *Lalitāmbikā* as well as the deities connected to the various alphabets that make a *mantra*. Then one can understand the potency of the *Sahasranāma* when it is recited with true devotion. The highest form of dignity alone is capable of providing of liberation to the soul. In this *Sahasranāma, Lalitāmbikā* has been repeatedly affirmed as the Brahman, the administrator of the entire universe. She alone is capable of granting liberation. The other gods and goddesses have their own super-human powers. Their propitiation appeases them and they offer certain of their powers to their worshippers. They are incapable of offering final liberation to the soul. It is really amazing how such a detailed and laborious study was undertaken to bring out these 1000 nāma-s. For example, let us take the last nāma *Lalitāmbikā* which consists of only five Sanskrit alphabets (*la* + *li* + *tām* + *bi* + *kā* – ल + लि + ताम् + बि + का). But this nāma should have six alphabets according to *Nrisimha Nādha*. In order to rectify this, Om is also taken into account to arrive at the correct counting. Recitation of *Lalitā Sahasranāma* should be concluded by reciting ॐ (Om) at the end. Further, each of these nāma-s convey deeper and subtler interpretations equivalent to "I am That". Let us take the first nāma '*Śrī Mātā*". This nāma as such conveys that She is the Universal Mother. To get the subtler meaning, according to certain tantra texts, this nāma should be made as *Śrī Mātā asti*. *Asti* means existing or being and the meaning of the nāma is "*Lalitāmbikā* is existing as the Universal Mother". Such interpretations have been made for all the 1000 nāma-s, though not available today.

There are certain nāma-s conveying the same meaning. The repetition of the same nāma is called *punarukti doṣa* (fault of repetition or tautology). But this Sahasranāmam does not have any such repetitions and hence not affected by tautlogicalness. The same meaning conveyed through two nāmās is not considered as *doṣa* (defect). If the nāmās are not split according to the *paribhāṣā* verses, we would not have got these 1000 nāma-s in their existing form today, without any errors.

THE SCENE

This scene takes us back to the situation at the time of first appearance of this *Sahasranāma*. All gods and goddesses are seated in *Lalitāmbikā-s* royal court. *Sapta* (seven) *riṣi*-s, other *riṣi*-s, eighteen *siddha*-s and other saints are also seated. The seating arrangement was as per the protocol. There is a huge throne made out of gold and the best of precious stones. Suddenly, there was a divine fragrance that spread throughout the royal court and the whole area was filled with radiating red light. *Lalitāmbikā* entered the court along with Her assistants. All those seated got up and paid their obeisance to Her. Her form is described in *dhyāna* verses. She had earlier summoned Her eight *Vāc Devi*-s and spoke to them thus: "The eight of you got the power of your vāc (mastery of speech) through my blessings. You are appointed to provide the power of vāc to my devotees. You are aware of the secrets of my *Śrī Cakra*. You perpetually chant my name with great devotion. Therefore, I command you to script a verse about me consisting of 1000 nāma-s. When my devotees recite this verse, I should derive immense satisfaction. The verse should have my name as its cachet". She emphasized three points for composing the verse. First, it should have 1000 nāma-s; second, the verse should have Her name embossed; third, She should be gratified when Her devotees recite

the verse. Bearing Her command in mind, *Vāc Devi*-s composed such a verse and were ready for the recitation. When *Lalitāmbikā* nodded Her head, *Vāc Devi*-s commenced their recitation and *Lalitā Sahasranāma* was declared to the universe. She expressed Her immense happiness by nodding Her head often and smiling frequently while attentively listening to their rendition. She also encouraged the *Vāc Devi*-s by saying 'good' and 'excellent'.

ŚRĪ CAKRA

Śrī Cakra is Her abode. *Śrī Cakra* is made up of four triangles known as *Śiva cakra-s* facing up and five triangles known as *Śaktī cakra*-s facing down. The total triangles formed out of the intersection of the nine triangles are forty four including the central dot or *bindu*. Instead of nine triangles, if we take only eight triangles, the resultant triangle becomes static, instead of its present dynamic form. Static is the quality of *Śiva* and dynamism is the quality of *Śaktī*. Hence, this *cakra* has been made dynamic as this is the abode of *Lalitāmbikā*. *Śrī Cakra* is also known as the cosmic *cakra*. A comparison can be drawn between *Śrī Cakra* and the nine *cakra*-s of *kuṇḍalinī* (six *cakra*-s + *sahasrāra* + *kula sahasrāra* + *akula sahasrāra* thus making it to nine). *Śrī Cakra* is also compared to a human body, upper *cakra*-s representing the portion above the navel and lower *cakra*-s representing the portion below the navel. Alternatively, this can be explained thus. *Śaktī koṇa-s* (triangles) represent skin, blood, brain, muscles and bones. *Śiva koṇa*-s represent soul, *prāṇa*, *tejas* and sperms or ova. *Śaktī koṇa-s* represent gross matters and *Śiva koṇa-s* represent subtle matters. A life comes into existence only if both gross and subtle matters conjoin. The five *Śaktī* angles also represent the five elements *ākāś*, air, fire, water and earth and its modifications like *karmendriya-s* (hands, feet, etc), *jñānendriya-s* (eyes, etc), *tanmātra-s* (taste, etc),

whereas the four *Śiva* angles represent *antaḥkaraṇa* comprising of mind, intellect, individual consciousness and ego.

Bindu also known as dot is placed inside the centre triangle that faces downwards. This *bindu* is said to be the cause of creation of the universe. This can be compared to a tiny seed causing the growth of a huge tree. The place around this *bindu* is the cause for bliss and this is the reason for calling this *cakra* as *sarva-ānanda-mayī* (*sarvānandamayī*). The cause of the bliss is because *Śiva* and *Śaktī* stand united here (nāma 999). This place is meditated at *sahasrāra* in the form of a *bindu*. Not only *Śiva-Śaktī* form is meditated here, but also one's *iśṭa devatā* and Guru are also meditated at *sahasrāra*. Worshiping *Śrī Cakra* is known as *navāvaraṇa pūja*. *Nava* means nine and *āvaraṇa* means roundabouts. Following is the number of goddesses worshipped in *Śrī Cakra* before reaching the central *bindu*. In the first *āvaraṇa* twenty eight goddesses, in the second *āvaraṇa* sixteen goddesses, in the third *āvaraṇa* eight goddesses, in the fourth *āvaraṇa* fourteen goddesses, in the fifth *āvaraṇa* ten goddesses, in the sixth *āvaraṇa* ten goddesses, in the seventh *āvaraṇa* eight goddesses and in the eighth *āvaraṇa* fifteen goddesses and four of Her weaponries (nāma-s 8 – 11). In the central triangle fifteen *tithi nitya devi*-s are worshipped, five on each side of the triangle. *Lalitāmbikā* is worshipped at the *bindu*. Apart from these goddesses, one's guru lineage is also worshipped just above the central triangle. *Śrī Cakra* and *Mahā Meru* are the same. *Mahā* means great and *meru* means mountain. She lives at the top of *Mahā Meru*, (the vertical form of *Śrī Cakra* is known as *Mahā Meru*). *Śrī Cakra* is flat in formation and the *bindu* or the central dot is in the centre and in the case *Mahā Meru*, which is vertical in formation where the *bindu* is at the top. She is worshipped in *bindu sthāna*.

ŚRĪ VIDYĀ

Śrī Vidyā means auspicious knowledge. Everything concerned with *Lalitāmbikā* is auspicious. Knowledge about Her is passed on from a guru to his disciple by way of initiation. Guru initiates his disciple

into a *mantra japa* called *Pañcadaśī mantra* or any other *mantra* of his choice. Normally the first initiation is Her younger form called *Bālā*. Based upon the disciple's progress, *Pañcadaśī* mantra and *ṣodaśī mantra* are initiated. The supreme *mantra japa* of *Lalitāmbikā* is known as *mahā- ṣodaśī, mantra*, which leads the practitioner to emancipation. The relationship between a master and his guru continues until the disciple is fully developed and becomes independent. The mantras thus initiated need to be recited a certain number of times. On completing such number of recitations, the disciple has to perform certain other rituals like fire oblations. Once the entire procedure is completed, the disciple should be able to establish commune with Her.

Apart from *mantra japa-s,* the ritual worship of *Śrī Cakra* is also taught by the guru to his disciple. The disciple is expected to recite a prescribed number of *mūla mantra-s* (like *Pañcadaśī* or *ṣodaśī*) daily and this should be followed by ritual worship of *Śrī Cakra*. This should be followed by meditation. The importance of *Śrī Vidyā* is the culture of guru-disciple relationship.

PAÑCADAŚĪ MANTRA

The main *mantra* of *Lalitāmbikā* is *Pañcadaśī* which consists of fifteen *bīja-s*. A *bīja-s* need not be a single Sanskrit alphabet. It could be a combination of alphabets. For example, *sa* is a *bīja* and it is a single alphabet, whereas *hṛīṃ* is also a *bīja* but a combination of many alphabets. Each alphabet in Sanskrit has a meaning. If we take the first letter *a* (अ) in Sanskrit alphabet, it conveys many things. It is the origin of ॐ (OM); it also means unification, non-destruction, etc. The interpretation of meaning for such *bīja-s* mostly depends on the context in which it is used. *Pañcadaśa* means fifteen. Since this *mantra* has fifteen *bīja-s,* it is called as *Pañcadaśī*. *Pañcadaśī mantra* consists of three groups consisting of *bīja-s* and each line is called *kūṭa* or group. The three *kūṭa*-s are known as *vāgbhava kūṭa, kāmarāja kūtā or madhya kūṭa and śakti kūtā*. *Vāgbhava kūṭa* represents *Lalitāmbikā*'s face, *kāmarāja kūṭa*

represents the portion between Her neck and hip and the last one *śakti kūṭa* represents the portion below Her hip. The whole form of *Lalitāmbikā* is made up of these three *kūṭa-s*. This is one of the reasons why *Pañcadaśī* is considered as very powerful. These three *kūṭa-s* are joined in such a way that an inverted triangle is formed which represents Her *yoni,* the source of the universe. This is why this mantra is considered as highly secretive. *Vāgbhava kūṭa* is the right side of this triangle, *kāmarāja kūṭa* the upper side and *śakti kūṭa* forms the left side of the triangle.

Vāgbhava kūṭa consists of five *bīja-s* viz. *ka-e-ī-la-hrīṁ* (क-ए-ई-ल-ह्रीं). *Madhya kūṭa* consists of six *bīja-s* viz. *ha-sa-ka-ha-la-hrīṁ* (ह-स-क-ह-ल-ह्रीं). *śakti kūṭa* consists of four *bīja-s* viz. *sa-ka-la-hrīṁ* (स-क-ल-ह्रीं). Thus, we have fifteen *bīja-s* of *Pañcadaśī*. This *mantra* is not revealed by these *bīja-s*, but by the following verse in Sanskrit.

kāmo yoni: kamalā vajrapāṇirguhāhasā matariśvābhrāmindraḥ|
punarguhāsakala māyayā ca purucyeṣā viśvamātādividyā||

कामो योनि: कमला वज्रपाणिर्गुहाहसा मतरिश्वाभ्रामिन्द्रः।
पुनर्गुहासकल मायया च पुरुच्येषा विश्वमातादिविद्या॥

This is the verse where in the fifteen *bīja-s* of *Pañcadaśī* are hidden. This is a clear indication of the highly secretive nature of this *mantra*. From this verse, the fifteen *bīja-s* of *Pañcadaśī* are arrived thus. *kāman (ka) yoni: (e) kamalā (ī)vajrapāniṛ (la)-guhā (hrīṃ) ha (ha) sā (sa) mathariśvā (ka) abram (ha) indraḥ (la)| punar (punar* means again*) guhā (hrīṃ) sakala (sa,ka,la) māyayā ca (hrīṃ) purucyeṣā viśvamātādividyā*.

The first *kūṭa* has five *bīja-s ka-e-ī -la- hrīṃ*. The entire three *kūṭa-s* end with *hrīṃ* and this *hrīṃ* is called *hṛllekha*. A lot of importance is attached to this *hṛllekha* which is also called as *māyā bīja*. *Vākbhava kūṭa* is also known as *agni khaṇḍa* and indicates *jñāna śakti* of *Lalitāmbikā*. *Ka* means *Brahma,* the creator. *e* means *Sarasvatī* the goddess of *jñāna*. *ī* means *Lakṣmī*, *la* means *Indra* and *hrīṃ* means the merger of *Śiva* and *Śaktī.* The *bīja ka* is the root of

kāma bīja klīṁ (क्लीं). *ka* also bestows peace and prosperity to the *sādaka*. The next *bīja e* prevents misfortunes to the *sādaka*. *ī* bestows wealth and all good things to *sādaka*. The *bīja la* gives victory to the *sādaka*. Thus, the first four *bīja-s* give peace, prosperity, prevention of misfortunes, auspiciousness and a status like *Indra*. This means victory to *sādaka* in every step he puts forward. (*Indra* is the chief of all gods and goddesses and is victorious in all the battles against demons).

hrīṁ is made up of twelve letters. *H + r + ī + m* and a *bindu*. *Bindu* is a dot on the letter m (*ṁ*). But this is not just a dot. This dot comprises of *ardacandra, rodhinī, nāda, nādānta, śakti, vyāpikā, samanā* and *uṇmanī*. Beginning from *bindu* and including these eight, is *nāda* (total nine). This *nāda* comprises of two V-s one above the other (each *V* has two lines and two *V*-s together have four lines) and four dots each at the open ends of V and one dot on the top these four dots. This is the combination of bīja *hrīṁ*. More than these V-s and dots, the pronunciation is important. There are specifications of length of timing for pronunciations of each *bīja*. The entire *kūṭa* should be pronounced in eleven *mātrā-s* (a *mātrā* is the time taken for a winking, possibly lesser than a second). There are guidelines for pronouncing the *bīja-s*. The pronunciation of *Vākbhava kūṭa* should commence from *mūlādhāra cakra* and end at *anāhata cakra*, contemplating the entire *kūṭa* as the fire.

The second *kūṭa* is *kāmarāja kūṭa* or *madhya kūṭa* is to be meditated upon *Lalitāmbikā*'s neck to hip. This *kūṭa* has the highest number of *bīja-s*, six. They are *ha-sa-ka-ha-la- hrīṁ*. Out of these, *ka, la* and *hrīṁ* have been discussed in the first *kūṭa*, leaving two new *bīja-s* in this *kūṭa*. Out of the new *bīja-s*, *ha* has been repeated twice. The first *ha* means *Śiva*; the second *ha* means *ākāś* element (*Saundarya Laharī* (verse 32) refers this second *ha* as the sun) and *sa* in this place means *Viṣṇu*. With reference to the five basic elements, *sa* means air element. The *bīja ha* is also known as eunuch *bīja*. Probably this is the reason why the *bīja hrīṁ* refers to the union of *Śiva* and *Śaktī*. In the first *kūṭa*, *Brahma* was

mentioned, as the first *kūṭa* refers to creation. In this *kūṭa* of sustenance, *Viṣṇu* is mentioned as He is the lord of sustenance. This *kūṭa* should be pronounced in a time frame of 11.50 *mātrā*. This *kūṭa* is to be contemplated from *anāhata cakra* to *ājñā cakra* in the form brightness that is equivalent to millions of suns. This *kūṭa* is also called *sūrya khaṇḍa* and forms the second act of Brahman viz. the sustenance. Since it is associated with sustenance, desire is attached to this *kūṭa*.

The third and the last *kūṭa* which is called *śaktī kūṭa*, has only four *bīja-s*. This *kūṭa* is to be meditated upon the portion between hip and the feet of *Lalitāmbikā*. The four *bīja*-s are *sa-ka-la- hrīṃ*. The first *kūṭa* has five *bīja-s*, second *kūṭa* six *bīja-s* and the third has only four *bīja-s*. Possibly this could mean that sustenance is the most difficult act and dissolution is the easiest act. *Vākbhava kūṭa* refers to subtle intellect, *kāmarāja kūṭa* refers to preponderance of valour, wealth, fame, etc and the third *kūṭa*, the *śakti kūṭa* expands the conveyance of the previous two *kūṭa-s*. It can be noticed that two *ha bīja-s* in the *madhya kūṭa* is removed in this *śaktī kūṭa*. This *kūṭa* is to be pronounced in a time frame of eight and a half *mātrā-s*. The entire *Pañcadaśī mantra* should be pronounced in thirty one *mātrā-s*. In the case of continuous recitation of this *mantra*, without leaving time gap between the *kūṭa* only twenty nine *mātrā-s* are prescribed. But the time factor does not apply when the mantra is recited mentally. This *kūṭa* is to be contemplated from *anāhata cakra* to the middle of the forehead in the forms of brightness comparable to the millions of moons. There are nine stages from *anāhata* to the middle of the forehead. These nine stages are nothing but the nine components of *nāda* which was discussed under *hrīṃ*. This *kūṭa* is called *chandra khaṇḍa* and forms the third act of Brahman, the dissolution. The dissolution is represented by the *bījā* '*la*' which means the destructive weaponries viz. *vajra* (thunder bolt), *cakra* (the wheel. Possibly meaning the *Sudarśana cakra* of *Viṣṇu*), *triśūla* or trident of *Śiva* and the *gada* of *Viṣṇu*. There are three *hrīṃ*-s in *Pañcadaśī* each representing creation, sustenance and dissolution.

Śaṃkarācārya also talks about the *bīja-s* of *Pañcadaśī* in a secretive manner in *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 32). In the second *kūṭa* out of the two *ha bīja-s*, *Śaṃkarācārya* means sun instead of *ākāś* element. The interpretations of the *bīja-s* differ from scholar to scholar. It is also pertinent to note that chanting of one round of *Pañcadaśī mantra* is equivalent to three rounds of recitation of *pūrṇa Gāyatrī mantra*. *Pūrṇa Gāyatrī* means an addition of *paro rajase sāvadom* as the last line in addition to the existing three lines.

ṢODAŚĪ MANTRA

ṣodaśī has been explained under *nāma* 587. All *mantra*-s are considered as secretive in nature and *ṣodaśī* is not an exception. Recitation of *ṣodaśī* leads to liberation. This mantra does not give any materialistic gains. It leads straight to the Brahman. Normally, one is not initiated into this mantra straight away. Guru decides the timing of initiation into this mantra. Generally one is first initiated into *Bālā*. Depending upon one's progress, *Pañcadaśī* is initiated. If Guru considers that his disciple is fit for final liberation, he initiates him into *ṣodaśī*. One should recite 900,000 times of this *mantra* followed by *puraścaraṇa* rituals to attain *siddhi*. Then only liberation is possible. It is also said that initiation into *ṣodaśī* depends upon one's *karmic* account.

ṣodaśī vidyā is considered as *Brahma vidyā*, the knowledge of the Brahman. Brahman is depicted in the form of *mantra*-s in *ṣodaśī vidyā*. Since *ṣodaśī* depicts the Brahman in the form of *mantra*-s, it is treated as secret. But the important aspect of its secrecy is the replacement of second ॐ in this *mantra* with *ātma bīja*. The third aspect of the secrecy is the worship of ninth *āvaraṇa* that deals with *parā, parāpara* and *apara* states (these states have been dealt with while discussing nāma-s). If one is able to reach the fourth stage of *turya or turīya*, he gets prepared to attain liberation in the next stage of *turyātīta*. *Turya* is reached without any difficulty when *ṣodaśī mantr*a is chanted regularly.

(*Turya and turyātīta*: *Turya* is the fourth state of consciousness, the other three being awake, dream and deep sleep. *Turya* stage transcends all the above three stages by bundling them out. The level of consciousness at *turya* stage is very close to the stage of blissfulness, derived from experiment and observation rather than theory. *Turyātīta* is the stage where one's consciousness transcends *turya* stage. In this stage of blissful consciousness, the Brahman is realised where one feels that "I am That" or *aham brahmāsmi.* The final stage of merging into the Brahman is *kaivalya*, when a soul ceases to transmigrate.}

In *Pañcadaśī* one can transcend the fourth state of consciousness, the *turiya* state. In *ṣodaśī* one can merge with the Brahman, by reaching the fifth state of consciousness, *turyātīta*. There is nothing beyond this. What happens if one transcends *turya* state? The self is replaced by SELF. This transformative realization happens in a fraction of a second where near death-like situation is experienced. One is not the same person after that 'second'.

PŪRVA BHĀG

The *pūrva bhāg* begins with *Agastya*'s address to *Hayagrīva*. *Agastya* was a great sage of ancient times, short in stature. He is believed to be alive even today, according to the theory of immortality. *Agastya* means the one who stabilized mountains. It is said that Vindhya hill was growing in size continuously and it was *Agastya* who arrested its growth. It is also said that *Agastya* was born out of a pot. He is one among the twelve best known *Śrī Vidyā* worshippers. *Hayagrīva* has a horse face and one of the ten incarnations of Lord *Viṣṇu*. *Hayagrīva* is known for his supreme knowledge and is one of the exponents of *śāstra-s* (commands or precepts).

There is a story in *Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad* (II.v) about a learned person with horse head. There was a sage by name *Dadhyac*, an exponent in *Atharva Veda* who taught *madhu vidyā* to Lord *Indra*. Indra asked *Dadhyac* not to teach this *madhu vidyā* to anyone else after teaching him. If *Dadhyac* taught this anyone else, his head would be chopped off by *Indra*. *Aaśvin deva-s* somehow wanted to learn this *madhu vidyā*. They told *Dadhyac* that they would first replace his head with a horse head and that he should teach them *madhu vidyā* with the horse head (detailed in *Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad* II.v.16). Once it is taught, *Indra* would chop of his head and that *Dadhyac* would lose only the horse head. The horse head would then be replaced by his original head. Everything happened according to their plan and *Aaśvin*-s were taught *madhu vidyā* by

sage *Dadhyac*. In the said *Upaniṣad*, V.v.16 ends with *pra yadīmuvāca*. In this word *kāmakalā bīja īṁ* ई (pronounced as *eeṁ*.) is secretively placed. *Kāmakalā* is discussed in nāma 322 in this *Sahasranāma*. This *īṁ* is considered as the most important aspect of *Śrī Vidyā*. However, the *riṣi* who taught *madhu vidyā* is not the incarnation of *Viṣṇu*. *Hayagrīva*, the incarnation of Lord *Viṣṇu* initiated *Agastya* into *Śrī Vidyā* worship through *Lalitā Sahasranāma*.

The following story is found in *Devi Bhāgavata* (I.5). *Viṣṇu* was very tired after waging a war with demons. He sat in *padmāsana* (well known cross legged or lotus posture) resting his head on one side of the bow after placing the other side of the bow, firmly on the ground. *Indra* and other gods wanted to perform a great *yajña* and came to seek blessings from *Viṣṇu* as He is the Lord of all *yajna-s*. They went to *Vaikuṇṭha*, the abode of *Vishnu*. But He was not there. They found out He was resting elsewhere and reached there. They decided to wait till He woke up. Since the *yajña* was to be urgently performed, they could not wait any longer and they asked termites to bite the bow string of *Viṣṇu*'s bow. The string was snapped and in the force it chopped off *Viṣṇu*'s head. Gods and goddesses searched for His head, but that was not to be found. They all prayed towards *Lalitāmbikā* who asked them to bring a horse head and fix it on *Viṣṇu*. *Viṣṇu* was then known as *Hayagrīva*. He got *Śrī Vidyā* initiation from Her and this *avatār* of *Viṣṇu* is known for the highest wisdom. Based upon this story *Hayagrīva* is worshiped for gaining knowledge. *Hayagrīva* in turn initiated *Agastya* into *Śrī Vidyā* cult. Please note the contextual difference from what is narrated in the 'the presentation' section.

Hayagrīva told *Agastya* the entire details about *Lalitāmbikā* such as *Śrī Puram*, Her abode, *Pañcadaśī mantra*, *japa* and *pūja* methods, *inner yajña* and *ritual yajña.* The importance of conceiving oneness between *Śrī Cakra*, *Śrī Guru*, *Śrī Vidyā*, *Śrī Devi* (*Lalitāmbikā*) and the self is the important aspect of *Śrī Vidyā* worship. *Hayagrīva* has already taught *Agastya* the one thousand names (nāma-s) of two

ministers of *Lalitāmbikā*, *Maṇtrinī* (*Rāja Śyamalā*) and *Dhandinī* (*Vārāhī*). These two goddesses have been referred to in this *Sahasranāma*. *Agastya* asks *Hayagrīva* why he has not been taught with the one thousand names of *Lalitāmbikā*, and wanted to know whether he was not worthy of knowing it. *Hayagrīva* answers *Agastya* by addressing him as the spouse of *Lopāmudrā*, who is also a well known follower of *Lalitāmbikā*. *Hayagrīva* answers *Agastya* by saying that *Śrī Vidyā* should not be taught without asking for it as this is very secretive in nature. Since *Agastya* has asked for it now, *Hayagrīva* agreed to teach him this *Sahasranāma.* *Hayagrīva* further informs *Agastya* about the eligibility for knowing this *Sahasranāma*. One should have extreme faith in *Śrī Mātā*. One should have been initiated into *Pañcadaśī mantra* by a learned guru. One should have dedication and perseverance. He should have no bad habits and should always be pure. The reasons for such conditions are also elaborated.

The rituals performed as per tantra *śāstra-s* are said to yield quick results. Particularly, *Lalitā Sahasranāma* is considered as the best. There are ten *Sahasranāma*-s in praise of Her various forms. They are *Gaṇgā*, *Gāyatrī*, *Śyāmalā*, *Lakṣmī*, *Kāli*, *Bālā, Lalitā* (the present one), *Rājarājeśvarī*, *Sarasvatī* and *Bhāvanī*. *Mantra* is the term used for worshipping gods and *Vidyā* is the term used for worshipping goddesses. In the case of *Śrī Vidyā*, it consists of both *mantra* component and *vidyā* component highlighting the importance of *Śiva-Śaktī* union. As far as *Pañcadaśī mantra* is concerned, there are twelve types of *Pañcadaśī* and popular among them is *Kādi vidyā,* which is also known as *parā vidyā*. *Pañcadaśī mantra* though appears to have only fifteen *bīja-s*, in reality it consists of thirty seven letters comprising of fifteen vowels, sixteen consonants, three *bindu-s* and three *nāda-s* totalling to thirty seven (*Varivasyā rahasya* II.27). These thirty seven represent thirty six principles or *tattva-s*. The thirty seventh *tattvā* is *Para-Brahman* represented by the *bīja a* (अ). *Lalitā Triśatī* is based entirely on *Pañcadaśī mantra*. After performing *pūja* with *Triśatī mantra*-s, no other *arcana-s* should be performed and *pūja* should be concluded

with offerings and *ārati*. *Pañcadaśī mantra* is discussed in the introduction chapter.

Lalitāmbikā is extremely pleased when this *Sahasranāma* is recited either verbally or mentally and when one performs *arcana* with lotus flowers, *tulsi* leaves, *bilva* leaves, etc. In daily ritual, first *Śrī Cakra* should be worshiped followed by *Pañcadaśī mantra japa* and finally recitation of *Lalitā Sahasranāma*. If for any reason, one is not able to perform all the three, one should certainly recite this *Sahasranāma* without fail. It is not necessary that one should perform *arcana*, whereas one should certainly recite *Sahasranāma*. Any additional *stotra* (hymns of praise) will surely add additional benefits, but if one fails to recite *Sahasranāma* it is considered as sin. *Lalitāmbikā* Herself says that She would grant all the boons, if one recites this *Sahasranāma* once in his life time. Now *Hayagrīva* begins to recite *Lalitā-Sahasranāma* for initiating *Agastya*.

INTRODUCTION TO DHYĀNA VERSES

There are four *dhyana* verses (descriptive verses for visualisation) of *Lalitāmbikā* in *Lalitā Sahasranāma*. The first one starting with *sindūrāruṇa-vigrahāṃ* probably is the one composed by the eight *Vāc Devi*-s. The second one beginning with *aruṇām karuṇā-tarangitākṣīm* is said to have been composed by *Dattatreya* (*Datta*reya is considered to be a God who is an incarnation of the Divine Trinity *Brahma*, *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva*. *Datta* means given, granted or presented. *Datta* is called so because the divine trinity have born themselves in the form of a son to the sage couple *Atri* and *Amasuya* and his parentage forms the second part of his name *Atreya*). The fourth *sakumkuma-vilepanām* has been composed by *Ādi Śaṃkarācārya*. No information is available about the origin of the third verse beginning with *dhyāyet padmāsanasthām*. In all the *dhyāna* verses there is unanimity about Her red complexion, which resembles the sun at dawn. *Lalitāmbikā* is a sculptured beauty. More than Her complexion or beauty, Her qualities are paramount. She is the universal mother, which is emphasized by the fact that Her *Sahasranāma* begins by addressing Her as *Śrī Mātā*, which

means universal mother. She is seated on a throne and Goddesses *Lakṣmī* and *Sarasvatī* standing on each side of the throne fans Her. She is also called *parā bhaṭṭārikā* meaning the queen of queens. She is also known as par*ā Śaktī*, *Parameśvarī* and *Rājārajeśvarī*. She is the consort of *Paramaśiva*. *Rudra* is different from *Paramaśiva*. She is worshiped in the form of *Śrī Vidyā* and *Daśa Mahā Vidyā*. Both the forms of worship consist of many secrets that are to be learnt from a learned Guru. The latter form of worship consists of tantric rituals. But they are extremely powerful and desired results are imminent.

In the Supreme form, *Śiva* and *Śaktī* are called *Mahā Kāmeśvara* and *Mahā Kāmeśvarī*. They are the Ultimate and the Absolute. In the absolute form, She is called *prakāśa vimarśa mahā māyā svarūpini*. Both of them in this absolute form have four hands and hold the same weapons - *pāśa*, *aṅkuśa*, bow made of sugar cane and arrow made of flowers. Both of them have moon in their crowns. *Mahā Kāmeśvara* is pure, transparent and colourless form. He is seated on a throne, with left leg folded and his right foot placed on the ground. She, the red complexioned beauty incarnate, radiating with smile that is filled with joy and grace, ever ready to help Her devotees, walking towards *Mahā Kāmeśvara* with full of bashfulness. His pure, transparent and colourless form gradually turns red with every step She puts forward towards Him. Even swans, praised for their agile walk are ashamed of themselves on noticing the way She walks towards Him. *Mahā Kāmeśvara* beams with loving smile on seeing Her. She sits on His left thigh with Her right leg folded and left foot placed on a golden vessel filled with rubies. The moment She placed Her left foot on this vessel, the red colour of the rubies reflects everywhere. When She sits on His lap, His form also turns red. Both of them are radiating and when gods and goddesses look at them, they mistake the bright red radiation emanating from them as sun. This divine couple always stays united and that is why in this *Sahasranāma,* the penultimate nāma is called *śivaśaktī aikya rūpiṇī*. This nāma complies with the above description. This form is called the Absolute form. It is presumed

that there is nothing beyond this *Śivaśaktī aikya* or the Absolute form.

But this *Sahasranāma* ends with *Lalitāmbikā*. Does this mean that Her *Lalitāmbikā* form is superior to *Śivaśaktī aikya* form? The answer would be a firm Yes. Otherwise, *Vāc Devi*-s would not have placed this nāma as the last one. They could have made this as the penultimate and *Śivaśaktī aikya rūpiṇī* as the last. They did not do so. In the body of the *Sahasranāma* there are nāma-s saying *Pañca pretā sanāsīnā* and *Pañca brahma svarūpiṇī*. The first one means that she sits on *Brahma*, *Viṣṇu*, *Śiva*, *Mahādeva* and *Sadāśiva*. The deeper and impressed meaning of this nāma will be discussed later. *Brahma*, the creator; *Viṣṇu*, the sustainer; *Śiva*, the destroyer; *Mahādeva* and *Sadāśiva* are the two forms of *Śiva* one removing the illusion and another providing knowledge and blessings. When *Lalitāmbikā* is sitting on them, Her power becomes undescriptive by human comprehension. She is the ultimate. She is everything. She is you and She is me. She can give us whatever we pray for. She can be approached like our own mother. Everyone is Her child. Let us bow before Her Absolute form in right earnest. Rest, she will take care. In the higher form of learning, *Śiva* is known as subject and *Śaktī* is known as object. *Śiva* is quiet and does nothing and *Śaktī* is the performer and is called *prakṛti* or *māyā*. *Śiva* is like *Ātman* within us and *Śaktī* is like our body and mind, always active to perform *karma*-s or acts. *Lalitā Sahasranāma's dhyana* verses give huge and valuable inputs about Her gross appearance. When we meditate on Her, we can meditate on this form.

DHYĀNA VERSES

sindūrāruṇa-vigrahāṃ tri-nayanāṃ māṇikya mauli sphurat
tārānāyaka-śekarāṃ smitamukhīṃ āpīna vakṣoruhām|
pāṇibhyāṃ alipūrṇa-ratna-caṣakam raktotpalam bibhratīṃ
saumyāṃ ratna-ghaṭastha-rakta-caraṇāṃ dhyāyetparāmambikām||

सिन्दूरारुण-विग्रहां त्रि-नयनां माणिक्य मौलि स्फुरत्

तारानायक-शेकरां स्मितमुखीं आपीन वक्षोरुहाम्।
पाणिभ्यां अलिपूर्ण-रत्न-चषकम् रक्तोत्पलम् बिभ्रतीं
सौम्यां रत्न-घटस्थ-रक्त-चरणां ध्यायेत्परामम्बिकाम्॥

Sindūrāruṇa-vigrahāṃ - *sindūram* means the *kumkum* kept on women's forehead, which is red in colour. *ārunam* means the colour of sun rise, which is also red. The complexion of *Lalitā* is red. Why Her complexion is referred twice - one is the reference to the colour of the *kumkum*, and another reference is to the colour of sun at the time of its rise? *Vāc Devi*-s could have felt the need to emphasize the deep red colour of Her complexion and could have thought that one example was not enough and hence two examples could have been cited. *vigrahāṃ* means Her form. *trinayanāṃ* means three eyed. Third eye mentioned here is not in its literal sense. It is the eye of *jñāna*. If one acquires *jñāna*, his third eye will be opened on its own. That is why Gods are described with three eyes. These three eyes represent the sun, the moon and the *agni* (fire), possibly indicating *ājñā cakra.*

māṇikya mauli sphurat – She is wearing a crown studded with ruby stones (ruby stones are red in colour) where the planet moon *(mouli*) is also placed. *tārānāyaka-śekarāṃ – tāra* means stars. Moon is said to be the chief of stars (*nāyaka*). She is wearing in Her crown the chief of stars, viz. moon. The moon's placement is emphasized by referring to the moon twice. This could mean that the rubies are shining in bright red in the moon light. *smitamukhīṃ – smita* - smile, *mukhīṃ* – face. She has a smiling face or She is always smiling. Generally all the Gods have smiling faces. Then what is special with *Lalitāmbikā*? The answer is given in forty eighth nāma *mahā lāvanya śevadhī*. She is the embodiment of *all the beauty of the universe* and there is no other beauty that can be compared to Hers. She is referred to as the Brahman in various nāma-s. "The Brahman" is the ultimate of blissfulness. *Lalitāmbikā* is the combination of beauty and joy. Beauty is with reference to the physical body and joy is related to the mind. Her joyful mind is reflected in Her physical body and adds lustre to Her beauty. It is

said that face is the index of mind. One can easily ascertain the quality of a person from his face. There will be *tejas* or the refulgency in his face, who performs a lot of *upāsana*. (*upāsana* – five types of worship, (*abhigamana* or approach, *Upādāna* or preparation of offering, *Ijyā* or oblation, *Svādhyāya* or recitation, and *Yoga* or devotion). When one begins to radiate such *tejas* by worshipping Her, it clearly indicates that the he is pursuing the right spiritual path.

{Idol worship: Worshipping an idol is individual's choice. It depends upon one's mental makeup. If one finds envisioning difficult, he can with the aid of an idol or a picture visualize that form of God. But, when one takes up idol worship, he has to necessarily follow the rituals prescribed in *śāstra-s*. When *pūja* and other rituals are performed with great devotion and sincerity, one can over a period of time certainly observe changes in the face of the idol or picture. The spiritual energy generated during the rituals gets transferred to the idol and a two way communication begins to unfold between the idol and the seeker. Spiritual transformation has to be gradual. It is better to begin with idol worship in the initial stages of spirituality. Ultimate in spirituality is to realise the Brahman within. One has to cross different stages such as *japa*, meditation through inner search and exploration and perpetual meditation one leading to the other.}

āpīna vakṣoruhām – fully developed bosoms [this is because She has to nourish the entire universe as the Supreme mother, *Śrī Mātā* (*nāma 1*)] *pāṇibhyām* - holding in Her hands. *alipūrṇa* – full of honey, the spirituous liquor. *Ali* also means bees. *rathna caṣakam* – a cup made of rubies. In one hand She is holding a cup made out of rubies with honey filled to the brim. On smelling the honey in the cup, bees fly around. *raktotpalam bibhrathīm* – She holds in another hand a red coloured flower. In this *dhyān śloka* (hymn of praise), She is described with two hands only. But in the next *dhyān śloka,* She is described with four hands and in Her *ṣodaśi* form She is described with sixteen hands. *soumyāṁ* – beauty. *rathna ghatastha* – a pot consisting of rubies. *raktha caraṇām* - She is placing Her

red coloured left foot on this pot. *dhyāyet* – meditating on Her form. *parā ambikām – parā* (nāma 366) means the highest, Her highest and Supreme form.

This *dhyāna śloka* gives Her following form. Her complexion is red and all things associated with Her are red in colour. She is the embodiment of beauty. In one hand She holds a cup made of ruby, filled with honey and in another hand She holds a red coloured flower. She is keeping Her red coloured foot on a pot containing rubies. It is difficult to say why Her feet are red in colour. Is it due to the radiation of rubies reflecting in Her lustrous feet. Now doubt arises as to which is shining, is it the rubies or the feet of *Lalitāmbikā* placed on the pot full of rubies or is it due to the henna applied on Her feet or is it because Her complexion being red, Her feet are also red in colour in match with Her complexion? Possibly nobody can answer. What we know is that everything associated with Her is red in colour. This is the first of Her *dhyān ślokā*.

aruṇāṃkaruṇā-taraṃgitākṣīṃ dhṛta-pāśāṅkuśa-puṣpa-bāṇa-cāpām|
aṇimādibirāvṛtām mayūkhai-rahamityeva vibhāvaye bhavānīm||

अरुणां करुणा-तरंगिताक्षीं धृत-पाशांकुश-पुष्प-बाण-चापाम्।
अणिमादिबिरावृताम् मयूखै-रहमित्येव विभावये भवानीम्॥

aruṇām – like rising sun, the colour of the sun at dawn which is red; *karuṇa* – compassion; *tarangitākṣīm* – waves from Her eyes; Waves of compassion emanating from Her eyes (like waves continuously). *dhṛta* – supported by; *pāśa* – noose, a type of weapon (*pāśam* also means anything that binds a soul); *aṅkuśa* – another type of weapon, like an arrow; *puṣpa* – made out of flowers; *bāṇa* – arrow i.e. arrows made out of flowers or using flowers as arrows; *cāpām* – bow; She has bow made out of a sugarcane and arrows made out of flowers. *aṇimādibir – aśṭamā* (eight) *siddhi-s* like *animā, mahimā, garimā, laghimā, prāpti, prākāmyā, iṣṭvā* and *vaśtvā*. *āvṛtām* – surrounded by. She is surrounded by eight types of *siddhis* like *animā*, etc referred above. *mayūkhaiḥ* - a ray of light

or beam of light; *aham* – I; *ityeva* – like this; *vibhāvaye* - beatitude (a state of supreme happiness); *bhavānīm – Bhavānī*, another name of *Lalitāmbikā*. *Bhavānī* is the 112th nāma in this *Sahasranāma.*

The meaning for this verse is – I meditate on *Bhavānī*, the supreme happiness, whose colour is like the sun at dawn i.e. red in colour and from whom rays of light are emanating. This confirms Her red complexion discussed in the previous verse. Her compassion for Her devotees comes out of Her eyes like waves of ocean. In this verse She is described with four hands. In the rear hands She has two weapons called *pāśam* (like a rope) and *aṅkuśa* (a sharp edged metal weapon normally used to control elephants). In the front hands she holds a bow made out of sugar cane and arrows made out of flowers. A detailed study of Her weaponries is discussed later in this *Sahasranāma*. They represent four of Her premier assistants. She is surrounded by *aṣṭama siddhi-s*. Each *siddhi* is represented by a goddess in *Śrī Cakra*. I meditate on Her form called *Bhavānī*, a state of supreme happiness with beams of light.

dhyāyet padmāsanasthāṃ vikasita-vadanāṃ padma-patrāyatākṣīṃ
hemābhāṃ pītavastrāṃ kara-kalita-lasaddhema padmām varāngīm|
sarvālaṃkāra-yuktāṃsatatamabhayadāṃbhakta-namrām bhavānīṃ
śrividyāṃ śāntamūrtiṃ sakala-sura-nutāṃ sarva saṃpat
pradātrīm||

ध्यायेत् पद्मासनस्थां विकसित-वदनां पद्म-पत्रायताक्षीं
हेमाभां पीतवस्त्रां कर-कलित-लसद्धेम पद्माम् वरान्गीम्।
सर्वालंकार-युक्तां सततमभयदां भक्त-नम्राम् भवानीं
श्रिविद्यां शान्तमूर्तिं सकल-सुर-नुतां सर्व संपत् प्रदात्रीम्॥

dhyāyet – meditating; *padmāsanasthāṃ* – seated on a lotus flower or seated in a posture called *padmāsanā*; *vikasita-vadanāṃ* – charming face. *vikasa*: also means moon. It can be construed that Her face looks like a full moon. *padma* – lotus; *patrāya* – petal; *tākṣīm* – eyes. Her eyes look like long petals of a lotus flower. *hemābhāṃ* - golden complexioned; *pītavastrāṃ* – wearing clothes with gold sheen; *kara-kalitha* – holding in Her hand; *lasad*- shining;

hema – gold (*hema* also means a beautiful woman); - *padmām* – lotus. She is holding a shining golden lotus in Her hand. *Vara* + *angīm* – most beautiful + body parts. She has the most beautiful body. *Sarva* + *ālaṃkāra* + *yuktām* – all types of + ornaments + bejewelled. She is adorned with all types of ornaments. *satatam* – continually; *abhayadām* – bestowing protection. She constantly protects Her devotees. *bhaktha* – devotees; *namrām* – bowing down; She bows down to listen to Her devotees. *bhavānīm* – *Bhavānī*, the wife of *Bhavan*. *Śiva* is also known as *Bhavan*. *Bhavan's* consort is *Bhavānī*. *śrī vidyām* – *mantra* and tantra *śāstra-s* of *Śrī Vidyā*. *Śrī Vidyā* is the worshiping ritual of *Śaktī*. She is in the form of *mantra* and tantra *śāstra-s*. *Śānta* + *mūrtim* – form of tranquillity or without any agitation. S*akala* + *sura* + *nutām* – worshiped by all gods and goddesses. S*arva* + *sampat* – all types of wealth; *pradātrīm* – giver (giving is emphasized).

The meaning of this verse is: She is seated on a lotus. She has a charming face. Her eyes appear elongated and look like petals of a lotus. She has golden complexion and Her clothes have gold sheen. She holds a golden lotus. She has a sculptured figure. She is wearing all types of ornaments. She constantly protects Her devotees. She bows down to listen to the needs of Her devotees. She is the embodiment of all *mantra*-s and *tantra*-s of *Śrī Vidyā*. She is calm and composed. She is worshiped by all gods, which emphasises Her Supremacy. She endows wealth to Her devotees.

sakuṃkuma-vilepanāṃ alika-cumbi-kastūrikāṃ
samanda-hasitekṣaṇām saśara-cāpa-pāśāṅkuśa
aśeṣa-jana-mohinīṃ aruṇa-mālya-bhūṣāṃbarāṃ
japā-kusuma-bhāsurāṃ japavidhau smaredaṃbikām

सकुंकुम-विलेपनां अलिक-चुम्बि-कस्तूरिकां
समन्द-हसितेक्षणाम् सशर-चाप-पाशांकुशाम्
अशेष-जन-मोहिनीं अरुण-माल्य-भूषांबरां
जपा-कुसुम-भासुरां जपविधौ स्मरेदंबिकाम्

sakuṃkuma – with *kumkum*; *vilepanāṃ* – anointing; *alika* + *cumbi* – attracted by bees; *kastūrikāṃ* –vermilion; *samanda* + *hasita* + *ekṣaṇām* (*samanda-hasitekṣaṇām*)– benignant+ smile + looks; *saśara* – with arrow; *cāpa* – bow; *pāśa* – a weapon; *aṅkuśa* – a weapon (these two weapons are already discussed in second *śloka*); + *aśeṣa* + *jana* + *mohinīm* – attracts people without exception; *aruṇa* – red; *mālya* – a type of sandal wood from Malaysian mountains; *bhūṣa* - ornaments; *aṁbarām* – without the use of magical feats or incantations (attractions by sheer presence); *japā-kusuma* – red hibiscus flower; *bhāsurām* – decorated; *japa* + *vidhau* – as per the rules of *japa* or *mantra* chanting; *smared* + *ambikām* – think about Her.

The meaning of this verse is: She is anointed with *kumkum* and vermilion, which gives a pleasant fragrance, towards which bees are attracted. She looks at Her devotees with a benignant smile. She holds in Her hands bow and arrow, two weaponries. She attracts everybody; which means everybody is attracted to Her irrespective of being Her devotee or not. She is wearing a red garland made out of special sandal wood. Excellent ornaments adore Her and She has the complexion like a hibiscus flower. One has to meditate on this form of *Lalitāmbikā* during *japa* time.

NĀMA-S WITH INTERPRETATIONS

Śrī Mātā श्री माता (1)

We address our mother as *mātā*. *Mātā* means mother. The prefix *Śrī* is important here. *Śrī* (श्री) represents the highest form of motherhood. The human mothers can take care of their children with love and affection. But they cannot remove the miseries and sufferings of their loved ones, which they are destined to undergo. Since *Lalitāmbikā* is much more than a human mother is, She has the capacity to remove sorrows and miseries of Her children. Children mean all the living beings in this universe, as She is the mother of the entire universe that includes the galaxy. She is addressed as *mātā* as She is the Creator, sustainer and also the dissolver. The universe was created out of Her. The universe acts as per Her instructions. When the dissolution takes place, the universe merges back into Her. The cycle of *saṃsāra* (the world which has phenomenal existence and also meaning transmigration) repeats itself by birth, sustenance and death. *Saṃsāra* is called as an ocean. It is difficult to swim against the current of *saṃsāra*. The current of *saṃsāra* is produced by sense organs. These sense organs in turn influence the mind that causes desires and attachments. Only *Śrī Mātā* is capable of helping us to cross the

hurdles of *saṃsāra* and reach the destination (realization of Brahman). This is possible only by worshipping Her.

Śrī Mātā is also said to mean the mother of the Goddesses *Śrī Lakṣmī* (goddess of wealth), *Sarasvatī* (goddess of knowledge) and *Rudrānī* (the goddess of dissolution) the wife of *Rudra*. *Rudra* is different from *Śiva*. Therefore Śrī *Mātā* means the mother of these three goddesses.

Durvāsā is a great saint. He composed *Śrī Śaktimahimnaḥ Stotram* containing sixty one verses in Her praise. He surrenders to *Śrī Mātā* by saying "Oh! *Mātā*! the Supreme compassionate! I had born to a number of mothers. In future also, I may be born to a number of mothers. My mothers are countless, as I had different mothers for my different births. I am so scared to be born again and to undergo the associated sufferings. Oh! *Mātā*! I am surrendering to you. Please give me relief from my future births."

When *Śrī* is added as a prefix to any word, it shows the greatness. There are five such words with *Śrī* prefixed in the worship of the Devi. These five together are called *Śrī Panchagam*. They are *Śrī Puram* (the place where She dwells), *Śrī Cakra*, the palace where She lives with Her body guards, *Śrī Vidyā*, the ritual worship, *Śrī Sūktam*, verses in praise of Her and *Śrī Guru*, the spiritual teacher who initiates his disciple into *Śaktī* worship. The main element of *Śaktī* worship is *tantra śāstra*.

Śrī also means Veda-s. Veda-s originated from the Brahman. *Lalitāmbigai* is the Brahman as repeatedly stressed in this *Sahasranāma*. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (VI.18) says, "He first created *Brahma* and then presented the Veda-s to Him. I, a seeker of liberation, take refuge in that luminous Lord who reveals the knowledge of the Self in the mind."

It is also said that this nāma means the *Pañcadaśī mantra*.

It is pertinent to note that this *Sahasranāma* begins by addressing *Lalitāmbikā* as the mother of all, which emphasizes Her compassion

for the universe and all its beings. Since She is addressed as *Śrī Mātā*, this *nāma* refers to creation, the first act of the Brahman.

Śrī Mahārājñī श्री महाराज्ञी (2)

Again this *nāma* also begins with *Śrī*. *Mahārājñī* means the queen of queens, the empress.

Most of the *nāma*-s of this *Sahasranāma* contain powerful *bījākśara-s*. It is difficult to segregate these *bīja-s* from the *nāma*. *Bīja-s* or *bījākśara-s* are either single Sanskrit alphabet or the combination of alphabets making a compound alphabet. Each of these *bīja-s* is considered as highly secretive in nature, very powerful and can bestow powers on a person who regularly chants these *bīja-s* duly understanding its meaning. Specific rules are prescribed for pronunciation.

Ṣodaśī mantra is considered as the supreme of all the *mantra*-s in the worship of *Devi*. *Ṣodaśī* means sixteen *kalā-s* or letters. *Kalā** means the sixteen days of waxing or waning moon i.e. full moon to new moon or new moon to full moon. There is another mantra called *Pañcadaśī* consisting of fifteen letters. If one more *bīja* is added to fifteen lettered *Pañcadaśī*, it is called *Ṣodaśī*. *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 1) says, "Oh! Mother, the letters of the three groups constitute Your *mantra*." (A detailed study of *Pañcadaśī mantra* is provided in the introduction chapter and in *nāma-s* 85 to 89) If one chants the *Ṣodaśī mantra* for the prescribed number of times, (900,000 times) he or she will have no more births. This sixteenth *bīja* of *Ṣodaśī* is hidden in this *nāma*. Normally, this should be learnt only from a Guru. The sixteenth *bīja* consists of the first four letters of this *nāma Ś + r + ī + ṁ = Śrīm, (*श्रीं*)* the *Lakṣmī bīja*, the *bīja* of sustenance.

The first *nāma* talks about Her creative power and the second *nāma* talks about Her power of sustenance. As a mother She creates and as the supreme queen, She sustains the universe.

{*Further reading on *kalā: Kalā* is the dynamism peculiar to Nature, also known as *prakṛti*. This does not mean the *prakṛti* that exists at the level of *Śiva* , but *Śiva* , when envisaged in union with the energy, is eminently endowed with the creative dynamism that Nature will exhibit at Her own stage of differentiation. *Śiva* is always two fold, with attributes and without attributes. *Śiva* without attributes is considered as the Supreme amongst the creation and is distinct from *prakṛti*. When *Śiva* is endowed with attributes, it means that He is endowed with *kalā*-s.

Sixteen *kalā*-s mean the sixteen vowels, which are full (owing to their ambrosial nature) and where the knowable predominates. Being *Śrī Mātā*, the Divine Mother, whose name is constituted by these *kalā*-s (letters). Impulsion is the culmination of the expansion of *kalā*. *Kalā* also means a small part of anything, any single part or portion of a whole, especially a sixteenth part, a digit, or one-sixteenth of the moon's diameter, a symbolical expression of the number sixteen. }

Śrīmat Siṃhāsaneśvarī श्रीमत् सिंहासनेश्वरी (3)

Lalitāmbikā as the queen of queens is sitting on a lion. Lion is associated with ferociousness and is known as the king of animals. The supreme queen is using lion as her vehicle. This description of *Lalitāmbikā* talks about Her role as the supreme dissolver. *Simha* in Sanskrit means lion. The root for the word *siṃha* is derived from the word *himsa*. *Himsa* in Sanskrit means destruction. *Śrīmat + siṃha + āsanam + Iśvarī*. *Śrīmat* means the supreme respect given to Her in Her capacity as the destroyer of the universe, *simha* means lion, *āsanam* means seat (here it means throne), *Iśvarī* means the ruler.

The first three *nāma*-s of this *Sahasranāma* begin with the letter *Śrī*. *Śrī* means prosperity, wealth, etc. This *bīja Śrī* represents the goddess *Lakṣmī*, the goddess of wealth. She is the wife of *Śrī Mahā Viṣṇu*. This *nāma* also conveys that the worshipper of *Lalitai* will attain all material prosperity.

According to *Jñānārnava*, one of the ancient texts, there are eight *mantra*-s called *simhāsana mantra*-s to be performed on the four sides of the *bindu* in the *Śrī Cakra* and one in the *bindu* itself. Twenty four goddesses are worshiped in this *simhāsana mantra*. This *nāma* also means that *Lalitāmbikā* is the *Īśvarī* for these twenty four goddesses.

The first three *nāma*-s refer to the Supreme nature of *Lalitāmbikā*, the creator, the sustainer and the dissolver. As far as Her act of dissolution is concerned, She destroys those who commit sinful acts. But She ensures that Her true devotees merge with Her. This merger is called *laya* or absorption.

Cidagnikuṇḍa-saṃbhūtā चिदग्निकुण्ड-संभूता (4)

Cit + *agni* + *kuṇḍa* + *saṃbhūta*. *Cit* means the *nirguṇa Brahman* or the Brahman without attributes (the foundational consciousness). *Agni kuṇḍa* means a fire altar, in which fire sacrifices are done by offering oblations. *Saṃbhūtā* means born. *Agni kuṇḍa* or the fire altar means the dispeller of darkness. Darkness means lack of knowledge or ignorance which is called *a-vidyā* (*vidyā* means knowledge). This should not be interpreted as the one who was born out of the fire. She is the supreme consciousness who dispels ignorance. She dispels ignorance through Her form of pure consciousness, who illuminates within, dispelling the darkness of *māyā*.

The same explanation is given by *Kṛṣṇa* in *Bhagavad Gīta* (IV.37), "Like a fire turning the fire logs into ashes, the fire of knowledge burns to ashes all the *karma*-s (*sarva karmani*)." Complete knowledge of the pure Brahman residing within, destroys all our *karma*-s whether good or bad. One should have no balance in *karmic* account to avoid further births.

Devakārya-samudyatā देवकार्य-समुद्यता (5)

She has manifested Herself to help *deva-s* (gods and goddesses). What is the help She can do for *devās*? It goes back to a story where *deva-s* were engaged in a war with the demons who are called as *asura-s*. She helps *deva-s* to win the battle with the demons. *Deva-s* do not perform evil deeds, therefore She always helps *deva-s*. When She is said to be a part of the Brahman, why She should manifest afresh to destroy the demons? When She is said to be the part of the Brahman, it refers to Her *prakāśa* form. *Prakāśa* (the principle Self-revelation; consciousness; the principle by which ever other thing is known.) form represents *Śiva* and *vimarśa* (Self-consciousness as opposed to Self-revelation of *Śiva* ; the awareness of *Śiva* , full of knowledge and actions that bring about the world process) form represents *Śaktī*. Since She is a part of the Supreme *Śiva* who Has created Her as His *vimarśa* form, the *prakāśa* form of *Lalitāmbikā* is subtly highlighted here without explicitly saying so. This *nāma* discusses Her *prakāśa* form.

There is an important saying in *Yogavasiśtā*, "I have two forms, ordinary and supreme. The ordinary form of mine is with hands and legs. This form of mine is worshiped by ignorant men. The other one is my supreme form, the formless form without a beginning and an end. This form of mine has no qualities or attributes and is called the Brahman, *Ātman, Paramātman*, etc."

In this *nāma* demons or *asura-s* means *avidyā* or ignorance. *Deva-s* means knowledge or *vidyā*. She helps those who seek knowledge about the Brahman.

Udyadbhānu-sahasrābhā उद्यद्भानु-सहस्राभा (6)

Udyad – rising; *bhānu*-sun; *sahasra* – thousand or countless; *abhā* - light. *Lalitāmbikā* appears as bright as thousand suns rising at the same time. The colour of the rising sun is red. The complexion of *Lalitāmbikā* is red as described in the *dhyāna śloka* of this *Sahasranāma (sakuṅkuma-vilepanām)*. Almost all the tantra *śastra-s* and ancient scriptures talk about Her complexion as red. In the previous *nāma* Her *prakāśa* form was discussed and in this *nāma*

Her *vimarśa* form is being described. She has three forms – the *prakāśa* form or the subtle form, the *vimarśa* form or the physical form and Her *parā* form or the supreme form. The *prakāśa* form of Her is said to be made of various *mantra*-s, the supreme one being *mahā ṣodaśī mantra*. Her *vimarśa* form is Her physical form. She is worshiped in thousands of forms. Her supreme form is realised through mental worship. These forms and the associated red colour are for easier contemplation. From the next *nāma* onwards, Her physical form is being described. The red colour also indicates care. She looks after Her devotees with great care and affection like a mother.

Kṛṣṇa says (*Bhagavad Gīta* II.12) "If hundreds of thousands of suns were to rise at once into the sky, their radiance might resemble the effulgence of the Supreme Person in that universal form."

Caturbāhu-samanvitā चतुर्बाहु-समन्विता (7)

The physical appearance of *Lalitāmbikā* begins here. She has four arms. These four arms represent Her ministers, through whom She administers. These *Devi*-s who assist Her are described in the next four *nāma*-s.

Rāgasvarūpa-pāśāḍhyā रागस्वरूप-पाशाढ्या (8)

Rāga means desire or a wish. *Pāśa* is a type of rope used to pull an object. She pulls all the desires of Her devotees using this rope. There are three *śakti*-s (*śakti* in this context means power) – *iccā*, *jñāna* and *kriya*. This *nāma* talks about *iccā śakti* or the desire. She never allows Her devotees to sink with desires. This arm is Her left lower arm and is represented by *Aśvārūdā Devi*.

Krodhākāraṅkuśojvalā क्रोधाकाराङ्कुशोज्वला (9)

She holds an elephant hook in her right upper arm. *Krodha* means hatred and *akāra* means knowledge. This *nāma* talks about subtle body. Knowledge is always subtle. She uses this elephant hook to

destroy the hatred if developed in Her devotees and gives them knowledge. A *bīja* of *Kālī, kroṁ* (क्रों) is hidden in this *nāma*. *Kālī* is the destroyer of all evils. This right lower arm is represented by *Sampathkarī Devi*.

Manorūpekṣu-kodaṇḍā मनोरूपेक्षु-कोदण्डा (10)

Mind involves both *saṃkalpa* and *vikalpa*. *Saṃkalpa* means resolve, process of thought. *Vikalpa* means difference of perception. Both are opposite to each other. Mind is also subtle like knowledge. Mind is reflected through the five sensory organs. It has both *saṃkalpa* and *vikalpa* quality as it acts through the impressions received from sense organs that get fine tuned in the form of thought and finally explodes in the form of actions. *Ikṣu* means sugar cane and *kodaṇḍa* means a bow. She is holding in Her left upper arm a bow of sugar cane. Why sugarcane bow? If sugarcane is crushed, sweet and tasty juice is obtained from which sugar is manufactured. It means if one crushes his mind (controlling the mind), he gets the sweet reality of the Brahman. This arm is represented by *Mantrinī* also known *Śyāmala Devi*.

Pañcatanmātra-sāyakā पञ्चतन्मात्र-सायका (11)

Pañca means five and *tanmātra-s* are sound, touch, sight, taste and smell, the subtle modifications of the five basic elements *ākāś,* air, fire, water and earth.

The earlier *nāma* spoke about the bow and this *nāma* talks about Her arrows. She has five arrows. These five arrows are made of flowers. The five flower arrows represent five subtle elements. These five flowers or arrows are described differently in various tantra *śāstra-s*. These five flowers are lotus flower, *raktakairava* flower, *kalhara* flower, *indivara* flower and flowers of mango tree. These five flowers represent excitement, madness, confusion, stimulation and destruction. The arrows are used in wars targeting the enemies. *Lalitāmbikā* targets Her devotees with these arrows to

destroy the illusion or *māyā* as the five subtle elements are associated with *māyā*. This is Her right upper hand. *Vārāhī Devi* is represented by this hand.

Nāma-s 8,9,10 and 11 have secret *bījākśara*-s. For example, eighth *nāma* has *hrīṃ bīja* which is known as *māyā bīja*. The eighth *nāma* begins with *rāgasva* which is formed of *ra + aga + sva*. *Aga* means *Śiva*. The *bīja* for *Śiva* is *hāṁ* (हां). This is to be taken as *ha*. The next is *ra* (र) and this is to be taken as it is. *Sva* means the letter *īṁ* (ईं) with a *bindu* (dot) on the top. The *bīja hrīṁ* (ह्रीं) is thus formed by *ha + ra + īṁ* and pronounced as *hrīṁ*. Like this in the other three *nāma*-s such *bījākaśara-s* (*da, ra, ka, la, ya, sa, va, ā, ī, ū*) are hidden. That is why *Lalitā Sahasranāma* is considered on par with Veda-s. Most importantly, this *Sahasranāma* should not be recited with *rāga* or *svara* (musical notes).

Nijāruṇa-prabhā-pūra-majjad-brahmāṇḍa-manḍalā निजारुण-प्रभा-पूर-मज्जद्-ब्रह्माण्ड-मन्डला (12)

Her red-rose like complexion radiates the universe with red colour. From this *nāma* onwards, the gross description of *Lalitāmbikā* begins. When physical description of a God is made, it is from foot to head and for Goddesses it is from head to foot. For *Lalitāmbikā*, the description begins from Her head. For *Śiva* the descriptions are both from His head as well as His feet as He represents both *Śiva* and *Śaktī* (ardhanārīśvara form, *Śiva* and *Śaktī* combined in a single form, half male and half female, conjoined vertically). In *Pañcadaśī mantra* there are three parts or *kūṭa-s* (divisions). Out of the three *kūṭa-s*, *Vāgbhava kūṭa* is meditated upon Her head, which is in line with the tradition of describing Her from head to foot.

Campakāśoka-punnāga-saugandhika-lasat-kacā चम्पकाशोक-पुन्नाग-सौगन्धिक-लसत्-कचा (13)

Campaka, aśoka, punnāga, saugandhika are the four types of fragrant flowers that adorn Her hair. But Her hair does not get fragrance because of these flowers, whereas these flowers get their fragrance from Her hair. Her hair is always sweet smelling.

Saundarya Laharī (verse 43), says."Your dense, greasy and soft braid of hair, resembling a group of blue lotuses in bloom, dispel our ignorance. I think the flowers of the trees in the garden of the foe of Vala abide therein to attain their innate fragrance." Wetness indicates Her compassion and softness indicates Her motherhood.

Durvāsa ṛṣi (Sage Durvās) in his '*Śaktī Mahimna'* meditates on Her sweet smelling hair in his heart *cakra*.

The idea behind these description is when Her hair can drive away ignorance (knowledge is considered as supreme in realising the Brahman), what Her total form can do for Her devotees. These four sweet smelling flowers mean the four deceptive components of *antaḥkaraṇa* viz. mind, intellect, consciousness and ego.

Kuruvinda-maṇiśreṇī-kanat-koṭīra-maṇḍitā कुरुविन्द-मणिश्रेणी-कनत्-कोटीर-मण्डिता (14)

Kuruvinda is a rare type of ruby, which is red in colour. This particular type of ruby is said to enhance love, wealth and devotion for *Viṣṇu* (*Viṣṇu* is Her brother). These rubies adorn Her crown. When She is meditated upon with this red crown, spirituality and prosperity will increase. *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 42) says, "Why will not he, who extols your golden crown, closely stud with the twelve Suns (twelve *āditya-s* - *dvādasa āditya-s*, each *āditya* representing one solar month) transformed into gems, form the idea that the digit of the (crescent) Moon, variegated by enveloping lustre of the inlaid gems, is but the bow of Indra (rainbow)?" *Śrī Śaktī Mahimnaḥ* (verse 42) also describes Her crown.

Aṣṭamī -candra-vibrāja-dhalika-sthala-śobhitā अष्टमी-चन्द्र-विब्राज-धलिक-स्थल-शोभिता (15)

Her forehead appears like the moon on the eighth day. Eighth day from the full moon or new moon is called *aṣḥṭamī*. The moon appears beautiful with even curves on both sides on eighth lunar day.

Mukacandra-kalaṇkābha-mṛganābhi-viśeṣakā मुकचन्द्र-कलण्काभ-मृगनाभि -विशेषका (16)

She is wearing a *kastūri* (*kastūrikā* a fragrant paste) *tilaka* (a mark on the forehead made with coloured earths, sandal-wood, or unguents, either as ornament or as a sectarian distinction) and this is compared to the spot that we see in the moon. In *Śrī Śaktī Mahimnaḥ* (verse 39), Her face is meditated upon.

Vadanasmara-māṅgalya-gṛhatoraṇa-cillikā वदनस्मर-माङ्गल्य-गृहतोरण-चिल्लिका (17)

Her face is compared to the palace of lord *Manmatha* (the god of love - cupid) and Her eyebrows are compared to the festoons adorning his house. *Cillikā* means eyebrows. It is said that *Manmatha* constructed an auspicious palace, copying the face of *Lalitāmbikā*.

Vaktra-lakṣmī-parīvāha-calan-mīnābha-locanā वक्त्र-लक्ष्मी-परीवाह-चलन्-मीनाभ-लोचना (18)

Her eyes appear like fishes moving in a pond. Her face is compared to a pond and Her eyes to fishes. Fishes move very quickly. She also moves Her eyes quickly as She has to shower Her grace on the entire universe. The fish eggs become fertile by mere glance of mother fish. In the same manner She by Her mere glance nourishes

the universe. Because of the beauty of Her eyes She is also known as *Mīnākṣī, Mīnalocanī,* etc.

Navacampaka-puṣpābha-nāsadaṇḍa-virājitā नवचम्पक-पुष्पाभ-नासदण्ड-विराजिता (19)

Her nose resembles like a newly blossomed *champaka* flower.

Tārākānthi-tiraskāri-nāsabharaṇa-bhāsurā ताराकान्थि-तिरस्कारि-नासभरण-भासुरा (20)

She is wearing a nose stud that outshines the stars. Her nose stud is made up of rubies and pearls. Tārā means stars Tārā also means two goddesses Maṅgalā and Śuklā. Śuklā has later come to be known as Śukrā. Possibly these Maṅgalā and Śukrā could mean the two planets Mars and Venus. Each planet governs certain precious stones. Planet Mars rules ruby that is red in colour and Venus rules diamond (Mani Mālā II.79). It can also be said that these two planets adorn Her nose. This also indicates that worshipping Her wards off the evil effects of planets.

Kadhamba-mañjarī-klpta-karṇapūra-manoharā कधम्ब-मञ्जरी-क्लप्त-कर्णपूर-मनोहरा (21)

She is wearing the petals of *kadhamba* flowers in Her ears or flowers kept in Her hair flow down to Her ears. These flowers are grown outside Her *Cintāmani graha* (The palace where She lives). These flowers have divine fragrance, which is derived from Her ear lobes.

Tāṭaṅka-yugalī-bhūta-tapanoḍupa-maṇḍalā ताटङ्क-युगली-भूत-तपनोडुप-मण्डला (22)

She is wearing sun and moon as Her ear rings. This means She controls all the activities of the universe, as sun and moon are responsible for sustaining life. It is also said that sun and moon

represent her eyes, earrings and bosoms. The *bīja klīṁ* (क्लीं) is symbolises Her two bosoms, which represent the two semi circles in the *klīṁ bīja*. The *klīṁ bīja* is also known as *kāma bīja*. Further details are to be learnt from a Guru. Most of the *nāma*-s of this *Sahasranāma* subtly convey various *bīja-s* and hence this *Sahasranām* is considered as very powerful.

Saundarya Laharī (verse 28) says, "*Brahma, Indra* and other celestials perish even though they have drunk nectar which confers immunity from frightful grey hairs (of old age) and death. If the longevity of *Śiva* despite His swallowing the terrific poison is not limited by time, it is because of the greatness of your ear ornaments."

Padmarāga-śilādharśa-paribhāvi-kapolabhūḥ पद्मराग-शिलाधर्श-परिभावि-कपोलभूः (23)

Her cheeks are shining, soft and reflecting. *Padmarāga* is a type of ruby, red in colour. Ruby is of four types: *vipra, kuruvinda, saugandhika and mansa-khanda*, out of which *vipra* is superior. Wearing afflicted rubies cause irreparable damages in one's life. Her cheeks are reflecting red colour as Her complexion itself is red. The other ornaments that have been described above are also red in colour. The sun and the moon in Her ear lobes make Her cheeks shining red. Everything associated with Her is red. As discussed earlier, red indicates compassion.

Saundarya Laharī (verse 59) says, "Your face is cupid's four wheeled chariot, having the pair of your ear ornaments reflected in the expanse of your cheeks. Cupid, the mighty warrior sitting on it plots revengefully against the Lord *Śiva*, resting on the chariot of the Earth having the Sun and Moon for its wheels."

Navavidruma-bimbaśrī-nyakkāri-radanacchadā नवविद्रुम-बिम्बश्री-न्यक्कारि-रदनच्छदा (24)

Her lips outshine fresh coral and the *bimba* fruit (*momordica monadelpha*). *Bimba* fruit is normally compared to beautiful lips. Both are red in colour.

Śuddha-vidhyāṅkurākāra-dhvijapakṅti-dvayojvalā शुद्ध-विध्याङ्कुराकार-ध्विजपक्ङ्ति-द्वयोज्वला (25)

Her teeth appear like *Śuddha-vidyā*, which means *Śrī Vidyā*. *Śrī Vidyā* is considered as the most secret and powerful ritual worship of *Lalitāmbikā*. This involves a lot of rituals and each ritual has its own meaning and interpretation. *Śuddha* means pure, *vidyā* means knowledge and *Śuddha-vidyā* means pure knowledge. This is considered pure because this *upāsana mārg* or the cult of *Śrī Vidyā* worship emphasizes the non-duality, 'I am That' concept.

The *ṣodaśī mantra* is considered as the seed for *Śrī Vidyā*. It has sixteen *bīja-s*. When a seed grows into a sprout, it has two leaves. Therefore 16 x 2 gives 32, the number of teeth in human beings. Even though teeth have two rows placed in upper and lower jaws, the jaws are attached to each other internally. In the same way soul (*jīva*) and (Brahman) God are considered as different out of ignorance when both remain the same. *Śrī Vidyā* worship is to be done in seclusion, understanding the significance and meanings of the procedures. Then only the worship yields results.

In the *mantra* initiation procedures of *Devi*, there are thirty two types of *dīkśa* (types of initiation). Yet another interpretation is also possible. This *Sahasranāma* starts only with 32 letters out of the 51 alphabets in Sanskrit. This 32 represents Her teeth. This could also mean that the initiation into *Śrī Vidyā* cult is to be done verbally by Guru to his disciple.

{Further reading on *Śuddha-vidyā: T*his is the fifteenth *tattva*, counting from *Śiva*. In this *tattva*, the consciousness of both "*I"* and "*This"* is equally predominant. Though the germinal universe is seen differently, yet identity runs through it as a thread. There is

identity in diversity at this stage. *Kriya* is predominant *tattva* here. The consciousness of this state is 'I am, I and also this'. *Vidy*ā *tattv*a consists of *Śuddha-vidyā, sahaja vidyā* and *kañcuka* (limited knowledge). *Vidyātattva* consists of *śuddhavidyā*, *sahajavidyā* and *vidyākañcuka*. *Śuddhavidyā* here is the same as *sadvidyā* (fifth *tattva*), while *sahajavidyā* is natural knowledge (not a *tattva*). Natural knowledge implies the emergence of His Freedom. As *sahajavidyā* (natural knowledge) is also known as *śuddhavidyā* (pure knowledge). }

Karpūravīṭikāmodha-samākarṣi-digantarā कर्पूरवीटिकामोध-समाकर्षि-दिगन्तरा (26)

*Karpūravītik*ā is a combination of fragrant ingredients, used to chew along with the betel leaves. The ingredients used are – saffron, cardamom, clove, camphor, *kastūri*, nutmeg and mace or *myristica fragrans* or *jātipattrī* (arillus of the nut also known as *myristica officinalis*). The ingredients are finely powdered and mixed with powdered sugar candy. This *Karpūravītikā* powder when used with betel leaves for chewing gives immense fragrance and delicious taste). When She chews this, it provides fragrance to the entire universe. Please refer *nāma* 559 also. In *Lalitā Triśatī* (containing 300 *nāma*-s based on *Pañcadaśī mantra*) *nāma* 14 also coveys the same meaning.

Possibly this could mean that She attracts ignorant men by this fragrance. Knowledgeable men can reach Her by devotion whereas ignorant men require inducement to obtain Her grace. This inducement is the fragrance mentioned here.

Nija-sallāpa-mādurya-vinirbhartsita-kacchpī निज-सल्लाप-मादुर्य-विनिर्भर्त्सित-कच्छपी (27)

Sarasvatī's veena (*veena* is musical instrument with strings) is called *kachapi*. It produces a superb melody, in the hands of

Sarasvatī Devi, the goddess for fine arts. The voice of *Lalitai* is more melodious than *Sarasvatī's veena*.

Saundarya Laharī (verse 66) says: "While *Vāni* (*Sarasvatī)* is singing with *veena* about the various glorious deeds of *Śiva* and you begin to express words of appreciation, nodding your head, *Sarasvatī* quickly covers Her *veena* in its case. The sweetness on the strings of the *veena* is ridiculed by the soft melody of your eulogistic words."

The explanation provided to the earlier *nāma* is applicable here too. She attracts the ignorant by the melody of Her voice.

Mandasmita-prabhāpūra-majjatkāmeśa-mānasā मन्दस्मित-प्रभापूर-मज्जत्कामेश-मानसा (28)

Smita means smile and *mandasmita* means a special benevolent smile. *Kāmeśa* is *Śiva*. When *Lalitai* is sitting on the left thigh of *Śiva*, they are known as *Kāmeśvara* and *Kāmeśvarī*. This form is different from their *Ardhanārīśvara* form. *Śiva* is immersed in that beautiful special smile of *Lalitai*.

Kāma also means bindu, a dot. *Bindu* is a part of *kāmakalā bija* (*īṁ* ईं). This *bīja* has two *bindu*-s, each representing the sun and the moon. The *bindu* refers to ego. *Kāma* and *kalā* both mean desire. Mind is the cause for desire. When the mind of *Śiva* Himself is influenced by the smile of *Kāmeśvarī*, it only speaks about Her glory.

She attracts ignorant men by Her smile and offer them salvation by infusing wisdom.

Anākalita-sādṛśya-cibuka-śrī-virājitā अनाकलित-सादृश्य-चिबुक-श्री-विराजिता (29)

She has the most beautiful chin. *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 67) says "Your incomparable chin that is touched by the forepart of the hand

of *Śiva* is raised frequently out of His eagerness to drink the nectar of your lower lip."

Kāmeśa-baddha-māṅgalya-sūtra-śobhita-kandharāकामेश-बद्ध-माङ्गल्य-सूत्र-शोभित-कन्धरा (30)

Her neck is adorned with the *māṅgalya sūtra* (married women wear this) tied by *Kāmeśvara*.

Saundarya Laharī (verse 69) says "The three lines on your neck indicating the number of strings in the auspicious cord fastened at the time of your wedding shine like boundaries, delimiting the position of the gamut, the repositories, of the treasures of various kinds of melodious *rāga-s* (tunes)."

The tying of *māṅgalya sūtra* is not discussed in Veda-s and possibly a custom followed in later days. As per *sāmudrikā śāstra*, (interpretation of features of the body) three fine lines in the forehead, eyes or hip indicate prosperity.

Kanakāṅgada-keyūra-kamanīya-bhujanvitā कनकाङ्गद-केयूर-कमनीय-भुजन्विता (31)

kanaka – golden; *aṅgada* – bangles or bracelets; *keyūra* is a type of ornament worn in the upper arms. She is wearing these ornaments. Possibly, this could mean the following. Both these ornaments are made out of gold and worn in the arms. Though they differ in form, the ingredient gold is the same in both. Though the forms of living beings are different, the innermost Brahman remains the same.

Ratna-graiveya-cintāka-lola-muktā-palānvitā रत्न-ग्रैवेय-चिन्ताक-लोल-मुक्ता-पलान्विता (32)

She is wearing a gems embedded golden pendent and a pearl necklace. These ornaments are dangling in Her neck.

The dangling of these ornaments is compared to mind. Those who are not capable of meditating Her full form (head to foot) are said to be low class devotees and called as *lola-s*. Those who are able to meditate on Her full form are said to be high class devotees and called as *muktā-s*. *Lola-s* or *muktā-s* get the benefits (*pala*) of their prayers according to their category. This is the meaning of *lola-muktā-palānvitā*. While worshipping Her, one has keep to keep his mind steady, without distractions.

Kāmeśvara-premaratna-maṇi-pratipaṇa-stanī कामेश्वर-प्रेमरत्न-मणि-प्रतिपण-स्तनी (33)

She offers her two bosoms to *Kāmeśvara* (*Śiva*) in return for His love. The subtle meaning is that She will give Her blessings to Her devotees, twice the amount of devotion offered to Her.

Nābhyālavāla-romāli-latā-phala-kucadvayā नाभ्यालवाल-रोमालि-लता-फल-कुचद्वया (34)

Her two bosoms are the fruits of the creeper (refers to hair) that springs from Her navel. The significance of this *nāma* is on the navel and heart *cakra*-s. Meditating on the heart *cakra* by upwardly moving the *kuṇḍalinī* from navel *cakra*, gives fruits of meditation. *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 76) says "The God of love afflicted by the fire of *Śiva*'s anger took shelter in your navel."

Lakṣya-roma-latādhāratā-samunneya-madhyamā लक्ष्य-रोम-लताधारता-समुन्नेय-मध्यमा (35)

Her waist is to be known only from creeper like hair as described in the previous *nāma*. The secretive meaning is that *ātma* is subtle and can be known only by keen observation (through meditation).

Stanabhāra-dalanmadhya-paṭṭabandha-valitrayā स्तनभार-दलन्मध्य-पट्टबन्ध-वलित्रया (36)

The golden belt that She wears supports Her waist as it bends under the heaviness of Her bosoms, resulting in three folds in Her stomach area.

Saundarya Laharī (verse 80) says "Your bosoms rubbing at the upper arms, abounding the bodice and the God of love, in order to protect Your hip from breaking has bound Your hip with three fold strands."

The possible interpretation could be that Her compassion to the universe is vast which is referred to as heaviness here. The three lines in Her hip indicate Her three activities – creation, sustenance and dissolution. Her time for compassion is more than Her other activities. After all She is the Supreme Mother.

Aruṇaruṇa-kausumbha-vastra-bhāsvat-kaṭītaṭī अरुणरुण-कौसुम्भ-वस्त्र-भास्वत्-कटीतटी (37)

She wears a red silk cloth around Her waist. Red colour means compassion. Everything associated with Her is red in colour, indicating that Her form is full of compassion (one of the reasons of being *Śrī Mātā*). It can be said that She performs Her three acts (creation, sustenance and dissolution) with compassion. This could also refer to one of the *Vāc Devi-s*, *Arunā*. This *Sahasranāma* was composed by eight *Vāc Devi-s*. They are *Vasini, Kāmeśvari* (not *Śiva* 's wife), *Modhini, Vimalā, Arunā, Jainī, Sarveśvarīi and Koulinī. Arunā Vāc Devi* is in Her waist.

Ratna-kiṅkiṇikā-ramya-raśanā-dāma-bhūṣitā रत्न-किङ्किणिका-रम्य-रशना-दाम-भूषिता (38)

She is adorned with girdle studded with mini bells and gems. *Devi*'s *Pañcadaśī mantra* consists of three parts or *kūṭa-s*. *Vāgbhava kūṭa* was discussed from *nāma* 13 to 29. *Madhya kūṭa* was discussed from 30 to 38 and *Śaktī kūṭa* will be discussed from 39 to 47. Devi's face is *vāgbhava kūṭa*, from face to hip is *madhya*

kūṭa (also known as *kāmarāja kūṭa)* and *Śaktī kūṭa* is hip downwards. The entire *Pañcadaśī mantra* is hidden in *nāma*-s 13 to 47. Her gross description is also discussed from *nāma*-s 13 to 54.

Kāmeśa-jñāta-saubhāgya-mārdavoru-dvayānvitā कामेश-ज्ञात-सौभाग्य-मार्दवोरु- द्वयान्विता (39)

The beauty of Her thighs is known only to Her consort and Creator *Kāmeśvara*. This indirectly refers to the secretive nature of *Śaktī kūṭa* of *Pañcadaśī* that begins from this *nāma*.

Māṇikya-mukuṭākāra-jānudvaya-virājitāमाणिक्य-मुकुटाकार-जानुद्वय-विराजिता (40)

Each of Her knees is like a single piece of ruby (again red colour) appearing like a crown.

Indragopa-parikṣipta-smaratūṇābha-jaṅghikā इन्द्रगोप-परिक्षिप्त-स्मरतूणाभ-जङ्घिका (41)

Her calf muscles look like the quiver of *Manmatha*, the god of love. *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 83) says "In order to win the heart of your Lord *Śiva*, the five arrowed cupid God of love has made your legs into an arrow case with ten arrows (toe nails)."

Gūḍha-gulphā गूढ-गुल्फा (42)

She has round and well shaped ankles that are hidden.

Kūrma-pṛṣṭha-jayiṣṇu-prapadānvitā कूर्म-पृष्ठ-जयिष्णु-प्रपदान्विता (43)

The arch of her feet is more beautiful and curvier than tortoise's shell. But *Śaṇkarā* expresses his anger for comparing Her feet to that of tortoise shell, which is hard. *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 88) says "The toes of your feet is the one that sustains this universe (he

is not even comparing the entire feet, he says only about the toes). Lord *Śiva* knows the softness of your feet that is why He held your feet with great care during your marriage ceremony. How dare they (possibly *Vāc Devi*-s) compare such soft feet to that of tortoise shell?" This also confirms that *Sahasranāma* is much older than *Saundarya Laharī.*

Nāma-s 41, 42, and 43 are as per the features described in *sāmudrikā lakśanā* (study of body parts).

Nakhadīdhiti-saṃchanna-namajjana-tamoguṇā नखदीधिति-संछन्न-नमज्जन-तमोगुणा (44)

The rays of Her nails remove the ignorance of those who bow before Her. When *Deva*-s and *asura*-s (demons) pay their reverence to Her by bowing, the rays of the gems emanating from their crowns are in no comparison to the rays emanating from the nails of Her feet. The rays that come out of Her nails destroy the *tamo guṇa* (inertia) and ignorance of those who worship Her.

It is also said that She does not bless with Her hands, but with Her feet. She does not have *abhaya* and *varada* hands. Normally one can notice that most of the Gods have four hands, out of which one is meant for blessings and another for giving boons. *Lalitai* does not have these two hands as She has four powerful goddesses (nāma-s 8, 9, 10 and 11) in Her four hands. The two acts of blessings and granting boons are done by Her lotus feet.

Pada-dvaya-prabhā-jāla-parākṛta-saroruhā पद-द्वय-प्रभा-जाल-पराकृत-सरोरुहा (45)

The beauty of Her feet is much more than a lotus. Generally lotus flower is compared to the eyes and feet of gods and goddesses. In *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 2) says "Gathering tiniest speck of dust from your lotus feet, *Brahma* creates the worlds, *Viṣṇu* sustains

them and *Śiva* pulverising them into ashes besmears His body with them."

There are opinions that She has four feet. They are known as *śukla, rakta, miśra* and *nirvāna*. The first two rest in *ājña cakra*, the third on the heart *cakra* and the fourth on the *sahasrāra*. Each of these feet is ruled by *Brahma*, *Viṣṇu*, *Rudra* and *Sadāśiva*. They stand for creation, sustenance, dissolution and the last one for liberation (or recreation).

In Hindu mythology, every act of Nature is represented by a god or goddess. For example, water is represented by lord *Varuṇa*, fire is represented by *Agni*, wealth by *Kubera*, death by *Yama* etc. It is nothing but worshiping the Nature and the cosmos. Since there are so many forces and energies in the universe, each of them is represented by a god.

Saundarya Laharī (verse 3) says, "The particles of dust at your feet serve to remove the inner darkness of the ignorant."

Siñjāna-maṇi-mañjīra-maṇḍita-srīpadāmbujā सिञ्जान-मणि-मञ्जीर-मण्डित-स्रीपदाम्बुजा (46)

She is wearing anklets made out of precious gems that shine.

It is to be noted that five *nāma*-s 42 to 46 describe only about Her feet. When Her feet alone are described in such a detailed manner, it is beyond human comprehension to think about Her powerful form. This is made so by *Vāc Devi*-s, to impress about Her *prākaśa vimarśa mahā māyā svarūpinī* form.

Marālī-manda-gamanā मराली-मन्द-गमना (47)

Her walking gait is like a female swan. When She comes out of the *kunda* (nāma 4) and walking towards gods and goddesses, Her gait is described like this. The fact is that Her gait cannot be compared to that of swans, as Her gait is incomparable. In order to give an

idea about Her gait such visual comparisons are made. *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 91) says, "Oh! Goddess of graceful gait! Your household swans, as if intent on practising to balance their steps with tripping gait, do not abandon your feet."

With this *nāma* the subtle description of *Śaktī kūṭa* of *Pañcadaśī* is concluded.

Mahā-lāvanya-śevadhiḥ महा-लावन्य-शेवधिः (48)

She is the treasure house of beauty. *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 12) says "The best of thinkers such as Brahma and others are at great pains to find a suitable comparison to your beauty. Even the celestial damsels, out of great eagerness to get a glimpse of your splendour, mentally attain a condition of absorption into *Śiva*, which is unobtainable even by penance."

Sarvāruṇā सर्वारुणा (49)

Sarvam + *aruṇam* = everything in red. Everything associated with Her is red. This fact has been highlighted in various *nāma*-s. *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 93) says *karuṇā kācid aruṇā* meaning that Her compassion which is red in colour is beyond comprehension.

The same *nāma* is in *Lalitā Triśatī* (138). *Yajur Veda* (4.5.1.7) *'saysasau yastāmro aruṇa uta babhruḥ sumangalaḥ*' (this comes under *Śrī Rudraṁ* 1.7) which says that *aruṇa* (the colour of the sun at the time of dawn) is copper red in colour which is auspicious. 'The colour of red is auspicious' says *Śruti* (Veda-s). No other authority is needed to ascertain Her complexion.

Anavadyāṅgī अनवद्याङ्गी (50)

Every part of Her body is flawless and in accordance with *samudrikā lakśana* or *śāstra.* She is *nirguṇa Brahman* (without attributes) as well as *saguṇa Brahman* (with attributes). When She

is known as *saguṇa Brahman* She is with form and attributes. *Saguṇa Brahman* is discussed here. Brahman is always flawless.

Sarvābharaṇa-bhūṣitā सर्वाभरण-भूषिता (51)

She is adorned with all types of ornaments. The *Kālika Purāṇa* mentions forty types of ornaments. *Parasurāma Kalpa Sūtra,* one of the authoritative texts on *Śrī Cakra pūja* (ritual worship) mentions more number of ornaments that adorn Her. The nāma 140 in *Lalitā Triśatī* conveys the same meaning.

Though many believe that the description of her physical form ends with this nāma, some scholars are of the opinion that physical description ends with nāma 55 only. However 48 to 51 describe Her form of *prakāśa* and *vimarśa* combine.

Śiva-kāmeśvarāṅkasthā शिव-कामेश्वराङ्कस्था (52)

Her seating posture begins from this nāma. She sits on the left thigh of *Śiva*. This is the form of *saguṇa Brahman*. *Śiva* is *prakāśa* form and self illuminating and *Śaktī* is His *vimarśa* form. It is good to meditate upon this posture of Them. Why She is sitting on his left thigh? Heart is on the left side and She is said to be *Śiva*'s heart (could also mean love).

Kāma means handsome, desire, god of love *Manmatha*. *Kāma* also means knowledge. *Śiva* means auspicious. *Īśvara* means the supreme ruler. Knowledge is said to be the form of *Śiva*. Perception of heart and mind is the knowledge. Here all the qualities of the *saguṇa Brahman* are covered. This is *saguṇa Brahman* because it talks about forms and qualities. *Nirguṇa Brahman* does not have form and attributes. When *māyā* or illusion is still associated with Brahman it is called *saguṇa* Brahman. This *saguṇa Brahman* is called *Śaktī* or *prakāśa vimarśa mahā māyā svarūpinī*. Why *kāmā* is mentioned here? This *kāmā* does not mean *Manmatha*, the god of love. It means the supreme, not the desire with which this word is associated. The desire of the Brahman to

create the universe is executed through *Śaktī*, the auspicious form of the Supreme ruler *Śiva*. This nāma actually talks about static and kinetic form of energies in unison. This also could mean the creation of the universe.

Śiva शिवा (53)

There is no difference between *Śiva* and *Śaktī*; hence she is called as *Śiva*. *Śiva* also means auspiciousness. She is the embodiment of auspiciousness. She is the *icchā* form of *Śiva*. There are three types of *śakti*-s – *icchā* (desire), *jñāna* (knowledge) and *kriyā* (action). Since *Śiva* is the Brahman and as such He does not have any desires. But His *icchā* form is reflected in the form *Lalitai*. Here desire means desire to self-realization. "*Yatā Shivā –tatā Devi; Yatā Devi- tatā Shivā*" is the saying. Wherever *Śiva* is, there will be *Śaktī* and wherever *Śaktī* is, there will be *Śiva*. That is why it is said there is no difference between *Śiva* and *Śaktī*. Elsewhere it is said that *Pārvatī* and *Parameśvara* cannot be separated from each other. This is compared to a word, which cannot be separated from its meaning. They are considered as father and mother of the universe. Scriptures say that there is no difference between *Umā* (*Śaktī*) and *Śankarā* (*Śiva*). *Śankarī* is the consort of *Śiva* and is known as *Śiva - Śankarī*.

She is the *māyā Śaktī* that is connected to one's consciousness. How does she look like? She is knowledgeable, self-illuminating (remember our discussions on self-illuminating Brahman), without qualities, the cause of destruction of *saṃsārā* (desires and related issues) and the bliss. She is *Śiva,* the supreme Devi, the ocean of mercy and compassion. Men of intellect get everything out of Her.

There are two important points mentioned here. One is that, *Lalitai* is in no way different from *Śiva*. Both *Śiva* and *Śaktī* are in a single form only. Only out of ignorance, we worship them as two separate individuals. Secondly, assuming that we continue to worship Her individual form that has been described in the above verses, still we

get all auspicious things. This aspect is discussed in subsequent nāma-s also.

Svādhīna-vallabhā स्वाधीन-वल्लभा (54)

Her consort (*Śiva*) belongs to Her alone. This confirms the interpretation of the previous nāma. We have been discussing that *Śiva* alone created Her to take care of His three acts. For this exclusive purpose, *Śiva* created *Śaktī*, the kinetic energy as opposed to the static energy of *Śiva*. As She is the only creation of *Śiva*, it is said that *Śiva* belongs to Her alone. *Śiva* is the cause of this universe and *Śaktī* is His power. Without this combination, the universe cannot exist. This is also confirmed by *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 1). Without being united with *Śaktī*, *Śiva* cannot even make a single move.

Possibly this can also be interpreted as follows: Brahman is omnipresent. Soul is the *jīva* where *karma*-s of living beings are embedded. Neither Brahman nor soul in their individual capacity can create a life. Brahman needs the soul to function with a gross form and the soul needs the Brahman to get a birth. *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 1) says that *Śiva* cannot act alone. In the same way *Śaktī* also cannot act alone. Since the verses are about *Śaktī*, generally negative points (not qualities) in such cases are vetoed. It is poetic way of expression.

With this verse, the physical description of *Lalitai* is concluded. From nāma-s 53 to 64 it is going to be the description of *Śrī Nagara*, the place where *Lalitai* lives. It can be observed in nāma-s 13-54, while describing physical form of *Lalitai,* some of them are delicate to discuss. Not only in this *Sahasranāma*, but also in *Saundarya Laharī* such descriptions are found. Generally a question arises, whether such descriptions are justifiable, beyond a certain level. There could be two possibilities for such narratives. One is the possibility of poetisation, which is generally allowed in poems. One can apply this to *Saundarya Laharī*, composed by *Ādi Śaṅakara*. How a great sage like *Śaṅakara* can make such

descriptions? *Śaṅakarā* is no ordinary person. He is said to be the incarnation of Lord *Śiva*. If this is true his descriptions can be accepted, subject to the question why he should express such things in public. It is difficult to know the right answer. There should be something extremely subtle in such descriptions, which cannot be comprehended by ordinary humans. Take this *Sahasranāma* composed by *Vāc Devi*-s, who are always with *Lalitai*. Further, this *Sahasranāma* was recited in the presence of *Lalitai* Herself. If She found something wrong with the verses, She could have burnt these *Vāc Devi*-s. She did not do so. So, it is clear that such descriptions are approved by *Lalitai* Herself. Her *Pañcadaśī mantra* is meditated upon Her bodily parts which are considered to be highly secretive in nature, though discussed moderately in this edition.

Following could be the reasons for such descriptions in this *Sahasranāma* and elsewhere. The first point is, in any poetic visualization, such narratives are permitted. Poetic skills are expressed through such descriptions. Second thing is to test a devotee whether he gets excited on such descriptions. This is a sort of test before proceeding to higher awareness. Thirdly, such descriptions are part of *māyā* played by *Śaktī*. Unless *māyā* goes away from a person, realizing the Brahman is not possible and hence such descriptions fall under the gaze of *māyā*. It could also mean the *kuṇḍalinī* energy and its path. But beyond such reasoning one can think of, none has authority or right to analyze such narrations. One has to understand that the world of illusion is full of desires and one has to cross such desires to reach higher planes of consciousness only after knowing such realities, as realising the reality alone leads to the Brahman. Before closing the discussion on this subject, one should not forget that *nirguṇa Brahman* is formless and to realize *nirguṇa Brahman*, one has to realize the *saguṇa Brahman* (with qualities and form) first. Possibly such narrations could help those not-so-intelligent (those who never heard about the Brahman) people to at least visualize the *saguṇa Brahman*, perhaps a stepping stone to spirituality.

Sumeru-madhya-śṛṅgasthā सुमेरु-मध्य-शृङ्गस्था (55)

From this nāma till 63, the narration of Her abode begins.

Sumeru means in the midst of mountains called *meru*. She lives in the centre of *Meru* Mountains. *Vāc Devi*-s in nāma 52 said that *Lalitai* is seated on the left thigh of *Śiva*, union of static and kinetic energies. Now they are discussing about her palace. *Meru* mountain range has three peaks and if a line is drawn connecting them, a triangle is formed. In the midst of this triangle there is a taller peak than the rest of the three where in *Lalitai* resides. Sage *Durvāsa* in his master piece *Lalithāstavaratna* says "I salute the three peaks (the shorter ones) which are abodes of *Brahma*, *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva*. In the midst of these peaks, there is another peak much higher than the other three. The golden rays are beautifying this peak and I worship it."

Possibly this could be the description of *Śrī Cakrā*. In the middle of *Śrī Cakrā* there is a triangle and in the centre of this triangle there is dot called *bindu* in which *Lalitai* lives with Her consort *Mahā Kāmeśvara*. Nāma 52 is contemplated on this *bindu*.

Śrīman-nagara-nāyikā श्रीमन्-नगर-नायिका (56)

She owns this auspicious and wealthy city called *Śrī Nagara*. There are two narrations about this *Śrī Nagara*. One is found in *Durvasa*'s *Lalithāstavaratna* and another in *Rudra Yāmala* (as told to *Pārvatī* by *Śiva*). The former says that *Śrī Nagara* was constructed by celestial architect *Viśvakarma*. *Rudra Yāmala* says that *Śrī Nagara* is in the midst of ocean of milk as an island called *Ratnadvīpa* (island formed out of precious gems). In the midst of *Śrī Nagara* there is another city called *Śrī Vidya* that is surrounded by twenty five walls, each wall representing a *tattva*. So, She is the queen of such a place, from where She performs all Her three acts of creation, etc.

Cintāmaṇi-gṛuhāntasthā चिन्तामणि- गृहान्तस्था (57)

She lives in a palace constructed out of *Cintāmaṇi*, one of the most valuable gems. This gem is supposed to give whatever is desired. This palace is on the northern side of *Śrī Nagara*, the city. All the gods and goddesses go to this place to worship Her. This is supposed to be the place of origin of all *mantra-s*. Worshipping this place eradicates all mental afflictions.

Pañca-brahmāsana-sthitā पञ्च-ब्रह्मासन-स्थिता (58)

She is seated on a throne made up of five Brahmans. The five Brahmans are *Brahma, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Īśāna* and *Sadāśiva* (Some used to say *Brahma, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Mahādeva* and *Sadāśiva*). *Śiva, Mahādeva, Sadāśiva, Kāmeśvara* are the different forms of *Śiva*. Each form represents different acts. *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 92) says that "*Brahma, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Īśvara* form the support of Your throne and *Sadāśiva* is the seat of Your throne". This nāma affirms Her highest authority of the universe. But, Surely *Vāc Devi*-s could not have meant to name *Brahma, Viṣṇu* etc as support of Her throne and *Sadāśiva* as Her seat. There is another interpretation for this *Pañca-Brahman*. This could possibly mean the basic elements. We have five *cakra-s* in our body (*mūlādhāra* to *viśuddhi*) and each of these *cakra*-s represent one element. *Mūlādhāra* – earth element, *svādhiṣṭhāna* – water element, *maṇipūraka* – fire element (some are of the opinion that *svādhiṣṭhāna* is fire element and *maṇipūraka* is water), *anāhata* – air element and *viśuddhi – ākāś* or ether element. *Lalitai* is sitting on these five elements, each element forming four legs of Her throne and one forming the seat. This seems to be appropriate as She is the creator and creation is made out of the five basic elements only. After crossing these *cakra-s*, one has to proceed to ājñā *cakra* where mind is controlled and then proceed to the crown *cakra* where the union of *Śiva* and *Śaktī* takes place. This explanation suits the interpretations of certain other nāma-s in this *Sahasranāma*. Nāma-s 249 and 947 also speak about this concept.

Mahāpadmāṭavī-saṃsthā महापद्माटवी-संस्था (59)

She dwells in a great forest full of lotus flowers. Lotus flower grows only in water. Nature's bounty has been mentioned here. Big mountains with high peaks were referred earlier. Now indirectly the water bodies are mentioned. *Mahāpadma* also refers to a type of elephant.

This nāma talks about the crown *cakra* or *sahasrāra*, situated above the six *cakra*-s of our body. A minute aperture in the centre of *sahasrāra* is called *brahmarandhra* or *padmāṭavī*. The divine energy enters human body through this aperture only. Human contact with higher planes is established through this aperture. This aperture is connected to all the six *cakra*-s. *Lalitai* conjoins Her consort *Śiva* in *sahasrāra*. This nāma talks about Her domicile in the middle of a thousand petal lotus or *sahasrāra*.

Kadaṃbavana-vāsinī कदंबवन-वासिनी (60)

She lives in the middle of *kadaṃba* trees whose flowers have divine fragrance. Her *Cintāmaṇi graha* is surrounded by a forest of *kadaṃba* trees. Nature's greenery is mentioned here. By such narrations, *Vāc Devi*-s describe Her *pṛthivī tattva,* the Nature. She is also called Mother Earth. There are about twenty five walls around Her *Cintāmaṇi graha*, each wall representing a *tattva*. This *Kadaṃba vana* (*kadamba* forest) is situated between the walls of gold (eighth wall) and silver (seventh wall).

It is interesting to note that all the goddesses of *Śrī Cakra* intersect each other in the place between seventh and eighth walls. There are twelve Vedic (solar) months corresponding to English calendar. These twelve months are grouped under six *ṛtu*-s, each *ṛtu* consisting of two months. Each *ṛtu* is ruled by a god. These six gods along with their wives live in their palaces situated between third and eighth walls or forts of *Śrī Pura*.

In between the walls of gold and silver *Mantrini Devi* who is also called *Śyāmala Devi* has a palace where She resides. She is the authority of ninety *bīja*-s of *Brahma Vidyā*. Refer nāma 10.

Vāc Devi-s narrate how *Lalitai* controls even minute things. From the literal angle certain nāma-s may appear insignificant. But each and every nāma of this *Sahasranāma* has inner and secretive meaning and also a *bījākṣara*. By and large, such secretive meanings are not disclosed to everyone. People knowing the secretive nature of this *Sahasranāma* are extremely rare to find.

Sudhā-sāgara-madhyasthā सुधा-सागर-मध्यस्था (61)

She resides in the middle of the ocean of nectar. *Sudhā* means nectar, *sāgara* means ocean and *madhyasthā* means centre. *Sudhā-sāgara* is a place in *sahasrāra*. Just before *sahasrāra*, there is a place called *soma cakra*. When *kuṇḍalinī* reaches this *soma cakra*, due to the extreme heat, a liquid flows down through the throat (nāma 106). This liquid is called *sudhā* as its viscosity and taste resembles nectar. This liquid is also called *amṛtavarśinī*. *Amṛtam* also means nectar. She being present in the middle of this *soma cakra* in the midst of ocean of nectar causes this nectar to flow into all the 72,000 (*nāḍi-s*) nerves of human body. It is said that, if this nectar flows into our body, it does not cause death to the physical body. However this is possible only during advanced stage of *kuṇḍalinī* meditation. This is said to be the reason for long life of great sages.

Sudhā sindu also means the *bindu* in the centre of *Śrī Cakra*. This is mentioned in *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 8). This nāma attains great importance because it talks about *amṛtavarśinī* and the *bindu*.

Kāmākṣī कामाक्षी (62)

She has lovely eyes. Her eyes are full of grace, compassion and mercy for the universe. That is why, Her eyes are so beautiful. She fulfils all the desires of Her devotees by Her looks alone. Normally,

our thoughts are reflected through our eyes. *Kāmā* is the combination of two *bīja*-s *kā* + *mā*. *kā* means *Sarasvatī* and *mā* means *Lakṣmī*. These two goddesses are said to be the eyes of *Lalitā*. *Kāmā* also means *Śiva*. This can mean that She is the eyes of *Śiva*.

Kāmadāyinī कामदायिनी (63)

She fulfils whatever is desired. There are several interpretations for this nāma. *Kāma* means *Kāmeśvara*, a form of *Śiva*. *Dāyini* means giver. It has been discussed earlier that *Śaktī* alone leads to *Śiva* and there is no direct access to Him. She takes Her devotees to *Śiva*, the supreme *prakāśa* form, the *nirguṇa Brahman* (Brahman without attributes). She is like a veil around *Śiva* and unless this veil is removed, *Śiva* cannot be realized. This veil can be removed only at Her will.

Brahma, the creator gave Her two names *Kāmākṣī* and *Kāmeśvarī*. This is because of Her omniscient nature. Brahma honoured her with these two names, because He was so impressed with all Her activities, which She does by mere glance. This interpretation indicates Her *vimarśa* form. *Dāyini* also means inheritance. She inherits *Śiva,* meaning that *Śiva* belongs to Her (possible obsession!).

The 59th nāma secretly refers to *Vārāhi Devi*, 60th nāma refers to *Śyamalā Devi*, 61st nāma to *Kāmākṣī Devi* and 62nd nāma refers to *Mahā-tripura-sundarī* (nāma 234, another form of *Śaktī*). These references are highly subtle in nature.

With this, the description of Her physical or gross form ends. Nāma-s 64 to 84 narrate the slaying of demon *Bhandāsura*. Here begins the narration of Her Supreme form and these recitals are also equally secretive in nature.

Devarṣi-gaṇa- saṃghāta -stūyamānātma-vaibhavā देवर्षि-गण-संघात-स्तूयमानात्म-वैभवा (64)

From this nāma, till nāma 84, Her slaying of demon *Bhaṇḍāsura* is described. *Deva + ṛṣi + gaṇa*. *Deva* means gods and goddesses, *ṛṣi* means sage and *gaṇa* means demigods. *Agni purāṇa* says that there are seven types of *gaṇa-s*. For example *Rudra gaṇa-s* mean the assistants or helpers to *Śiva*. There is a separate stanza (11) in *Śrī Rudraṁ* offering prayers to *Rudra gaṇa-s*. *Ṛṣi*-s mean great sages like *Vasiṣṭha*, *Nārada*, etc. *Nārada* is also called *Deva ṛṣi*. She is worshipped by gods, goddesses, sages, demigods and goddesses. *Stūyamānātma* means worshipping. *Vaibhavā* means all pervading. Only Brahman or *Pramātman* is all pervading. *Deva-s* and *ṛṣi-s* will not worship anybody below the grade of the Supreme Brahman. So this indirectly implies Her status of *nirguṇa Brahman*.

It is also said that sage *Nārada* (*deva*) approached *Lalitai* to slay demon *Bhaṇḍāsura* who was causing immense trouble to *Deva-s* and *ṛṣi-s*. The deeper meaning of this nāma is - demons here mean the ego arising out of ignorance. *Lalitā* is approached by them to absolve them of their ego, as She alone is capable of absolving them. Sins are committed because of ego.

Bhaṇḍāsura-vadhodyukta-śakti-senā-samanvitā भण्डासुर-वधोद्युक्त-शक्ति-सेना-समन्विता (65)

She is ready with Her army to wage a war against *Bhaṇḍāsura*. Her army consists of various goddesses mentioned in *Śrī Cakra*. There is a story associated with this nāma. *Manmatha*, the god of love was burnt by *Śiva* to ashes. *Gaṇeśa*, playfully collected the ashes of *Manmatha* and created a man. *Brahma*, the lord of creation on seeing *Gaṇeśa*'s act said *bhaṇda bhaṇda* meaning well done. That was how the demon was named as *Bhaṇḍāsura*. Since *Manmatha* was burnt by the fierce fire of the third eye of *Śiva*, *Bhaṇḍāsura* was said to be all powerful. He was an embodiment of evils.

Bhaṇda also means bondage. *Śiva Sūtra* (I.2) says *jñānam bhandaḥ*. The explanation given to *bhandaḥ* is limited knowledge. This means ignorance is the cause for bondage. Bondage refers to

attachments, desires etc. Since lack of knowledge is the cause for duality, it is called bondage. If one has knowledge, he will say *I am That* (Brahman). Innate nature or unconditioned state of mind is called *ānava mala*. It refers to the limitation pertaining to empirical individual. It is the primal limiting condition which reduces universal consciousness to a *jīva* or individual soul. This state of mind is called innate because, the mind does not realise the Brahman and as a result gets bonded. Liberation is needed to get out of this bondage. This liberation is possible only with knowledge. There is another interpretation for such a situation in *Śiva Sūtra* (I.6) which says that by intense awareness, the various *śakti*-s (various acts of *Śaktī*) are united causing the disappearance of the universe (*māyā* or illusion and duality), leaving the Supreme Consciousness (the Brahman) to be realized. This process is nothing but Self-realization.

The secretive meaning of this nāma is – *Lalitai* is ready to give us liberation from the cycles of birth and death, provided we have inclination to know about Her. *Bhaṇḍāsura* is an embodiment of ignorance and resultant evil acts. She is ready to wage a war against ignorance and its associated acts. *Śakti-senā* means Her different acts, not just creation but sustenance and dissolution as well. Her different acts are symbolically represented by various goddesses represented in *Śrī Cakra* (nāma 996).

Sampatkarī-samārūḍha-sindhura-vraja-sevitā सम्पत्करी-समारूढ-सिन्धुर-व्रज-सेविता (66)

She is worshipped by herds of elephants headed by *Sampatkarī*. *Sampatkarī Devi* has already been discussed in nāma 9. There is also a mention about *Sampatkarī Vidyā*, which is considered as very powerful. There is a three syllable *bījākśarā* hidden in this nāma that is used in *sampatkarī vidyā*. Though this *bījākśarā* is considered very secretive in nature, this has been already discussed in nāma 9. The *bījā kroṁ* (क्रों) is formed out of three alphabets –*ka* + *ra* + *ma* with a *bindu*. The alphabet *ka* stands for joy and fame.

The alphabet *ra* is considered as powerful as it is the *bīja* of *agni*, the fire. Any *mantra* with *ra* bestows supernatural powers. The alphabet *ma* stands for comforts in the present and future births. The repeated chanting of *kroṁ* will give all-round prosperity and happiness. No *mantra* will fructify without *ātma bīja*, which should be initiated by one's Guru.

The knowledge, the knower and the known together are called a triad. The knowledge of realising that all the three are the same is called *sukha-sampatkar*. *Śiva Sūtra* (I.19) says *śaktisandhāne śarīropattiḥ*. This means 'single pointed union (union with intensity and constant awareness) with *Śaktī*. {*śaktisandhānā* means that one need not pray to *Śiva* asking for favours. If one is able to energise his thoughts, what is sought for is achieved. *Sandhānā* is one of the essential factors of spirituality. Conglutination of fixedness and intensity of awareness are the primary factors in spiritual progression. Without developing the abilities of *sandhānā,* it is said that initiation into *mantra* will not fructify and consequently *mantra*'s contrivance will never be attained.}

If *Lalitai* is meditated upon with the *bīja kroṁ* the meditator will be endowed with everything that is desired. This could also be interpreted as advancement to the higher level of spiritual realization.

Āśvārūḍhā-dhiṣṭhitāśva-koṭikoṭibhi-rāvṛtā आश्वारूढा-धिष्ठिताश्व-कोटिकोटिभि-रावृता (67)

Lalitai is surrounded my many horses headed by *Aśvārūḍhā Devi*, about whom we have discussed in nāma 8. *Aśvārūḍhā Devi* is the chief of the horses used in the war. The face of this *Devi* also looks like a horse. *Aśvārūḍhā*'s *mantra* consists of thirteen *bīja*-s and considered to be very powerful. Out of the thirteen *bījākṣara*-s, four are recited in the regular order at the beginning and in the inverted order at the end. This is called *mantra sampuṭa*. *Sampuṭa* means caged. Such types of *mantra*-s fructify quickly.

Senses are compared to horses as they run faster and without control, if let loose. Mind is the jockey of the horse as mind alone can control the senses. *Śiva Sūtra* (I.12) says, '*vismayo yogabhūmikāḥ*'. The meaning is slightly complicated but one certainly needs to understand this. The literal meaning is 'the stations and stages of yoga constitute, fascinating wonder'. Stations mean *cakra*-s. In these stations consciousness arrives and moves to the next station or higher *cakra*-s. The consciousness above *sahasrārā* or the consciousness outside the physical body of the yogi is called *turya* stage. In this stage yogi's senses are totally under the control of his inner self which is also called supreme consciousness. In this stage the yogi realises the bliss. In other words realising our own inner self is the ultimate joy that leads to bliss. Station could also mean a well activated *ājña cakra*, where one could control his senses. Stages mean the level of consciousness. The highest stage of consciousness is called *turya* stage. The will power with which a yogi establishes his commune with *Śiva* is called *Umā* or *Kumārī*. A yogi treats everything as the same. He does not distinguish between external and internal, I and his, good and bad, etc.

This explanation is not out of place here as this nāma talks about controlling senses that wander like horses. There are plenty of spiritual rewards for controlling the senses. *Śaktī* alone is capable of taking one to *Śiva*, the Supreme Brahman. *Śaktī* is *māyā*. Unless *māyā* is dispensed with, the Supreme Self cannot be realised. The will power for establishing commune with *Śiva* is provided only by *Śaktī* who is called *Umā* in *Śiva sūtra*-s.

Therefore, *Lalitai* manifested in different forms and names is the cause for sense-impressions and She alone can remove those impressions, to proceed to higher planes of consciousness and to establish commune with *Śiva*. Once *Śiva* is realized, one eternally remains in bliss.

Katha Upaniṣhad says senses are horses and the body is the chariot. Objects are the road and Self is the enjoyer (owner of the chariot

and horses). Knowledge is incapable of discriminating between good and bad and when connected with uncontrollable mind, then it is like a charioteer or the driver who has to deal with the uncontrollable horses (mind out of control causing all types of miseries). Such explanations are found in *Devi Māhātmya* (*Durgā saptasatī*) and *Bhagavad Gīta* as well.

Cakrarāja-rathārūḍha-sarvāyudha-pariṣkṛtā चक्रराज-रथारूढ-सर्वायुध-परिष्कृता (68)

Cakrarāja is the chariot of *Lalitāmbikā* in which She travels along with all types of weapons. Weapons mean the ways of attaining *suddhavidyā* or pure knowledge which is called the knowledge of the Brahman. This chariot consists of nine tiers. There are other two chariots that accompany this *Cakrarāja* the details of which will be discussed in the next two nāma-s. This *Cakrarāja* is said to mean the *Śrī Cakra*, the place of *Lalitāmbikā*. *Pariṣkṛtā* means adorned.

A brief knowledge of *Śrī Cakrā* becomes a necessity to understand this nāma. *Śrī Cakrā* consists of nine partitions or angles broadly divided into five *Śaktī cakra*-s and four *Śiva cakra*-s. The triangles facing upwards are called *Śiva cakra*-s, and the triangles facing down are *Śaktī cakra*-s. *Śrī Cakrā* contains forty four triangles in which forty three goddesses (44th is *Lalitai*) and seventy nine *yoginī*-s (demi-goddesses) live. All the gods and goddesses are said to reside in *Śrī Cakra* and that is why it is said that one can perform *pūja* to any god/goddess in *Śrī Cakra*. The nāma 996 *Śrī Cakrārāja nilayā* confirms Her domicile in *Śrī Cakra*.

Cakrarāja also means the six *cakra*-s (*mūlādhārā to ājña*). *Ratha* means base or foundation. *Arūḍha* means control and *sarvāyudha* means pure knowledge which is called *suddhavidyā*. The six *cakra*-s form the foundation to attain pure knowledge through which mind can be controlled in the sixth *cakra*. The five psychic *cakra*-s represent the five basic elements and the *ājña cakra* represents

mind. Therefore to control the basic elements and the mind, pure knowledge becomes essential. When *cakra*-s are controlled, *siddhi*-s are attained. When we discuss about *suddhavidyā* let us also know what *Śiva Sutra* (I.21) says. It says '*śuddhavidyodayāccakreśatva siddhiḥ*'. This means that only through *suddhavidyā* (pure knowledge), mastery can be attained over *śakti*-s. *Śaktī*-s here means the *cakra-s*. When one is able to attain mastery over the *cakra*-s, through the pure knowledge, he can attain the state of *Śiva*. State of *Śiva* means oneness with *Śiva*. In this stage except *Śiva* nothing exists. Possibly this could mean that he sees everything and everybody as *Śiva*. This stage is called oneness with universal consciousness. *Suddhavidyā* is possible only if *māyā* goes. *Kṛṣṇa* says in *Bhagavad Gīta* "all sacrifice of work culminates in transcendental knowledge". The word transcendental means the knowledge of the Supreme. The ultimate meaning is that when mastery over the *cakra*-s and mind is attained, there is nothing one needs to do except to be with the Brahman always.

One has to really admire *Vāc Devi*-s about their knowledge of expressing the secrets of Self-realization in such a subtle way.

Geyacakra-rathārūḍha-mantriṇī-parisevitā गेयचक्र-रथारूढ-मन्त्रिणी-परिसेविता (69)

In the previous nāma it is seen that two chariots always accompany the *Cakrarāja* chariot. Out of the two, the first one is being discussed here, which is called *Geyacakra* chariot. This is the chariot of *Mantrinī Devi* who is also called *Śyamalā Devi*, about whom we have discussed in nāma10. *Mantrinī Devi* who owns *geycakra* worships Her is the literal meaning. As *Mantrinī* is one of Her ministers, *Mantrinī Devi* holds *Lalitai* in high esteem and chooses to worship Her. Worshipping is different from respecting.

We have seen that there are seventy nine *yoginī-s* in *Śrī Cakrā*. *yoginī-s* are the great worshippers of *Lalitāmbikā*. These *yoginī-s* are also called *mantrinī-s* (different from *Mantrinī* or *Śyamalā*

Devi). They are the masters of *Śrī Vidyā* rituals. This nāma could possibly mean the *Śrī Vidyā* worship by these *yoginī*-s. *Geya* also means important. *Geyacakra* means important *cakra*, which is *Śrī Cakra*. Those who meditate Her in *Śrī Cakrā* attain mantra *siddhi* easily. Such a person who attained *siddhi* is called *mantrinī*. She is worshipped by those who attained *mantra siddhi* of *Pañcadaśī* or *ṣodaśī* as these are the two main *mantra*-s of *Lalitāmbikā*. The importance of worshipping *Śrī Cakrā* is emphasized here. Human body is compared to *Śrī Cakrā* in many scriptures. The nine partitions of *Śrī Cakrā* are compared to nine parts of our body - the orifice in the crown *cakra* is head, *ājña cakra* is forehead, *viśuddhi cakra* is neck, *anāhata cakra* is heart, *maṇipūra cakra* is navel, the hip (possibly includes both *svādhiṣṭhāna* and *mūlādhāra cakra*-s) and thighs and the feet. It is pertinent to note that the divine energy enters our body through the orifice in the *sahasrārā* and excess energy if any is grounded through our feet.

Śiva Sūtra (II.3) talks about the secret of *mantra*-s. The illuminating "I" consciousness existing as an essential constituent of various *mantra*-s (like *Pañcadaśī* and *ṣodaśī*), whose essence is the knowledge of realizing the Brahman, is the secret of *mantra*. Therefore *mantra*-s are not just the combination of letters, but the *Śaktī* Herself. Hence these letters are called *Mātṛka* (*Mātṛka* means coming from or belonging to a mother. Please refer nāma 1 *Śrī Mātā*, the Supreme Mother). In the initial stages of spirituality, chanting of *mantra*-s is considered essential.

In this nāma, the importance of *mantra* and considering our own body as one with *Śrī Cakra* are emphasized. Considering our body as the one with *Śrī Cakra* means that She is not different from us, the main principle of Self-realization.

Kiricakra-rathārūḍha-daṇḍa-nāthā-puraskṛtā किरिचक्र-रथारूढ-दण्ड-नाथा-पुरस्कृता (70)

Kiricakra ratha is the chariot of *Daṇḍanāthā Devi* who is also called *Vārāhī Devi*. This *Devi* is considered as very powerful and was already discussed in nāma 11. *Kiri* means *Vārāha*. *Vārāha* means boar (pig). Her face is like a pig. Her chariot is also in the shape of a pig. She is called *Daṇḍanāthā* because she always carries a *daṇḍa* (staff) with her. *Kiri* means rays of light and light here means creation. Possibly this could mean that light is the beginning of creation. The holy Bible says (Genesis.I.3) "And God said, let there be light: There was light". *Cakra* means the cycle of creation, sustenance and dissolution. A yogi sits on *kiri cakra* chariot, meaning that he undergoes the process of creation, sustenance and dissolution. But he is not subjected to the fear of death. How somebody can be beyond death? Death means the destruction of the physical body and not the *ātma* or soul. A yogi is not concerned about his physical body. Why he is not concerned with his physical body? This is answered by *Śiva* Himself in *Śiva Sūtra* that a yogi considers pleasure and pain as external not affecting his *ātma* or Self. Only if he is associated with *antaḥkaraṇa,* (mind, intellect, consciousness and ego) he will feel the pain in his body. For him, his physical body is not an object worth considering. As he is free from the bodily afflictions, he feels that he is alone, fully connected to the Supreme Brahman. This was possible to him because he was able to identify his consciousness with the Supreme consciousness, which is called 'the merger' or 'the union' (union of *Śaktī* with *Śiva*). *Vārāhī Devi* is said to be in our *ājña cakra*. This nāma indicates the importance of our inner Self and our physical body has nothing to do with the *ātma*. Though the physical body suffers on account of our *karma*-s, the *ātman* is eternally pure and the unification of our self consciousness with the Universal Consciousness leads to the liberation, a stage without birth and death.

Nāma-s 68, 69 and 70 talk about the chariots of *Lalitāmbikā*, *Mantrinī* (*Śyamalā*) and *Vārāhī*. *Mantrinī* and *Vārāhī* occupy the next secondary position to *Lalitāmbikā*, the Supreme. Without worshipping these two and without their permission, none can go

anywhere near *Lalitai*. *Mantrinī Devi* is the Chief of Her ministers. The entire administration of the universe is under the control of *Mantrinī*, which is confirmed in nāma 786 *Mantriṇī-nyasta-rājyadhūḥ*. *Vārāhī* is the chief of Her army. *Vārāhī* has the capacity to drive away the evil forces. If *Vārāhī* is worshiped on the 18th day of the month of *āṣāḍha* (July-August), it is believed that those who have difficulties in getting married will get married. These three chariots are always close to each other. As discussed earlier, the chariots mean our mind, possibly the stages of our mind.

Jvālāmālinikākṣipta-vahniprākāra-madhyagā
ज्वालामालिनिकाक्षिप्त-वह्निप्राकार-मध्यगा (71)

Jvalāmālini, one of the *tithi nityā Devi*-s constructed a fortress of fire and *Lalitai* resides in the midst of this fortress. *Tithi Nityā Devi*-s are the goddesses of each lunar day. From full moon to new moon there are fifteen days in between and the sixteenth day will be either full moon or new moon. Each of these days is called a *tithi* and each such *tithi* is ruled by a goddess. *Jvālāmālini* is the goddess of fourteenth *tithi*, called *caturdaśi*. *Lalitāmbikā* is called *mahā nityā* representing both full moon and the new moon (16th day). These goddesses are worshipped in the innermost triangle of *Śrī Cakra*, five on each side of the triangle.

During the war with *Bhandāsura*, *Lalitai* asked *Jvālāmālini* to construct a huge fort of fire to protect Her army. *Jvalā mālini* means the five *Śaktī* triangles of *Śrī Cakra*, *akṣipta* means mixed, *vahni* (also meaning fire) *prākāra* means the four *Śiva* triangles of *Śrī Cakra* and *madhyagā* means resides in the middle. *Lalitai* resides in the middle of the five *Śaktī* and four *Śiva konā*-s or triangles. This point is called *bindu* or a dot (nāma 905).

Jñāni is a wise man and the knower of the Brahman. That is why *Kṛṣṇa* said He likes *jñāni-s*. They have also to undergo the cycles of birth and death, as they have not yet merged with the Brahman. But in each of their births, *jñāni-s* continue to realize the Brahman. As a *jñāni*, he is in the midst of flames of fire, which destroys

ignorance (by its light). *Jvalāmāla* means garland of fire. *Jñāni* who is wearing this garland of fire, realises the Brahman. The garland of fire around his neck destroys the darkness of ignorance. When *jñāni* realizes the Brahman, he is aware of the Creator of this universe, as Brahman is the Creator. *Vahniprākāra* means surrounded by fire. Here we have two objects. One is *jñāni* and the other is the flame of fire. The sparks that come out of the fire exist for some time and then turn into ashes. But the fire, from which such sparks originate continue to remain and witness the birth, sustenance and destruction of the sparks that originated from it. The flame of fire is merely witnessing the activities of the sparks, without itself partaking in the activities of the sparks. The fire is compared to the Brahman that remains unaffected by any actions and continues to remain as a mute spectator, witnessing the actions happening around. This concept is more fully described in *Spanda kārika* (this can be construed as a commentary on *Śiva Sutra-s* which deals with dynamic aspect of the Divine). It says that there are two stages – one is doer who is the subject and another is the deed, the object. Out of the two, deed is perishable as it is associated with object (sparks of fire), the subject or the doer is not perishable (the flames of fire). *Śiva Sutrā* also confirms the stage of such *jñānis*. It says these *jñāni-s* are like *Śiva*, but remain in a body that is perishable, retaining their consciousness with *Śiva*. His physical body is the only difference from him and *Śiva*. The *jñāni* who experiences such pure consciousness does not depend upon any objects for his sustenance. This means that a *jñāni* does not depend on anything for his survival as long his consciousness is with *Śiva*. This consciousness is verily food for him.

The deeper meaning of this nāma is that *Lalitai* performs all the three acts, creation, sustenance and dissolution. Though She is the cause for all the three acts, She does not participate in any individual action but remains as a witness to such actions. These are the qualities of Brahman; hence She is portrayed as Brahman. More importantly, a *jñāni* does not depend on or concerned with

any external factors, nor is he associated with such factors as his awareness is about the Brahman only.

{Further reading on *jñāni*: A *jñāni* is one who pursues the path of wisdom known as *jñāna mārg. Jñāna* is known as knowledge, is typically pure consciousness. The *mahā vākya*, I am Brahman (*ahaṁ bṛhmāsmi* अहं बृहमास्मि) can be resolved under two conditions, 'I am He' and 'I am His'. Both lead to realisation of the Brahman, but under different circumstances. 'I am He' signifies the identity of the individual soul with the Brahman leads to the realisation of *nirguṇa Brahman* (Brahman without attributes). This path is full of challenges and not easily persuable. Perseverance and dedication are key factors to pursue this path. One's intellect plays a dominant role here, coupled with the level of true devotion one develops. The second path 'I am His' is comparatively an easier approach, but not necessarily an inferior approach. This stage is associated with one's personal deity or *iṣṭa devata*. Here, Brahman is approached through one's *iṣṭa devata.* Realisation of *saguṇa Brahman* leads to the Ultimate Realisation, which means realisation of Brahman. This is a circuitous approach, but the destination is the same. This path is known as *bhakti mārg*.

There is also a firm view, that the second path is the appropriate path to realise the Brahman, though it is circuitous. While pursuing this path, one undergoes all sorts of experience. He begins with rituals, proceeds, to *japa*, meditation and finally he begins to search the Brahman within. This transformation happens over several births. Direct approach is extremely difficult and one needs to have tremendous amount of knowledge, will power and mind control. A true *jñāni* can be described as the one who is able to unite his mind with the wisdom and bliss of his soul after undergoing several but gradual transformation of his mind, as God realisation happens only in the arena of mind.}

Bhaṇḍasainya-vadhodhyukta-śakthivikrama-harṣitā भण्डसैन्य-वधोध्युक्त-शक्थिविक्रम-हर्षिता (72)

When Her *śaktī*-s (army) destroyed the army of the demon *Bhaṇḍasurā*, She was delighted.

Bhaṇḍa also means ignorant soul afflicted with duality, *sainya* (army) also refers to duality (identifying the self as different from the Brahman), and *vadha* means destruction. *Lalitai* is delighted when one destroys duality. When duality is removed, it is an indication of the removal of the veil of *māyā*. The duality can be removed only by internal exploration with the help of mind.

Nityā-pārākramāṭopa-nirīkṣaṇa-samutsukā नित्या-पाराक्रमाटोप-निरीक्षण-समुत्सुका (73)

Nitya means *tithi nitya devi*-s (refer nāma 71). *Lalitai* was happy on observing the valour of these fifteen *tithi nityā devi*-s during the war.

When duality is destroyed and the veil of *māyā* is removed, the knowledge of Brahman continues to increase over a period of time. Spiritual progress achieved cannot be reversed that easily (though it can be reversed in exceptional circumstances). This is the secretive meaning of this nāma.

Bhaṇḍaputra-vadhodyukta-bālā-vikrama-nanditā भण्डपुत्र-वधोद्युक्त-बाला-विक्रम-नन्दिता (74)

Bālā is daughter of *Lalitai* and is nine years old. *Bhandāsura* had thirty sons. In spite of *Lalitai* advising Her daughter not to go to the battle field, *Bālā* prevailed upon her mother and waged a war against all the thirty sons of *Bhandāsura* and destroyed them.

In *Śrī Vidya* cult, the first initiation is always the *mantra* of *Bālā*. If one attains *siddhi* in *Bālā mantra*, he can attain super natural powers by using rare herbs. Certain herbs have divine qualities and are capable of conferring superhuman powers to a person provided he has attained *siddhi* in *Bālā mantra*.

Bālā is the *aṅga devata* of *Lalitāmbikā*. *Lalitai, Mantrinī* and *Vārāhī* have *aṅga devi-s, upāṅga devi-s* and *pratyaṅga devi-s*. *Annapūrna Devi* is *upāṅga Devi* and *Aśvārūdā Devi* is the *pratyaṅga Devi* of *Lalitāmbikā*. (*aṅga, upāṅga* and *pratyaṅga* refer to gross, subtle and subtler limbs of *Devi*)

The sons of *Bhadāsura* represent the thirty *tattva*-s. Unless we cross these *tattva*-s, realization cannot take place. A small effort (referring to *Bālā*) from us will destroy the evil effects of the *tattva*-s.

Mantriṇyambā-viracita-viśaṅgavadha-toṣitā मन्त्रिण्यम्बा-विरचित-विशङ्गवध-तोषिता (75)

She was delighted with the destruction of demon *Viśaṅgavadha* by *Mantrinī* (*ṣyamalā*) *Devi*. *Viśaṅga* and *Viśukra* are the two brothers of *Bhandāsura*. There were created by *Bhandāsura* from his shoulders.

There is *bīja* '*vi*' (वि) in this nāma . The root of this *bīja* is the alphabet *'va'* (व). *Va* indicates two things. It helps in attaining super natural powers. Secondly it eradicates evil influences. *Mantrinī Devi* represents the potency of *mantra*-s. *Viśaṅga* means desires arising out of the evil effects of sensory organs. *Mantrinī Devi* destroys such desires of the devotees of *Lalitāmbikā*.

Viśukra-prāṇaharaṇa-Vārāhī-vīrya-nanditā विशुक्र-प्राणहरण-वाराही-वीर्य-नन्दिता (76)

Viśukra is the brother of Bhandāsurā (refer the previous nāma). *Vārāhī Devi* slayed *Viśukra* and *Lalitai* was happy with the bravery of *Vārāhī Devi*.

Nāma-s 74, 75 and 76 talk about *Bālā, Mantrinī* and *Vārāhī Devis*. Stain or impurities in Sanskrit is known as *mala*. The three *Devi*-s destroy the mental impurities that accrue through our sensory

organs. These impurities or stains are called *mala*, the worst of which is ego. In the case of *Bālā* it can be interpreted as *balā* or strength. One needs to have sufficient physical strength to receive the divine power, which is infused through our crown *cakra* and back head *cakra*. *Mantrinī* possibly could mean the potency of *Devi's mantras* like *Pañcadaśī* or *ṣodaśī*. According to several ancient texts, each *mantra* is be recited up to a particular number of times, followed by other rituals called *puraścaraṇa*. *Vārāhī* is supposed to be the most powerful of the three *Devi*-s. She cannot tolerate any indiscipline. Possibly, *Vārāhī* could mean certain austerities to be followed in the worship of *Devi*. The three qualities viz. the physical strength, control of the mind (controlling the mind happens through the recitation of mantra) and observing certain austerities (sensory organs) make a man realize the Supreme Self within. When such a stage is reached, the devotee uses his body merely as a sheath to get final liberation and merge with Her.

Kāmeśvara-mukhāloka-kalpita-śrīgaṇeśvarā कामेश्वर-मुखालोक-कल्पित-श्रीगणेश्वरा (77)

Gaṇeśhā was born out of a mere glance of *Lalitai* at *Kāmeśvara*. *Gaṇeśhā* is the first son of *Śiva* and *Pārvathī*. *Bhandāsura* during the war was witnessing the destruction of his army. In order to avoid further causalities to his army he ordered a *yantra* by name *jaya vignaṁ* to be kept in the midst of the army of *Lalitai*. *Yantra*-s are powerful, only if impregnated with potency of *mantra*-s. When this *yantra* was kept, the army of *Lalitai* started losing their self-confidence. *Mantrinī Devi*, who is an authority of *mantra*-s, noticed this and reported to *Lalitai*. This *yantra* can be removed by the one who has won over *puryaṣṭaka* which consists of the following eight-1) five organs of action (*karmendriya*-s), 2) five organs of senses (*jñānaendriya*-s), 3) *antaḥkaraṇa* (four in numbers - *manas, buddhi, cittam* and *ahaṃkāra* or ego), 4) five *prāṇa*-s (*prāṇa, apāṇa*, etc), 5) five elements (*ākāś*, air, etc) 6) desire, 7) ignorance and 8) *karma*. The total components of *puryaṣṭaka* are twenty seven and with this the attributes of *Śiva* is added, takes the total to twenty eight. The

mūla mantra of *Mahā Gaṇapati* is twenty eight. When all the twenty seven components of *puryaṣṭaka* are destroyed, it leads to attributes of *Śiva*. The attributes of *Śiva* (*saguṇa Brahman*) leads to pure *Śiva* or *nirguṇa Brahman* (*Śiva* without attributes). The bliss of realization is attained followed by emancipation.

Śiva Sūtra (III.42) says "*bhūtakañcukī tadā vimukto bhūaḥ patisamaḥ paraḥ*" which is translated as "for him (means a yogi), the five elements are only coverings. At that very moment, he is absolutely liberated. Supreme and just like *Śiva*."

This nāma talks about the stages that to lead to emancipation.

Mahāgaṇeśa-nirbhinna-vighnayantrā-praharṣitā महागणेश-निर्भिन्न-विघ्नयन्त्रा-प्रहर्षिता (78)

This is in continuation of the previous nāma. *Gaṇeśa* was created to remove the *yantra, jaya vignaṁ* planted by *Bhandāsurā*. *Gaṇeśā* removed that *yantra* and helped the army of *Lalitai* to regain their self confidence. *Lalitai* was delighted with *Gaṇeśa*, when he removed the *yantra*. We have to observe the beauty of these two nāma-s. All evil activities are represented by this *yantra*. *Māyā* is the cause of evil acts. This *māyā* is caused by *Lalitai* and She alone can remove the veil of *māyā*. Once She decides to remove the veil, pure *Śiva* is realized. But *Lalitai*, on Her own, will not remove the veil. She will remove the veil of *māyā* depending upon one's efforts. That is why, She is addressed as Guru (nāma 713), later in this *Sahasranāma*.

Bhaṇḍāsurendra-nirmukta-śastra-pratyastra-varṣiṇī भण्डासुरेन्द्र-निर्मुक्त-शस्त्र-प्रत्यस्त्र-वर्षिणी (79)

She counters the weapons used by *Bhandāsura*, by using Her own. Here, two types of weaponaries are mentioned. One is *astra* that is thrown at the enemies in a battle field. Modern day bombs can be compared to this. Another is *śastra*, which is always held in hand, like a gun. The weaponaries of *Lalitai* aids our efforts in attaining

bliss by destroying *avidyā*. Weapons coming out of Her hands are aimed at us in destroying the illusion of duality. Nāma-s 77, 78 and 79 together convey the steps to be initiated in Self-realization and how She helps one in reaching his supreme goal.

Karāṅguli-nakhotpanna-nārāyaṇa-daśākṛitiḥ कराङ्गुलि-नखोत्पन्न-नारायण-दशाकृतिः (80)

She created ten incarnations (*dasa-avatāra*) of *Śrī Nārāyaṇa* from Her nails. *Bhandāsura* created ten demons like *Rāvana* and others from his missile *Sarvāsurāstra*. These ten demons were killed by Lord *Mahā Viṣṇu* during His ten incarnations. *Nārāyaṇa* means *jīva* and *Īśvara*. *Daśākṛitiḥ* means five stages of man like awake, asleep, deep sleep, *turya* (string together the first three. It is a metaphysical consciousness) and *turyātīta* (level of consciousness above the level of *turya*. No duality exists here) and the five functions of Brahman namely creation, sustenance, destruction, absorption (blessings) and merger. The five stages of man and the five functions of God together are called *daśākṛitiḥ*. Possibly *Nārāyaṇa* mentioned here does not mean Lord *Mahā Viṣṇu*. *Viṣṇu* is the brother of *Lalitai* and hence *Vāc Devi*-s would not have meant to mean this way. The right explanation would be that She creates the five stages of man and five functions of Brahman from Her nails. The creation from the nails means the ease with which She creates these ten.

It has already been discussed about Her *prakāśa* and *vimarśa* forms. Every nāma in this *Sahasranāma* makes a mention to either of these forms.

{Further reading on *turya* and *turyātīta:* Turya is the fourth state of consciousness, the state higher than the normal three states of consciousness, awake, dream and deep sleep. Turya binds all these states together. The state of turya is the sate of metaphysical consciousness that is different from psychological consciousness or the empirical self. This remains as a witness of the divine.

Turyātīta is the state of mind beyond turya where the differenciated perception is totally rescinded. For the one who has attained this state, the entire universe appears as One, leading to perpetual blissfulness.}

Mahā-pāśupatāstrāgni-nirdagdhāsura-sainikā महा-पाशुपतास्त्राग्नि-निर्दग्धासुर-सैनिका (81)

She burnt the army of the demons with the *astra* called *mahā-pāśupatā*. This *astra* produces fire that causes the destruction of the entire enemy camp.

Liṇga Purāṇa says that *pāśupatā* is a rite that is divine and conducive to liberation from the clutches of bondage. This is a propitiation rite to *Śiva*. *Śiva* is worshiped in different forms such as *Śiva, Mahādeva, Sadāśiva, Paśupati, Kāmeśvara*, etc and each form has distinct interpretation. *Śiva* is the lord of all the creations of the universe hence called as *Paśupatī*. *Paśu* refers to living beings. Nāma-s 271 and 272 describe the difference between *Īśvarā* and *Sadāśiva*.

As per *Liṇga Purāna, pāśupatāsta mantra* is a six syllable *mantra* "*Om nama Śivāya*" (ॐ नमशिवाय). In general *Om* is not taken into account in any of the *mantra*-s as all the *mantra*-s begin with *Om*. A (अ) + U (उ) + M (म) and *bindu* constitute *Om* which indicates creation, sustenance and destruction, the three acts of God. That is why *OM* is a prefix to all the *mantra*-s. *Nama Śivāya mantra* is called *pañcākṣara* (five syllables). In *pāśupatāsta mantra Om* is also taken into account and hence called six syllable *mantra*. This *mantra* is for *Sadāśiva*, the higher form of *Śiva*. (The five faces of *Śiva* are *Īśānā, tatpuruśā, aghorā, vāmadevā* and *sadyojāthā).* These weaponaries mean mental progression from duality to non-duality (destruction of duality). The progress of the mind depends upon practice. Enemy camp means ignorance arising out of duality. With persistent practice, duality gives way to non-duality.

Kāmeśvarāstra-nirdagdha-sabhaṇḍāsura-śūnyakā कामेश्वरास्त्र-निर्दग्ध-सभण्डासुर-शून्यका (82)

Śūnyaka is the capital of *Bhandāsura*. *Bhandāsura* was burnt along with his capital city by the fire from *astrā* of *Kāmeśvara*. The last nāma mentioned about the *astrā* of *Paśupati* and in this nāma the *astrā* of *Kāmeśvara* is discussed. With this nāma the war with *Bhandāsura* ends with the killing of *Bhandāsura* and his warriors along with the destruction of his kingdom.

Kāmeśvara form of *Śiva* is considered as the supreme form than the *Paśupati* form of *Śiva*. *Kāmeśvara* form is the Brahman. Since the attributes are being discussed in this nāma, possibly the present refers to *saguṇa Brahman*. When we talk about Brahman, it always means the highest level of consciousness. The supreme form of consciousness is not discussed here as *Vāc Devi*-s continue to discuss Her attributes thereby referring Her form of *saguṇa Brahman*.

There is a definition for *Kāmeśvara*. He is liked by all and all like Him. Thus He becomes both subject as well as object. Object is *Śiva* and liking is the subject. Generally, *Śiva* is always referred as the subject. *Vāk Devi*-s end this part of *Sahasranāma* with a subtle hint on renunciation. Renunciation is one of the steps to realise the *nirguṇa Brahman*. All renunciations are in favour of the Supreme Self (*nirguṇa Brahman*). This is confirmed in *Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad* (II.4.5) which says, "The Self should be realised, should be heard of, reflected on and meditated upon. By realisation of the Self, all is known." There is nothing beyond that.

Kāmeśvara is the Supreme Self or the Brahman. *Bhandāsura* refers to ego. Army refers to the subtle body (mind). When ego and activities of subtle body are removed, what remains is only the Brahman. Since *Bhandāsura* has been destroyed along with his army, what remains is the *śūnya* or void. This means the thought of

duality has gone paving way for realization of the Brahman. The destination can be achieved by meditation and internal exploration.

Brahamopendra-mahendrādi-devasaṃstuta-vaibhavā ब्रह्मोपेन्द्र-महेन्द्रादि-देवसंस्तुत-वैभवा (83)

The victorious *Lalitai* is praised by *Brahma*, *Viṣṇu* (*Upendra* means Viṣṇu. Refer *Viṣṇu Sahasranāma* nāma 57, *Mahendra* (a form of *Śiva*) and other gods like *Indra*, etc. As She is considered as the Supreme power, Gods like *Brahma*, *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva* praise Her. *Saṃstuta* means praise. *Saṃstuta* also means internally. *Vaibhava* means omnipresence. She is worshiped by all, as She is known as the Supreme *Ātman*. As She is the omnipresent Brahman, Her existence is described both internally (through mind) and externally (through senses). Brahman exists everywhere both internally and externally. This aspect is discussed in the next nāma also. The power of the kinetic energy is explained here.

Haranetrāgni-sandagdha-kāmasaṃjīvanauṣadhīḥ हरनेत्राग्नि-सन्दग्ध-कामसंजीवनौषधीः (84)

Manmatha, the god of love was burnt by the third eye of *Śiva*. *Śaktī* resurrected *Manmatha*. *Sañjīvana* is an herbal medicine that causes resurrection. Therefore She is praised as *sañjīvana* for *Manmatha*. The motherly nature of *Lalitai* is highlighted here. *Manmatha* is the son of *Śiva* and *Śaktī*. When father is angry with his child, only the mother comes to its rescue. When *Śiva* was angry with *Manmatha*, *Lalitai* came to his rescue. *Śiva* is a strict disciplinarian.

There is a saying that when *Śiva* is angry, Guru can save a person and if Guru is angry *Śiva* cannot and will not save that person. Here *Lalitai* is in the form of a Guru which is substantiated in nāma 603. *Śiva* was angry with *Manmatha* and burnt him. But as a Guru, *Lalitai* saved *Manmatha*. But this explanation contradicts the general statement that *Paramaśiva* is the Supreme Guru or *āti* guru

(the first Guru). *Śiva* is worshiped in *Śrī Cakra* in *guru maṇḍala* as *Paramaśiva-anandanāda,*

Hara also means the real nature of the self. *Neta* means showing the way. *Agni*, the fire exists everywhere and also causes destruction (one of the acts of *agni* is destruction, apart from creation). *Śiva Sūtra* ends by saying that that consciousness of a yogi exists both inwardly and outwardly. *Agni* also exists both inwardly and out worldly. *Agni* is used in the all the three acts of God.Therefore, *haranetrāgni* means that which shows the path to the supreme Self, causing the destruction of desires (*kāma*) etc which acts as blockades to realisation. The existence of *agni* everywhere could also mean the existence of ignorance everywhere (because of the presence of ignorance, *agni* has to exist to dispel ignorance). Ignorance is compared to darkness and the darkness is removed by the presence of *agni*.

The secretive meaning is that liberation means knowing the inner self which is possible only by eradication of ignorance or *avidyā*. When ignorance is removed, what remains is knowledge or *vidyā*. That is why the worship of *Lalitai* is called *Śrī Vidyā*. Burning of *Manmatha* is the removal of *avidyā* and his resurrection is *vidyā*. *Manmatha* before his killing was an embodiment of *avidyā* that mainly comprises of ego and resurrected *Manmatha* was with pure knowledge. His ego was burnt by *Śiva* and knowledge was given to him by *Śaktī*.

This nāma possibly could mean the power of the third eye or *ājñā cakra* wherein the Supreme Guru *Śiva* gives His commands, either directly or through great sages and saints to His devotees towards Self-realization. If one attaches importance to the usage of *netra* (eye), it could mean the third eye or *ājñā cakra*. In *ājñā cakra* the two *nāḍi*-s *iḍā* and *piṅgala* meet the *suṣumna*. *Suṣumna* is considered as the Brahma *nāḍi*. *Iḍā* and *piṅgala* could mean *jīva* or soul. The merger of soul with the Brahman is called Self-realization. Self-realization is conveyed here.

Saundarya Laharī begins by saying "*Śiva* becomes capable of creating the universe, only when united with *Śaktī*, but otherwise, He is incapable of even a throb." (verse 1).

With this nāma, the verses about war with *Bhandāsura* ends.

The *mantra* form of *Lalitai* begins from the next nāma.

Śrīmadvāgbhava-kūṭaika-svarūpa-mukha-paṅkajā श्रीमद्वाग्भव-कूटैक-स्वरूप-मुख-पङ्कजा (85)

Beginning this nāma, Her *Pañcadaśī mantra* is being explained. *Pañcadaśī mantra* has been explicated in detail in the introductory chapter.

Now, the description of Her subtle form begins. Her subtle form comprises of three divisions viz. subtle, subtler and the subtlest. Subtle form is *Pañcadaśī mantra*. Her subtler form is *kāma-kalā,* nāma 322. *kāmakalā-rūpā*. Her subtlest form is *kuṇḍalinī śaktī* (nāma 110). In this nāma, Her face is compared to the first *kūṭa* viz. *vāgbhava-kūṭa* of *Pañcadaśī mantra*, which gives knowledge and wisdom. The prefix *Śrīmad* is used here to indicate the power of *Pañcadaśī mantra* as a whole. *Śrīmad* also indicates the respect given to the *mantra*. Since this *kūṭa* is described first, this prefix is added to this nāma.

kaṇṭhādhaḥ kaṭiparyantha-madhyakūṭa-svarūpiṇī कण्ठाधः कटिपर्यन्थ-मध्यकूट-स्वरूपिणी (86)

Madhya kūṭa or the middle group of *Pañcadaśī mantra* refers to that portion between Her neck and the hip. Previous nāma is *jñāna śaktī*, this nāma is *icchā śaktī* and the next nāma is *kriyā śaktī*.

Śakti-kūṭaikatāpanna-kaṭyadhobhāga-dhārinī शक्ति-कूटैकतापन्न-कट्यधोभाग-धारिनी (87)

Śaktī kūṭa, the last of the three *kūṭa*-s is compared to Her hip downwards.

Mūlamantrātmikā मूलमन्त्रात्मिका (88)

Mūla means root. *Mūlamantra* means root of the *mantra*. *Mantra* here means *Pañcadaśī.* She is the root of the *Pañcadaśī mantra,* which is the root of all other *mantra*-s. In fact, Her *kāmakalā* is the root of *Pañcadaśī mantra*, which is discussed in nāma 322.

The *Pañcadaśī mantra* is superimposed on Her physical form.

Mūlakuṭatraya-kalebarā मूलकुटत्रय-कलेबरा (89)

Traya means three. The three *kūṭa*-s of *Pañcadaśī mantra* is mentioned here. *Kāmakalā* is the root of *Pañcadaśī mantra*. Therefore, it implies that both Her physical and subtle forms represent *kāmakalā*. Out of the three subtle forms, the first subtle form is *Pañcadaśī mantra* that we have discussed from nāma 85 to 88. The second subtle form (subtler form), *kāmakalā* form is discussed here. In a nutshell, *kāmakalā* is the union of *haṃsa* and *sohaṁ* (*haṃsa mantra* – referring to the universal and the individual Spirit.) having three *bindu*-s and a triangle. This is the actual physical diagram of *Lalitāmbikā*. The *bīja* involved is īṃ ईं. This *bīja* is extremely powerful and will surely cascade down prosperity if one knows how to use this *bīja* in *ṣodaśī mantra*. However this is to be learnt from one's Guru.

With this nāma, the description of Her subtle and subtler forms end. We now proceed to discuss Her subtlest form viz. *kuṇḍalinī* from nāma 90 to 111.

Kulāmṛtaika-rasikā कुलामृतैक-रसिका (90)

From this nāma onwards till 111, the subtlest form of *Lalitāmbikā* will be discussed. Her subtle form is *mantra* form, either *Pañcadaśī* or *ṣodaśī,* Her subtler form is *kāmakalā* form and Her subtlest form

is *kuṇḍalinī*. Apart from these twenty two nāma-s, detailed descriptions of each *cakra-s* are mentioned in nāma-s from 475 to 534. But these nāma-s are classified under the head *yogini nyāsa* and more to do with physical description of the *cakra-s*.

She likes the taste of *kulā*. *Kulā* means the nectar or the ambrosial essence that flows from the *sahasrāra*. When *kuṇḍalinī* reaches the crown *cakra* and conjoins with *Śiva* a few drops of nectar like fluid, ambrosia will flow into the throat. This is also called *amṛta varśini*. She likes this *kulā*, not because of its taste, but because of her union with *Śiva*. This *kulā* will flow only if *kuṇḍalinī* reaches *sahasrārā*. She would never like to move away from *Śiva*. That is why is she is also called *mahā suvāsini* (nāma 970) meaning the supreme amongst women of class (supreme *sumaṅgali*). *kulā* also means absorption of earth. It indicates *mūlādhāra cakra*. *Mūlādhāra cakra* is connected to earth element. The path of *kuṇḍalinī* from the *mūlādhāra cakra* to the *sahasrāra* is also called *kulā*. *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 10) says '*kulakuṇḍe kuhariṇi'* which means, a small orifice in the perineum. Through this orifice, *kuṇḍalinī* ascends to the higher *cakras*. Sages live only on this ambrosial essence, which never causes death even to the physical body.

There is yet another interpretation. *Kulā* also means a triad (it is called *triputi*, meaning three words that leads to a single goal.) In this case knower, known and knowledge are known as a triad. Knower is the *sādhaka*, knowledge is the path that leads the *sādhaka* to the known and known is *Lalitāmbikā*. There should be no difference between these three and this knowledge alone leads to self-realization. At this stage, the duality ceases to exist and non-duality dawns.

Kulasaṅketa-pālinī कुलसङ्केत-पालिनी (91)

In this nāma *kula* means race or family. She guards the secrecy of the *kula* or the family of Her worshippers.

Everything that belongs toHer is highly secretive in nature. For example Her *Pañcadaśī* and *ṣodaśī mantra*-s, Her *kāmakalā* form, Her *kuṇḍalinī* form, the ritual worship called *navāvarana pūja* etc. Out of all this, her *kāmakalā* form and *Pañcadaśī mantra* are highly secretive in nature. The secrecy is on account of two factors. One is that such *mantra*-s should not be elaborately discussed because, if they fall in the wrong hands, by mastering such *mantra-s* they could harm the society. Secondly, Her physical and *kāmakalā* forms are highly intimate in nature and hence cannot and should not be described in detail. But if they are continued to be kept as secrets, those who really want to understand the inherent meanings of such descriptions may not have the opportunity to know them. Hence, an attempt is being made in this book about providing certain details that are very essential to interpret a nāma. This nāma says that She Herself protects these secrets from those who are not worthy of knowing them.

Kulāṅganā कुलाङ्गना (92)

She hails from the family of chaste women. Such women protect the honour of the lineage they hail from and protect the lineage of the families of their husbands as well. In another interpretation it is said that, such women cannot be seen much in public. *Lalitāmbikā,* being supreme amongst such women protect Herself with the veil of *avidyā* or ignorance. *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 9) says "in *sahasrāra* you conjoin with your consort *Śiva* secretively." It is explained that by breaking the six psychic planes, conquering twenty five *tattva*-s, She, in the form of *kuṇḍalinī* reaches *sahasrāra* and there unites with *Sadāśiva tattva*. This union is considered as a separate *tattva* known as *sādākhya tattva*. This *tattva* is also known as *Para-Brahman*, the complete identity of *Lalitāmbikā* with *Sadāśiva*. This stage is also known as *tādātmya*. Such is the interpretation of *Śrī Śaṁkara* for chaste women.

Śrī Vidyā ritual worship is considered as the most secretive. This ritual is called *navāvaraṇa pūja*. If this is performed in the right

way, it will surely bestow everything on earth to the person who performs this worship. Most of the *navāvaraṇa pūja-s* performed today is purely for pomp and vanity. Pomp and vanity have no place in the worship of *Lalitāmbikā*. Secondly, there are many deviations from the prescribed rituals. Any ritual not performed according to the prescribed methods does not yield results. For the sake of convenience, nothing can be compromised in rituals.

Kulāntasthā कुलान्तस्था (93)

Kulā also means scriptures. She resides in the midst of these scriptures. This nāma could possibly mean *Devi Sarasvatī*, the goddess of letters, as She is supposed to be the root for all scriptures. This also means the spinal cord or *suṣumna* and is called the path of *kulā*. In the triad we have seen earlier (nāma 90), that she is in the form of worthy of knowing (known). She is the object of the knowledge of *kulā*. *Kula* means *Śaktī*. *Śaktī* prevails everywhere i.e. omnipresence. This situation is well described in *Kena Upaniṣad* as '*pratibodha-viditam'* which means 'known at all levels of *sādhaka's* consciousnesses.

Kaulinī कौलिनी (94)

She is the core of *kaula* worship. *Kaula* worship is a tantric worship under *śākta* method (methods of worshipping *Śaktī* is called *śākta* worship). Since She is the centre of this worship She is called *kaulīnī*. As She is worshiped everywhere (omnipresence), She is called as *kaulīnī* (as per triad – worshipper, worshipped and worship). Tantra *śāstra* define *Śaktī* as *kulā* and *Śiva* as *akula*. The union of *Śiva* and *Śaktī* is called as *kaula* and She is called *kuṇḍalinī*. This union takes place in *sahasrāra*. There is a reference in some tantra texts to one more thousand petal lotus, just below the thousand petal lotus, is the *sahasrāra*. In the centre of the second *sahasrāra, Kula Devi* is worshiped and in the petals *kula Śaktīs* are worshiped. *Kaulīni* also means this *kula Devi*, the goddess of one's lineage. One of the *Vāc-Devi*-s, the authors of this

Sahasranāma is known as *Kaulīnī*. The external worship of *cakra*-s, possibly meaning that *Śrī Cakra* is also called *kaulīnī*.

Kulayoginī कुलयोगिनी (95)

Kaulā means mental worship. Here it means offering mental worship to Her in the six *cakra*-s. Mental worship can be performed only through yoga. *Kula* means *mūlādhārā cakra* and *akula* means *sahasrāra*. The link between these can be established only by yogic methods. That is why she is called as *Kulayoginī*.

Akulā अकुला (96)

She does not have genealogy, hence *akula*. She was created by *Śiva* and hence no parentage. *Akula* also means beyond *kula*, the six *cakra*-s. *Akula* is beyond the six *cakra*-s, which means, beyond *sahasrāra*. *Sahasrāra* is not considered as a *cakra*. It is said that *suṣumna* has two lotuses at both the ends, one at top in the crown which has thousand petals and is called *akula sahasrāra*. Since She resides here, She is called *akula*. The other one is at the bottom and has two petals and this is called *kula sahasrāra*. *Kula sahasrāra* does not mean the *mūlādhāra cakra* that has four petals.

From nāma 90 to 96 it can be observed that how a single word *kula* has been used in seven contexts. The beauty of this is, nāma 90 starts by saying that She likes the taste of the ambrosia and nāma 96 ends by saying that she is beyond *kula*.

Samayāntasthā समयान्तस्था (97)

She is centre of *samayā* doctrine. *Samayā* means internal or mental worship, while *kula* means external worship. Mental worship is more powerful than external rituals. The internal worship has been emphasized by five great sages - *Vāsiṣṭhta, Śuka, Sanaka, Sanāndana* and *Sanathkumāra*. They have prescribed procedures for internal worship and their writings are called *tantra-pañcaka* meaning five *tantra*-s. This nāma underlines the equality between

Śiva and *Śaktī*. This equality is classified under five heads. *Śiva* is called *Samayaḥ* and *Śaktī* is called *Samayā* as per Sanskrit grammar. The five fold equalities are:

1. In terms of equality of place of worship such as worshipping both of them in *Śrī Cakra* or in *Liṅga* form. In the *bindu,* the centre point of *Śrī Cakra,* both of them are worshipped. In psychic *cakra*-s of *kuṇḍalinī* also, they are worshiped – *Śaktī* uniting with *Śiva* at *sahasrāra*. *Śrī Cakra* worship is mostly external and *kuṇḍalinī* worship is always internal.

2. In terms of functions such as creation, sustenance and dissolution. Since there is equality between the two, their functions remain the same. They are called father and mother of the universe. They cannot be separated under any circumstances.

3. In terms of actions such as dancing. The significance of dancing by them will be dealt with in later nāma-s. When a woman dances, it is called *nāṭyā* and when a man dances it is called *tāṇḍavā*. *Śiva tāṇḍavā* is well known.

4. In terms of names such as *Bhairava* and *Bhairavī*; *Parameśvara* and *Parameśvarī*; *Rājarājeśvara* and *Rājarājeśvarī*; *Śiva* and *Śiva* (*Lalitai* is called as *Śivā* in nāma 53); *Kāmeśvara* and *Kāmeśvarī* etc. (When one says *Śiva Śivā* it does not mean *Śiva* alone. The second *Śiva* is pronounced as *Śivā* with an extra *a* (*a* + *a* = *ā*). *Śiva* the Supreme means fortunate, happiness, welfare, liberation, final emancipation, auspicious. *Śivā* means the energy of *Śiva* personified as His consort. Therefore when one says *Śiva Śivā* it means both *Śiva* and *Śaktī*. *She* alone holds independent Power of Autonomy (*svātanraya śakti*) and He has given a Power of Attorney to *Śaktī* permitting His Power of Autonomy to be used by Her.

5. In terms of forms such as their complexion, their weaponries, etc. In terms of complexion both appear as red. *Lalitai* is red in complexion. *Śiva* is pure white like a *spatika* (crystal). The specialty of *spatika* is that it gets reflected with the colour of the properties nearby. When *Lalitai* sits by the side of *Śiva* or on the lap

of *Śiva*, His translucent crystal complexion also appears as red. The gods and goddesses who witness this glorious scene compare this to the rising sun. This scene could lead to an inference that *Śaktī* is more potent than *Śiva* as *Śiva* only reflects the colour of *Śaktī*. Both of them hold the same four weaponries.

It is always ideal to worship both *Śiva* and *Śaktī* together. They should never be separated either in worship or in meditation. In worshipping *Viṣṇu*, *Lakṣmī* should never be separated from Him. *Lalitai* sits on the left thigh of *Śiva* and *Lakṣmī* is in the chest of *Viṣṇu* (*śrīvatsa*). There is yet another form of *Lakṣmī* sitting on the lap of *Viṣṇu* known as *Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa*.

{Further reading on *kula* and *kaula*: *Kula* means race, community, etc. Those who worship *Śaktī* are called *kula*. They are also known as śaktā-s, their tenets being contained in the, tantra-s. Their rituals are of two kinds, the impurer called *vāmācāra*, and the purer *dakṣiṇācāra. Kaula* generally rferes to those who worship *Śaktī* and in particular the followers of *vāmācāra*.}

Samayācāra-tatparā समयाचार-तत्परा (98)

Worshipping *Lalitai* in the *cakra*-s of *kuṇḍalinī*, beginning from *mūlādhāra cakra* is called *samayācāra*. This is explained in *Rudrayāmala*, an ancient scripture, as told by *Śiva* Himself to *Śaktī*. This nāma means that She likes *samayācāra* worship. This worship can be done only mentally. Initiation from a Guru is the first step in this worship. This initiation will culminate in *pūrṇa abhiṣeka* (*mantra* bath) that will be performed by guru to the disciple. The initiation by the guru will make the *kuṇḍalinī* ascend from the perineum to the six *cakra*-s. Guru will guide his disciple at each level and at each *cakra*. Guru will not perform the *mantra* bath on the disciple unless he is convinced that the disciple has attained a particular stage from where, the disciple could carryon on his own. Guru also will not perform this ritual unless the disciple pursues the right path of Self realisation. After this ritual of *mantra* bath, there is yet another ritual called *mahā veda samskāra*, a fire ritual. This

mahā veda saṃskāra will be done only on the day of *mahā navami* (ninth day of *Dasara* celebrations) which occurs once in a year. (After completing all such formalities, the *sādhaka* (practitioner) will have to go to an isolated place and commences his *samayācāra* meditation, i.e. meditation on the six *cakra*-s and the *sahasrāra*. There is a prescribed procedure for this worship.

Kuṇḍalinī is aroused from the perineum and taken to *mūlādhāra cakra*. She is in Her subtle form viz. *mantra* form in this *cakra*. From *mūlādhāra cakra,* She is taken to the next higher *cakra* viz. *svādhiṣṭhāna cakra*. She has to be mentally worshipped in this *cakra*. She is in Her subtler form viz. *kāmakalā* form at this stage. After the worship at this *cakra,* She is adorned with rich clothes and ornaments. Remember that everything associated with Her is red in colour. She is then taken to *maṇipūraka cakra*. At this stage, changes occur in the gross body of the *sādhaka*. People around him start noticing these changes. In this *cakra*, She is offered *arghya, pādya,* etc (washing Her hands and feet) and She accepts the offerings made by the *sādhaka*. Then She is made to adorn the throne that has been discussed in nāma 3. In this *cakra* She is in Her subtlest form viz. *Kuṇḍalinī. Kuṇḍalinī* energy gets the name of *Kuṇḍalinī* only from the navel *cakra*. From this *cakra* onwards, She becomes very powerful. It is to be remembered that this is a mental worship that happens within.

Then she is taken to the heart *cakra* or *anāhata cakra*, where She is offered betel leaves (*karpūra vītikā* - nāma 26). She is then taken to *viśuddhi cakra* where is worshiped with *ārati*. *Ārati* means offering (showing) various types of lamps lit with pure ghee (clarified butter). Each such *ārati* has its own significance. For example *pañca ārati* means the five elements, '*pūrṇa kumbha ārati* signifies that everything was created out of totality and everything merges in totality. From *viśuddhi cakra*, she is then taken to *ājñā cakra*, where is offered '*karpūra ārati*. *karpūra ārati* means *ārati* lit with camphor. *Ārati* with camphor has a lot of significance (Pure camphor is not easily available nowadays. If pure camphor is not available, it is better to use a ghee lamp, which does not cause

pollution. The soot coming out of impure camphor affects the purity of the energy level that prevails during rituals.) She is adorned with garlands of sweet smelling flowers and perfumes. She is to be visualized as a bride at this stage. She is then taken to *sahasrāra* where *Śiva* is waiting for Her. When She enters *sahasrāra,* a veil is placed around them and the *sādhaka* awaits Her return. Once She returns from *sahasrāra,* She is taken back to *mūlādhāra cakra*.

This nāma means that She likes this type of worship. *Kuṇḍalinī* meditation is highlighted here. *Śaktī* alone can take one to *Śiva*, the Supreme Brahman. The Supreme Brahman is *Śiva* and *Śaktī* is *māyā*. There is yet another interpretation possible for this nāma. *Kuṇḍalinī* represents *jīva-ātma* or soul. Soul is a dynamic energy where our *karma*-s are embedded. When the soul merges with *Paramātma* or the Brahman, this is called *Śiva-Śaktī* union. The merger of *jivātma* with *Paramātma* is discussed in this nāma. Further it is also emphasized that emancipation can take place only if *Kuṇḍalinī* reaches *sahasrāra*. Repeated practice of this *samāyāchara* worship is necessary to stay with the Brahman forever.

Mūlādhāraika-nilayā मूलाधारैक-निलया (99)

She resides in *mūlādhāra cakra*. *Mūla* means root and *ādhāra* means support. That is why *mūlādhāra cakra* is called the base (foundational) *cakra*. A detailed study of *mūlādhāra cakra* is made from nāma-s 514 to 520.

Brahmagranthi-vibhedini ब्रह्मग्रन्थि-विभेदिनी (100)

She pierces the *brahma granthi*. There are three knots called *granthi-s* in three places in the path of *Kuṇḍalinī*. These *granthi-s* are to be pierced to make the *Kuṇḍalinī* ascend to the higher *cakra*-s. First of such *granthi-s* is found above the *mūlādhāra cakra* and below the *svādhiṣṭhāna cakra*. *Kuṇḍalinī* has to pierce the *brahma granthi* to reach the *svādhiṣṭhāna cakra*.

Maṇipūrāntha-ruditā मणिपूरान्थ-रुदिता (101)

She appears in the navel *cakra*. It was seen in nāma 98, that She is well decorated and sits on the throne in the navel *cakra*. *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 40) beautifully describes *maṇipūraka cakra*. "I worship that redoubtable dark-blue cloud, abiding forever in you *maṇipūraka cakra*, endowed with lightning in the form of *Śaktī*, whose lustre controverts darkness, with a rainbow caused by the sparkling variegated gems set in the jewels (of the *Kuṇḍalinī*) and showering rain over the worlds scorched by *Hara* (fire) and *Mihira* (sun; certain dictionaries say moon)." In deep stage of meditation, one will be able to see bright light in the form of a bow. A detailed study of this *cakra* is made from nāma-s 495 to 503.

Viṣṇugranthi-vibhedinī विष्णुग्रन्थि-विभेदिनी (102)

She pierces the second knot called *Viṣṇu granthi*, which is just above the navel *cakra*. Lord *Viṣṇu* resides in *maṇipūraka cakra* and that is why the knot above this *cakra* is called *Viṣṇu granthi*. Lord *Viṣṇu* is the authority for the sustenance of this universe. When a *sādhaka* could cross the navel *cakra*, it means that he exists beyond sustenance. Sustenance is only for ordinary living beings. Beyond sustenance means sages and yogi-s. They can sustain themselves on the ambrosia, the nectar that has been discussed earlier.

Ājñā-cakrāntarālasthā आज्ञा-चक्रान्तरालस्था (103)

She resides in *ājñā cakra* which is also known as third eye. This is the last of the six *cakra*-s and this *cakra* belongs to one's guru from where he gives his commands to the *sādhaka*. In this *cakra*, a *sādhaka* gains a little knowledge about the Brahman. In the previous five *cakra*-s, all the basic elements were identified. But this *cakra* is related to mind. Mind is the instrument for acquiring knowledge. *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 36) describes this *cakra*. "I worship the supreme *Śiva* (*paraṃ śaṃbhuṃ*) who abides in your *ājñā cakra*, covered by *parā-cit* on the sides and having the

splendour of billions of sun and moon." This verse underlines the mental worship of both *Śiva* and *Śaktī*. *Ājñā cakra* is associated with mind.

Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna (*Bhagavad Gīta* XI.8), "You cannot see me with your physical eyes. I now give you divine eyes (the third eye or the *ājñā cakra*)". *Ājñā cakra* is described in detail in nāma-s 521 to 528.

Rudragranthi-vibhedinī रुद्रग्रन्थि-विभेदिनी (104)

She breaks the *Rudra granthi* and proceeds to *sahasrāra*. This is the last of the three knots. It has already been seen that *Pañcadaśī mantra* has three *kūṭa-s* and each *kūṭa* ends with *hrīṃ* (ह्रीं). Therefore, *Pañcadaśī mantra* has three *hrīṃ-s*. Each *hrīṃ* represents one *granthi* or knot. The *bīja hrīṃ* represents the *candra kalā*, (divisions of moon) whereas the other *bīja-s* in each of the *kūṭa-s* represent *agni* (fire), sun and moon (Please refer details at the end of nāma 84). Once this *granthi* is crossed, *Kuṇḍalinī* reaches *sahasrāra* where she unites with *Śiva*. However, there are minor *cakra*-s in between *ājñā* and *sahasrāra*. The union of *Śiva* and *Śaktī* is represented by the *bījā hrīṃ*. *Pañcadaśī mantra* represents only the six *cakra-s* and three *granthi-s*. It does not mention about *sahasrāra*, which is beyond the subtler (*kāmakalā*) and subtlest (*Kuṇḍalinī*) forms of *Lalitāmbikā*. Once this last *granthi* is passed over, all the *vāsana-s* (impressions) go away leading to supreme knowledge. Till this point *Kuṇḍalinī* had to cross too many resistances to reach Her final destination. In the next nāma Her destination is explained. During the last leg of one's journey to his domicile, (for example the flight is about to land) one always feels the happiness of seeing his dear ones. This is the sort of happiness She derives at this stage. She grants whatever boons one asks for at this *cakra*.

Sahasrārambujārūḍhā सहस्राराम्बुजारूढा (105)

She has now reached Her destination, the *sahasrāra*, where *Śiva* is waiting for Her. *Sahasrāra* is just below the *brahmarandhra*, an orifice in the skull that connects to cosmos (The existence of this orifice has not been medically proved. Perhaps this is like the pores that exist in our skin through which sweat comes out. But one can distinctly feel the cosmic connection through this orifice). The union of *Śiva* and *Śaktī* takes place at *sahasrāra*. The *sādhaka*, who all along was worshipping only the *Śaktī*, begins to worship Her along with Her creator, *Śiva*. There are fifty alphabets in Sanskrit (in another version it is fifty one including one more *ḻa* ळ). Based on these alphabets and multiplying this fifty by numeric twenty (made up of five basic elements, five *karmendriya*-s, five *jñānendriya*-s and five *tanmātra*-s) one thousand is arrived. This one thousand is said to be the number of psychic petals of an imaginary lotus flower in *sahasrāra*.

Please refer 'further reading on Sanskirt letters' at the end of nāma 833).

Sudhāsārabhi-varṣiṇī सुधासारभि-वर्षिणी (106)

There is one *soma chakra* in the middle of *sahasrāra*. When *Kuṇḍalinī* reaches this *cakra*, out of the heat generated by Her presence, the ambrosia which is stored there gets melted and drips through the throat and enters the entire nervous system. *Soma cakra* is discussed in nāma 240. Tantric interpretation of this ambrosia differs from this interpretation. *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 10) says, "You drench the *nādi*-s (nerves) in the body with the flood of nectar gushing through Your feet."

{Further reading on ambrosia: The followers of *samayācāra*, (worshipping Her through the *cakra*-s of *Kuṇḍalinī*, beginning from *mūlādhāra* is called *samayācāra*. Please refer nāma 98) both the planet moon and *cit-candra-mandalā* (nāma 240) (*cit* means foundational consciousness) at *sahasrāra* represent *Śrī Cakra* as both have similar qualities. Both shed nectar. Her lotus feet deemed

to shine in the moon region of *śrī Cakra*. Moon is the master of all medicinal herbs that are said to ooze divine water known as nectar.}

Taḍillatā -samaruciḥ तडिल्लता-समरुचिः (107)

She shines like a line of lightning. In the advanced stage of *Kuṇḍalinī* meditation, one can realize the entire spinal cord glowing like a flash of lightning. Till this nāma, this kind of epithet was not used, but used here for the first time as She is now with Her spouse. She shines like a lightning when She is with *Śiva*. There are instances of comparing the Brahman to lightning. *Kena Upaniṣad* (IV.4) explains Brahman beautifully. It says "It is like a flash of lightning…Just as lightning comes in a flash and removes darkness; Self realization dawns in a fraction of a second and removes the darkness of ignorance". *Mahā Nārāyana Upaniṣad* (XIII.11) (*Nārāyaṇa sūkta*) says *vidyallokhā* meaning flash of light. Therefore it is apparent that *Lalitāmbikā* is referred to as the Brahman in this nāma. This nāma fortifies the argument that both *Śiva* and *Śaktī* are the Brahman. *Śiva* is the *nirguṇa Brahman* and *Śaktī* is *saguṇa Brahman* (*nirguṇa* means without attributes and *saguṇa* means with attributes). *Śaktī* attains potency only if She remains with *Śiva*. *Śiva* also becomes inert without *Śaktī*. This argument is strengthened by this nāma as She is compared to lightning only during Her union with *Śiva*.

Some texts use *Taṭillatā* instead of *Taḍillatā.* However this difference does not alter the meaning.

ṣaṭcakropari-samsthitā षट्चक्रोपरि-सम्स्थिता (108)

She is above the six *cakra*-s starting from *mūlādhāra* to *ājñā cakra*-s. She is now at *sahasrāra*, which is not a *cakra*. As *sahasrāra* is above the six *cakra*-s, hence this nāma. There is another interpretation possible. It has been seen earlier, that She is the Brahman when united with *Śiva*. To realise the Brahman in *sahasrāra*, one has to cross the lower *cakra*-s, all of which are associated with worldly acts. *Sahasrāra* is above the worldly acts.

That is why She is said to be above these six *cakra*-s, meaning that the Brahman is above the six *cakra*-s.

Mahāsaktiḥ महासक्तिः (109)

Maha means festivals and *asaktiḥ* means great liking. She has a great liking for festivities. Here festival means Her union with *Śiva*. Festivities are of two kinds. One that is celebrated internally (associated with mind) and another is external worship (associated with body). If this nāma is interpreted, based on *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 9) *mahīṁ mūlādhāre*, (meaning – the earth is placed in *mūlādhāra)* then it means only internal worship, worshipping Her subtlest form *Kuṇḍalinī*. She likes internal worship. *Maha* means supremacy, *ā* means on all sides and *Śaktī* means supreme. Her supreme power is spread across everywhere. In this context, this nāma means that She is the Supreme power.

Kuṇḍalinī कुण्डलिनी (110)

She is in the form of a three and a half coiled snake in *mūlādhāra cakra*. Her subtlest form is described in this single nāma. Her subtler form *kāmakalā* (nāma 322) is also described in a single nāma. But *Vāc Devi*-s used nāmas 13 to 54 to describe Her subtle form. This also goes to prove the importance of internal worship or meditation than the external rituals. The vital energy of *prāṇa* is called *kuṇḍalinī*. This lies in the *mūlādhāra cakra* in the midst of fire that keeps biological body warm. Any modification in the intensity of this fire causes sickness. The sound of the *Kuṇḍalinī* can be felt by anyone. If one closes both his ears tightly, he can listen to a hissing sound, the sound of *Kuṇḍalinī* from within. The base *cakra* is a triangle where *icchā, jñāna* and *kriyā śakti*-s (desire, knowledge and action) form the three sides. From these three *śakti-s* (potencies) the sound of OM *a, u* and *m* is generated. *Yoga-vāsiṣṭha* (the compendium of teachings of sage *Vāsiṣṭha* to Lord *Rāma*) in *nirvāna prakaraṇa* (the last of six chapters) talks about *Kuṇḍalinī*. Sage *Vāsiṣṭha* says to Lord *Rāma* "Like the coiled body

of a serpent when it sleeps…like a plantain flower it is exceedingly delicate within…hissing like an angry female serpent…causing fluctuations in the mind. All other *nādi-s* are connected with this. This becomes purified only by the rays of *jñāna* or knowledge….thus this *Śaktī* rejoices in the name of *puryaṣṭaka*. Should the upward and downward actions of this *Kuṇḍalinī śakti* be arrested by the control of *prāṇa* and this *prāṇa* be made to rest in the heart, diseases will never affect those who have such control." *Yoga-vāsiṣṭha* also talks about *siddhi*-s.

Kānci Paramācāryā in his magnum opus 'Voice of God' observed the following about *Kuṇḍalinī* yoga: "*Kuṇḍalinī* yoga is not the only path available to the seeker. Choose any path other than it, adhere to it with a mind that is one-pointed and with faith and sincerity. As you advance to a high state on this path, your breathing will change automatically and it will be similar to that of one practising yoga-s. You may even be aware of it; the breathing will change on its own" and after saying that one's breath will undergo modifications, he says, "....the movement of breath will impinge on the nerves in the roof of our head and touching the feet of *Ambāl* (referring to *Śaktī*) create a flow of ambrosia. Even in worldly life when we are in ecstasy of delight our breathing stops and we faint. In this there is reflection of the emotion experienced by us during *kumbhaka* (holding breath). During this time we excalim: 'Ah, I feel cool in the crown of my head.' This also means that a tiny droplet of the ambrosia has trickleld on the nerves in the crown of the head. I have said this to show that even by following the path of devotion you can have inward experience of sublime nature."

Viṣṇu Sahasranāma nāma 907 is *kuṇḍaline.*

{Further reading on *puryaṣṭaka:* (as told by sage V*āsiṣṭha* to Lord Rama in *Yoga-vāsiṣṭha* - VI.5). Brahman who is without beginning or end and which is the seed of the universe, becoming differentiated is *jīva* (soul); subjecting itself to the idea of separateness, it becomes *ahaṃkāra* (ego) with *manana* (contemplation), it becomes *manas* (mind); with the certainty of

intelligence, it becomes *buddhi* (intellect); then the five elements (sound, etc) through *indriyā*-s (sensory organs). With the thought of the body, it becomes the body itself; with the thought of a vessel, it becomes the vessel. A form (subtle body), having such a nature is called *puryaṣṭaka* body or eight constituents of the body. The eight constituents are mind, ego, intellect, sound, touch, sight, taste and smell, the last five together known as *tanmātra*-s.}

Bisatantu-tanīyasī बिसतन्तु-तनीयसी (111)

She is like the minute fibre of a lotus stalk. This is the last of the nāma-s that describe Her subtlest form. She is like a young girl in the lower *cakra*-s as She makes sound in the *mūlādhārā cakra*, gets dressed like a bride in the navel *cakra* and proceeds to meet her spouse *Śiva* in *sahasrāra*. There are many references for this description. These descriptions ultimately point to the path of *Kuṇḍalinī*, the inner canal of the spinal cord which is extremely subtle and almost invisible. When *Kuṇḍalinī* ascends through this middle canal without any blocks or deviations, it shines like a lightning. Since it has such immense potency, it confers on the *sādhaka* certain *siddhi*-s before it reaches the crown *cakra*. If the *sādhaka* misuses such powers, he will not be able to realize the Brahman and also gets punished. Though She has the burning desire to conjoin Her spouse, She certainly knows how Her power has been utilized by the *sādhaka* during Her sojourn in various *cakra*-s of the s*ādhaka*. She never forgets the duties allotted to Her by *Śiva*.

Possibly, the *Vāc Devi*-s used two nāma-s to emphasise both Her minute (this nāma), and *mahat* or supreme (nāma 109) forms, as otherwise there is no necessity for them to talk about anything else after describing Her subtlest *Kuṇḍalinī* form (nāma 110).

Nārāyaṇa sūkta describes *Kuṇḍalinī* thus: "The place for His meditation is the ether in the heart, the heart which is comparable to an inverted lotus bud. It should be known that the heart which is located just at the distance of a finger span below the Adam's apple

and above the navel is the great abode of the universe. Like the bud of a lotus, suspends in an inverted position, the heart surrounded by arteries. In it or near it there is a narrow space (*suṣumna*). In it everything is supported. In the middle of that remains the non-decaying, all knowing, multi faced, great fire, which has flames on every side, which enjoys the food presented before it, which remains assimilating food consumed and which warms its own body from the insole to the crown. In the centre of that fire, which permeates the whole body, there abides a tongue of fire, of the colour of shining gold, which is the topmost among the subtle, which is dazzling like the flash of lightning that appears in the middle of a rain-bearing cloud, which is as slender as the awn of paddy grain and which serves as a comparison to illustrate subtlety."

Possibly this nāma could also mean the *citrini nādi*, which is the central canal of the spinal cord through which *Kuṇḍalinī* ascends and descends.

With this nāma the description of Her *Kuṇḍalinī* form ends and from the next nāma, the description of Her blessings begin.

Bhavānī भवानी (112)

Beginning from this nāma till nāma 131 the significant aspect of blessing Her devotees is described.

Bhava means *Śiva*, particularly his form of *Mahādeva* and *ana* means infusing life. She, the wife of *Śiva* gives life to all or as *Śrī Mātā*, She gives life. Since She gave back life to *Manmatha* (*Manmatha* is also known as *Bhava*) she is addressed as *Bhavānī*. *Śiva* is known as *Bhava* because the universe was created from Him *(bhava* means produced from) and being sustained by Him. Though grammatically, *Bhava* and *Bhavānī* may differ, but the actions of both *Bhava* and *Bhavānī* remain the same. .

The famous verse of *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 22) says "*Bhavānī tvaṃ*" meaning You are *Bhavānī*. The verse further says, "When

one is desirous of paying to You as Oh! *Bhavā*'s consort! May You cast Your gracious glance on me, Your servant utters the name of *Bhavā*'s consort (meaning *Bhavānī).* You, at that very moment grant him the state of absorption into You."

{Further reading on absorption: Absorption means the metnal state that is completely filled with God consciousness. Individual consciousness submerged in God consciousness is absorption. The word *Bhavānī* is used in the above verse is intended by the devotee as an address to *Lalitāmbikā* in the vocative case. But, as a verb in the first person of the imperative mood, it would mean 'let me become'. As soon as the first two words *Bhavānī tvaṃ* are uttered, She rushes to grant him absorption in Her own Self. She becomes so elated and happy of being addressed as *Bhavā*'s consort, She does not even wait for the verse to be completed. She acts immediately on listening to those two words *Bhavānī tvaṃ,* interpreting them as 'Let me become Thyself'. This translates into *mahā vākyā* "*Tat Tvam Asi*". This process is called *sāyujya* that gives immediate liberation. This way of contemplating Her is more efficacious than *japa* and *homa*. Liberation is of four types: *Sālokya*, co-existence with the Lord in His world. *Sārūpya*, attaining the same form as that of the Lord. *Sāmīpya*, proximity as that of the Lord. *Sāyujya*, absorption into the Lord Himself. The first one progressively leads to the last one. But the thought process of identifying the self with the Lord (*sāyujya*) leads to fast track emancipation.}

Bhāvanāgamyā भावनागम्या (113)

She is to be realized through the mind. Internal worship or mental worship known as meditation is referred here. If this interpretation is correct, then it gives the same meaning as that of nāma 870 *antarmuka-samārādhyā*. Possibly this nāma refers to '*Bhāvanā Upanishad'* which describes Her internal worship through *Kuṇḍalinī* meditation. In the advanced stages of *Śrī Vidyā* worship all the external rituals such as *navāvarana pūja* (*Śrī Cakra* worship) etc. cease on their own leading the *sādaka* to internal worship

through meditation internal exploration in terms of *Bhāvana Upaniṣad*. This *Upaniṣad* emphasizes the union of knower, knowledge and the known.

There is another interpretation for this nāma. It says that meditation is of two types. One is meditating with the help of *mantra* and another is meditating with the meaning of *mantra*. For example, one can meditate by reciting *Pañcadaśi mantra* mentally. The second type is to understand the meaning of *mantra* and meditating on the meaning of such mantras. The latter is considered as more powerful. *Śrī Vidyā* cult attaches a lot of importance to Guru and therefore one has to go by what his/her Guru says.

But the transition from external rituals to internal worship (meditation) is very important, without which She can never be realized. This nāma says that She can be realised only through unstained awareness.

Bhavāraṇya-kuṭhārikā भवारण्य-कुठारिका (114)

She axes the forest of *saṃsāra*. *Saṃsāra* refers to transmigratory existence, which arises because of indulgence in worldly activities such as desire, attachment, love and affection causing bondage. *Saṃsāra* is compared to forest. Forest consists of many trees. If one wants to clean a forest he needs to axe each and every tree in the forest. It is not just enough to axe the trees. He has to remove the roots too; as otherwise, trees will grow from the roots again. Unless every aspect of *saṃsāra* is removed at the root level, the bondage is bound to rear its ugly head again causing transmigration.

But She does not axe *saṃsāra* for all. She does it for those who address Her as *Bhavānī* and for those who follow the *Bhāvana Upaniṣhad*. It is to be understood that those who mentally worship Her in terms of *Bhāvanā Upaniṣhad,* alone, address Her as *Bhavānī* and reap the benefits.

Bhadrapriyā भद्रप्रिया (115)

She likes the act of benefaction. She is keen to shower Her blessings on Her devotees. Devotees are those who try to attain Her by any of the means discussed earlier. The act of benefaction is done by Her sacred feet.

Bhadramūrtiḥ भद्रमूर्तिः (116)

She is an embodiment of auspiciousness (nāma 200). This is because she is also addressed as *Śrī Śiva* (nāma 998) which means auspiciousness. The Brahman alone is auspicious. Therefore, She is addressed here as the Brahman. *Viṣṇu Sahasranāma* also says *maṅgalānām ca maṅgalaṃ* meaning the best amongst the auspices. Her very form is auspicious.

Bhakta-saubhāgya-dāyinī भक्त-सौभाग्य-दायिनी (117)

She confers prosperity on Her devotees. There is a reference to *saubhāgya aṣṭagam* (eight things that gives prosperity) in *Agni Purāṇa*. They are sugarcane, peepul tree, sprouted *jīra* seeds, coriander, cow's milk (and its modifications curd, butter and ghee), everything that are yellow in colour, flowers and salt. All these indicate auspiciousness and prosperity.

The next three nāma-s discuss about *bhakti* (devotion).

Bhakti-priyā भक्ति-प्रिया (118)

She is fond of devotion. *Śivānanda Laharī* (*Lahari* means rise up as if in waves) (verse 61) describes devotion. "The way needle seeks magnet, the way creeper seeks tree, the way river unites with ocean and the way the mind seeks the lotus feet of *Śiva* are called devotion". Sage *Nārada* said 'Devotion is beyond three *guṇa -s – rajas, tamas* and *sattva*. It is beyond desire. It grows every second. It remains connected with the Brahman. It is subtle and realized out of experience. Once realized, he always remains with That.' *Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa* compares devotion to the flood that flows powerfully into the ocean in spite of the dams built to control the floods. Our

mind, he continues, is not flowing but stagnant like a pond. Our mind gets stagnated towards devotion, which has to grow every second.

Viveka cūḍāmaṇi (verse 31) says that "amongst things conducive to liberation, devotion alone holds the supreme place. The seeking after one's real nature is designated as devotion. Others maintain that the inquiry into the truth of one's own Self is devotion".

The point driven home in this nāma is that nothing prevents a true devotee in realizing Her irrespective of the hurdles. She is delighted with such devotion and such devotees. Devotees are those who worship Her through mind to seek Her within.

Bhakti-gamyā भक्ति-गम्या (119)

She can be attained only by devotion. Since She likes pure devotion in terms of the previous nāma, She can be attained by such devotion only. *Upaniṣad*-s explain devotion in detail.

Brahma Sūtra (III.ii.24) says, "Brahman is realized in *samādhi*, as known from direct revelation and inference."

Cāndogya Upaniṣad (II.23.1) says "*brahmasṃsthomṛtatvameti"* meaning one devoted to Brahman attains immortality. Attaining immortality means *Sāyujya* discussed in nāma 112. This is possible only through devotion.

Katha Upaniṣad (II.i.1) says "Self-created God has also created the sense organs with the inherent defect that they are by nature outgoing. This is why beings see things outside and cannot see the Self within."

Taittirīya Upaniṣad (II. i) says *satyaṃ, jñānam, ananthaṃ Brahma*, meaning truth, knowledge and infinite is Brahman.

Patanjali in his *Yoga Sūtra* (I.23) says, "by devotion to *Īśvarā*".

Kṛṣṇa confirms this by saying (*Bhagavad Gīta* XVIII.55) "One can understand me by devotional service and when he is in full consciousness of me by such devotion, he can enter my kingdom". "Only by undivided devotional service I can be understood as I am….and can thus be seen directly…" (XI.54)

Lalitā Triśatī (nāma 192) says that She can be attained only by devotion.

{Further reading on devotion: Brahman can be realised either through *bhakti mārg* (the path of devotion) or through *jñāna mārg* (the path of knowledge). In devotional path, the divine grace is an essential factor. While pursuing the path of knowledge, self-effort is primary. In *bhakti* one affirms this world, affirms himself and his life and work with a devoted remembrance of his *iśta devata*. Among all the disciplines of worship, *bhakti* is considered as Supreme. The desperate longing and intense love for *Iṣṭa devata* is known as *bhakti*. The intense search for our true nature is *bhakti*. The one noticeable, yet significant difference between *bhakti* and *jñāna* is the difference in the perception of the Supreme. *In bhakti* one perceives *Iṣṭa devata* and in *jñāna* he looks for the formless Brahman.}

Bhakti-vaśyā भक्ति-वश्या (120)

She is controlled by devotion or She is attracted by devotion. *vaśya* means attraction or keeping under control.

Śivānanda Lahari (*Śivānanda Lahari* is in the praise of *Śiva* and *Saundarya Laharī* is in the praise of *Lalitāmbikā*. Both have one hundred verses each and composed by *Ādi Śaṃkara*) verse 62 refers the Divine Mother as *bhakthi janani* meaning 'Mother thy name is devotion' and *bhaktārbhakam rakṣati* meaning that She nurses the devotee as Her child. When somebody is overwhelmed with the feeling of devotion, tears roll down his eyes, his voice gets choked and goose bumps appear. This could be followed by a body shudder.

The next verse of *Śivānanda Lahari* refers to the story of *Kannappa Nāyanār* (KN). He was a great devotee of *Śiva* and his devotion is beyond explanation. KN used to worship *Śiva* in the form of a liṇga. KN does not know any rituals as prescribed by *śāstrā-s*. He used to offer raw meat to *Śiva* and *Śiva* also gladly accepted his offerings. One day, KN noticed blood oozing out from one of the eyes of *Śiva*. KN tried to arrest the oozing by trying different methods. But none of them worked. Then he thought for a moment and immediately, he took one of his own eyes and placed in the place of oozing eye of *Śiva*. The oozing stopped immediately. Now, the other eye of *Śiva* also started oozing blood. This time KN did not try any other methods. He placed his big toe on the oozing eye of *Śiva* as a marking, as he will not be able to see anything, as he was about to remove his another eye also. At that time, *Śiva* appeared before him. Such is the type of devotion which *Ādi Śaṃkara* refers to in his verses. The verse says 'the one who follows KN, his (follower) footwear is used as *kuśa* grass (*darbha*) for the *kalasa* (a pot containing water with mango leaves and coconut on the top with a cluster of *kuśa* grass. When *mantra*-s are recited, the energy of the mantras gets transmitted to the water inside the vessel. This water is used for purification purposes and also used to purify a *sādhaka* and is called mantra bath. Kuśa grass or *darbha* is used for all purification purposes) that is used to give a Vedic bath to *Śiva*". This is called devotion. True devotion is nothing but sincere love.

Those who are ignorant say that *Śiva* and love are different. Those who are knowledgeable say that both *Śiva* and love are the same- says *Tirumūlar*, the great Tamil saint. *Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahaṃsa* says that those who are the masters in Veda-s and *śāstra-s* say this is right and that is wrong. Assuming there are defects in the ways of worship by such devotees, God will never mind the defects as He wants only sincere devotion. He is ready to bless us, but we are not ready to get His blessings. This is because, the path followed by us is wrong.

Kṛṣṇa says, (*Bhagavad Gīta* (IX.30) "Even if the vilest sinner worships me with exclusive devotion, he should be accounted as a saint. He is positive in his belief that there is nothing like devoted worship of God," and *Kṛṣṇa* proceeds to say in the next verse "that my devotee never perishes". *Kṛṣṇa* says in (XI.54), "Only by undivided devotional service can I be understood as I am" says the Lord.

All the scriptures and *Śrutiī-s* make a clear definition of devotion. Devotion can therefore be defined "as the subject where the feelings of ardent love blossoms within, expecting nothing in return, crossing the boundaries and limitations of all the prescribed rituals and gets transformed into an object where there is a desire to stay put with that object forever".

Bhayāpahā भयापहा (121)

She dispels fear.

Taittirīya Upaniṣad (II.9) says "having known the Brahman, he is not afraid of anything as there is none by his side". He is with the Brahman who is always a witness; therefore *Upaniṣad* says that there is none with him. *Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad* (I.iv.2) says, "If there is nothing else except me, where is the question of fear". The cause of fear is the existence of a second person. The existence of second person is felt only out of ignorance. In fact, there is no second in this universe. It is only the same Supreme Self within, who prevails in everybody which is mistaken for the second. This happens out of *māyā*.

The very recitation of Her name will dispel fear. *Viṣṇu Sahasranāma* nāma 935 is '*bhāyapahā*'.

Saundarya Laharī (verse 4) says, "Your feet are by themselves powerful to protect those in grip of fear." But *Śaṇkarā* says that cycle of birth and death afflicted with *saṁsāra* (bondage) is known as fear. *Śaṇkarā*'s interpretation of fear is also confirmed by Sage

Durvāsā in his *Śrī Śakti Mahimnaḥ*. He says *jarāṁṛuti nivāraya,* praying relief from the fear of birth and death.

Those who worship Her do not have the fear of birth and death. Mere recitation of Her name will dispel this fear.

(Further reading on fear: Fear is the worst destroyer of spirituality. Fear is a product of mind. Not only it obstructs the spiritual path, but also it destroys the progress made. Fear not only afflicts the mind, though it is a product of the mind, it affects one's health as well. Most of the fears are unfounded and a result of our imagination. Fears are mostly related to physical body. For example fear of an accident, fear of an unexpected fall, fear of disease or injury, fear of an enemy etc. Sometimes fear arises out of ego. Fear of hurting one's prestige in the society, fall in status, etc are classified under this category. Basically it is important to note that fear arises out of attachment to the physical body and ego. The latter also includes finance management. There are only two possible remedies one can think of. One is to undergo the agony of fear and the other is destroying the cause of fear by visualization. When there is fear, the entire energy will be drained out. After all, everything is pre-determined by *karma*-s and whatever is to happen is bound to happen. If one develops positive thoughts, positive actions will manifest and if negative thoughts are nurtured, manifestation of miseries and sufferings happen. To a great extent one can eliminate fear by positive thoughts. Thoughts are always very powerful.

All of us never escape the clutches of fear, but most of us encounter fear and make it powerless. There should be some cause for fear. If one is are able to destroy that cause, the effect of fear will not manifest. Let us take a simple example. If someone is pulling a car out of the garage with a fear that he might meet with some accident, his fear will manifest and cause some accident. In this situation, his thought manifests as action. On the contrary, if one thinks that he will have a safe day, the day is bound to be safe. Let us take another example. One's superior is going to give his report on his promotion. On some earlier occasions he had misunderstandings

with his superior and he did not like his attitude. Possibly he may not give a good report about him for his promotion. In this case if he meditates and infuses positive energy to his superior he can be rest assured that his superior will not give any adverse report about his, as his positive energies will induce him to make out a good report. By infusing positive energies, one can have positive results in most of the situations. Mentally one can burn the cause of fear by visualizing fire burning the cause. Practicing this type of meditation is a sure way to success. There is no need for separate place to do this meditation. One can take a minute or two, find out a place where one can get some fresh air, by closing the eyes and visualise that the cause of fear is being burnt by flames of fire.

{Remember one thing always. Nobody can harm you either emotionally or physically. You are a divine soul and abundant divine energies are always around you to protect. This divine energy prevents committing evil acts and protects you from evil influences. After all what you sow is what you reap.}

Śāṃbhavī शांभवी (122)

Śiva is known as *Śāṃbhu* and His wife is *Śāṃbhavī*. *Viṣṇu Sahasranāma* nāma 38 is *Śāṃbhavae* which is interpreted as 'the one who gives comforts to devotees'. In that way both *Śiva* and *Lalitāmbikā* give comfort to their devotees.

There is a *mudra* called *śāṁbhavi mudra* which is generally used in *Kuṇḍalinī* meditation. Focusing both the eye balls internally towards *ājña cakra* and lifting the consciousness upwards, by correspondingly raising the eye balls is *śāṁbhavi mudrā*. There are other interpretations also.

There are three types of *dīkṣā-s* (initiations) and one among them is *śāṁbhavi dīkṣā*. The other two are *śākti* and *māntri*.

Worshippers of *Śiva* are called *śambhavā-s*. She is the mother of *śambhavā-s*. *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 34) says, *śarīraṁ tvaṁ*

śambhoḥ meaning 'You (*Śaktī*) are the body of *Śiva*. The next verse says *śiva yuvāti bhāvena* meaning 'assuming the role of *Śiva*'s wife'. Such narrations are in plenty to affirm that She always remains as a part of *Śiva*, both physically and mentally.

Śāṃbhavī also refers to a young girl of eight years. There is a ritual by name *kanyā pūja* explained in *Devi Bhāgavata* (III.25 and 26) about worshipping Her in the form of girls of of different ages. If such a ritual is performed as per the prescribed method, it is said that the devotee will become prosperous and wealthy.

Śāradārādhyā शारदाराध्या (123)

Śāradā means *Sarasvatī*, the Goddess of speech. She is worshiped by *Sarasvatī*. *Śāradā* could also mean *Vāc Devi*-s, the authors of this *Sahasranāma*.

She is worshipped for nine days in the month of October/ November called *navarātrī* or *śārada navarātrī*, meaning nine nights. *Śaktī* worship is always done in the nights as per *tantra śāstra*. It is said that *Viṣṇu* is to be worshipped in the morning, *Śiva* in the evening and *Lalitāmbikā* in the night. Apart from the *śārada navarātrī*, there is one more *navarātrī* called *vasanta navarātrī* celebrated in the month of April/May. Possibly this nāma could mean *Śāradā navarātrī*.

Kālikā Purāṇa says 'Once upon a time in spring, in the ninth day you were awakened by gods. Hence you are known to the world by the name *Śāradā*".

This nāma means that she is worshipped by the knowledgeable (knowledge gained from Veda-s and *śāstra*-s).

Śarvāṇī शर्वाणी (124)

Śiva has eight cosmic forms that correspond to the five basic elements (*akāś*, air, fire, water and earth), soul, sun and moon (*Liṅga Purāṇa* I.28.15-17). *Bhīma* form is *akāś*, *Ugra*-wind,

Rudra-fire, *Bhava*-water, *Śarva*-earth, *Paśupatī*-soul, *Īśāna*-sun and *Mahādeva*-moon. *Śarva* form of *Śiva* represents water element and *Śarva's* wife is *Śarvānī*. Their son is Mars, one of the nine planets referred in astrology.

{Further reading on planetary propitiation: For performing remedies for the afflicted planets, one has to thoroughly study the afflicted planet/s and perform propitiation accordingly. The ill effects of the planets will not be totally eradicated by merely performing rituals or visiting certain specified temples. The day and time of the propitiating ritual to be performed is to be fixed taking into account the star lord and its sub lord. For example, in a horoscope planet Mars is afflicted, performing remedies on a Tuesday may not be correct. The appropriate day would be the day connected to the star lord or sub lord of planet Mars. Poor feeding and animal feeding are very important in eradicating the evil effects of a planet. The ideal thing would be to go to orphanages and feed them personally. Satiated hunger expressed in their faces is capable of eradicating any type of planetary afflictions. *Mantra japa* is another useful way to ward off the evil effects of planets. Planetary propitiation should be done in person and not through someone else. Planets are incapable of causing any afflictions to those who repose unshakable faith in God}

Śarmadāyinī शर्मदायिनी (125)

Śarma means happiness. She confers happiness on Her devotees. Conferring happiness is Her habit as She is the Divine Mother.

Please refer nāma-s 192, 953 and 968 which convey the same meaning.

Śāṃkarī शांकरी (126)

Wife of *Śaṇkarā*, a form of *Śiva*, is known as *Śāṃkarī*. *Śam* means happiness and *karā* means doer. Therefore *Śaṇkarā* is known to give happiness and his wife *Śāṇakarī* has the same quality. *Śiva* and

Śaktī do not have any difference in qualities between them. That is why *Śiva* and *Pārvatī* are said to be father and mother of the universe.

Śrīkarī श्रीकरी (127)

Śrī means all types of prosperity. It also means wealth, happiness, beauty, attraction, auspiciousness, etc. Since She is the embodiment of all these qualities and also endows these qualities on Her devotees, She is known as *Śrīkarī*. *Viṣṇu Sahasranāma* 611 is *Śrīkarā* which means the giver of wealth to His devotees. In fact, there is no difference between *Viṣṇu* and *Lalitāmbikā*. *Viṣṇu* is also known for auspiciousness etc. There is brother- sister relationship and *Viṣṇu* is elder to *Lalitāmbikā*. Other nāma-s in this *Lalitā Sahasranāma* confirm this. They are 267. *Govinda rūpinī*, 298. *Nārāyanī*, 893. *Viṣṇu-rūpinī*, etc. *Śrīkarā's* sister is *Śrīkarī*.

Sādhvī साध्वी (128)

She is chaste (please refer nāma 709). When someone has huge wealth he is called *Lakṣmī pati*, meaning husband of *Lakṣmī, Śrī Mahā Viṣṇu*. *Pati* is generally used to refer husband of a woman. In ancient Sanskrit *pati* was used to mean a good sign, good fortune, prosperity, success, happiness *Lakṣmī* resides in the chest of *Viśnu*. *Lalitāmbikā* and *Śiva* are attached to each other so deeply, the one without the other cannot even carry out their duties.

Saundarya Laharī (verse 96) explains this nāma. "Oh! Foremost among the chaste! How many are the poets who do not court Brahma's wife (meaning knowledge). Who does not become the lord of *Lakṣmī* with only some riches? But, except *Śiva* nobody can attain you." The interpreters intend to say that nobody can claim *Lalitāmbikā* like other Gods and Goddesses as She is beyond comparison with them. The problem in the interpretation arises with the Sanskrit word '*pati*' which generally means husband. But there are other meanings for this word such as master, lord, owner, possessor etc. Therefore *pati* in this context does not mean

husband but refers to a person who owns wealth or who has knowledge and wisdom, or who has mastered the art of speech. This verse is a poetic parlance.

Lalitāmbikā is called as chaste because, She always remains with *Śiva*. She considers *Śiva* as *pati deva* which means a wife who regards her husband as divine. This is the right explanation for this nāma as She was created by *Śiva* and therefore She considers *Śiva* as Her divine husband. '*Pati vedanaḥ*' means *Śiva*. *Vedanaḥ* means perception or knowledge and *pati vedanaḥ* means possessor of knowledge.

Śaraccandranibhānanā शरच्चन्द्रनिभानना (129)

Her face appears like the moon in spring season. *Śarad* means second half of October, November and first half of December. In a natural horoscope, each *rāśi* represents a solar month. Two solar months make a *ṛtu* and six *ṛtu-s* make a year. During *śarad ṛtu* (autumn or fall season) the moon appears brighter and without blemishes. Please refer nāma 133 also.

Śātodarī शातोदरी (130)

She has thin waist. These two nāma-s (129 and 130) are connected to Her *kāmakalā* form, the details of which will be discussed in *kāmakalā rūpā* (nāma 322) .

Śantimatī शन्तिमती (131)

She is never harsh to Her devotees. She tolerates certain acts of Her devotees that are not considered appropriate. *Śanti* means peace. She appears peaceful and tolerates only certain acts of Her devotees. She too has a tolerance level. Once that level is crossed by Her devotees, She does not hesitate to initiate corrective measures. The corrective measures are carried out through Her ministers like *Aśvārūdā* or *Vārāhi Devi*-s.

With this nāma, Her act of benediction ends. Nāma-s 132 to 155 discuss Her as *Nirguṇa Brahman* or Her formless form. Worshipping Her as *Nirguṇa* (without attributes or qualities) form is considered as an important aspect of worship and the result of such worship is described in nāma-s 156 to 195. It is also interesting to note that *Vāc Devi*-s have chosen to discuss her *nirguṇa* worship first and *saguṇa* (with attributes) worship later (196-248).

Nirādhārā निराधारा (132)

She is without support. She does not depend upon anybody. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VII.24.1) asks "That which is infinite is immortal and that which is finite is mortal. It rests on its own power – or not even on that power (as it depends on nothing else, not even its own power). This is known as *nirādhārā*.

Śaktī is worshipped both internally and externally; but internal worship leads to quicker realisation. External worship is further divided into two categories- Vedic and Tantric. Internal worship is also divided into two categories, one is with form and another is without form. Worshipping Her internally without attributing any form is considered to yield desired results leading to quicker realisation of the Self.

The pure form of consciousness is *Śaktī*. *Śiva Sūtra* (1.1.) says *caitanymātmā*. This means that pure consciousness is *Ātma.* Only by worshipping Her, detachment from *saṁsāra* becomes possible, which ultimately leads to liberation.

Nirañjanā निरञ्जना (133)

Añjanā means a black paste (eye liner or collyrium) that is applied to eyes of women. *Hanuman*'s mother's name is *Añjanā*. "*Añjanā nandanaṁ vīraṁ*" says a verse. When *añjanā* is applied to eyes, they look beautiful. Her eyes look beautiful without *añjanā* is the textual meaning. But *añjanā* also means ignorance as ignorance is always compared to darkness and knowledge to light. *Nir* means

without. She is without ignorance. *Vāc Devi*-s would not have coined this nāma to mean that She is without ignorance. Ignorance and knowledge are associated with human and not with the Divine Mother as She is the embodiment of knowledge. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (VI.19) gives answer to this argument. It Says '*niṣkalaṁ, niṣkriyam, śāntam, niravadyaṁ, niranjanaṁ*". This means that Brahman has 'no form, no action, no attachment, above reproach and without any blemish'. It also says *niranjanaṁ* which means without any blemish. Therefore it is to be inferred that *Lalitāmbikā* is the Brahman. This nāma says that Her formless (*nirguṇa Brahman*) form is without any blemishes. Please refer nāma 354 for further details.

In *Kuṇḍalinī* meditation, when one reaches *ājñā cakra*, one will be able to see light. In the initial stages, this light may have some blemishes and these blemishes vanish along with the practice. This is called Her blemish less form, as *Kuṇḍalinī* is Her subtlest form.

Nirlepā निर्लेपा (134)

She is without attachments. *Lepā* means stain or pollution which is impure. Attachment is caused by bondage and bondage is the result of *karma*-s. *Karma*-s arise out of actions. She is beyond *karma*-s arising out of actions. This could be interpreted in two ways. She is attached to Her devotees. Many devotees are able to manifest Her in their bodies. In such situations, She becomes one with the bodies of Her devotees. The *karma*-s of such devotees do not affect Her. In fact, if a devotee has such an opportunity, he is absolved of all his *karma*-s. This is because of the fact that the divine energy can enter into a body, provided that body is suitable in all respects (such as strength, internal and external purity) to withstand the potency of divine energy. Some ancient scriptures point out that the body of a devotee becomes pure by merely acquiring knowledge about Her.

The second interpretation is in line with what *Kṛṣṇa* says (*Bhagavad Gīta* V.10) 'One who performs duty without attachment, surrendering the result to the Supreme Lord, is unaffected by sinful

action'. *Kṛṣṇa* also says 'There is no work that affects me nor do I aspire for the fruits of action' (*Bhagavad Gīta* IV.14). *Lalitāmbikā* perfectly fits this explanation. She performs Her action as directed by Her Lord *Śiva*, hence *karma*-s arising out of such actions do not affect Her. This is the case of yogi-s also. Yogi-s perform worldly duties, perform rituals, sacrifices, external worships, etc but they surrender the results unto God, either good or bad arising out of such actions. The attire does not make a yogi. Only thoughts and actions make a perfect yogi. If one acquires complete knowledge about the Brahman and remain with the Brahman, *karma*-s do not affect him.

Nirmalā निर्मला (135)

Mala means dirt arising out of impure matter, where the afflicted mental state of an empirical individual is disabled by his own impurity causing attachment to actions viz *saṁsāra*. She is without such dirt. In the last nāma impurity arising out of mind was discussed and in this nāma impurities arising out of matter is being discussed. It is to be recalled that mind and matter is *Śaktī*. *Mala* is a sense of imperfection that leads to ignorance about the soul and hampers the free expression of the Supreme Self. This ignorance is caused by ego which is called *mala* or *ānava-mala.*

This nāma says that if one gets out of attachments towards matter by dissolving his ego, knowledge is attained. Presence of *mala* causes *avidyā* (ignorance) which leads to confusion, dirt and darkness. This darkness can be dispelled by meditating on Her, thereby acquiring knowledge.

It is interesting to note that all the nāma-s that talk about *nirguṇa Brahman* either directly or indirectly refer to meditation.

{Further reading on *mala: Mala* is known as innate ignorance that conceals the true nature of the Self. It is mere consciousness of the supposed imperfection and limitation which is responsible for the rise of countless individual selves. It is the instrumental cause of

the impurity or *mala*. One's karmic account is the main cause for the level of innate ignorance. This ignorance is of two types, internal and external. One is due to the revival of old *vasānā-s* (impressions) and another one arises from the contact of a certain sense with a certain external object. Again intellectual ignorance is different from spiritual ignorance. Intellectual ignorance is dependent upon the connection of the individual self with the body, with which it co-exists. But, in the case of spiritual ignorance, it is independent of intellectual ignorance. It is due to this difference, liberation cannot be attained only by intellectual knowledge. Liberation can be obtained only with the combination of intellectual knowledge and spiritual knowledge.}

Nityā नित्या (136)

Nitya means eternal and without changes. As *nirguṇa Brahman* is being discussed, one of the qualities of the Brahman is explained here. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (IV.v.14) describes the Brahman as "the Self is indeed immutable and indestructible". Brahman is beyond changes and exists everywhere, omnipresent.

Nitya-s are the fifteen deities representing fifteen lunar days. They are worshipped while worshipping *Śrī Cakra*. Each of these deities has *mūla mantra* and is capable of giving different *siddhi-s*.

{Further reading on *Nitya-s: Nitya* is said to be the highest object of worship and the ultimate philosophical principle in *kula* system. The world *kula* stands for *Śaktī*. Apart from the fifteen *nitya-s*, sixteenth *nitya* is *Lalitāmbikā* Herself, who is also known as *Mahā Tripurasundarī*. Out of these *nitya-s*, the last three *nitya-s* are more concerned with internal worship. There are nine *tantra*-s that deal with these *nitya-s*. It is also said that the power of *Śaktī* is known as *nitya*.]

Nirākārā निराकारा (137)

She is formless. *Ākāra* means form, figure, shape, etc. This is an important aspect of *nirguṇa Brahman* (*nirguṇa* means devoid of all qualities or properties). The qualities of the formless Brahman are being described one after another.

Nirākulā निराकुला (138)

She is without agitation. *Ākulā* means confounded, confused, agitated, flurried, or disordered. *Nir* negates all that is meant by *ākulā.* This means that She is not agitated, not confused etc. She is the cause for these attributes, but She is not affected by these attributes.

Though She is associated with ignorance or *avidyā*, still she is not agitated. She is associated with ignorance means She is the cause of *avidyā*. When She is in the form of *māyā* or illusion, She causes ignorance. *Māyā* prevents the *sādhāka* to acquire knowledge. This nāma means that even though ignorance is caused by Her, She is not agitated by this ignorance.

Nirguṇā निर्गुणा (139)

She is unconditioned with *guṇa*-s. *Guṇa* is of three types *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. These *guṇa*-s are responsible for the formation of gross body and originate from *prakṛtī* (the source of objectivity) which is also known as *māyā*. Since She does not have a gross body, She is called *nirguṇa*. The Brahman alone is without *guṇa*-s, as Brahman does not have a gross form. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (VI.11) says '*ekah devaḥ'* God is one without a second. Though *devaḥ* also means luminous, here it means only the Brahman as Brahman alone is self illuminating. After identifying the Brahman, the *Upaniṣad* talks about the qualities of the Brahman. It says 'without attributes and unconditioned'. All these confirm Her as the Brahman.

[Further reading on *guṇa-s*: *Guṇa* can be interpreted as constituent qualities. There are three kinds of *guṇa -s*. They are *sattva, rajas*

and *tamas*. *Sattva guṇa* means quality of purity and knowledge. *Rajo guṇa* means activity and passion. *Tamo guṇa* means inertia and ignorance. The Brahman is the embodiment of *sattva guṇa*, whereas the empirical souls are associated with more of other two *guṇa-s*. *Prakṛtī* is the primordial, unmanifested, and the most subtle metaphysical principle that has the potentiality to manifest into an enormous empirical universe. In the process of creation, the universe remains in a potential state within *prakṛtī,* so long as the three *guṇa-s* remain undisturbed. When the equilibrium of the *guṇa-s* is disturbed, *prakṛtī* begins to unfold Her metaphysical categories causing the process of creation.]

Niṣkalā निष्कला (140)

She is without bodily parts. This nāma is an extension of the previous one. Because of being *nirguṇa*, She is *niṣkalā*. *Kalā* means parts. Brahman has no parts in literal sense.

Kṛṣṇa gives more clarity on these two nāma-s. He says "the living entities in this conditioned world are my eternal fragmental parts. Due to conditioned life, they are struggling very hard with six senses that include mind" (*Bhagavad Gīta* X).

This is beautifully explained in *Vijñāna Bhairava* (verse 146) thus: "Unswerving *buddhi* (intellect) without any image or support constitutes meditation. Concentration on an imaginative representation of the divine with bodily parts is not meditation." This is possible only with knowledge.

Brahma Sūtra also says (II.iii.43) "The individual souls are parts of the Brahman because of the mention that they are different." The individual is a part only apparently, for the part-less Brahman can have no part in literal sense.

Thus it is amply made clear that the Brahman is without form and meditation with form is not a meditation on the Brahman. *Chādogya Upaniṣad* (VIII.vii.1) further explains the Brahman as

"free from sin, old age, death, sorrow, hunger and thirst. It is the cause of desire for truth and commitment to Truth. This Self has to be sought for and thoroughly known."

Śantā शन्ता (141)

The absence of negation is to be noticed in this nāma. Prefix *niṣ* or *nir* means negation of the quality mentioned in that nāma. For Example *kalā* means parts and *niṣ-kalā* means without parts. This nāma means that She is calm and tranquil.

The saying of *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* VI.19 referred in nāma 133 is also applicable to this nāma. All these qualities of the Brahman are cited by *Vāc Devi*-s in this *Sahasranāma*. One more quality of the Brahman, the tranquillity is described here. Please remember that we are now discussing the qualities of *nirguṇa Brahman* (the Brahman without form and attributes). To make us understand *nirguṇa Brahman* better, certain qualities are negated and certain other qualities are affirmed in *Upaniṣads* as well as in this *Sahasranāma*.

When one is bound by the clutches of bondage, there cannot be any tranquillity. Tranquillity is considered as an essential quality for self-realization.

Niṣkāmā निष्कामा (142)

She is without desire. This is the reason for the previous nāma. When one has desires, he cannot have tranquil mind. There is no question for any desire for *nirguṇa Brahman*, the Absolute. Brahman cannot have any desires and this has been confirmed in earlier nāma-s. These nāma-s are in line with *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (II.iii.6) which says '*neti neti'* meaning not this, not this. The *Upaniṣad* is zeroing on the Brahman by negating many known qualities. Finally this verse says '*satyasya satyaṃ'* meaning "The Truth of truth". It has identified truth as one of the qualities of the Brahman. The same *Upaniṣad* further elucidates the Brahman (V.i).

"That (the Brahman) is infinite and this (universe) is infinite. The infinite proceeds from infinite. Then, taking the infinitude of the infinite (universe), it remains as the infinite (the Brahman) alone." The original verse goes like this:

पूर्णमदः पूण्नमिदम् पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते।पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते॥

Pūrṇamadaḥ pūṇṇamidam pūrṇātpūrṇamudacyate|
Pūrṇasya pūrṇamādāya pūrṇamevāvaśiṣyate||

This nāma is in confirmation of Her Brahmanic status. During the course of this *Sahasranāma*, one can find a number of such affirmations.

Nirupaplavā निरुपप्लवा (143)

She is perdurable, yet another quality of the Brahman. The same meaning is conveyed in nāma 180.

There is another interpretation, which says that She produces ambrosia that spreads to the 72000 nerves in human body. This refers to Her subtlest *Kuṇḍalinī* form. When *Kuṇḍalinī* reaches *sahasrāra*, it produces ambrosia that drips through the throat and spreads throughout the nervous system. This nāma is split into *nir* (the word *nir* has many meanings and in this context, it means body) + *upa* (approaching) + *plavā* (dripping). This means that when *Kuṇḍalinī* approaches *sahasrāra* the ambrosia starts dripping into the body system.

Nitya-muktā नित्य-मुक्ता (144)

She is eternally free, another quality of the Brahman. To realise the Brahman, one has to be free from bondage.

Nirvikārā निर्विकारा (145)

She is devoid of modifications (*vikāra* means modification). Brahman does not change. There are two aspects of creation viz. *puruṣa* and *prakṛtī*. *Puruṣa* is the Supreme consciousness that is free of bondage, full of knowledge and creative power. This can be interpreted as the divine or active principles from the minute portions of which the universe was formed. If one has the power to create, he has to possess the requisite knowledge for creation. If creator does not possess sufficient knowledge, his creation goes haywire. *Puruṣa* is not associated with body, senses and mind. It does not undergo modification but constantly witnessing those countless modifications that happens around it. *Prakṛtī* is opposite of *puruṣa*. It is the root cause of creation and undergoes changes continuously. It is associated with three gunas. When *puruṣa* and *prakṛtī* conjoin, universe is created.

Devoid of changes here mean with regard to twenty three *tattva-s*. They are *mahat* [It is a product of *prakṛti*. It the great principle, of *buddhi*, the Intellect, or the intellectual principle. According to the *Sāṃkhya* philosophy the second of the twenty three principles produced from *prakṛti* and so called as the great source of *ahaṃkāra*, (ego) self-consciousness *and manas, the mind*], ego and five *tanmātra-s* (sound, taste, smell, light and touch). These seven are called cause. Five organs of perception, five organs of action, five basic elements and mind make the balance sixteen. These sixteen are called action. Therefore *prakṛti* is made up of cause and action and *puruṣa* is devoid of this. But for creation both *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* are required. This points out to *Śiva-Śaktī* union.

But, in this nāma She is addressed as *puruṣa*, the Brahman. *Puruṣa* and *prakṛti* are discussed in detail in later nāma-s.

Niṣprapañcā निष्प्रपञ्चा (146)

Prapañca means expansion, development or manifestation. She is without such attributes. Since the Brahman is *ādhi* (the first) and *anādhi* (without parentage) it does not have any control and does not require any modifications or changes. This is because the

Brahman is complete or full which is called *pūrṇam*. *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* (verse 7) says 'total cessation of the world as such, the embodiment of peace (here word *śāntam* is used. Refer nāma 141 '*śāntā*'), the total of all that is good (word '*śivam*' is used here), one without a second (this is because of *ādhi* and *anādhi*), the fourth state (*turya* state, the other three being, sleep, dream and deep sleep stages which are called *jākrat, svapna, suṣupti*). Think this *turya* as the Self and this is to be realized'. The Brahman is beyond the three stages and can be realized only in the *turya* or the fourth state. This state is the embodiment of peace and all that is good. These stages are discussed in detail from nāma 257.

All these interpretations go to indicate the *nirguṇa Brahman*. This nāma means that She is without any expansion as the Brahman will never undergo changes or modifications.

Nirāśrayā निराश्रया (147)

Āśraya means dependence (that to which anything is annexed or with which anything is closely connected or on which anything depends or rests). *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (II.7) uses the word '*anilayane*' meaning not resting on anything and free from modifications. She does not depend on anything. She being the Brahman does not depend upon anything and on the contrary, everything depends upon Her. This nāma more or less conveys the same meaning conveyed in nāma 132. Possibly, *āśraya* in this context could mean the gross body that supports the soul. Since She is beyond soul (Brahman and soul are different. Soul is called *jīva*), there is no question of Her gross body. Since She is devoid of gross body, it connotes that She is the Brahman.

Chāndogya Upaniṣad (VIII.i.5) says, "The body may decay due to old age, but the space within (the Brahman) never decays. Nor does it perish with the death of the body. This is the real abode of the Brahman. All our desires are concentrated in it. It is the Self – free from all sins as well as from old age, death, bereavement, hunger

and thirst. It is the cause of love of Truth and the cause of dedication to Truth."

This nāma says that She is not dependent on anybody.

Nitya-śuddhā नित्य-शुद्धा (148)

She is eternally pure. Impurity is associated with the gross body and the embodiment of purity is within the impure gross body. Brahman is always pure as It is not subject to changes or modifications. Impurity arises only if an object undergoes changes.

Nitya-buddhā नित्य-बुद्धा (149)

She is eternally wise. Knowledge is gained by experience whereas being wise (*jñāna*) is inbuilt. Knowledge is acquired from the wise. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (IV.iii.30) says 'the knower's function of knowing can never be lost, because it is imperishable. But there is not that second thing separate from it which it can know'. The Brahman is self illuminating intelligence.

Niravadhyā निरवध्या (150)

She is inviolable and without defects. *Avadhyā* means incapable of being transgressed or dishonoured. Defects arise out of ignorance or ignorance is the cause of differentiating between defect and perfect. There cannot be any defect in the Brahman as it is eternally pure. Defects arise out of impurities such as desire, ego, etc.

Nirantarā निरन्तरा (151)

Antara has many meanings such as in the middle, inside, within, among, between, on the way, by the way, near, nearly, almost, in the meantime, now and then, for some time, between, during, without, etc. She is without such divisions. Brahman will neither divide nor multiply, as He does not change. It is permanent.

Taittirīya Upaniṣad (II.7) says "If he makes even a smallest discrimination from the Brahman, he is afraid of the Brahman" (discriminating self from the Brahman). Here the fear means rebirth. The point driven home is the omnipresent nature of the Brahman. The Brahman within all living beings, be it a plant, an insect, an animal or a human is the same, irrespective of the gross form. The time, distance and religion do not modify the Brahman. But it is the ignorance that make one consider Brahman as someone different from what he perceives.

Niṣkāraṇā निष्कारणा (152)

She is without cause. *Kāraṇa* means that which is invariably antecedent to some product. She is beyond descendance yet another quality of the Brahman. But the universe descends from Her.

Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (VI.9) says "There is none in this world who is His master or who governs Him, and here is nothing by which He can be identified. He is the cause of all. He is also the lord of the *jīva* (soul), who is the lord of the sense organs. No one is His creator and no one is His controller".

She is invoked in *Śrī Cakra* by addressing Her as *kāranānanda vigrahe* (कारनानन्द विग्रहे).It means that She is the blissful elementary matter for manifestation of the universe. Therefore, She is the cause for the universe and there is no cause for Her.

Niṣkalaṅkā निष्कलङ्का (153)

She is without any stains. Stains arise out of sins. That is why those who do not commit sins are considered on par with God, as such persons are extremely rare to find. *Īśa upaniṣad* (verse 8) uses two words to describe the Brahman without stains. The first one is *śuddham* which means pure. The other one is *apāpaviddha* meaning unblemished (no race of ignorance). The Brahman is pure and unblemished. The sense of dualism is the cause for sins. These sins cause blemishes. Blemishes could be of anything viz. anger,

hatred, jealousy, etc. These blemishes are responsible for not realising the Brahman within. These are called stains and She is devoid of such stains.

{Further reading on sin: With ethicization, morally good or bad actions are systematically converted into religiously good or bad actions. In as much as any social morality must punish those who commit wrong and reward those who conform, so must a religious morality. Implicit in these notions of reward and punishment are such ideas as religious merit and sin. That is the consequences of the rights and wrongs for which one is being rewarded or punished can br conceptualised for present purposes of merit or sin. Sin is directly related to one's *karmic* account.}

Nirupādhiḥ निरुपाधिः (154)

She is without *upādhi*. *Upādhi* means limitations. Due to *upādhi* an unlimited thing appears as limited. For example, the sky or a *ākaś* appear as limited whereas in reality, it is infinite. *Upādhi* can also be explained as the imposition of a character on an object which really does not possess. For example, a hibiscus flower placed with a crystal. Crystal is colourless. Because of the red colour of the hibiscus, the crystal also appears red in colour. This is also *upādhi*. *Upādhi* is made up of *upa* which means near and *ādhi* means attributes. Ignorance is called *upādhi* as the effect of ignorance is reflected in the speech and actions of an ignorant person. She is without such *upādhi* or She is without limitations. Brahman is beyond limitation.

Śiva is devoid of colour and transparent. He appears like a crystal. *Śaktī* is red in colour as per *dhyān* verses of this *Sahasranāma*. When She sits by the side of *Śiva*, He also appears to have red complexion. Gods and goddesses confuse this scene for the rising sun. This is also *upādhi.*

Nīriśvarā नीरिश्वरा (155)

Iśvara means superior or master. She does not have a superior. She is the Supreme ruler. One may argue that *Śiva* is above Her in hierarchy. *Śiva* has certain well defined acts that include creation of *Śaktī* out of His *prakāśa* form, acting as the static partner in creation but Himself not partaking in the acts of creation, sustenance and dissolution. *Śiva* does not interfere with Her administration *(vimarśa* form of *Śaktī*). Hence it is said that She does not have a superior.

Though there are many other interpretations for these nāma-s, this book has taken into account the explanations available to qualify the Brahman. When the qualities of the Brahman are being discussed, it is inappropriate to interpret nāma-s in a way different from what they are intended for.

With this nāma the description of qualities of Her *nirguṇa* Brahman form ends. Though the Brahman does not have qualities, one could be wondering why *Vāc Devi*-s mention about the qualities of the Brahman. As said earlier, for a common man, the Brahman can be qualified by negations, as the Brahman cannot be realized by sensory perceptions. Hence prefixes *niṣ* or *nir* (negation) is used in all these nāma-s (132-155 except 141). Knowledge of the Brahman starts with 'not that' and ends with 'I am That'. The first that is negation and second That is affirmation. Any affirmation is possible only if one has comprehensive knowledge of the subject concerned. Nāma-s 156 to 195 discuss about the fruits of worshipping Her formless form.

Nīrāgā नीरागा (156)

Rāga means desire. She is without desire. Though this nāma and a few subsequent nāmas may appear similar to the previous group, in fact they are not so. *Antaḥkaraṇa* consists of four components mind, intellect, consciousness (in a manifested form in the mind) and ego. These four in no way are connected to the Atman or the Brahman. The components of *antaḥkaraṇa* are impediments to self-realization. Apart from *antaḥkaraṇa* there are six other deterrents

viz. desire, anger, jealousy, confusion, pride and envy. These six need no explanation as a mere look at these words will show how dangerous they are. These nāma-s explain the means to get disassociated from these. First, *Vāc Devi*-s explained the concept of the Brahman and now they proceed to explain how to realise the Brahman, a true step-by-step guidance to Self-realization.

Rāgamathanī रागमथनी (157)

She destroys the desires of Her devotees. This is the first of various benefits accruing out of worshipping Her Brahman form (the formless form). Desire is the prime impediment in spiritual pursuit that keeps a person bonded to worldly attachments.

P*atañjali Yoga Sūtra* (II.3) says, "The five pain bearing obstacles in one's life are ignorance and its effects. The effects are egoism, attachment, aversion, clinging to life."

Nirmadā निर्मदा (158)

She is without pride. *Mada* means pride. When someone has something that others do not have, it gives rise to pride. She has everything and everything comes out of Her (*hiranya garbha* or the golden egg or womb. It is the matrix of the imperishable substance, the Brahman. It is said to be the luminous 'fire mist' or ethereal stuff from which the universe was formed and generally applied to *Brahma*. This is described in the *Rig-Veda* as born from a golden egg, formed out of the seed deposited in the waters when they were produced as the first modifications of the Self-existent.) There is no necessity for Her to become proud of something.

Madanāśinī मदनाशिनी (159)

She destroys pride of Her devotees. Annihilating pride is one of the preconditions for realizing the Brahman. What is followed is preached. She is without pride and She wants Her devotees also to be without pride.

Niścintā निश्चिन्ता (160)

She is without worries. Worries arise out of recollecting the past. Since She transcends time and space, She does not have a past. It can also be said that in spite of the responsibility of administering the universe, She is without worries because, She has intelligently delegated Her work to Her ministers like *Vārahī* and *Śyāmalā.* This can be known while worshipping *Śrī Cakra* through *navāvaraṇa pūja*. This is in confirmation of nāma 155 *Nīriśvarā,*

Nirahaṃkārā निरहंकारा (161)

She is devoid of ego. Ego arises out of three *guṇa-s* viz. *sattva, rajas* and *tamas*, already discussed in nāma 139. *Nirguṇa*, which says that She is without these three *guṇa-s*. Since She does not have *guṇa-s*, it implies that She is devoid of ego.

Nirmohā **निर्मोहा** (162)

Moha means bewilderment, perplexity, distraction, infatuation, delusion, etc all leading to follies. She is without any confusion, a product of mind. Mind is the most important factor in realising God. Only the attunement of mind to thoughtless state leads to Self-realization. *Īśa upaniṣad* (verse 7) asks "when a person knows that he himself has become everything and knows oneness of things, how can he hate or love anything?" Love and hate leads to confusion. *Kṛṣṇa* says, (*Bhagavad Gīta* XIV.22-25) "One who is unwavering and undisturbed through all these reactions of the material qualities remaining neutral and transcendental, knowing that the modes alone are active; who is situated in the self and regards alike happiness and distress; who looks upon a lump of earth, a stone and a piece of gold with an equal eye…such a person is said to have transcended the modes of nature'. Such a person does not have confusion (nāma 162), ego (nāma 161) and worries (nāma 160).

Mohanāśinī मोहनाशिनी (163)

She destroys such confusions in the minds of Her devotees. When a devotee is without confusion, he moves forward in the spiritual path. *Īśa upaniṣad* (7) says, '*ekatvam anu pashyataḥ'* which means seeing everywhere the same thing, the Brahman. It was seen earlier that *Śakthī* alone is capable of taking one to the Brahman. When *Śakthī,* who is also called *māyā* moves away, leaving a person before the Brahman (*Śiva*) She enables him to realize the Brahman by himself. Self illuminating Brahman is realized only when illusion (*māyā*) is destroyed.

Nirmamā निर्ममा (164)

She does not have self concern. If there is self concern, one identifies himself as different from the Brahman. This is called dualism and should not be pursued. If one looks at this nāma from the point of view of the first nāma *Śrī Mātā*, as the Supreme Mother she does not care for Herself. Her concern is only about Her children, all the living beings in this universe. From the point of view of the Brahman, self-concern is yet another quality that is being negated here.

It is interesting to note that commencing from nāma 164 one nāma says that She does not have that quality and the next nāma says that She destroys such qualities in Her devotees. For example nāma 166 is *niṣpāpā* (without sins) and the next namā 167 is *pāpa-naśinī* (destroys sins of Her devotees).

Mamatā-hantrī ममता-हन्त्री (165)

She destroys selfishness of Her devotees. Self interest causes ego, one of the impediments to realization.

Niṣpāpā निष्पापा (166)

She is without sins. Pāpa means sin. Sins arise out of desires. It has already been discussed that She is without desires (156 *Nīrāgā*). *Kṛṣṇa* says, (*Bhagavad Gīta* IV.14) "There is no work that affects me, nor do I aspire for the fruits of action."

Pāpanāśinī पापनाशिनी (167)

She destroys the sins of Her devotees. Devotee is the one, who always thinks about Her not only at the time of reciting *mantra*-s, not only at the time of performing rituals but at all the times. For such a devotee *mantra*-s and rituals become meaningless. It is also presumed that Her devotees will not perform those actions that are termed as sins. If knowingly someone commits a sin, She will not come to his rescue. But why does She want to destroy the sins of Her devotees? *Kṛṣṇa* answers this question in *Bhagavad Gīta* (IV.14) "One who understands this truth (refer the previous nāma) about me, does not become entangled in the results of reactions of work (results of reactions mean *karma*-s. The concept of *karma* is based on Newton's third law – for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. This equal and opposite reaction is *karma*.).She wants Her devotees to pursue the path of liberation for which sins are impediments. How does She consume their sins? *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (V.xxiv.3) says, *pāpmānaḥ pradūyante,* which means all sins are burnt up. The *Upaniṣad* further says 'such sins are burnt like dry grass thrown into a fire'. The point driven home here is that when She is worshipped with all sincerity, the devotee gets rid of all his sins except *prārabdha karma-s* (the sum total of all *karma*-s accumulated over several past births) that have to be experienced.

Niṣkrodhā निष्क्रोधा (168)

She is without anger. Even at the time of total dissolution (*mahā-pralayā*), the Brahman is without anger. *Kṛṣṇa* says in *Bhagavad Gīta* (IX.29) "none is hateful to me, none is dear to me". This is one of the qualities of the Brahman. Brahman is like a mirror. Unless one stands before a mirror, he cannot see his image. Unless

one is devoted to Her, he cannot realize Her grace. Whether one is devoted to Her or not, She is without anger.

Krodha-śamanī क्रोध-शमनी (169)

She destroys anger of Her devotees. Anger is one of the six deterrents (desire, anger, jealousy, confusion, pride and envy) to self-realization. It is said that any worship done with anger destroys the effect of such worship. *Kṛṣṇa* cites the reasons for anger (*Bhagavad Gīta* II.63, 64) "while contemplating the objects of the senses, a person develops attachment to them and from such attachment desire develops, and from desire anger develops and from anger total dissolution arises…" This is the reason for considering sensory organs as evils. *Kṛṣṇa* also says that material mode of passion is responsible for all the sufferings.

Nirlobhā निर्लोभा (170)

She is without greed. She is extremely liberal with Her devotees.

Lobhanāśinī लोभनाशिनी (171)

She destroys greed of Her devotees. *Kṛṣṇa* says "There are three gates leading to the hell – desire, anger and greed. These should be given up, as they lead to the degradation of the soul" (*Bhagavad Gīta*. XVI.21) and hence She destroys greed of Her devotees.

Niḥsaṃśayā निःसंशया (172)

She is without doubts. Doubts arise while seeking knowledge. When She is the embodiment of knowledge, there is no question of doubts for Her.

Saṃśayaghnī संशयघ्नी (173)

She clears doubts of Her devotees. She is capable of clarifying the doubts of wise men, as She is the embodiment of knowledge as per

the previous nāma. She assumes the form of Guru as per nāma 603. *gurumūrtiḥ*. The one who is called as Guru should be without doubts, should clarify the doubts of his disciples instantaneously and expecting nothing in return. It is said that 'spirituality cannot be sold'. At the same time, it is to be understood that those who seek knowledge should monetarily compensate the Guru, as he also needs money to sustain himself. But at no point of time the disciple should exceed his capacity in compensating the Guru and a real Guru will gladly accept whatever is offered by his disciples.

Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad (II.ii.8) explains this. "If a person can realize the Brahman, the cause and the Brahman, the effect as own Self, all the peculiarities of his character disappear and all his doubts are dispelled. One should seek a Guru who falls within the ambit of this saying."

Kṛṣṇa says (*Bhagavad Gīta* IV.34), "Understand the true nature of knowledge by approaching illuminated soul. If you prostrate at their feet, render them service, and question them with an open and guileless heart, those wise seers of Truth will instruct you in that knowledge."

In today's context Gurus are known under three categories. In the first category are those who initiate *mantra*-s. Most of them are exponents of *mantra*-s, but they do not proceed beyond *mantra*-s. In the second category are those who teach yoga including the most fancied and the most sought after *kuṇḍalinī* yoga. The third category consists of true Gurus who impart knowledge of the Brahman out of their own experience. But this category is extremely rare to find. *Śiva* has imparted the knowledge about Guru to His consort *Pārvatī* through 274 verses and this teaching is known as *Guru Gīta*.

This nāma means that there is no difference between Her and Gurus (third category, the true spiritual masters.)

Nirbhavā निर्भवा (174)

She is without origin. She is *ādhi* (first) and '*anādhi*' (without parentage, having no beginning). It is generally said that *Śiva* is without origin, as nobody has created Him. Here, *Lalitāmbikā* is said to be without origin because, there is no difference between Her and *Śiva*. Their unified form is called as the Brahman.

Kṛṣṇa says (*Bhagavad Gīta* XIII.12), "That supreme neither Brahma, who is the lord of beginningless entities, is said to be neither *Sat* (being, existing) nor *Asat* (unreal, non-existing). This saying of *Kṛṣṇa* has conceptualised the crux of all the *Upaniṣads*.

Bhavanaśinī भवनशिनी (175)

She destroys the cycles of birth and death of Her devotees. This cycle of birth and death is called *saṃsāra*. This nāma means that when She is worshipped in Her formless form, one becomes free of bondages. Bondage is the cause for *saṃsāra* or bondage itself is *saṃsāra*.

Kṛṣṇa says, (*Bhagavad Gīta* XII.6 and 7) "Those who depending exclusively on me, and surrendering all action to me, worship me constantly meditating on me with single minded devotion absolves them from the ocean of birth and death." This also defines a true devotee.

It is also said that if one performs *caṇḍī homa* on ninth lunar day (*navami tithi*) he is absolved of the afflictions of *saṃsāra*.

Nirvikalpā निर्विकल्पा (176)

Vikalpa means false notions. It also means alternative. The idea of 'horse having horns' is called *Vikalpa*. She is without such ideas. *Nir-vikalpa* means devoid of name, form, class, etc. In meditative parlance, it is known as indeterminate perception or *nirvikalpaka pratyakṣa* and the next higher stage is called is *nirvikalpa samādhi. Samādhi* is a stage where the mind is stilled in conjunction with a single object. *Nirvikalpa samādhi* refers to a state where there is no

discrimination between the subject and object. It is an awareness of identity or non-difference.

vi + *kalpa* is *vikalpa*. *Vi* means opposition and *kalpa* means theory and *vikalpa* as a whole means opposition to the theory. Here, theory means the Brahman. Therefore this nāma says that She is the Brahman and there is no opposition to this theory of addressing Her as the Brahman. The nāma also means that anything, be it a subject or an object is inseparable from Her.

Patañjali yoga Sūtra (I.9) says, "Verbal delusion follows from words having no corresponding reality."

Brahma Sūtra (III.ii.14) says "Brahman is only formless to be sure, for that is the dominant note." Here 'dominant note' means the teachings of *Upaniṣad-s*.

Nirābādhā निराबाधा (177)

She remains undisturbed. She is not disturbed by illusions. Illusion arises out of wrongly identifying an object. For example, identifying in darkness a piece of rope as snake is illusion. This illusion causes fear, desire, etc. Since She Herself is the cause of such illusions (*māyā*), there is no question of any illusion for Her. Moreover, the Brahman does not have qualities such as illusions.

Nirbhedā निर्भेदा (178)

She is without differences. Possibly this difference could mean the difference between Her and *Śiva*. That is why, it is said that wise men do not find any difference between *Śiva* and *Śaktī*. Their unified form is known as the Brahman and there is no difference between them. The qualities of this unified form are being described in this *Sahasranāma*. Though all the nāma-s in this *Sahasranāma* addresses *Lalitāmbikā*, it should not be construed that they are addressed to Her in Her individual capacity. They are addressed to the *Śiva-Śaktī* combine. *Saundarya Laharī* says that

neither *Śiva* nor *Śaktī* can act, without depending on each other. *Kūrma Purāṇa* says that the Supreme *Śaktī* is infinite, devoid of all differences and destroyer of all differences (described in the next nāma).

Bhedanāśinī भेदनाशिनी (179)

She is the destroyer of differences, in the minds of Her devotees. Difference means duality. When difference is destroyed, there is no second. The difference can be destroyed by acquiring knowledge and She provides this knowledge to Her devotees. The *phala śrutī* (the concluding verses, conveying the benefits of reciting this *Sahasranāma*) of this *Sahasranāma* says that there is no difference between Her and Her devotees. Authors of this *Sahasranāma* or any other important verses like this *Sahasranāma* always add a few verses after the conclusion of the main body of *Sahasranāma* and these verses are called *phala śrutī* or the concluding part. The verses in the concluding part normally prescribes how this *Sahasranāma* is to be recited, on which days to be recited and also indicates the benefits accruing out of such recitations. An abridged version of *phala śrutī* is provided at the end of this book.

Nirnāśā निर्नाशा (180)

She is indestructible. Brahman is beyond destruction. Infinity, thy name is Brahman!

Taittirīya Upaniṣad (II.1) says, "*satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ brahma*", which means that Brahman is truth, knowledge and infinite.

Mṛtyu-mathanī मृत्यु-मथनी (181)

She destroys the death of Her devotees. *Mṛtyu* means death. Only someone without death alone can give the boon of deathlessness. Death also means rebirth. She does not allow Her devotees to be reborn. This means that She destroys the *karma-s* of Her devotees. Devotee does not mean a person who performs rituals. One who is

able to identify himself with Her is called a devotee and this stage can be attained only by perpetual meditation.

Niṣkriyā निष्क्रिया (182)

She does not get involved in actions. She is the kinetic energy and *vimarśa* form of the Brahman or *Śiva* and as such She cannot be without action. As discussed earlier, Brahman is the combination of static and kinetic energies. It is obvious that kinetic energy is always associated with action. But, if one looks at this nāma from the angle of *nirguṇa Brahman* (the formless form) She does not get involved in action, as the Brahman does not get associated with actions but acts only as a witness.

Secondly, only the physical body is subjected to actions and such actions may be good or bad. Depending on such actions, *karma-s* accrue to the soul. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VIII.xii.1) says, that one without a physical body is not affected by good or evil actions. Karmas affect only the physical body. The *Upaniṣad* points out that a Self-realized person though has a gross body, he does not take cognizance of his body as he does not consider himself different from the Brahman. For such persons, their actions do not create *karma-s*.

Kṛṣṇa explains this in *Bhagavad Gīta* (III.17). "He, who takes delight in the self alone and is gratified with Self, and is contended in the self, has no duty."

Niṣparigrahā निष्परिग्रहा (183)

She does not get anything in return for the actions She perform. This is in conformity of interpretation of the previous nāma. This nāma says that She performs actions (creation, sustenance and dissolution). The point driven home in the previous nāma is that She does not get involved in Her actions. When She is without actions (even any one of the actions), the universe ceases to exist. For doing such actions, She does not get anything in return. The

appropriate interpretation would be that She does not expect Her devotees to perform ritual worship by offering flowers, food, etc thinking that they are expressing their gratitude to Her. This nāma reiterates that ritual worship, at the most could only be a stepping stone towards Self-realization. If one is stranded here, it is obvious that he cannot reach Her.

Nistulā निस्तुला (184)

She is incomparable. Comparison can be only between two equals. Since She is the Supreme and does not have equals there is no question of comparing Her.

Nāma 389 also refers to Her incomparability.

Nīlacikurā नीलचिकुरा (185)

Nīla means indigo colour and *cikurā* means hair of the head or tuft of hair. She has indigo coloured hair. This meaning seems to be inappropriate here. A proper interpretation of this nāma seems to be difficult. This nāma becomes out of context, when *Vāc Devi*-s are narrating the benefits of worshipping Her nirguna Brahman form. At the same time, *Vāc Devi*-s would not have placed this nāma here without knowing its significance. Some are of the opinion that *Vāc Devi*-s while concentrating on the effects of worshipping Her formless form, realised like a flash, the beauty of Her hair and this could be the reason for placing the nāma here. This is also described in *Lalitā Triśatī* nāma 150 *kacajitāmbudā.*

The possible interpretation could be: *Ājñā cakra* is associated with indigo colour (*nīla*). *Nīla-cikura* could mean the back head *cakra*, situated just behind *ājñā cakra* at the back of the head (just above medulla oblongata) that is fully covered by hair. Priests have their tuft in the back head *cakra*. When back head *cakra* is well developed, one can see anything happening in the world. It also helps in establishing cosmic commune. This *cakra* is considered to be highly secretive in nature. Some are of the opinion that tuft is

kept here in order to prevent others from noticing this place. The area in which this *cakra* is located protrudes predominantly, when fully activated. *Cikura* also means a mountain, possibly indicating this protrusion. This *cakra* receives cosmic energy. In other words, by developing *nīla-cikura* (back head *cakra*), one can realize Her Self illuminating form, which is indigo in colour.

Nirapāyā निरपाया (186)

She is without destruction, the prime quality of the Brahman. *Apāyā* means destruction, death, annihilation.

Niratyayā निरत्यया (187)

She does not transgress Her limits. It has already been seen that She functions as per the law of *karma-s*, the law of the Lord. Law of *karma* is enacted by Her, and She does not transgress Her own laws. She sets an example for others to follow.

Durlabhā दुर्लभा (188)

She is difficult to attain. Though this nāma says that She is difficult to attain, it does not say that She is not attainable. She can be attained by internal search and exploration and not by external rituals. For attaining Her, one need to have dedicated and persistent practice of meditation, by which higher level of consciousness is attained, where She is realised.

Durgamā दुर्गमा (189)

She is not easily accessible. She can be approached only by tough *sādhana* or practice. *Sādhana* means meditating on Her Self-illuminating form. She has three forms viz. gross or physical form that is worshipped by performing external rituals. Second is Her '*kāmakalā*' form which is subtle and Her *kuṇḍalinī* form which is considered to be Her subtlest form. She is not accessible by performing only external rituals. She can be accessed through tough

sādhana by meditating on Her other two forms. Her worship should commence with rituals, gradually transforming into meditating Her subtlest form. When such a transformation happens in a devotee, She becomes *a-durgama*, meaning She is easily accessible.

Durgā दुर्गा (190)

There is a reference to *Durgā* in *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* (*Durgā sūktaṃ)*. *Durgā* means dispeller of difficulties. Her *Durgā* form is described as fiery and radiant in nature. Those who take refuge in Her are saved by Her from their difficulties. Reciting *Durgā sūktaṃ* regularly eradicates miseries. The first verse of *sūktaṃ*, *ṃrityuñjaya mantra* (*tryambakaṁ yajāmahe*) and *Gāyatrī mantra* (leaving *vyākṛti-s*) together make 100 *bīja-s* (*sadākṣari*) and when this is recited, it is supposed to ward off all miseries. *Durgā* refers to Her act of protection, both physical and mental. A strong mental and physical balance is required to realize Her through inner search.

Sadākṣari mantra:

त्र्यम्बकं यजामहे सुगन्धिं पुष्टिवर्धनम्।
उर्वारुकमिव बन्धनान् म्रित्योर्मुक्षिय मांरुतात्॥
तत् सवित्र् वरेण्यम्।भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि।
धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात्॥
जातवेदसे सुनवाम-सोम-मरातीयतो निदहाति वेदः।
स नः पर्षदति दुर्गाणि विश्व नावेव सिन्धुं दुरितात्यग्निः॥

tryambakaṁ yajāmahe sugandhiṁ puṣṭivardhanam|
urvārukamiva bandhanān mrityormukṣiya māṁrutāt||
tat savitr vareṇyam|bhargo devasya dhīmahi|
dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt||
jātavedase sunavāma-soma-marātīyato nidahāti vedaḥ|
sa naḥ parṣadati durgāṇi viśva nāveva sindhuṁ duritātyagniḥ||

Duḥkhahantrī दुःखहन्त्री (191)

She dispels sorrows of Her devotees. *Saṃsāra* is the cause for sorrows. *Saṃsāa* means getting affected by attachments and desires. That is why *Kṛṣṇa* says "this is the actual freedom from all miseries arising from material contact" (*Bhagavad Gīta* VI.23). *Saṃsāra* is called '*sāhara*' or ocean. If one plunges into this ocean, it is difficult to swim across to reach the shore. *Saṃsāra* should not be confused with one's family. She dispels the sorrows of those who do not get attached to material world.

Sukhapradā सुखप्रदा (192)

She confers happiness. When sorrow is removed what remains is happiness. But, She confers eternal happiness by forbidding Her devotees from rebirth. This is considered as one of the best boons She gives to Her devotees. But She has Her own way of preferring such devotees. Such devotees should have tasted the sweetness (knowing the self is called as sweetness) and the source of sweetness (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* II.7). They are '*ānandī bhavati'* i.e., happy. Since She acts as per the law of *karma-s* (refer nāma 187. *niratyayā*), Her selection of devotees purely depends upon their *sādana* (practice). For such *sādhaka-s* alone, She confers happiness that arises out of having no future births.

Duṣṭadūrā दुष्टदूरा (193)

She is far away from sinners. *Duṣṭa* means spoilt and corrupted and they do not even think about Her. They can never attain Her. This implies that they cannot have liberation.

Durācāra-śamanī दुराचार-शमनी (194)

Performing those actions that are prohibited by scriptures is called '*dur-ācāra'*. *Ācāra* is known as customs or traditions. These customs are of two types. The customs that are prescribed by Veda-s belong to the first type. In the second category are the customs that are introduced recently, not prescribed by Veda-s. The customs

that were introduced in recent times do not have significant spiritual values. A prayer done for a minute with deep devotion is much more powerful than performing expensive rituals. Veda-s never said that one should spend beyond his means to perform rituals, most of which are hyped in recent times.

Doṣa-varjitā दोष-वर्जिता (195)

She is devoid of blemishes, yet another quality of the Brahman. Blemish arises out of hatred, desire, etc. Here, blemish refers to mind and not the gross body. She does not have any blemish and this has been discussed in earlier nāma-s in this *Sahasranāma*.

With this nāma the effects of worshipping Her formless form (nirguna Brahman) ends. Nāma-s 196 to 248 discuss about Her various forms known as *saguṇa Brahman* or the Brahman with attributes. Worshipping God without form is called *nirguṇa* worship and considered as superior. Worshipping God in various forms is called *saguṇa worship*. Religious faiths are based on *saguṇa* worship (with forms and attributes).

Sarvajñā सर्वज्ञा (196)

She is omniscient. Only the Brahman alone can be omniscient. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (I.1.9) says "That Brahman, which is all-knowing in general way and which is also all-knowing in detail whose austerity is knowledge and from that *(para*) Brahman comes this (*apara*) Brahman and also such categories as name, form and food." The *Upaniṣad* specifically uses the word *tapaḥ*, meaning the highest form of meditation known as penance. *Parā Brahman* is the *nirguṇa Brahman* (without attributes) and *aparā* Brahman is *saguṇa Brahman* (with attributes).

Sāndrakaruṇā सान्द्रकरुणा (197)

She is compassionate. This is mainly because of being 'the Divine Mother'. "She has more than any other, the heart of the universal

Mother. For Her compassion is endless and inexhaustible; all are to Her eyes Her children and portions of the One (meaning the universal Brahman). Her rejections are only postponement; even Her punishments are a grace. But Her compassion does not blind Her wisdom or turn Her action from the course decreed (law of *karma*)". These beautiful words are of Sri Aurobindo in his book 'The Mother'.

Samānādhika-varjitā समानाधिक-वर्जिता (198)

She has no equals. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (VI. 8) says, "He has no body and no organs. No one is His equal. No one is His superior either. He possesses many powers of knowledge and powers of action." The *Upaniṣad* talks about the nature of the Brahman.

Arjuna addresses *Kṛṣṇa* like this in *Bhagavad Gīta* (XI.43) "You are the Lord of incomparable might, in all the three worlds there is none else even equal to You; how then, any better?" She has all these qualities.

Sarvaśakti-mayī सर्वशक्ति-मयी (199)

She is the power of all *śaktī-s*. There are two different meanings for the word *śaktī. Śaktī* means power. As far as She is concerned, Her power is the divine power. She uses this divine power for Her acts of creation, sustenance and dissolution. Since Her *saguṇa* (form) is being discussed, it can be said that She has ministers such as *Vārāhī, Śyamalā,* or even Her ten forms which is popularly known as *dasa mahā vidyā,* who are Her *śaktī*-s. In this context *śaktī-s* mean these goddesses who function under Her control. In literal sense, She is in the form of all such goddesses, in view of the omnipresent nature of the Brahman. Since She is the embodiment of all *śaktī*-s, She is known as *Śaktī.* This is the reason for addressing Her as *Sarvaśakti-mayī.*

Sarva-maṅgalā सर्व-मङ्गला (200)

She is the embodiment of all auspiciousness. She is addressed as *Śrī Śiva* in nāma 998. *Śiva* means auspiciousness. Since She is the source of auspiciousness, She is capable of giving the desired auspiciousness to Her devotees. The same nāma is there in '*Lalitā Triśatī'* as nāma 124. There is a famous verse '*sarvamṅagala māngalye śive sarvartha sādhike| śaraṇaye triyambake gouri nārayaṇi namostu te‖* . (*Durga saptasati* 11.10, *Markandeya Purāṇa* Chapter 88, verse 9). The meaning for this famous verse is "Oh! *Nārāyanī*! The cause of creation, sustenance and dissolution; ever existing; the source of all virtues; thy form itself is made up of these virtues (excellent qualities); I worship you."

Sadgati-pradā सद्गति-प्रदा (201)

She guides Her devotees in the right path to reach the right target (salvation). The target is realizing the Brahman. To realize the Brahman one needs to have higher spiritual knowledge. This knowledge is provided by Her. She can only provide the knowledge, but receiving the knowledge and act as per the knowledge gained, is in the hands of Her devotees. *Sadgati* is the path pursued by wise men. This is the stage where ignorance is destroyed and knowledge alone prevails. *Viṣṇu Sahasranāma* nāma 699. *sadgatā.*

Kṛṣṇa explains this in *Bhagavad Gīta* (XVII.26). "The name of God *Sat* is employed in the sense of truth and goodness. And the word *Sat* is also used in the sense of praiseworthy act."

Liṅga Purāṇa (II.15.3) says, "The wise speak of *Śiva* of the form of *sat* (existing) and *asat* (non-existing)."

Sat means all-pervading and is both eternal and non-eternal. It is also said that *Sat* and *Asat* refers to manifest and unmanifest.

Sarveśvarī सर्वेश्वरी (202)

She is the supreme ruler of the universe and leads the beings to the Brahman as discussed in the previous nāma. Ruler is the one who is concerned about his citizens. She has no superior or equal as discussed in nāma 198. Hence She is the Supreme ruler.

Sarva-mayī सर्व-मयी (203)

She exists in all forms, the omnipresent nature of the Brahman. It would be appropriate to say that She exists in all the souls. Without soul, life cannot exist. As discussed earlier, soul is different from the Brahman. Coming together of soul and the Brahman is creation, sustenance and dissolution. *Sarva* could also mean the thirty six *tattva-s* or principles, discussed later in this book.

Sarva-mantra-svarūpiṇī सर्व-मन्त्र-स्वरूपिणी (204)

She is the embodiment of all *mantra*-s. This is one of the reasons why tantra *śāstra* is based on Her various forms, as *mantra*-s have vital role in tantric rituals. It is said that all the *mantra*-s are placed around the *Pañcadaśī mantra*, which is the centre of all *mantra*-s.

This nāma could also be interpreted this way. There are fifty one letters in Sanskrit. All these fifty one letters are twined together in the form of a garland and worn by Her. So any *mantra* has to originate from these alphabets. This is the reason for addressing Her as *Sarva-mantra-svarūpiṇī*. This nāma and the next one are extensions of the previous nāma.

Sarva-yantrātmikā सर्व-यन्त्रात्मिका (205)

She is in all the *yantra-s*. Different gods and goddesses have different *yantra-s*. *Yantra* is normally a metallic plate made out of gold, silver or copper or a combination of these, wherein several lines are drawn to crisscross each other. The potency of a mantra is infused into a *yantra* by means of rituals. These *yantra-s* represent the respective gods. A properly consecrated *yantra* becomes powerful and its power increases along with the increase in the

counts of *mantra*-s. Since She is *sarva-mayī* (nāma 203), She is said to be in all *yantra-s*.

Sarva-tantra-rūpā सर्व-तन्त्र- रूपा (206)

She is in the form of all tantra-s. There are various types of tantra-s and She is the focal point in all these tantra-s.

[Further reading on tantra: Tantra are class of works teaching mystical formularies (mostly in the form of dialogues between *Śiva* and *Śaktī* and said to treat five subjects, 1. the creation, 2. the destruction of the world, 3. the worship of gods, 4. the attainment of all objects, especially of six superhuman faculties (*siddhi-s*) 5. the four modes of union with the Supreme Spirit by meditation. Tantra can be defined as the practice in an effort to gain access to and appropriate the energy of illuminated consciousness of the Brahman that courses through the universe, giving its creatures, life and potential salvation. Humans in particular are empowered to realise this goal through strategies of embodiment, i.e. of causing that divine energy to become concentrated in or another or sort of template , grid, or macrocosm – prior to internalisation in or identification with the individual microcosm.

Tantra is generally considered as beliefs and practices which, working from the principle that the universe we experience, is nothing other than the concrete manifestation of the divine energy of the Brahman that creates and sustains that universe, seeks to ritually appropriate and channel that energy, within the human microcosm, in the creative and emancipator ways.]

Manonmanī मनोन्मनी (207)

She is in the form of *manonmanī* (beyond perception). There are eight smaller *cakra*-s between *ājñā cakra* and *sahasrāra* and the one, just below the *sahasrāra* is called *manonmanī*. It is also known as *unmani*. As this *cakra* is closer to the *sahasrāra*, where She is going to conjugate with *Śiva*, no activity takes place in

manonmanī, which is beyond time and space. This is the last point where She is known as *Śaktī*. In the next stage at *sahasrāra* She becomes *Śiva-Śaktī*. This point is also known as the mouth of *Rudra*. In *Śrī Rudram*, one of the forms of *Śiva* is called *Manonmana* and His wife is *Manonmanī*. There is a *mudrā* called *manonmanī*, which is used in advanced stages of meditation. When this *mudrā* is used, one almost loses his consciousness, ready to merge with the Supreme. At this state the triad of meditation, meditator and the object of meditation are dissolved to form the Supreme oneness and the flow of ambrosia is realised.

Śiva is known as *Manonmana*. The supra mental *śaktī* of *Paramaśiva* in its primal movement towards manifestation, through inseparable from Him is known as *unmanā* or *unmanī*. This is beyond time and space and is immeasurable.

Māheśvarī माहेश्वरी (208)

Wife of *Māhesvarā*, a form of *Śiva*. *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* (XII.17) says, "He is the Supreme Lord who transcends ॐ which is uttered at the commencement of the recital of the Veda-s and which is dissolved in the primal cause during contemplation." His wife is *Māheśvarī*. *Māheśvara* form of *Śiva* is the Supreme form. He is beyond the three *guṇa*s- *sattva, rajas* and *tamas*. *Liṅga* form of *Śiva* is *Māhesvara* form. *Liṅga Purāṇa* says that all the deities are present in *Liṅga* form of *Śiva*, a resemblance to *Śrī Cakra*.

Mahādevī महादेवी (209)

Śiva is also known as *Mahādeva*, His moon form (this is said to be the eighth form of *Śiva*. His wife is *Rohinī* and their son is *Budha*, the planet Mercury) and his wife is *Mahādevi*. *Maha* also means the Supreme. She is the Supreme and hence called *Mahādevi*.

Śiva has eight forms and they are – 1. *Sarva* – earth form, 2. *Bhava*-water form, 3. *Rudra* – fire form, 4. *Ugra* – wind form, 5. *Bhīma*-water form, 6. *Paśupati* – soul form, 7. *Īśāna* – sun form and 8.

Mahādeva –moon form. These eight forms of *Śiva* are His cosmic forms (*Liṅga Purāṇa*).

It is pertinent to note that both *Śiva* and *Śaktī* have moon in their crowns. Moon indicates two qualities, one is its coolness and another is intelligence.

Mahālakṣmī महालक्ष्मी (210)

The great (*mahā*) wife of *Viṣṇu*. *Śiva* manifests in the form of *Viṣṇu* for sustenance and His wife is *Mahālakṣmī*. *Liṅga Purāṇa* says that *Mahālakṣmī* is the mother of the universe. "May *Lakśmī* who is endowed with all attributes, who has all three characteristics, who is the goodness that bestows all and who is omnipresent, dispel my sin" is a hymn in *Liṅga Purāṇa*. *Mahālakṣmī* also means a girl of thirteen years. If *Mahālakṣmī* is worshipped on every 13th lunar day (*trayodaśa*) with Her *bīja* (śrīṃ- श्रीं), there will no dearth of prosperity and auspiciousness.

Mṛḍapriyā मृडप्रिया (211)

Śiva is also known as *Mṛḍan*, His *sattvic* form. Since She likes *Śiva*, She is called *Mṛḍapriyā*. *Mṛḍa* means happiness, a quality of *sattva guṇa*, showing compassion or mercy, gracious and *priyā* means dear. This nāma means that *Śiva* caresses this universe and as His wife, She loves this act of *Śiva*. After all, She is the Supreme Mother.

Mahā-rūpā महारूपा (212)

She has a great form. It is to be observed that all these nāma-s begin with *Mahā* indicating Her Supreme stature. *Kṛṣṇa* explains this Supreme form as "The total material substance called Brahman is the source of birth and it is that Brahman that I impregnate, making possible the births of all living beings' (*Bhagavad Gīta*. XIV.3).

Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad (I.i.9) says, "*tasmadetadbrahma nāma rūpamannaṃ ca jāyate",* which means from that Brahman (*parā Brahman*) this Brahman (*aparā*) with name, form, food emerge.' 'She has this kind of *mahat'*form. This supreme *mahat* form is the cause for creation.

Mahat means abundance. It also refers to the *buddhi*, or Intellect, or the intellectual principle. (according to the *Sāṃkhya* philosophy the second of the twenty three principles produced from *Prakṛti* and so called, as the great source of *ahaṃkāra*, 'self-consciousness' (ego), and *manas*, 'the mind'.)

Mahāpūjyā महापूज्या (213)

She is worshipped by great souls like saints and sages. Saints and sages have more knowledge than most of the demigods and goddesses. They will not worship anybody unless they are worthy of worship. There are interpretations saying that *Brahma, Viṣṇu, Śiva* worship Her. This means that Gods who have been assigned various duties, worship Her. This is yet another affirmation regarding Her supremacy.

There are references to gods, goddesses and others who worship Her using *mantra*-s, metals and gems.

1.*Śiva* - mantra, 2. *Brahmā* – stone, 3. *Viṣṇu* - blue stone, 4. *Kubera* – gold, 5. *Viśvedevās* - silver,
6. *Vāyu* – copper, 7. *Vasu* - brass, 8. *Varuna* – crystal, 9. *Agni* – gems, 10. *Śakra* – pearls,
11. *Sūrya* – coral, 12. *Soma* – lapis, 13. *Planets* – lazuli, 14. *Demons* – tin, 15. *Piśācas* - adamantine, 16. *Mātṛgaṇa*-s – iron.

Mahāpātaka-naśinī महापातक-नशिनी (214)

She destroys great sins. There are certain rules for expiations of sins. Sins are committed knowingly and unknowingly. There is no remedy for committing a sin knowingly. The worst sin is

brahmahatyā, which means murdering the one who is an exponent of *Veda*-s. It is said that there is no remedy for this sin. For such sins, *karmic* account swells and accordingly one has to undergo sufferings either in this birth itself or in subsequent births. (A study of birth chart will reveal whether a person has such *karmic* afflictions, based on 5th and 9th houses. Though various remedies are prescribed to eradicate such afflictions, the best remedy is to feed the deserving poor and starving animals. For *brahmahatyā doṣa*, it is said that there is no remedy at all.) One has to surely undergo sufferings for such sins either committed in this birth or in previous births and such sufferings cannot be mitigated by performing remedies. This nāma says that She can absolve even the worst sins of Her devotees.

Mahā-māyā महा-माया (215)

Māyā means illusion. She is known as *mahā-māyā svarūpinī*. The entire universe functions on the basis of *māyā* or illusion. If She does not cast Her effect of *māyā* on this world, there will no activity at all. Her spell of *māyā* makes us to seek the Brahman, Her another form, *prākaśa vimarśa mahā-māyā svarūpinī*. Even the sages and saints are no exception to Her spell of *māyā*. The intensity of *māyā* is felt depending upon one's *karma*. The '*hrīṁ* (ह्रीं)' *bīja* is called *māyā bīja* (please refer to the discussion on *Pañcadaśī mantra*).

{Further reading on *māyā:* In *advaita* philosophy (non-dualism) to some thinkers the terms *māyā* and *avidyā* mean the same thing. But some *advaitins* differentiate them and say that *māyā* is an auxiliary to *Īśvarā* and *avidyā* is an auxiliary to soul. The main function of *māyā* is projection, projecting the Brahman in various shapes and forms. But *avidyā* can both obscure and project, but covering is the main function of *avidyā.* According to some, the substrate of *avidyā* is soul and according to some others, *avidyā* resides in the Brahman.

The root of *māyā* is *mā* which means 'to measure'. The infinite Brahman appears as if measured due to the effect of *māyā.* The root

mā also means, leading to the ideal of illusionary appearance. The word *māyā* can be split into *mā* + *yā.* Then it means that which is not, but appears to be.

Māyā is regarded as *Śaktī,* the attribute of the Brahman. Brahman is essentially without attributes and is known as *nirguṇa* Brahman. But viewed in relation to *māyā,* it is *saguṇa* Brahman or with attributes. Just as a magician conjures up many things by his magical power which he really does not possess, so Brahman with *māyā śaktī* projects the appearance of the world. As things conjured up by the magician are false, so the projected world is ultimately false.

The phenomenal world is mere illusion or *māyā.* It is in reality non-existent. It appears to exist only because of the external objects that are related in the self, behind the mind. It is nothing but a mere illusory projection of *ātman.*}

Mahā-sattvā महा-सत्त्वा (216)

Sattvā is one of the three *guṇa-s,* the other two being *rajas* and *tamas*. Out of the three, *sattva guṇa* is supreme. When this *guṇa* is dominant in a person, he cannot commit any sins either knowingly or unknowingly. She chooses these persons to shower on them Her special grace. Here She is referred to as an embodiment of the qualities of *sattva guṇa* such as understanding the reality, emitting positive energy from one's own self, the mental and physical strength due to the positive vibrations etc.

Mahā-śaktiḥ महा-शक्तिः (217)

Śaktī means energy. Because of Her *sattvic guṇa,* She possesses supreme energy, with which She controls the universe. The universe functions only with the energy of the Brahman. For example, the gravitational force that keeps the planets in a place, thereby avoiding collision and resultant great dissolution. Therefore, She by Her supreme energy keeps this universe afloat.

Mahā-ratiḥ महा-रतिः (218)

She gives immense happiness and delight to Her devotees. *(rati* means pleasure, enjoyment, delight in, fondness for). This is possible because She has that kind of potential energy, full of happiness and delight. After all, She is the incarnation of auspiciousness. Her form, Her radiance, Her qualities, Her supreme care (being *Śrī Mātā* or the divine mother) all these lead to happiness when one cogitates Her sincerely. There is also another reason for this. *Śiva* is known for His auspiciousness. His wife is also full of auspiciousness as She is always with Him. 998th nāma of this *Sahasranāma* is *Śrī Śiva* meaning auspiciousness. Nāma 53 is *Śiva.*

Mahā-bhogā महा-भोगा (219)

She is the embodiment of immeasurable happiness. All that prevails in this universe is wealth for Her, as She presides over the universe.

Mahaiśvaryā महैश्वर्या (220)

She depicts the all pervading attribute of the Brahman, the manifestation of universe. This is called *vibhūti*, the supra normal splendour of the Brahman. She is the *svātantryaya śakti* (the power of autonomy, the Absoslute freedom, *vimarśa śakti*) of *Śiva* and She manifests the universe through this power.

Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad Gīta* (X.18, 19), "there is no limit to my magnitude. I am the universal Self seated in the heart of all beings; so I alone am the beginning and middle and also the end of all beings."

Iśvaryā means wealth, the wealth in the form of Her grace.

Mahā-vīryā महा-वीर्या (221)

There are several meanings for the word *vīrya*. Generally it means courage, power, lustre, dignity, energy, etc. She is the reservoir of all these qualities and She provides these qualities to Her devotees depending upon the depth of devotion.

Mahā-balā महा-बला (222)

Bala means strength. She is mighty, the quality of the Brahman. But based on the explanation given in nāma 219, Her thought alone gives comforts, wealth, courage etc. *Vāc Devi*-s describe the qualities of the Brahman through these nāma-s. The Brahman is explained in two ways. One is by negation, saying this is not Brahman or that is not Brahman. Another is by affirmation of certain attributes like courage, auspiciousness, intellect, happiness, etc. But in reality, the Brahman is to be realized out of nothingness.

Mahā-buddhiḥ महा-बुद्धिः (223)

She is intelligence personified. Intelligence is another quality of the Brahman. Intelligence can be explained as knowing That which explains everything else. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VI.1.3) says, "That teaching by which what is never heard of becomes heard, what is never thought of becomes thought, what is never known becomes known." Such intelligence can be given only by Her and that is why She is called as *mahā-buddhiḥ*.

{Further reading on *buddhi*: *Buddhi* is a product of mind. In the process of evolution, *antaḥkaraṇa* originates first. *Antaḥkaraṇa* works internally as against other *tattva*-s that work externally through senses. *Antaḥkaraṇa* consists of mind and its modifications. They are *cittā* (the individual conscience), *buddhi* (intellect), *manas* (mind) and *ahaṁkār* (ego). *Chitta* is the blemished reflection of pure consciousness. The other three, *buddhi*, *manas* and *ahaṁkār* are highly subtle in nature. *Buddhi* is also known as *mahat*. *Mahat* literally means great. It is the source of mind and ego. It is the cause of phenomenal universe. It not only helps in comprehending the material world, but also helps in

establishing commune with the Brahman. Without intellect, Brahman can never be realised. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (VI.5) says, "It is the ignorance that leads to being born again and again." Ignorance can be conquered only by intellect.}

Mahā-siddhiḥ महा-सिद्धिः (224)

She is the ultimate form of attainment. *Siddhi* means supreme felicity, bliss, beatitude, complete sanctification, final emancipation obtained through penance. There are eight important *siddhi-s* known as super-human powers or *aśtamā sidhhi-s* (aśtamā means eight). These eight *sidhhi-s* are *aṇimā, laghimā, prāptiḥ, prākāmyam, mahimā, īśitvaṃ, vaśitvaṃ, kāmāvasāyitā*.

Kṛṣṇa says in *Uddhava Gita* (X.3) "Those who are expert in concentration and yoga call the powers eighteen in number. Eight of these are pertaining to me and the remaining ten are to a perfection of *sattva*. Minuteness, immensity, lightness of the body (*aṇimā, laghimā*, *mahimā*), connection of being with his organs known as attainment (*prāptiḥ*), capacity to derive enjoyment from everything heard or seen (*prākāmyam*), exerting an influence on all, known as rulership (*īśitvaṃ*), non-attachment to sense objects called self control (*vaśitvaṃ*) and consummation of any and every desire (*vaśitvaṃ*) are considered as my natural powers."

But these super human powers are trivial to a true devotee. Undoubtedly She confers on Her devotees who pursue the path of meditation, these *aṣṭama siddhi-s*. But a true devotee does not bother about these super human powers and dumps these illusionary powers with the sole aim of realizing Her.

Mahā-yogeśvareśvarī महा-योगेश्वरेश्वरी (225)

She is the ruler of yoga and sought after by great yogis. Yoga is the practice by which an individual consciousness is merged with the universal consciousness. Yoga means to unite. It is the union of body, mind and Spirit. Those who have attained this state are called

yogis. Such yogis seek Her benediction through meditation to stay attuned with Her.

Mahā-tantrā महा-तन्त्रा (226)

Tantra is a way of worship. She Herself is the great tantra or all tantra-s lead to Her.

{Further reading on tantra: Practicing rituals strictly in accordance with the procedures laid down by Tantra *śāstra-s* will yield a faster effect, than following the procedures laid down by *Veda śāstra-s*. It cannot be said that tantric rituals are disowned by Vedas, as the *Atharva Veda* discusses certain rituals including usage of various herbs. Barring a few rituals, certain herbs and amulets, *Atharva Veda* does not discuss any elaborate tantric practice. Therefore it should not be construed that the tantric rituals have the stamp and authority of Vedas. Tantra *śāstra-s* have been wrongly interpreted, making others frown upon the laid down procedures. There is a lot of misconception about tantra *śāstra-s*. In fact the rituals laid down by tantra *śāstra-s* are tougher and needs immense suffering and sacrifice to achieve the desired results. The main components of tantra *śāstra-s* are *mantra* and *yantra*. Tantra itself is a combination of various scientific factors. For example astronomy, astrology, anatomy, study of herbs (ayurveda), geometry (for drawing *yantra*), etc are certain basic principles of tantra *śāstra*. One need to be better informed for practicing tantric rituals. The one important factor of tantric ritual is worshipping a form of Goddess as opposed to the teachings of *Upaniṣad*. All the tantra *śāstra-s* are said to have been told to *Pārvatī* by Her consort *Śiva*. *Śiva* himself says that in *kaliyug*, tantra *śāstra* works better than other *śāstra-s*. It is difficult to trace the origin of tantra *śāstra- s*. But it is prevalent in most of the Asian countries such as India, China, Japan, Tibet, etc. Buddhism also has mantra-s of tantric nature like Hinduism.

The importance of Vedic rituals is losing ground simply because in the present times, nobody is able to follow the procedures prescribed by Veda-s as they are elaborate. Purity of mind and body

is paramount in Vedic rituals as opposed to tantric rituals, though tantra also lays down its own rules for purity. Again *mantra*-s prescribed by Veda-s are different from the *mantra*-s prescribed by tantra-s. The *Vedic mantra*-s may not have the same potency as that of tantric *mantra*-s in today's scenario. Tantra *śāstra-s*, even today are kept as a closely guarded secret mainly on two accounts. If procedures are properly followed, the effect of such rituals is imminent. It could be possible that certain practitioners might use this for a destructive purpose. Secondly, a person who knows all the tantric rituals do not want to share his acquired knowledge with someone else purely out of ego.

The master-disciple relationship (guru-śiṣya) is the most important factor in tantra sastra. Master always chooses his disciples. Once the choice is made by the guru, the disciple is first initiated into a *mantra*. Guru alone decides the nature of *mantra* to be initiated. Most of the tantric *mantra*-s are about *Śaktī*. In fact, some call *Śaktī* worship itself as a tantric ritual. But in reality it is not so, as *Śaktī* is worshiped both by Veda-s and tantra-s. The idea behind *Śaktī* worship is her kinetic nature and secondly She is affectionately called as '*Ma*' meaning mother, who is capable of fulfilling the desires of Her children. The procedure of initiation of a *mantra* is not a mere formality, but accompanied by a number of rituals. Each disciple will have different *mantra*-s. These *mantra*-s are to be recited for a prescribed number of times. Once this is done, other formalities follow. The difference in interpretation of tantra lies only in the so called other formalities.}

Mahā-mantrā महा-मन्त्रा (227)

She is the embodiment of all *mantra*-s. All *mantra*-s originate from the fifty one alphabets of Sanskrit. These fifty one letters are worn around Her neck in the form of a garland and all the *mantra*-s originate from this garland. This nāma could also mean Her *Pañcadśi* and *ṣodaśī mantra*-s, that are considered supreme amongst all *mantra*-s.

{Further reading on *mantra*-s: In tantric philosophy, *mantra*-s play a very significant role, as tantrism attach greater significance to the powers of words (known as *vāc*). *Vāc* is predominantly identified with *Śaktī*. In Sanskrit, each alphabet or a compound alphabet is known as *bīja* and a number of *bīja-s* constitute a *mantra*. *Bīja* is explained as the mystical letter or syllable which forms the essential part of the *mantra* of any deity. *Bīja* is also explained as the primary cause or principle, source or origin. *Bīja* is like a seed. The effect of *mantra*-s can be compared to the manifestation of a gigantic tree from a tiny seed. Tantrism is designed in such a way that it infuses sound energy to *mantra*-s that manifests in whatever way it is used for. *Mantra*-s do not get energised by mere mundane repetition. The procedures of energising *mantra*-s are dealt elaborately in various tantra texts. Characteristic feature of tantra *śāstra* is the appropriate usage of powers of *mantra*-s. Every ritual used in tantra is accompanied by formation of *mantra*-s. The powers of *mantra*-s are so great that they can become fully functional, provided they are enunciated in the prescribed way. *Mantra*-s are the continuation of divine energy, restricted to either a particular deity or the Brahman or the Absolute, depending on the *mantra*-s used. For example, *Pañcadaśi* and *ṣodaśī* are capable of providing only the final liberation of the soul. They will not give *siddhi-s*. The choice of *mantra*-s is normally decided by one's guru, depending upon on disciple's ambition and capabilities.}

Mahā-yantrā महा-यन्त्रा (228)

Two interpretations are possible for this nāma. *Mahā-yantr* could mean *Śrī cakrā* in the midst of which She lives. *Śrī cakrā* is considered as the Supreme of all *yantra-s*, hence *mahā-yantra*. Secondly, Her form Itself represents *Śrī cakrā*.

{Further reading on *yantra*: If *tantra*, *mantra* and *yantra* are made to act in unison, the results are achieved much faster. In particular, the combination of *mantra* and *yantra* is an essential requisite to attain the benefits as prayed. *Yantra* is nothing but a diagram,

mostly containing criss crossed lines and *bīja-s*. A properly consecrated *yantra* becomes a shelter of the concerned deity and becomes a sanctified energetic source, through which the practitioner can establish cosmological contact with the concerned deity. There are various preconditions for formulating a *yantra* such as, materials for writing, the ink, the type of pens to be used, auspicious time, etc. The consecrated *yantra* should be kept secretively in a sanctified place, as these *yantra-s* emanate divine energy. Astrological remedies are also possible by using proper *yantra-s* and *mantra*-s.}

Mahāsanā महासना (229)

Āsana means seat. She has a great seat is the literal meaning. Her *āsana* is the seat of thirty six *tattva-s*. The third nāma already discussed about Her corporeal seat.

{Further reading on 36 *tattva*-s or principles: 1, 2, 3, 4. *antaḥkaraṇa* that comprises of mind, intellect, consciousness and ego. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. Organs of perception or cognitive senses (*jñānedriyā-s*), ear, skin, eye, tongue and nose. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14. Cognitive faculties or *tanmātra-s*, sound, touch, sight, taste and smell. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19. Organs of actions known as *karmendriyā-s*, mouth, feet, hands, organ of excretion and organ of procreation. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24. Action faculties, speech, movement, holding, excretion and procreation. (1 to 25 known as *ātma tattva-s*.) 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31. Time (past, present and future), *niyati* (order of sequence), *kalā* (induces action), *vidyā* (induces intelligence), *rāgā* (desire), *puruśā* (soul), *māyā* (illusion, causing ignorance) (25 to 31 known as *Vidyā tattva-s*.) 32, 33, 34, 35, 36. *Śuddhavidyā* (induces more intelligence than action), *Īśvara* (induces more action than intelligence), *Sadhāśiva* (induces both intelligence and action in equal proportion), *Śaktī* (induces action), *Śiva* (induces pure knowledge).}

Mahā- yāga-kramārādhyā महा-याग-क्रमाराध्या (230)

Worshipping sixty four *yoginī-s* (demigoddesses who are assistants to Her) is called *mahā-yaga* and if performed according to the laid down procedures, gives immediate results. This worship falls under the category of *tantra śāstra* as *navāvaraṇa pūja*.

In *Śrī cakra,* each of the eight *āvaraṇa* is presided by a *yoginī*. It is said that each of these *yoginīs* has eight deputies making sixty four *yoginīs* in all. *Yoginī-s* are explained as demigoddesses attending on *Śiva* and *Śaktī.*

There is another interpretation. There are eight forms of *Bhairava* known as *aśta Bhairava*. Their consorts are known as *aśta mātās*. Sixty four *Bhairava*-s and sixty four *Yogini-s* are born to them.

The *Bhāvanopaniṣad* prescribes Her mental worship. This is also called *mahā-yāga*. *Yāga* generally means fire rituals and *navāvaraṇa pūja,* though all fire rituals are not called *yāga*. *Krama* means going, proceeding or course. The nāma means that She is worshipped through *navāvaraṇa pūja*. The secretive meaning is that She is worshipped mentally as prescribed by *Bhāvanopaniṣad* (भावनोपनिषद्)

{Names of sixty four *yoginī-s:* (The names of *yoginī*-s differ from text to text.) *1. Brahmāni, 2. Candikā 3. Raudrī, 4. Gauri, 5. Indrānī, 6. Kaumāri, 7. Bhairavī, 8. Dusgā, 9. Nārasimhī, 10. Kālikā, 11. Cāmundā, 12. Śiva-dūtī, 13. Vārāhī, 14. Kauśikī, 15. Mahā-iśvari, 16. Śankari, 17. Jayanti 18. Sarva-maṇgalā, 19. Kāli, 20. Karālini, 21. Medhā, 22. Śivā, 23. Śākambari, 24. Bhīmā, 25. Śantā, 26. Bhramāri, 27. Rudrāni, 28. Ambikā, 29. Kśamā, 30. Dhātri, 31. Svahā, 32. Svadhā, 33. Parnā, 34. Mahāundarī, 35. Ghora-rūpā, 36. Mahā-kāli, 37. Bhadra-kāli, 38. Kapālini, 39. Kśemakari, 41. Candrā 42. Candrāvāli, 43. Prapancā, 44. Pralayantikā, 45. Picuvaktrā, 46. Piśāci, 47. Priyankari, 48. Bāla-vikarmī, 49. Bāla-pramanthani, 50. Madana-unmanthani, 51. Sarvabhūtā-damani, 52 Umā, 53. Tārā, 54. Mahā-nidrā, 55. Vijayā, 56. Jayā, 57. Śaila-putrī, 58. Zayanti, 59. Dusjayā, 60.*

Jayantikā, 61. Bidāli, 62. Kūśmāndī, 63. Katyāyani, 64. Mahāgauri.}

Mahā-bhairava-pūjitā महा-भैरव-पूजिता (231)

She is worshipped by the great *Bhairava*. *Bhairava* means, the highest reality. The word *Bhairava* is made up of three syllables - *bha* + *ra* + *va*. *Bha* means *bharana*, the act of sustenance; *ra* means *ravana*, the act of withdrawal or dissolution and *va* means *varana*, the act of creation. These three are the acts of the Brahman. *Bhairava* form of *Śiva* is considered as the Supreme form as it is the combination of His *prakāśa* and *vimarśa* forms (*prakāśa* is Self-illuminating and *vimarśa* manifests the entire universe with that Light). In other words, the *Bhairava* form is the united form of *Śiva* and *Śaktī* or *Bhairava* and *Bhairavī*. The entire cosmic manifestation of subjects and objects arise only from the union of *Bhairava* and *Bhairavī*, also known as *Śiva-Śaktī aikya* (*aikya* means union - nāma 999).

Maheśvara-mahākalpa-mahātāṇḍava-sakṣiṇī महेश्वर-महाकल्प-महाताण्डव-सक्षिणी (232)

Śiva dances fiercely at the time of great dissolution (*mahākalpa*) and none was around except *Lalitāmbikā*, who just witnesses this terrible act of *Śiva*. The great dissolution means the universe ceases to exist and nothing remains except *Śiva* and *Śaktī*. The dissolution is called the fourth act of the Brahman, the other three being creation, sustenance and destruction. The difference between destruction and dissolution is noteworthy. Destruction is transmigration of a soul. The soul leaves the body to be born again. Death is only for the physical body. Dissolution or annihilation or the deluge means the death of entire physical body as well as all the souls. When dissolution happens, nothing exists. Everything dissolves into *Śiva* in the presence of *Śaktī*, who witnesses the great dissolution.

In some of the texts *Kālarātrī* is referred to as the wife of *Bhairava*. *Kālarātrī Devi* is both a destructor and a protector. Her *mantra* is considered as extremely powerful and said to give immediate results (refer nāma 491 for further details on *Kālarātrī*).

Mahā-kāmeśa-mahiṣī महा-कामेश-महिषी (233)

The consort of *Mahā Kāmeśvara* is known as *Mahā Kāmeśvarī*. *Mahiṣī* means queen, the queen of *Śiva*. *Vāc Devi-s* after describing the great and terrible dissolution immediately mention about an auspicious scene, the *Kāmeśvarī* form of *Lalitāmbikā*. But who is that *Kāmeśvarī?* The next nāma answers this.

Mahā-tripura-sundarī महा-त्रिपुर-सुन्दरी (234)

She is described as the most beautiful woman of the three worlds. The three worlds are *vyāhṛti*-s (*bhūr, bhuvaḥ, svar*) of *Gāyatri mantra*. The significance of the *Tripurasundari* form is the stage of the *sādhaka* where the knowledge, the knower and known are merged together to form one single entity, the Brahman. She produces all things that are in a threefold state. This is called Self-realization.

Chatuḥ-ṣaṣṭyupacārāḍhyā चतुः-षष्ट्युपचाराढ्या (235)

She is worshipped with sixty four (*chatuḥ-ṣaṣṭi*) types of metaphorical expressions, which are called *upacāra-s*. For example offering Her scents, flowers, bangles, fanning Her, etc. Sixty four such offerings have been prescribed for Her. This nāma talks about the *pūja* ritual.

Catuḥṣaṣṭi-kalāmayī चतुःषष्टि-कलामयी (236)

She is in the form of sixty four types of arts. *Kalā* means art. There are sixty four types of arts in *tantra śāstra-s*. No concrete evidence is available to confirm or dispute these sixty four types. But these arts originate from *aṣṭama siddhi* (the eight super human powers).

Śiva Himself declares to *Pārvatī* about these arts. *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 31) says *Catuḥ-ṣaṣṭyā tantraiḥ sakalam* meaning that these sixty four *tantra-s* constitute everything. The above referred verse says, "Having deluded the entire universe with the sixty four *tantra-s*, which are devoted to producing various *siddhis* relating to each, the Lord of *jīva-s* (souls) again brought into this universe, due to Your compulsion, Your *mantra* (*Pañcadaśī*), which is the sole means of achieving, by itself all the objects of human desires." These *tantras* originate from the *Pañcadaśī mantra* and culminate in the *Pañcadaśī mantra*. This is evident from the fact the same *Saundarya Laharī* verse says '*idam te tantram'* possibly meaning the *Pañcadaśī mantra* that is declared in the next verse of *Saundarya Laharī*. Since there is no differentiation between Her and the *Pañcadaśī mantra*, She is said to be in the form of all the sixty four types of tantric arts.

Following are the sixty four arts: *gītam, vādyam, nṛtyam, nātyam, ālekhyam, viśeṣaka-cchedyam, taṇḍula-kusuma-balivikārāḥ, puṣpāstaranam, daśana-vasanāṅgarāgāḥ, maṇi-bhūmikā-karma, śayana-racanam, udaka-vādyam, udaka-ghātaḥ, citrā_yogāḥ, mālya-granthana-vikalpāḥ, keśa-śekharāpīḍayojanam, nepathya-yogāḥ, karṇa-pattra-bhaṅgāḥ, gandha-yuktiḥ, bhūṣaṇa-yojanam, indrajālam, kaucumāra-yogāḥ, hasta-lāghavam, citraśākāpūpa-bhakṣya-vikāra-kriyā, pānaka-rasarāgāsava-yojanam, sūcīvāpa-karma, vīṇā-ḍama-ruka-sūtra-krīḍā, prahelikā, pratimā, durvacakayogāḥ, pustaka-vācanam, nāṭakākhyāyikā-darśanam, kāvya-samasyā-pūraṇam, paṭṭikā-vetrabāṇa-vikalpāḥ, tarkū-karmāṇi, takṣaṇam, vāstu-vidyā, rūpya-ratna-parīkṣā, dhātu-vādaḥ, maṇi-rāga-jñānam, ākara-jñānam, vṛkṣāyur-veda-yogāḥ, meṣa-kukkuṭa-lāvaka-yuddha-vidhiḥ, śuka-sārikā-pralāpanam, utsādanam, keśa-mārjana-kauśalam, akṣara-muṣṭikā-kathanam, mlechitaka-vikalpāḥ, deśa-bhāṣā-jñānam, puṣpa-śakaṭikā-nimitta-jñānam, yantra-mātṛkā, dhāraṇa-mātṛkā, saṃpāṭyam, mānasī_kāvya-kriyā, kriyā-vikalpāḥ, chalitakayogāḥ, abhidhāna-koṣa-cchando-jñānam, vastra-gopanāni, dyūta-viśeṣaḥ, ākarṣaṇa-krīḍā, bālaka-krīḍanakāni, vaināyikīnāṃ-vidyāṇāṃ-ñānam,*

vaijayikīnāṃ-vidyānāṃ-jñānam. However, the list varies from text to text.

Mahā-catuḥ-ṣaṣṭi-koṭi-yoginī-gana-sevithā महा-चतुः-षष्टि-कोटि-योगिनी-गन-सेविथा (237)

Mahā-catuḥ-ṣaṣṭi-koṭi means sixty four crores or 640 million. *Yoginī-gana* are demigoddesses. She is worshipped by these 640 million demigoddesses also known as *yogini-s*. In *Śrī Cakra*, there are eight *mātṛkā devi-s* (also known as *aṣṭa māta-s*) like*, Brāhmī, Māheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vaiśṇavī, Vārāhī, Indrāṇī, Cāmuṇḍā, Mahālakśmī*. The *aṣṭa māta-s* have eight deputies called as *yogini-s* which make sixty four *yogini-s*. Each of these sixty four *yogini-s* has one crore or ten million attendant *yogini-s*. Thus the calculation of 640 million *yogini-s* is arrived. These *yogini-s* attend to different aspects of administration of the universe.

In *Śrī Cakra* there are nine *āvaraṇa-s* (coverings or roundabouts). Each *āvaraṇa* is controlled by a *yogini*. The ninth *āvaraṇa* is controlled by*Lalitāmbikā* Herself. Taking into account the other eight *āvaraṇa*-s, It is said that each *āvaraṇa* has ten million *yogini-s*. The number sixty four should have some significance. This numeric is used in three consecutive nāma-s 235, 236 and this nāma. It is possible that the numeric sixty four refers to sixty four *tattva*-s. The products of five basic elements like ether, etc combined with *antakaraṇa* (mind, intellect, consciousness and ego) making a total of sixty four. In fact, the entire human activities are controlled by these 64 *tattva*-s. Please also refer nāma 230.

Manu-vidyā मनु-विद्या (238)

Vidya means *Śrī Vidya*, the ritual worship of *Śrī Cakra*. The base of *Śrī Vidya* worship is *Pañcadaśī mantra*. There are twelve types of *Pañcadaśī mantra* introduced by *Manu, Kubera* (the god of wealth), *Chandra* (moon), *Lopāmudrā* (wife of sage *Agastya*), *Agastya*, *Manmatha* (the god of love), *Agni* (the fire god), *Surya* (sun), *Indra*

(chief of gods), *Skanda* (Lord *Kārttikeya*, son of *Śiva* and *Pārvatī,* also known as *Subrahmaṇya*), *Śiva* (Her consort) and *Durvāsa*. The basic *mantra* in all the twelve remains the same. In this *Sahasranāma* all these names are referred and the first of such reference is this nāma. This nāma refers to the worship done by *Manu*.

Candra-vidyā चन्द्र-विद्या (239)

After *Manu*, the worship by *Candra* is referred in this nāma.

{There are fifteen main worshippers of *Lalitāmbigai* and each one of them worshipped Her with their own *Pañcadaśī mantra*-s without making any changes in the *bīja*-s. Hence, there are fifteen types of *Pañcadaśī mantra*-s. (However, different texts provide different versions.

Corresponding Sanskrit alphabets for reference:

Ka e ī la hrīṁ ha sa ka ha la hrīṁ sa ka la hrīṁ
क ए ई ल ह्रीं ह स क ह ल ह्रीं स क ल ह्रीं

1. *Viṣṇu*: *ha sa ka la hrīṃ, ha sa, ka ha la hrīṃ, sa ka la hrīṃ, sa ha ka la hrīṃ, sa ha ka ha la hrīṃ, sa ha sa ka la hrīṃ* |

2. *Śiva*: *ha sa ka la hrīṃ, ha sa ka ha la hrīṃ, sa ka la hrīṃ, ha sa ka la ha sa ka ha la sa ka la hrīṃ* |

3. *Brahma*: *ka e ī la hrīṃ, ha ka ha la hrīṃ, ha sa ka la hrīṃ* |

4. *Manu*: *ka ha e ī la hrīṃ, ha ka e ī la hrīṃ, sa ka e ī la hrīṃ* |

5. *Chandra*: *sa ha ka e ī la hrīṃ, ha sa ka ha e ī la hrīṃ, ha sa ka e ī la hrīṃ* |

6. *Kubera: ha sa ka e ī la hrīṃ, ha sa ka ha e ī la hrīṃ, sa ha ka e ī la hrīṃ* |

7. *Lopāmudrā*: *ha sa ka la hrīṃ, ha sa ka ha la hrīṃ, sa ka la hrīṃ* |

8. *Agastya*: *ka e ī la hrīṃ, ha sa ka ha la hrīṃ, sa ha sa ka la hrīṃ* |

9. *Nandikeśvara: sa e ī la hrīṃ, sa ha ka ha la hrīṃ, sa ka la hrīṃ* |

10. *Sūrya*: *ha sa ka la hrīṃ, sa ha ka la hrīṃ, sa ka ha la hrīṃ* |

11. *Skanda: ha sa ka la hrīṃ, ha sa ka sa ka la hrīṃ, sa ha ka ha la hrīṃ*

12. *Manmatha*: *ka e ī la hrīṃ, ha sa ka ha la hrīṃ, sa ka la hrīṃ* |

13. *Sakara*: *ka e ī la hrīṃ, ha ka ha la hrīṃ, sa ka ha la hrīṃ* |

14. *Durvāsa*: *ha sa ka la ha sa ka ha la sa ka la hrīṃ* |

15. *Yama: ka ha e ī la hrīṃ, ha la e ī la hrīṃ, sa ka e ī la hrīṃ* |

Candra-maṇḍala-madhyagā चन्द्र-मण्डल-मध्यगा (240)

Candra-maṇḍala refers to the *sahasrāra*. She is in the middle of the *sahasrāra.* In the middle of the crown *cakra* there is an orifice called *bindu*. She is in the form of this *bindu*. In fact, in ritual worship of *Śrī Cakra*, this *bindu* is the focal point where She is worshipped. The *Candra-maṇḍala* itself is *Śrī Cakra*. The moon has sixteen *kalā-s* and on the full moon day, She is said to be in the form of moon with all the sixteen *kalā-s*. Reciting this *Sahasranāma* on full moon days will bring in all auspiciousness.

Śiva is said to reside in the head of *agni* (fire) and *Śaktī* is said to reside in the head of the moon and together they sustain this universe (it means that the universe is being sustained by fire and moon referring to *Śiva* and *Śaktī.*) This leads to the conclusion that *Candra-maṇḍala* is *Śrī Cakra* Itself.

Cāru-rūpā चारु-रूपा (241)

She is the beauty incarnate. *Cāru* means pretty.

Cāru-hāsā चारु-हासा (242)

Her smile is in line with Her appearance. Her smile (*hāsa*) is compared to the moon. Her smile is the cause of bliss experienced by Her devotees.

Cāru-candra-kalādharā चारु-चन्द्र-कलाधरा (243)

She is wearing the crescent moon in Her crown. *Cāru* means moon light. All the above nāma-s deal with the moon. The full moon represents supreme consciousness. If She is meditated upon on the full moon night, one will attain mantra *siddhi* at the earliest. On full moon days, *sattvic guṇa* becomes predominant.

Cāracara-jagannāthā चारचर-जगन्नाथा (244)

She controls both sentient and insentient things of the world. She is the cause for both static and kinetic energies. Pure static energy is *Śiva* and *Śaktī* is predominantly kinetic energy, though static energy of *Śiva* is also present and their union is the cause for creation. Sentient and insentient means these two energies. She administers this universe as *Śiva-Śaktī.*

Cakra-rāja-niketanā चक्र-राज-निकेतना (245)

Śrī Cakra is known as *Cakra rājam,* the supreme of all *cakra*-s. She resides in this *Śrī Cakra* along with all Her ministers, warriors, etc.

The *sahasrāra* is often referred as *Śrī Cakra*. By activating the *sahasrārā,* one will be able to control his physical and mental activities. This is called *siddhi* and often bound to be misused causing the spiritual down fall. The ministers and assistants, who are referred as *yogini-s,* mean different level of human

consciousness. The point driven home in these nāma-s is that one has to bring the mind under his control to make significant progress in spirituality. This mind control automatically happens when *kuṇḍalinī* reaches *sahasrāra*. Practicing meditation on full moon days will enable the *kuṇḍalinī* to ascend to *sahasrāra* with ease. Not even a single nāma in this *Sahasranāma* is without secretive interpretation. Such meanings are not discussed openly due to various reasons and continue to remain as hidden treasures.

Pārvatī पार्वती (246)

She is the daughter of *Himavān*, the king of mountains and wife of *Śiva*. Nāma 634 also conveys the same meaning.

Padma-nayanā पद्म-नयना (247)

Her eyes are compared to lotus flower. Lotus blossoms at the time of moon rise. This nāma further confirms the effect of meditating on full moon day. When Her eyes are compared to lotus flower, it also implies that Her eyes are wide open at the time of full moon. Please read this along with the notes at the end of nāma 245. Vishnu's eyes are also compared to lotus flower.

Padmarāga-sama-prabhā पद्मराग-सम-प्रभा (248)

She is compared to a special type of ruby called *padmarāga* which is deep red in colour. Or this could also mean that She is like a red lotus. *Padma* means lotus, *rāga* means red and *prabhā* means light, splendour, radiance, beautiful appearance; lights variously personified. The deeper meaning of this nāma is the description of Her subtlest *kuṇḍalinī* form. *Kuṇḍalinī* is deep red in colour at the base of the spine. When She ascends, the brightness of the red gradually decreases and at *sahasrāra* when She conjoins with *Śiva*, She almost becomes colourless. In *sahasrāra*, the practitioner will be in absolute bliss.

With nāma 248 the discussion on Her *saguṇa Brahman* (with forms and attributes) form is concluded and the discussion on Her five great acts begin from nāma 249. The Brahman has five acts to do. One is the creation of the universe, second is its sustenance, the third is dissolution or death of individual lives, the fourth is called *tirodhāna* known as annihilation or total disappearance of the universe and the fifth is called *anugraha* the act of re-creation facilitated by incantations.. The nāma-s from 249 to 340 discuss on the '*Pañca -Brahma svarūpa'* known as the five acts of the Brahman.

Pañca-pretāsanāsīnā पञ्च-प्रेतासनासीना (249)

She is sitting on a throne held by five corpses. These five corpses are *Brahma, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Mahādeva* and *Sadāśiva*. *Brahma* looks after creation, *Viṣṇu* looks after sustenance, *Rudra* causes death, *Mahādeva* conceals the dissolved universe (*tirodhāna*) and *Sadāśiva* again re-creates the universe (*anugraha*). It is said that these five Lords cannot function without their *Śaktī-s* or consorts. Commentators refer to the consorts of these five Gods and without them it is said that these Gods cannot perform their duties. When they are in inert condition, they are referred as corpses. *Śaktī-s* here should mean the various manifestations of *Lalitāmbikā. Vāc Devi-s* surely would not have meant to refer other gods and goddesses in this *Sahasranāma*.

Saundarya Laharī (verse 1) speaks about this. "*Śiva* becomes capable of creating the universe, only when united with *Śaktī,* but otherwise, He is incapable of even a stir. How then could one, who has not acquired merit (*puṇya*) worship you at least praise you, who is adored even by *Viṣṇu, Śiva, Brahma*, and others."

The nāma means that acts of these Gods cannot be carried out without Her authority. Please also read the note at the end of the next nāma.

Pañca-brahma-svarūpiṇī पञ्च-ब्रह्म-स्वरूपिणी (250)

This nāma is an extension of the previous one. The previous nāma underlined the importance of *Lalitāmbikā* in all acts of the Brahman and this nāma asserts that She is the Brahman. If the earlier nāma is not read along with this nāma, its significance would be lost.

These two nāma-s explain the cosmic creation. The Brahman has five functions to perform. They are creation, sustenance, destruction, annihilation and salvation. Each of these activities is governed by different Gods. *Brahma* for creation, etc has been explained in the previous nāma. These different Gods are only manifestations of the Brahman. Though one talks about various forms of gods, all these refer only to the Brahman, who does not have any form and is omnipresent. This concept is further explained in this book under different nāma-s. In fact these Gods, Goddesses, ministers, *yogini*-s mean different natural activities that take place in the universe. That is why Nature is called as Mother Nature and worshipped as a Goddess as acts of the Brahman are unfolded only through Nature and in the arena of Nature.

The five acts of the Brahman is a cyclic process. Creation here means the creation of the universe in the broader perspective. It does not mean the birth of an individual. Sustenance also means the sustenance of the universe as a whole. The birth and death of human beings as well as billions of other species is just a trivial part of the activities that happen in the universe. The first amongst the creations are the five basic elements viz. *ākāś*, air, fire, water and earth. Then the modifications of these elements take place gradually, which is called evolution. Such evolution happens both in physical and subtle planes. The highest known gross form of evolution is man and the highest form of subtle evolution is his mind.

The universe thus created is being administered by the Brahman Himself. In order to maintain a proper balance, creatures are allowed to shed their physical bodies. Souls make the physical bodies to function and hence soul is called kinetic energy. The souls originated from the *hiraṇyagarbha* or the golden egg. This is

so called, as it is born from a golden egg, formed out of the seed deposited in the waters when they were produced as the first creation of the Self-existent This seed became a golden egg, resplendent as the sun, in which the Self-existent Brahma was born as *Brahmā* the Creator, who is therefore regarded as a manifestation of the Self-existent. This is held as the fourth act of the Brahman, *tirodhāna*, or the great dissolution or the act of concealment. The difference between destruction and annihilation is significant. Destruction is the death of a single organism and dissolution is the Supreme process of the Brahman, wherein He makes the entire universe to dissolve and merge unto Himself. At this stage the universe becomes non-existent. There will be no continents, no mountains, no oceans, none of the basic elements *(Pañca bhūta-s*) exist. Such an act of the Brahman is called *mahā-pralayā*. This happens when *Śiva* begins His *mahā-pralaya tāṇḍava* or the cosmic dance. When *Śiva* performs this dance of annihilation, He becomes terribly ferocious. While He continues His dance, the universe gradually gets dissolved unto Him. The reverse modifications take place and penultimately there exists only the five basic elements. Finally these five elements too, dissolve into *Śiva*. Except *Śiva* and *Śaktī* none exists at this stage. *Śaktī* is the lone witness to *Śiva*'s cosmic dance (nāma-s 232 and 571).

Śaktī, is very compassionate. After all She is the divine Mother. She has the intent to re-create the universe. Since *Śiva* continued to be terribly aggressive, She could not even look at Him. Now *Śiva* and *Śaktī* are not united. The great dissolution takes place only if *Śiva* and *Śaktī* are separate. When they are together, *Śaktī* never allows *Śiva* to carry out the act of annihilation. When the great dissolution has commenced, *Śaktī* could only witness such an act and this was discussed in nāma 232. There is another nāma 571 *mahā-prayala-sākṣiṇī* to confirm this. Somehow She wanted Her children to exist. Towards the end of *Śiva*'s *tāṇḍava,* She started dancing (*nāṭya*) along with *Śiva*. But there was no ferocity in Her dance. On seeing Her dancing, the aggressive *Śiva* started returning to His auspicious form. *Śiva* was holding the *hiraṇyagarbha* or the

golden egg where the dissolved universe was concealed. At the request of *Śaktī*, the golden egg was given back to Her by *Śiva* and this is called *anugraha* or salvation. Salvation is a stage before the commencement of the next cycle of creation. Now *Śaktī* takes over from *Śiva* and administers the universe with His power of autonomy or *svātantrya śaktī*.

Now, it is apparent that act of the Brahman cannot happen without *śaktī*. Hence, it is said that without Her involvement no body including *Brahma, Viṣṇu, Rrudra*, *Mahādeva* and *Sadāśiva* can function. They are called '*Pañca-Brahman-s'* meaning the five acts of the Brahman. Since She becomes the cause of these five acts She is called *Pañca-brahma-svarūpiṇī*.

{Further reading on *hiraṇyagarbha:* Brahman has four distinctive states. They are *avyakṭā, Iśvarā*, *hiraṇyagarbha* also known as *sūtrātma* and *virāṭ*. The first state is *avyakṭā,* the unmanifest stage (nāma 398). This is also known as *turya* stage, beyond the three normal stages of consciousness. The next state is *Iśvarā* (nāma 271). This state is the cause of the universe and is associated with *māyā.* The third state is *hiraṇyagarbha,* which binds the universe together. The final state is *virāṭ*, transfiguration of the divine happens that is visible to our eyes. The *virāṭ* is also known as *vaiśvānarā, meaning* relating or belonging to all men, omnipresent, known or worshipped, everywhere, universal, general, common, etc.}

Cinmayī चिन्मयी (251)

She is in the form pure consciousness. *Cin* here means *cit*. Pure consciousness is that stage of awareness, where there is no differentiation between the known, the knower and the knowledge. The absence of this triad while realising the Brahman, is pure *cit* (also *chit*) or consciousness. Please refer nāma 254 also.

{Further reading on consciousness: Consciousness can be explained as an alert cognitive state in which one is aware of himself and his situation. Brahman is pure consciousness known as *cit*. When *cit*

becomes reflected as cosmic conscience in the form of God, it does not lose its omniscience and omnipotence. When *cit* is reflected as individual conscience, it degenerates from absolute consciousness to limited individual consciousness. This is known as *citta* (individual conscience) and is different from *cit*. The cosmic conscience, the Brahman initiates macrocosmic manifestation of *prakṛti* while the individual conscience initiates the microcosmic manifestation. Both *cit* and *citta* set in evolutionary forces into motion. There are different levels of consciousness, the lowest being the stage of action and the highest being *turya* and finally *turyātīta*.}

Paramānandā परमानन्दा (252)

She is the embodiment of happiness. This nāma is an extension of the previous nāma. When consciousness is pure, it leads to bliss, which is known as the supreme happiness.

The stage of pure consciousness can be attained only if *māyā* is discarded. To discard *māyā* or illusion, one needs to cogitate Her all the time. This does not mean that one should stop his quotidian activities, sit in a secluded place and think about Her. The prescribed actions should continue with the clear understanding that such acts are being done on Her behalf. This is the concept of Self-realization. When all the acts are done on Her behalf, the question of happiness or sorrow does not arise, as the results arising out of such actions are surrendered unto Her. Because one is not the doer, the karmas arising out of such actions do not accrue to him. One's body may suffer, but not his mind. His mind treats both happiness and sorrow on the same footing. To attain this stage, one should get away from the clutches of *māyā*. This stage is where one feels 'I am That'.

Chāndogya Upaniṣad (VII.23) says "That which is Infinite is the source of happiness, which is to be sought after".

Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad Gīta* (VI.20), "The mind curbed through practice becomes still in which *Ātman* is realised and the soul rejoices."

Vijñānaghana-rūpiṇī विज्ञानघन-रूपिणी (253)

She is the essence of pure consciousness. Essence means the subtle form of consciousness. *Ānanda* or supreme happiness is the gross form of consciousness.

This is beautifully explained in *Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad* (II.iv.12) says, "Pure and subtle form of consciousness is like dropping a pinch of salt in water. It gets dissolved and cannot be removed from the water. A pinch of salt (subtle) makes the whole pot of water (gross) taste salty. In the same way, the Self comes out as a separate entity (separate entity means me and mine or ego) is destroyed. Then what remains is the Supreme Self alone. Once this state of oneness is attained, there is no question of even the consciousness. But how is this pure consciousness?" This *Upaniṣad* further says (III.iv.2) "This is your Self that is within all. Everything else (the gross body) is perishable."

There is another interpretation. *Vijñāna* means soul or *jīva* and *vijñānaghana* means the total sum of souls. Such sum of souls is called the *hiraṇyagarbha* or the golden egg (please refer nāma 232). *Vijñāna* can be defined as 'the absolute freedom revealing itself in the three actions of the Brahman – creation, sustenance and dissolution. The entire manifestation consisting of subject and object is a reflection of *vijñāna*."

This interpretation is elaborated in *Praśna Upaniṣad* (V.2), which says, "*sa etasmājjīvaghanāt parātparaṁ*" which means He (Brahman) is superior even to *hiraṇyagarbha,* the sum total of all beings."

Dhyāna-dhātṛ-dhyeya-rūpā ध्यान-धातृ-ध्येय-रूपा (254)

She is the form of a triad – the meditation, the meditator and the object of meditation. This triad leads to another triad – the knower, the known and the knowledge. Higher level of spiritual knowledge can be attained only through *dhyāna* or meditation. Meditation is only a process of powerful concentration. Reading books and listening to sermons are not knowledge. Knowledge is attained through internal quest and exploration. The store house of knowledge is not extraneous, but within. The store house is nothing but the Supreme Self. Please refer nāma 251 also.

Patañjali Yoga Sūtra (III.2) explains this further. "Unbroken flow of that concentration in that object is called *dhyāna."*

Kashmiri Saivism has unique *advaita* philosophy known as *trika,* a triad formed out of *Śiva, Śaktī* and *nara* or soul.

Dharmādharma-vivarjitā धर्माधर्म-विवर्जिता (255)

She is above *dharma* and *a-dharma*. *Dharma* is the result of good acts and a-dharma arises out of evil acts. Accrual of sins is the result of *adharma*. It is argued whether an action is *dharma* or *adharma* depends upon the type of job one undertakes. For example, a hangman executing a convict is not *adharma* and on the other hand an ordinary citizen commits a murder amounts to *adharma*. Generally, *dharma* is what is preached by scriptures. It may also be argued that *dharma* and *adharma* are the cause arising out of the three *guṇa-s*. She is beyond *guṇa-s*; hence, these do not apply to Her.

There is another interpretation for *dharma*, religious abstraction, causing bondage. Opposite to bondage is liberation. Bondage and liberation are only for souls and not for the Brahman, as Brahman is the embodiment of absolute purity. Here, Her Brahman form is referred. The ultimate Reality is the situation, where there is no bondage and desire. Desire to attain liberation is also bondage. If one has absolute faith in Her, he should not even aspire for anything, including liberation. She knows what to give and when.

There is a difference between *mukti* (final liberation) and *mokṣā*. Liberation means that a soul will have no more re-births. But, *mokṣā* refers to a soul going to Heaven for sojourn to be reborn again. It is the transmigration of the soul. This means that the soul is not ripe enough for absorption into the Brahman due to its *karmic* account. This aspect is discussed with more details subsequently.

Viśvarūpā विश्वरूपा (256)

Beginning from this nāma, next 19 nāma-s till 274 talk about the difference between the soul and the Brahman.

Viśvarūpā means omnipresent. This nāma discusses the manifold nature of the Brahman. The omnipresence is the unique nature of the Brahman. The creation of the universe was discussed in nāma 250. The Brahman has different forms and shapes as the Brahman exists in every living and non-living being in this universe. In the case of non-living beings, they do not have souls and hence no action takes place on their own. There is no place in the universe, where the Brahman does not exist. The creation takes place first in the form of total darkness. From this darkness intellect arises. From intellect the ego and this ego gives rise to the modifications of the five elements which ultimately creates lives in this universe. This universe is manifested through three different factors viz. gross, subtle and casual which give rise to *vaiśvānarā, hiraṇyagarbha* and *Īśvarā*. These three exist in three stages of a human life awake, dream and deep sleep. Scriptures accept only creation, sustenance, and destruction. But tantra *śāstrās* talk about additional two acts of the Brahman *tirodhāna* and *anugrah*a (details of these two acts are discussed in nāma-s 270 and 273. For basic information, please refer nāma-s 249 and 250) corresponding to additional two stages viz. *turya* and *turyātīta*. *Turya* is the transcendental stage. The consciousness transcending the *turya* stage becomes devoid of duality. In the next and the ultimate stage the consciousness further gets purified and merges into the Supreme Self. This state of consciousness is called *turyātīta*. The union of soul with the

Brahman takes place here and finally gets bonded in *kaivalya*, the ultimate state. The journey of the soul stops here and it ceases to exist. One has to take efforts to have such a union and it does not happen automatically like the first three stages of sleep, dream and deep sleep. The *vaiśvānarā, hiraṇyagarbha*, and *Īśvarā* are the three Gods, *Brahma*, *Viṣṇu* and *Rudra*. They are popularly known as the lords of creation, sustenance and contraction. Generally, one is aware of the first two stages viz. awake and dream stages. In the third stage of deep sleep none is aware of what is happening around, the stage of unconsciousness. A yogi can reach the other two stages, as he knows consciously that he is *Śiva* himself. *Śiva Sūtra* (III.25) says, "*Śiva-tulyo jāyate",* which means 'that yogi becomes like *Śiva*.' When his consciousness realizes the Brahman, the effects of his karmas wither from him and he reaches a stage where there is neither happiness nor sorrow. When the mind ceases to think or when the mind disassociates from the sensory organs such a stage is attained. Only in this stage, *Viśvarūpa* is realized. She is the *Viśvarūpa*, the omnipresent.

In *Bhagavad Gīta* (XI.16), *Arjuna* addresses *Kṛṣṇa*, "Oh! Lord of the universe, I see you endowed with numerous arms, bellies, mouths and eyes and having innumerable forms extended on all sides. I see neither your beginning, nor middle and nor even your end, manifested as you are in the form of universe." *Viśvarūpā* is used here to mean *Kṛṣṇa*'s manifestation in the form of whole universe.

Jāgariṇī जागरिणी (257)

The three stages viz. awake, dream and deep sleep are now being discussed from this nāma till 263.

She is in the form of waking state in the living beings. In *Śiva Sūtra* (I.8) says, "*jñānaṁ jāgrat*". The stage of *jāgrat* (the stage of awake) is explained thus: 'The knowledge obtained by consciousness by direct contact with the external objects'. Here the subject (mind) is in direct contact with the object (material world)

and knowledge is derived with the help of sensory organs. In the previous nāma, She was addressed as '*Viśvarūpa*'. Her *Viśvarūpa* form exists in the form of *jāgrat* in all living beings. This and subsequent nāma-s emphasize the omnipresent nature of the Brahman.

Svapantī स्वपन्ती (258)

She exists in dream state too. [During dream state, REM (Rapid Eye Movement) continues to exist but at lower intensity.] The knowledge gained through external objects is transmitted to mind, causing impressions in the mind. But during dream state, these impressions manifest subconsciously as dreams. Dream is nothing but the contemplation of the mind that could not be executed, in not only this birth, but also the previous births. Dream is the store house of thoughts, accumulated over a period of time. In this state, there is no reasoning to interfere, thoughts remain only as thoughts. Thoughts do not get converted into action. Impressions on the mind remain only as impressions. Impressions revolve in mental horizon. Mind in this stage does not use sensory organs. Here the subject is not in direct contact with any objects as sensory organs are not involved. The modification of consciousness in this stage is assumed by intellect gained in the waking stage. That is why most of the dreams are around the objects that are already known to us. The transformation from gross to subtle begins at this stage. The mind does not actively participate in dream state. It remains passive and just watches the dreams as a witness. Exactly this situation is to be attained when one is awake, not getting affected by the materialistic impressions of the mind. This becomes the ultimate step for Self realisation. She is the cause for this stage.

Taijasātmikā तैजसात्मिका (259)

The individual soul associated with the dream state discussed in the previous nāma is called *taijasa*. In the state of awake, gross body is active and in the state of dream, subtle body (*sūkṣma śarīra*) is

active. *Taijas* operates through the egoistic impulses with the aid of sense faculties and vital airs. Its consciousness turned inward, enjoying exquisite dream memories. Because of its association with the subtle body, it remains associated with *hiraṇyagarbha* state, the aggregate of all subtle bodies. When the individual consciousness withdraws from the gross body and becomes identified with the subtle body, the waking state disappears and the dream state emerges. In this state, the consciousness remains restricted to mind, intellect, consciousness and ego (these four together are called *antaḥkaraṇa*). *Taijasa* is the word derived from *tejomaya* (nāma 452), which means splendour or light, shining, brilliant. She manifests in this stage.

Suptā सुप्ता (260)

The third of the three known stages called '*suṣupti*', the state of deep sleep or the state of unconsciousness. In the stage of deep sleep, one is not aware of anything around him. In this state mind also rests. No traces of the previous two stages are felt here. During this state, REM is either absent or present in lowest intensity. In this stage, casual body is also rested. She is present in this stage as well, the confirmation of Her omnipresence.

Prājñātmikā प्राज्ञात्मिका (261)

She is known as *prājñātmikā* in the *suṣupti* stage, the stage of deep sleep. This is an extension of the previous nāma. *Prājñā* is the manifestation of individual soul in the casual body. As such, it is associated with the Brahman, the aggregate of entire casual bodies. If Brahman controls the universe, at microcosmic level, *prājña* controls individual existence.

Vāc Devi-s after having described the three known stages, now proceed to explain the fourth state of consciousness called *turya*.

(Further reading on the three normal stages of consciousness as elaborated in (*Śiva Sūtra*-s I.8, 9, 10)

Jñānaṁ jāgrat ज्ञानं जाग्रत् (sūtra 8)

Svapno vikalpāḥ स्वप्नो विकल्पाः (sūtra 9)

Aviveko māyāsauṣuptam अविवेको मायासौषुप्तम् (sūtra 10)

Jñānaṁ means knowledge. *Jāgrat* refers to the state of wakefulness or the normal active stage with alert stage of consciousness (8).

Svapna means dream. *Vikalpāḥ* refers to internal perception. External perception happens through senses and internal perception happens through mind (9).

Viveka means discrimination. *Aviveka* means absence of discrimination. *Māyā* means illusion. *Sauṣupta* means deep sleep. Indiscrimination happens naturally in the deep sleep state or *māyā* (10).

These three aphorisms are considered together because they refer to the successive stages of mundane level of consciousness. Every person undergoes through these three successive levels of consciousness almost daily. The first stage refers to the normal active stage of awareness, without which no action can take place. Here sensory perceptions play the lead role. Second stage is the stage where one enters the dream state, a prelude to the next stage of deep sleep. Here, mentation plays a significant role, as dreams unfold only through mind. The last of stage of normal consciousness level is deep sleep, where even the mind ceases to function.

During the first stage, the mind responds to the sensory inputs (8^{th} aphorism). Mind is extremely active during this period as it has to act on multitude of sensory stimulations it receives when a person is in active or alert cognitive state. During this state, mind and senses are interdependent. Communication between senses and mind happens in tremendous swiftness. The sensory perceptions leave lasting impressions in the mind known as thoughts that manifest as dreams in the second stage of consciousness, the dream state, as conveyed through 9^{th} aphorism. The third state of consciousness is a

sort of delusion, as during the stage of deep sleep one forgets his own inherent nature. Both his senses and mind are completely rested. The 10th aphorism compares this stage to māyā, the deceptive state. It is only due to the veil of māyā, one forgets his inherent nature. It is only māyā that makes a person slide down into fathomless bondage and desire. According *Trika* philosophy, *māyā* also is the will of *Śiva*, which *Advaita* also endorses. All the three states co-exist at all the time, but only one state is predominant. This is like three types of *guṇa*-s. All the three *guṇa*-s prevail at the same time, but only one among them is predominant. This is also the case with five basic elements, ether, air, etc. But there is a significant precept in the tenth aphorism. It says that absence of higher level of consciousness is equivalent to the state of deep sleep. To put it other way, it says that ignorance *(avidyā*) is nothing but the state of deep sleep, where neither mental activity nor physical activity takes place. What is being discussed in these three aphorisms is only the mundane level of consciousness. There are higher levels of consciousness turya and *turyātīta* that will be discussed later in this book.

What is discussed above pertains to normal human beings. But, yogis are exceptions. Their level of consciousness is totally different from the consciousness level of ordinary humans. Yogis are those who are able to connect microcosm with macrocosm and remain in that position perpetually. Yogin means yoking. His concentration is always focused. Even in active state (*Jāgrat*), he remains connected with *Śiva*, the Ultimate Reality. His sensory perceptions are limited to merely maintain his gross body that merely acts a cover for *Śiva* within. None of the gross matters is of any interest to him. In the absence of extraneous impressions in his mind, in his dream state also, he remains united with *Śiva*. His internal perceptions do not undergo any significant changes to cause a dream other than *Śiva*. His sensory perceptions would have almost lost their intended utilities and therefore do not cause any significant impressions to dream about something else other than his own *Śiva*. Without any modifications, his consciousness enters the

stage of *samādi*, in his deep sleep state. He enters the state of *samādi* at his own will and in fact most of the times he remains in the stage of *samādi*. *Samādi* is attained by constant practice of cessation of all mental activities, in which the mind retains only the unmanifested impressions. The difference in perceptions happens only if any alternate object is available for consideration. But he does not have an alternate matter to consider. He considers everything as *Śiva*. He has realised that he is not different from his own Śiva. For him the knowing, the knower and the object of knowing are not different. He has developed unbroken flow of concentration in *Śiva*. He enters the higher tiers of consciousness *turya* and *turyātīta* at his own will and for him the transition from one level of consciousness to another level of consciousness happens with ease. To attain this stage, his free-will would have played a preponderant role.}

Turyā तुर्या (262)

This is the fourth stage of consciousness. It cannot be experienced automatically. This stage can be attained only through meditation. This stage is not related to any of the three earlier stages. In the waking stage we are associated with consciousness. In the dream stage our mind is associated with our consciousness. In the third stage of dream-less sleep, consciousness has no part to play as the mind at this stage is at rest. But in *turya* stage, one has to tune his mind to become unaware of consciousness. This can be attained only by practice. In this stage one is neither the Brahman nor his own self. If one is able to advance to the next stage of turyātīta, he merges with the Brahman. If he falls from *turya* stage, he is again bound by worldly actions and the associated miseries. She exists in the form of turiya stage.

This state of consciousness is witnessing the consciousness of the other three stages (in the deep sleep, consciousness is inactive). The consciousnesses in the other three stages are subjected to modifications. In this stage, the consciousness alone remains

looking up for something Superior that has not been experienced by it so far. Therefore the normal consciousness ceases to exist in this stage. Only when we talk about consciousness, we talk about subject and object. There is no subject and object and in fact nothing exists. This stage of 'nothing exists' leads to the transformation of awareness. This can possibly be interpreted as a seed ready to sprout. The transformed consciousness leads to the single pointed or focused consciousness to know about the Brahman or even ready to merge with it. The final stage is yet to be reached in this state.

(Further reading on *turya* as enumerated in *Śiva Sūtra* (I.7):

Jāgratsvapnasuṣuptabhede turyābhogasambhavaḥ.
जाग्रत्स्वप्नसुषुप्तभेदे तुर्याभोगसम्भवः (sūtra I.7)

There are three stages of consciousness, *jāgrat*, (normal active stage, or stage of awakening) *svapna* (dream stage) and *suṣupti* (deep sleep stage). These three stages are the normal level consciousness of a man. *Bheda* means difference. Beyond these three levels of normal consciousness, there are two more levels of consciousness. Out of these two, this *sūtrā* discusses about the fourth level of consciousness known as *turya*. *Ābhoga* (आभोग) means ecstatic stage (*abhoga* अभोग means non-enjoyment). *Sambhavaḥ* means existing.

This *sūtra* says that even during the first three stages of consciousness, the fourth stage of consciousness, the ecstatic *turya* exists. When spiritual transformation happens in a person, there is a meeting point between the material awareness and the spiritual awareness. Beginning from that point, when the upward movement in the spiritual path really begins, one's ego begins to dissolve. When ego begins to fade away, it leads to universal attitude of the soul, when the knowledge of the omnipresent nature of the Brahman begins to unfold. This is what is to be precisely practiced in meditation. The fourth stage of consciousness continues to prevail in the other three mundane stages of consciousness, as one is bound

by *ajñāna* (ignorance) and consequent egotism. When ego begins to get dissolved, the spell of *ajñāna* also begins to fade away, paving the way for the realisation of the Self. This transformation happens in the stage of *turya*.

Turya state is un-inferable, inconceivable and indefinable where manifold sensory perceptions paves way for the realisation of the *Śiva*. *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* (7) says, "*Turya* is not conscious what is happening within. It is also not conscious of what is happening externally. It is not conscious of anything in between. It is also not a mass of consciousness. It is not conscious of all objects simultaneously; it is not unconscious either. It is invisible, not susceptible to any kind of usage, not within the reach of any organ of action or perception or thought. In it there is only consciousness of the Self and there is a total cessation of materialism as such. It is the embodiment of peace and all that is good. It is one without a second. "

The fourth state of consciousness is always present in all the men as a witness to all the three mundane levels of consciousness. This is in contrast to the first three level of consciousness that prevails one at a time. When one is awake, he cannot sleep, when one is dreaming he cannot be awake and when one is in the state of deep sleep, he can neither be awake nor dream. But, *turya* is present in the first three states of consciousness, sheathed by *māyā*, thereby making it unrealizable. This can be realised only in the advanced stages of meditation. Preliminary stages of meditation merely formulate groundwork and lay proper foundation for the realisation of *Śiva*. If the foundational consciousness is weak, the most powerful *Śiva* cannot manifest. When proper preparatory work is completed, *turya* takes over the consciousness, and the emancipation happens thereafter. It does not mean that his body ceases to exist (death), but his consciousness is purified by his preparatory work, making it easier for *turya* to take complete control of his consciousness. He still experiences the first three stages of consciousness, the exception being that the quality of his consciousness has undergone

complete transformation, moving closer and closer to *Śiva*, awaiting the final realisation of *Śiva* at anytime.}

Sarvāvasthā-vivarjitā सर्वावस्था-विवर्जिता (263)

Previous nāma-s confirmed Her existence in all the four stages. Now it is said that She is beyond these stages, again the quality of the Brahman. Since, She being the Brahman, is merely witnessing these four stages by residing within us and She does not associate Herself with these stages. This is because the Brahman has no attributes and forms. In the earlier four stages, there existed consciousness. *Turyātīta* is the fifth stage, where there is no consciousness at all. This stage is beyond consciousness. When this stage is reached, there is no question of return to the lower four stages. Unless one experiences *turya* stage for some time, this fifth stage cannot be attained. The dictum that, *practice alone makes a man perfect*, is the best fit here. Here there is no duality. '*Sarvam Īśvara mayam jagat'* meaning everything is *Īśvara* or the Brahman. He becomes *Śiva* Himself. He will not make prayers, he will not perform japa, he will not go to places of worship, and he will not perform rituals. Whatever he does, he knows it is done for *Śiva* only. When he eats, *Śiva* eats. When he bathes, *Śiva* also takes bath. No duality, no *māyā*, no discrimination. He will not wear a red or white robe. He will dress like anyone else. He walks and talks like us. It is extremely difficult to recognize him as *Śiva*. As *Śiva* exists everywhere, this yogi also coexists one amongst us. This stage is beyond all the other four stages and She exists in this stage too. Here *Śiva* also means *Śaktī*.

Śiva Sūtra-s (III. 27, 28 and 29) enumerate the qualities of a person who has reached this stage. He is always of full of Supreme I consciousness and feels 'I am the highest *Ātma* and I am *Śiva*.' He realises that knowledge of the Self is the gift that he disseminates. He has attained mastery over *śaktī*-s (meaning powers), and becomes an instrument of knowledge and wisdom.

Sage *Patañjali* underlines the importance of purity of mind in his *Yoga Sūtra*-s. He says (I.47), "The concentration without discrimination being purified *citta* becomes firmly fixed." The pure form of consciousness is known as *dhyātmprasādaḥ*. In the next aphorism (I.48), he says, "the knowledge in That is called filled with Truth." This is the stage without ego. This is called Truth because there is nothing beyond this point. She is present in this stage also. These nāma-s repeatedly affirm Her Supreme status. The singular fact that is to be remembered is that *Śiva* and *Śaktī* do not have any ideological differences and the one without the other becomes inert. Their conjugation causes creation. This is discussed in the next nāma.

Sṛṣṭi-kartrī सृष्टि-कर्त्री (264)

Beginning this nāma, till 274 the five actions of the Brahman are being discussed. Earlier the five stages of consciousness were discussed. Now the five acts of the Brahman are being described. *Vāc Devi*-s have formulated this *Sahasranāma* in such a way that it talks about every aspect the Supreme Brahman (*saguṇa* and *nirguṇa* forms of Brahman). If one could understand impartations of all the nāma-s of this *Sahasranāma*, it tantamount to knowing all the *Upaniṣad*-s. *Bhagavad Gīta* is yet another treasure in Self-realization.

In this nāma, the creative aspect (*sṛṣṭi*) of the Brahman is referred. The creation happens out of Her *tamo guṇa*. The three main acts of the Brahman viz. creation, sustenance and dissolution are represented by three forms of God viz. *Brahma*, *Viṣṇu* and *Rudra*.

Saundarya Laharī (verse 24) talks about the three acts of the Brahman. "*Brahma* creates this universe. *Viṣṇu* sustains it and *Rudra* dissolves it. Annihilating them, *Īśvara* conceals Himslef as well. *Sadāśiva* approves of them pursuant of your command conveyed through your creeper-like (a symbolic description of Her eye-brows) eye-brows moved for a moment."

{Further reading on *guṇa-s*: There are three types of *guṇa-s*. *Guṇa-s* mean qualities or attributes, which form the inherent nature of *prakṛti*. The three *guṇa-s* are *sattvic* or *sattva*, *rajas* or *rajo* and *tamas* or *tamo*. In each of these *guṇa-s*, the other two *guṇa-s* are also present. *Sattva guṇa* is where quality and purity of knowledge attains the highest level, with the least presence of other two *guṇa-s*. This is where spiritual growth begins to bloom. *Rajo guṇa* is predominant when action and passion are predominant. It is associated with earthly plane and mundane knowledge. It involves higher passions with worldly pursuits. This is where goals are set and in order to achieve the set goals, attachment, self-conceit, arrogance, unjustness, contempt, slander and consequent sorrow and miseries are felt. This is the stage where major portion of the *karmic* account builds up. *Tamo guṇa* is inertia and ignorance. This is associated with much lower planes than earth. Illusion and ignorance are predominant here. Sluggishness, infatuation, confusion, stupidity, aversion, recklessness, vulgarity, grief, pain, anxiety, hatred, violence are some of the predominant qualities of this *guṇa*.}

Brahma-rūpā ब्रह्म-रूपा (265)

She is in the form of the God of creation *Brahma*. *Brahma* has four heads. The four heads could mean the components of *antaḥkaraṇa* mind, intellect, consciousness and ego. Without these four, creation is not possible. There are many stories about *Brahma*'s four heads. He had five heads, possibly meaning the five elements or five *prāṇa-s* (*prāṇa, apāna, vyāna, samāna and udāna*) that are needed for creation. The fifth head was cut off by *Śiva* for having shown disrespect to Him. There is yet another story, which says that *Brahma* had split his body horizontally into two, a male and a female form (different from *ardhanārīśvara* form of *Śiva* where *Śiva*'s body is dissevered vertically, the other half occupied by *Śaktī*). Brahma is said to be the great-grandfather, *Viṣṇu* the grandfather and *Śiva* the father of this universe.

(Further reading on the process of creation (in brief): The soul, which is also known as *puruṣa* can manifest only if interacts with *prakṛti,* which is also known as Nature, the creative self-unfoldment. When the soul gets associated with *prakṛti,* the latter unfolds first into subtle non-materialistic form and later into gross form. When gross form is formed, it gives rise to three types of bodies called gross (*sthūla*), subtle (*sūkṣma*) and cause (*kāraṇa*). Gross is the outer body, subtle and cause are the inner bodies. Until a soul is liberated, subtle and cause bodies continue their association with the soul. Only the gross body is perishable. The imperceptible impressions of many lives become embedded in these bodies, thereby causing predominance of certain qualities in the mind in each rebirth. They are the seeds of karmas that are embedded in a soul.}

Goptrī गोप्त्री (266)

She is the protector, sustaining this universe. Protection is the second act of the Brahman. Protection is Her *sattva guṇa*. Light and harmony are the qualities of *sattva guṇa*. She not only protects but also nurtures this universe. After all, She is the Divine Mother *Śrī Mātā*. Protecting and nurturing are the instinctive duties of a mother.

Govinda-rūpiṇī गोविन्द-रूपिणी (267)

Govinda is *Viṣṇu*. *Viṣṇu* is the protector of this universe. When one needs health, wealth and prosperity one has to worship *Viṣṇu*. *Viṣṇu* should not be worshipped alone to get material prosperity and should be worshipped along with His consort *Lakṣmī* and this form is known as *Lakṣmī Nārāyana*. This form is considered as the most auspicious form. If one needs to get rid of some difficulties, one has to pray *Lakṣmī Nārāyaṇa* form of *Viṣṇu*. *Narasiṃha,* also known as *Nārasiṃha* form of *Viṣṇu* is considered as the only terrible form; otherwise *Viṣṇu* is considered as the most auspicious God.

Viṣṇu is known through *Veda*-s and *Upaniṣads*. *Go* (गो) means *vāc* or words. Since the qualities of *Viṣṇu* cannot be described by words He is called *Govinda*. *Go* also means earth. Since He sustains the earth, He is called *Govinda*. When the great dissolution took place (refer nāma 232), *Viṣṇu* lifted and saved the earth (earth is only a part of the universe) from water that prevailed everywhere. Because He saved the earth, He is called *Govinda*.

In *Viṣṇu Sahasranāma* the nāma '*Govinda*' appears twice viz. nāma-s 187 and 539. (Such repetitions are not found in *Lalitā Sahasranāma,* which is its unique feature.)

{Further reading on *Viṣṇu*: *Viṣṇu* (विष्णु) administers the universe, which has seven worlds. These seven worlds are the seven *vyāhṛti*-s of *Gāyatri mantra*. In reality, these worlds represent the seven mental planes of human consciousness, from macro level to micro level. The lower and gross level of consciousness is the lowest world and the highest micro level of consciousness is called the upper world. Possibly, the seven worlds could refer to the six *cakra*-s and *sahasrāra*. Unless the level of consciousness undergoes modifications, refinement and purity, Self-realization is not possible. *Viṣṇu* administers this universe based on the "Law of *Karma*". He cannot and will not bypass this law even by a fraction of an inch. The worlds that He administers have different predominant aspects. For example, in earth matter is predominant. The higher planes have life energies, emotional energies, and mental energies. The level of energies that prevails in these seven worlds becomes subtle and refined from the gross level (association with matter) as one traverses these worlds towards the highest. *Viṣṇu* is known for His *sayana* or the yogic sleep. This famous posture means that all pervading *Viṣṇu* rests on the blissful ocean of eternal existence. *Viṣṇu* means all pervading. Sri Aurobindo says "*Viṣṇu* paces out the vast framework of the inner worlds in which our soul-action takes place. It is by Him and with Him that we raise into His highest seats where we find waiting for us the Friend, the Beloved

and Beatific (bestowing celestial Joy) Godhead". This celestial joy is known as bliss.

She is in the form of *Govinda* (*Viṣṇu*).

Saṃhārinī संहारिनी (268)

She causes destruction. Destruction is different from dissolution. The difference between destruction and dissolution is significant. Destruction is the death of a single organism and dissolution is the Supreme process of the Brahman, wherein He makes the entire universe to dissolve and merge unto Himself (nāma 270). This nāma refers to the death of gross bodies and She as the administrator of the universe also causes death.

Rudra-rūpā रुद्र- रूपा (269)

She is in the form of *Rudra*, while causing death. Her form is known as *Rudra* when She causes the death of individual lives. *Rudra* does not mean the lord of death.

Rudra is the destroyer of miseries. *Ru* refers to pains arising out of miseries arising out of improper usage of sensory organs and *dra* means to disperse. Rudra means driving away miseries.

Chāndogya Upaniṣad (III.13.3) says, "*Rudra*-s are connected with religious rites. The *prāṇa-s* are called *Rudra*-s because they make everyone in this world cry."

{Further reading on *Rudra*: The subtle form *Rudra* is the cosmic energy that is capable of destroying evil energies. The gross form of *Rudra* is a form of *Śiva*. He is known for perfect discipline. He destroys anything that obstructs the path of perfection. But for sure He is compassionate and merciful. The literal meaning of *Rudra* is moving around crying. As a matter of fact the cry of *Rudra* is the creation. *Rudra* also means the *prāna* or the life force (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* III.16.3). When a child is born, it starts crying, only when it inhales *prāṇa* or the first breath. This is the exact time of birth of

a child that should be noted for casting birth charts. Often, reference is made to eleven *Rudra*-s and they are called *ekādaśa Rudra-s*. They are in fact created from the *Ardhanārīśvara* form of *Śiva* and *Śaktī* (male-female combined form divided vertically). It is also said that *Rudra* was born out the third eye of *Brahma*, the lord of creation. *Rudra* is responsible for the union of individual soul with the Supreme soul by means of OM. Probably this is the reason why *Rudra* is called as the lord of death. The famous '*tryambaka mantra'* of *Śrī Rudram* in *Yajur Veda* and *Rig Veda* conveys the following meaning. "Oh! The Lord of three worlds, bestower of grace, provider of fullness and strength, may I be detached from the bondage of death like a ripe cucumber (A ripe cucumber bursts and comes off from the plant automatically. There is no need for plucking) from shell, but not from immortality". Shell means the physical body and seeds and pulp of the cucumber is compared to the soul. The verse seeks *Rudra*'s grace to prevent a pre-mature death. Immortality is not sought and cannot be sought also. This goes to prove that *Rudra* is not the lord of death.}

Tirodhānakarī तिरोधानकरी (270)

She causes annihilation and makes the universe disappear. *Tirodhāna* is the fourth act of the Brahman, which is called the great dissolution or the *pralaya*. Why this dissolution is necessary when every living being is subjected to death? The presence of ego makes a man live, as ego is a part of *antaḥkaraṇa* (mind, consciousness, intellect and ego). Without ego the man cannot exist. The ego is present in the soul and not in the physical body. The presence of ego in the soul hides the Brahman from realization. The souls never get destroyed and subject to their karmic account either they are re-born or merge with the Brahman. The law of *karma* says that a soul can have only three solutions. One is to merge with the Brahman, second is to reborn and the third is to get dissolved during the great dissolution. A majority of the souls are re-reborn. To remove the evil effects of ego in the souls, the great dissolution takes place. Such great dissolutions take place after billions of years. The soul

can be destroyed only by the Supreme Brahman. The Supreme Brahman simply acts as a witness and does not get involved in the actions associated with the souls. At one point of time, He wakes up and causes the great dissolution by taking back all the atoms of the universe. The great dissolution happens when lesser number of souls merges with the Brahman and more souls are reborn. Such a situation arises, only when more sins are committed. In fact the great dissolution means the total destruction of ego from the universe. Not even a single life exists after the great dissolution. The Brahman draws the entire universe unto him and at the time of recreation, this takes the shape of the golden egg or *hiraṇyagarbha*.

Īśvarī ईश्वरी (271)

The one who does the act of *tirodhāna* explained in the previous nāma. *Īśvara tattva* is the 26th *tattva* (principle) out of the 36 *tattva-s*, where the power of knowledge is predominant. *Īśvara* controls everything. *Īśvara* is *parāhaṃtā*, meaning Supreme individuality. *Viṣṇu Sahasranāma* nāma 36 is also *Īśvara*.

Sadāśivā सदाशिवा (272)

Look at the beauty of placement of nāma-s. As deliberated earlier, the Brahman has got five duties to perform. The first four have been discussed in the previous nāma-s. In these nāma-s, first the action was referred followed by the form of the Brahman who looks after that particular action. For example take nāma-s 264 and 265. Nāma 264 is *sṛṣṭi-kartrī*, the act of creation and 265 is *brahma-rūpā* the form of god who performs the act of creation. It is the case with other three. While talking about the gracious re-creative aspect of the Brahman, the form of God is referred first, then the action. Possibly *Vāc-Devi*-s could have thought that merely uttering this nāma alone would give salvation.

She is in the form of *Sadāśivā*. *Sadā* means ever and *Śiva* means auspicious. The *Sadāśivā* form of the Brahman is the most auspicious form and She is said to be in that form. In the stage of

Sadāśivā tattva, *icca śakti* or the will (to create) is predominant. The concept of "I am this" begins to dawn (this stage is not "I am That"), where perfect purity is not yet attained. In this stage universal consciousness is discovered. The individual consciousness has not yet merged with the universal consciousness. *Śaktī* is the intent of the Brahman to recreate. The power of will of the Brahman at this stage is to bless the universe for recreation and this act is being described in the next nāma.

The power of will of the Brahman has three distinct categories, *śuddhavidyā, Īśvara* and *Sadāśiva*.

Anugrahadā अनुग्रहदा (273)

The action of the gracious *Sadāśiva*, the blessing aspect for recreation is being referred. *Anugraha* means grace, promoting, etc. When the universe got dissolved, there exists nothing. The atoms of all the souls got compressed and embedded in the *hiraṇyagarbha* or the golden egg. The blessing aspect of the Brahman is the act of recreation after the dissolution. This act of recreation is done by *Śaktī*, the Supreme Mother. *Sadāśivā* form of the Brahman is endowed with compassion.

The importance of Guru is stressed in ancient scriptures. While worshipping *Śrī cakra*, Guru lineage is worshipped first. Guru is first worshipped in the form of *praṇava* (OM), then in the forms of *Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudrā, Mahādeva* and *Sadāśiva*. These five forms of the Brahman, discussed in the previous nāma-s are worshipped in the form of Guru.

Pañcakṛtya-parāyaṇā पञ्चकृत्य-परायणा (274)

She is the abode of all the five functions discussed above. Nāma 250 *Pañca-brahma-svarūpinī* already said that She is in the cause of all these five acts. All these five acts are carried out by Her as *prākaśa (cit) vimarśa (śaktī) mahā māyā svarūpinī*. She is also

known as *Cit Śaktī*. *Cit* means the consciousness that is absolute and unchanging.

Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam, a Kashmiri *saivaism* text on Self-realisation says that *Śaktī* brings about the universe by Her own free will and not by extraneous powers. The universe is already contained in Her implicitly and She makes it explicit. Even in a soul, He (meaning *Śiva*) does the five *kṛtya-s*. He does the five-fold act of manifesting, relishing, thinking out, settling of the seed and dissolution. One fails to recognise His own powers (five *kṛtya-s)*, because of ignorance. (*kṛtya* कृत्य means to be performed; whereas *kṛtyā* कृत्या means wickedness)

Bhānu-maṇḍala-madhyastā भानु-मण्डल-मध्यस्ता (275)

She is in the middle of solar orbit. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (I.vi.6) says, "There is deity within the orbit of the sun, who is seen by yogis. His whole body glitters like gold." 'Obeisance to that form in the sun's orbit the one, who is the embodiment of all the Veda-s, who showers his brilliance all over the different worlds (These worlds are the seven *vyāhṛti-s* of pūrṇa *Gāyatrī mantra*. Worlds refer to seven worlds above and seven worlds beneath totalling to fourteen. These imaginary worlds are the modifications of one's consciousness. The worlds could also refer to three types of mundane consciousness, awake, dream and deep sleep).

Anāhat cakra is also called *bhānu-maṇḍala* and *kuṇḍalinī* also glitters like gold. Possibly, this nāma could mean Her *kuṇḍalinī* form.

Bhairavī भैरवी (276)

Wife of *Bhairavā* (*Śiva*) is *Bhairavī*. They are inseparable.

It is interesting to know about the *Bhairava* form of *Śiva*. *Bha* means sustenance of the universe, *ra* means the great dissolution and *va* means recreation. This form of *Śiva* is considered as one of

His subtle forms and is beyond the essence of energy of *Śaktī* (not beyond *Śaktī* Herself) and is the manifestation of the Supreme Brahman. This is a stage beyond all the stages of consciousness. No *tattva*-s, no *mantra*-s, beyond OM, in fact *Bhairava* is beyond everything.

There is a series of yogic practices referred in *Vijñānabhairava*, a famous and ancient Kashmiri text on yoga (verse 24). 'There are two points in our respiration. One is the outer space where exhalation ends and the other is the point within our respiratory system where the inhalation ends. In both these points, the breath takes rest for a split second. The rest does not mean that it stops for a split second, but remains in the form of *Śaktī* in a stage of suspended animation. One should concentrate on this *Śaktī* to realize the Brahman. This *Śaktī* is called *Bhairavī*. This masterly interpretation also confirms the *prakāśa* and *vimarśa* aspect of the Brahman. *Śaktī* is moving up and down as *prāṇa* and therefore *vimarśa* form. *Prakāśa* is the static Self-illuminating *Ātman* within. This is the reason why yoga teaches on the concentration of breath.

The form of *Bhairava* that we see in temples is not the *Bhairava* discussed here. These forms of *Bhairava* are protectors of temples and the community living around temples.

In general it should be understood that the union of *Śiva* and *Śaktī* is known as *vāc*. *Śiva* is the meaning of a word and *Śaktī* is root of the word. It is also said that *Śiva* and *Śaktī* cannot be separated. They are united firmly like a word and its meaning. One cannot separate the meaning from the word. It is the same concept with *Bhairava* and *Bhairavī*.

A girl of twelve years is called as *Bhairavī*.

Bhagamālinī भगमालिनी (277)

Bhaga has many meanings. Goddess *Savitṛī* is also addressed as *Bhaga*. It also means good fortune, happiness, welfare, prosperity, dignity, majesty, distinction, excellence, beauty, loveliness, etc.

She is in the form of *Bhagamālinī*, one of the *tithi nitya devi-s*. There are fifteen *tithi nitya devi-s*, one *nitya devi-s* for each lunar day. *Tithi* means one lunar day. In her *mantra* '*bhaga*' appears several times. Hence this *tithi nitya devi* is called *Bhagamālinī*. They are worshipped during *Śrī Cakra navāvaraṇa pūja*.

In *Liṅga Purāṇa* there is a reference (I.99.6, 7) to a goddess called *Bhagā*. "She is the mother of the universe. Her name is *Bhaga*. She is the threefold pedestal (the bottom portion of Liṅga) of the deity, in the form of Liṅga". This description perfectly fits *Umā* and *Maheśvarā* (*Śaktī* and *Śiva*). The pedestal on which *Liṅga* is placed is called *Bhagā*.

Bhagā also means the six qualities of *Śaktī* which is explained in nāma 279. She is wearing a garland twined with these six qualities of prosperity.

Padmāsanā पद्मासना (278)

She is seated on a lotus or She is sitting in the posture of *padmāsana* (a yogic way of sitting, cross legged). *Padma* means lotus. When one is seated in *padmāsana*, the posture will appear like a lotus. The leaves of lotus creeper are compared to *prakṛti* (the source of objectivity), its filaments to *vikṛti* (categories, changed condition), and its stalk to knowledge. *Padma* also means the Goddess of wealth *Lakṣmī*. In this context it indicates that She distributes wealth to Her devotees. Here wealth does not mean material wealth only, but also the intellectual wealth, the capacity to have higher level of consciousness, needed to realise the Brahman. It could also mean the *Brahma*, the lord of Creation.

Bhagavatī भगवती (279)

She is endowed with auspiciousness and power of autonomy of *Śiva*.

This nāma is an extension of nāma 277. *Bhaga* refers to six qualities of *Śaktī* viz. supremacy, righteousness, fame, prosperity, wisdom and discrimination. The nāma means to highlight certain important qualities of the Brahman. She is endowed with these qualities. There is another set of six qualities and they are creation and destruction, waxing and waning, knowledge and ignorance. It is also said that She is worshipped by all gods and goddesses, therefore She is known as *Bhagavatī*. In *Viṣṇu Sahasranāma*, nāma 558 is *Bhagavate* which carries the same meaning. The masculine gender of *Bhagavatī* is used in *Viṣṇu Sahasranāma*.

Padmanābha-sahodarī पद्मनाभ-सहोदरी (280)

She is the younger sister of Lord *Viṣṇu*. *Brahma* and *Lakṣmī*, *Viṣṇu* and *Umā*, *Śiva* and *Sarasvatī* are twins. They represent creation, sustenance and destruction. *Sarasvatī* got married to *Brahma*, *Lakṣmī* to *Viṣṇu* and *Umā* to *Śiva*. This is a beautiful description of interdependence of creation in mythology.

The Brahman is divided into two aspects. One is the form of righteousness (*dharma*) and another is the possessor of righteousness. The *dharma* portion of the Brahman is divided into two, male and female. *Viṣṇu*, the male form of *dharma* portion of the Brahman is sustainer of this universe. *Śaktī,* the female portion of the righteousness became the wife of *Śiva*. She is called *Umā*. *Śiva*, His wife *Umā* and *Viṣṇu* combine is referred as the Brahman in this nāma.

The three nāmas 278, 279 and 280 subtly convey the first *kūṭa* (*vāgbhava kūṭa*) of *Pañcadaśī mantra* (क ए ई ल ह्रीं). That is why these nāma-s do not convey any serious meaning as seen in other nāma-s. In fact, these nāma-s convey the secretive *mantra* form.

Unmeṣa-nimiṣotpanna-vipanna-bhuvānavalī ऊन्मेष-निमिषोत्पन्न-विपन्न-भुवानवली (281)

Unmeṣa means opening eye lids and *nimiṣ* means closing of eye lids.

The creation and dissolution of the universe happens at the wink of Her eyes. When She opens Her eyes, universe is created and when She closes Her eyes, universe is dissolved (*vipanna*). She does these crucial acts with great ease. This nāma actually highlights the ease with which the Brahman creates and dissolves this universe.

Saundarya Laharī (verse 55) also speaks on the same tone. "The sages have said that the world gets dissolved and created with the closing and opening of your eyes respectively. I suppose that your eyes have dispensed with winking in order to save from dissolution of this entire world which has had its through the opening of your eyes."

This nāma conveys the subtle nature of the cosmic creation. Kashmiri texts interpret Unmeṣa as the externalising of icchā śakti, the commencement of world process. Unmeṣa also means the unfoldment of spiritual consciousness, which is attained by focussing on the inner consciousnss.

Sahasra-śīrṣa-vadanā सहस्र-शीर्ष-वदना (282)

Sahasra in this context means infinite and literally means thousand. She has countless heads and faces. The next two nāma-s also have the same meaning. Unable to describe Her supremacy by words, *Vāc Devi*-s have used an envisioned form here that encompasses summate supremacy. In fact, it can be considered as true in literal sense. Since the Brahman has so many acts to do in different places at the same time, the Brahman needed countless numbers of heads.

The countless number of heads for the Brahman is described in Veda-s and *Upaniṣads*. *Bhagavad Gīta* (XIII.13) says "He dwells

in the world, enveloping all – everywhere, His hands and feet; present on all sides, His eyes and ears, His mouth and heads".

The Brahman has no form and therefore has no sensory organs. The Brahman can be explained in two ways; one is by negation and the other by affirmation. These nāmas explain the Brahman by affirmations. These descriptions are called cosmic intelligence, hence beyond human comprehension *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* (I.13) says "He (the Brahman) became the possessor of the eyes, faces, hands and feet of all creatures in every part of the universe (विस्त्वतश्चक्ष् विश्वतोमुखः)". Thus, the *Upaniṣad* confirms that the Brahman exists in every living being of this universe. *Puruṣasūkta* also says '*Puruṣa* (the Brahman) has thousands of heads, thousands of eyes, thousands of feet'. Each element of universal creation is individualized Cosmic Consciousness.

Sahasrākṣī सहस्राक्षी (283)

She has thousands of eyes. *Viṣṇu Sahasranāma* 226 also conveys the same meaning.

Sahasrapād सहस्रपाद् (284)

She has thousands of feet. *Viṣṇu Sahasranāma* 227 also conveys the same meaning.

Puruṣasūktam opens by saying "सहस्र-शीर्षा पुरुषः । सहस्राक्षः सहरपात्॥"

The first *kūṭa of Pañcadaśī mantra* is discreetly revealed in nāma-s 278 to 280. The second and third *kūta*-s (ह स क ह ल ह्रीं। स क ल ह्रीं॥) of the *mantra* is revealed in nāma-s 281 to 284.

Ābrahma-kīṭa-jananī आब्रह्म-कीट-जननी (285)

The Supreme creator. She creates from *Brahma* to the smallest insect. *Brahma* here means humans. Human form is said to be supreme creation of God. Look at the placement of these nāma-s.

After having described the Brahman from nāma 281 to 284, *Vāc Devi*-s in this nāma have consolidated their description, by mentioning the creative aspect of the Brahman. The Brahman was descried with countless heads, ears and feet only to highlight the ease with which creation is being made by Her.

Varṇāśrama-vidhāyinī वर्णाश्रम-विधायिनी (286)

Varṇāśrama means the order of life as expounded in Vedās. Veda-s classify people based upon their knowledge and capabilities. For example, soldiers are needed to protect borders of countries, agriculturists are needed to grow grains for consumption to make a living, traders are needed to buy requirements, and priests are needed to perform rituals. Veda-s say that the classification is not based upon their birth, but on the ability of a person to perform certain duties. It would not be logical to expect a trader to protect borders effectively. Therefore the inclination, capacity, knowledge and experience are the parameters by which a person is classified. Such classifications are applicable only to the human race. Since She is not different from Veda-s and all the Veda-s originated from Her, it is said that She has made these classifications.

Having created the universe, She also created the Veda-s to effectively administer the universe. Veda-s lay down rules and regulations to be followed in a human life. Path shown by Veda-s is known as *dharma* or righteousness. If one trespasses prescribed righteousness by Veda-s, he gets afflicted by *karma*-s that leads to several transmigrations.

Kṛṣṇa explains this in *Bhagavad Gīta*. "The duties are allocated according to *guṇa*-s springing from their own nature (XVIII.41). Each one attentive to his own duty, he gains the highest success. How far one is devoted to his inborn duty, thus far he attains success (XVIII.45). If I did not perform actions in a balanced way, the universe would be annihilated and I would be the cause of improper admixture of duties (III.24)."

Nijājñā-rūpa-nigamā निजाज्ञा-रूप-निगमा (287)

She conveys Her commands through Veda-s. Derivatives of Veda-s prescribe the actions to be done and not to be done. Such actions depend upon the classifications based on the previous nāma. If all men perform all the actions prescribed in Veda-s, there can be no perfection. For example, a person cannot be an expert in medical, legal and financial fields all at the same time. To attain proficiency in one's field, more experience is required. This is the reason behind nāma 286. Though Veda-s themselves do not discuss much on such acts, (*karma kāṇḍa -s* of Veda-s discuss certain gross actions) the derivatives of Veda-s like *śāstra-s* and *Purāṇa-s* clearly spell out the *kriya-s* (performance towards atonement) and *karma-s* (actions causing future reactions afflicting karmic account) to be done and not to be done. But it is widely believed that *śāstra-s* are of later origin and do not derive significantly from the teachings of Veda-s and *Upaniṣads*. By and large this argument is to be accepted, as they do not typically teach the ways to realising the Self within. Therefore it is to be understood that there is a huge difference between Her commands through Veda-s directly, and through *śāstra-s* indirectly. Here it means Her commands are only through Veda-s. Following *śāstra-s* depends upon one's outlook, tradition and lineage. Her commands through Veda-s are conveyed to those who are exponents of Veda-s such as sages and saints. It is also believed that such sages and saints prescribed *śāstra-s*. Many are of the view that *śāstra-s* initiate a person to pursue religious path and later into spiritual path.

Puṇyāpuṇya-phalapradā पुण्यापुण्य-फलप्रदा (288)

Puṇyāpuṇya consist of two words *puṇya* + *a-puṇya*. *Puṇya* means the good or right, virtue, purity, good work, meritorious act, moral or religious merit, and *a-puṇya* means the illusionary *puṇya*. Illusionary *puṇya* or *apuṇya* is not exactly *pāpa*. *Apuṇya* is done out of ignorance and it is not as bad as committing sins or *pāpa*. Such discriminations are made based upon the teachings of Vedas.

Brahma Sūtra (II.i.34) says, "No partiality and cruelty because of His taking other factors into consideration. For so the Veda-s show."

What is sown in is reaped. Results arising out of such actions are transferred to one's *karmic* account. The end result of *karmic* account is rebirths and its associated pains and sufferings. Such results accrue at Her command as She is the Lord of karma-s.

Brahma Sūtra (III.ii.7) confirms this. It says, "फलमत् उपपतेः (*phalamat upapateḥ*)" which means "The fruit of action is from Him, this being the logical position."

Śruti-sīmanta-sindūrī-kṛta-pādābja-dhūlikā श्रुति-सीमन्त-सिन्दूरी-कृत-पादाब्ज-धूलिका (289)

This nāma describes Her as the Supreme Brahman, the Absolute. Veda-s are considered as the most sacred texts of all. In this nāma the four Veda-s are personified as goddesses. When these goddesses pay respects to Her by bending and placing their heads at Her feet, the reflection of red colour radiating from the 'dust' of Her feet make marks on the parting hair on the heads of these goddesses and appear like vermilion placed on the forehead of married women. The word 'dust' is symbolically mentioned here. The meaning of dust in this context is as follows: *Upaniṣads* are considered as the head of all Veda-s as they teach ways and means to realize the Brahman. Even these *Upaniṣads* are not able to describe the Brahman in His original form. Such descriptions are made only by negations and affirmations. It is the case with Veda-s as well. Veda-s never make a perfect description of the Brahman. This is because the real form of Brahman is beyond comprehension for the normal human mind. Since the Veda-s are represented by these goddesses, they feel ashamed in their inability to describe Her in words. They are satisfied by wearing the dust in Her feet in their parting hair and get satisfied that they are at least able to wear the

dust that gives them some knowledge (the knowledge of the Brahman) about Her.

Saundarya Laharī (verses 2 and 3) describes Her feet. "Collecting microscopic particles of the dust falling from your lotus feet, *Brahma*, *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva* carry out their actions." The next verse says. "The particles of dust of your lotus feet serve to remove the internal darkness of the ignorant."

Nāmas 287 and 288 dealt with the karma kāṇḍa of the Veda-s and this nāma deals with *jñāna kāṇḍa*.

Sakalāgama-saṃdoha-śukti-saṃpuṭa-mauktikā सकलागम-संदोह-शुक्ति-संपुट-मौक्तिका (290)

Her nose ring has been discussed in nāma 20. The ring made of pearl encompasses the *āgama*-s prescribed Veda-s. *Āgama-s* are traditional doctrines or precepts that lay down guidelines for various rituals, mostly with temples. It is a huge subject and is the combination of *vāstu śāstra*, astrology, astronomy etc. Earlier nāma-s said that even Veda-s could not describe the Brahman. In the same way *āgama-s* also could not describe the Brahman. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (II.9) says, "Words together with thoughts return from Brahman unable to reach it." Therefore, the Brahman could not be reached by Veda-s, formed out of words. The Brahman is beyond words. The words or thoughts can make one realize something to which he has familiarity or experience. But the Brahman cannot be realized this way. The only way to realize the Brahman is by internal search and exploration. When compared to the Brahman, the Vedās or *śāstra-s* are insignificant.

That is why this nāma says such Veda-s or *śāstra-s* etc are within the tiny piece of Her nose ring.

{Further reading on *āgama*: *Advaita* philosophy acknowledges six types of knowledge. They are perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), verbal testimony (*śabda* or *āgama*), comparison

(*upamāna*), postulation (*arthāpatti*), and non-apprehension (*anupalabdhi*). *Śabda* as a source of valid knowledge means *āgama*, authentic word that is free from all defects. It is a canon of knowledge recognised by most Indian systems of thought that the words of such persons as are free from delusion, error, deceit and defects of the senses and the mind are source of valid cognition. Thus, reason is implicit in faith. It is not unreasonable to rely on the reliable. Generally, *āgama* can said to mean Vedic testimony.}

Puruṣārtha-pradā पुरुषार्थ-प्रदा (291)

Puruṣārtha is the fourfold values of human life. They are *dharma* (righteousness or virtues), *artha* (wish or purpose), *kāma* (desires and pleasures) and *mokṣa* (the liberation). It is clear that the ancient scriptures do not prohibit these great human values. What they say is not to get attached to them. On many occasions this concept is misquoted. She is the giver of this *puruṣārtha*.

There is another interpretation. *Puruṣā* means *Śiva* (*Śaktī* is *prakṛti*), *artha* means salvation and *prada* means giver. *Śiva* gives salvation through *Śaktī.* The importance of *Śaktī* is emphasized or probably the interdependence of *Śiva* and *Śaktī* is cited through this nāma.

Pūrṇā पूर्णा (292)

She is the perfect (without blemishes) totality of everything. *Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad* (V.i.1) says

पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्ण्मुदच्यते। पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥
pūrṇamadaḥ pūrṇamidaṃ pūrṇātpūrṇmudacyate| pūrṇasya pūrṇamādāya pūrṇamevāvaśiṣyate ॥

"That (the Brahman) is infinite and this (universe) is infinite. One infinite, proceeds to the other infinite. Then taking the infinitude of the infinite (universe), it remains as the infinite (the Brahman) alone". There is no better verse than this to explain the all-

pervading Brahman. She is "That" (the Brahman, as Brahman alone is perfect and complete).

Bhoginī भोगिनी (293)

Bhoga means luxuries. She is the enjoyer of all luxuries. The embodiment of luxuries (She), enjoying the luxuries (of Her creations). Possibly this nāma is derived from the previous nāma saying that the Brahman proceeds to the Brahman itself. Here the term luxury could mean Her creations and She enjoys the acts of Her creation. There is a saying that God watches all our actions.

Bhoginī is the name of a female serpent, indicating Her *kuṇḍalinī* form. But this explanation at this point seems to be inappropriate.

Bhuvaneśvarī भुवनेश्वरी (294)

Bhuvana means the universe. She is the ruler *(Īśvari*) of this universe. Seven worlds below the planet earth including earth and seven worlds above the earth are together called universe. These fourteen represent the products of the five *tattva*-s and *antaḥkaraṇa*.

"*hrīṃ*" (ह्रीं) is known as *Bhuvaneśvari bīja*, also known as *māyā bīja*. This *bīja* has the potency of creation and is considered as one of the powerful bīja-s, as it is the combination of *Śiva bīja (ह्), Agni* (रं) *bīja* and *kāmakalā* (ईं). When She is enjoying all the luxuries, She ought to be a great ruler and this is what is stressed here. *Bhuvaneśvara* is *Śiva* and His wife is *Bhuvaneśvarī*.

Ambikā अम्बिका (295)

The mother of the universe. This is different from the first nāma *Śrī Mātā*. There She was referred as the mother of all living beings of the universe. Here She is called as the mother of the universe itself comprising of both living and non-living beings. This nāma mentions about Her creative action that comprises of *iccā, jñāna*

and *kriyā śaktī-s* (desire or will, knowledge and action). There is also a saying that *Śiva* represents day and *Śaktī* represents night, basically due to Her *māyā*.

Anādi-nidhanā अनादि-निधना (296)

She has neither a beginning nor an end. The nature of the Brahman is described, who alone is infinite.

Elation is said to be of two kinds. The first kind is having a feeling of Self-realisation, though one is miles away from realising the Brahman. This illusion is considered as an impediment to God-realization (Self-realization). Since this is the cause of *māyā*, She will remove this kind of *māyā* for those, who are worthy of making spiritual progress. The second type is that certain *siddhi-s* that are derived during spiritual progression. For example the intuitive power, sudden realization of the Brahman like a flash possibly from the words of one's guru or somebody, an unexpected meeting with a sage who could transfer the divine energy by a mere look, etc. Sudden chance, which makes a person to reach new heights both materially and spiritually also, happens at Her discretion. Since She is the cause for such elations and there is no beginning or end for such of Her activities, She is called *anādi-nidhanā*.

Anādi means existing from eternity and *nidhana* means domicile. *Nidhana* also means destruction. *Sāṃkhya sūtra* (III.38, 39 and 40) refers to three types of destructions (in fact, they are not destructions but distractions), "Inability is twenty eight fold; Acquiescence is nine fold; Perfection is eight fold." Inability means depravation. One can worship Her using his organs of perception (*jñānendriya*-s), five cognitive faculties (knowledge) and the mind. If they become dysfunctional, She cannot be worshipped. The cause of dysfunction is known as *aśaktī*. There are two other distractions. One is *tuṣṭi*, satisfaction personified. This arises out of illusion. For example, having a false feeling of emancipation is *tuṣṭi*, which is again divided into two types. The third is *siddhi*-s, the acquisition of supernatural powers by magical means or the supposed faculty so

acquired (the eight usually enumerated are given in the following verse, "*aṇimā laghimā prāptiḥ prākāmyam mahimā tathā īśitvaṃ ca vaśitvaṃ ca tathā kāmāvasāyitā".* These *siddhi*-s are hindrance to the Ultimate realisation.

Haribrahamendra-sevitā हरिब्रहमेन्द्र-सेविता (297)

Hari (*Viṣṇu*), *Brahma* and *Indra* worship Her. In *Śrī cakra pūja*, *Hari*, *Brahma* and *Indra* are all worshipped. The importance of *Śaktī* worship is underlined in this nāma. The Gods mentioned here are no demigods, but the creator and upholder and the lord of all gods and goddesses. They too, on their own merits are powerful. *Śiva* is not mentioned here possibly due to two reasons. He being Her consort, is not worshipped by Her or there is no difference between *Śiva* and *Śaktī*. The second interpretation seems to be appropriate. It has been discussed earlier that Brahman is the combination of static and kinetic energy. Though kinetic energy originates from the static energy, the latter cannot function without the aid of the former. This concept is explained here. *Hari* (*Viṣṇu*), *Brahma* and *Indra* should not be taken in literal sense. In fact, Veda-s talk about them more frequently than *Śaktī*. It is also to be understood that mastery of Veda-s alone do not help to realize the Brahman. One has to go beyond Veda-s to understand the Creation and the Creator. Both Creation and the Creator refer to the Supreme Mother or "*Ma*" as She is fondly called.

The same interpretation is conveyed in *Śivānanda Laharī* (verse 4) for *Śiva*. "Thousands of Gods abound, offering trifling gifts to them who pray and never even in my dreams would I pray or request gifts from them. *Śiva* who is close to *Viṣṇu*, *Brahma* and other Gods, but is difficult for them to near Him, I would beseech and beg always for His lotus feet."

Nārāyaṇī नारायणी (298)

This nāma can be explained in several ways. *Śivānanda Laharī* (*Śivānanda Laharī* consists of one hundred verses on *Śiva*.

Saundarya Laharī consists of one hundred verses on *Śaktī*) verse 82 says, that *Hari* (*Viṣṇu*) and *Haran* (*Śiva*) are conjoined in several ways. It says "*ardhavapuṣa bharyatvam āryāpate*" which means *Viṣṇu* holds the position of *Śiva*'s wife as *Śiva* holds *Viṣṇu* in His left vertical half. This is the place of *Śaktī* in *ardhanārīśvara* form of *Śiva*. The Form of *Śiva* and *Viṣṇu* combine is called *Śaṇkara Nārāyaṇa*. This clearly indicates that there is no difference between *Viṣṇu* (also known as *Nārāyaṇa*) and *Lalitāmbikā*. This conception is further confirmed in this *Sahasranāma* itself in nāma-s like *Govinda-rūpinī* (269), *Mukunda* (838) and *Viṣṇu-rūpinī* (893).

Nārāyana is the combination of two words *nara* + *ayaṇa*. *Nara* here means the Brahman. Since water first originated from the Brahman, water is also called *nara*. Water is said to be first abode of the Brahman, hence the Brahman having the abode of water is called *Nārāyaṇa*. Since there is no difference between *Lalitāmbikā* and the Brahman, She is addressed as *Nārāyaṇī*.

Viṣṇu Sahasranāma nāma 245 is *Nārāyaṇa*. The following is the explanation given to that nāma. "The creation is made out of that *Ātman* (the Brahman). Such creations are known as *nārāni*. The abode of *nārāni* is called *Nārāyaṇa*. The feminine gender of *Nārāyaṇa* is *Nārāyaṇī*. This nāma also reconfirms Her Brahmanic status. There are several such confirmations in this *Sahasranāma*.

Nāda-rūpā नाद-रूपा (299)

She is in the form of sound. *Varivasyā Rahasya*, the text that explains *Pañcadaśi mantra* (I.12 and 13) says, "The form of *hrīṃ* (ह्रीं) is composed of twelve letters: *vyoman* (h), agni (r), *vāmalocanā* (ī), bindu (ṃ), *ardhacandra, rodhinī, nāda, nādānta, śaktī, vyāpikā, samanā* and *unmanī*." The aggregate of the last eight is known as *nāda*. Out of the last eight, the subtlest is *unmanī* and they are placed above the *bindu* (dot).

{Further reading on sound: The supreme divine energy is called *Parā-Śaktī*. *Parā-Śaktī* is the divine Mother and naturally has

concern for the universe. In the state of *parā* (nāma 366), *Śaktī* is in the initial stage of manifestation. The next higher stage of *parā* is *paśyantī* (nāma 368) where there are questions and answers. Questions and answers leads to knowledge. In stage of *paśyantī*, there exists no difference between the word and the object of reference. The next stage is *madhyamā* (nāma 370) where the difference begins to arise between the word and the object of reference, but only in the levels of *antaḥkaraṇa*. In other words, the difference between the *paśyantī* and *madhyamā* is only subtle and not reflected at the gross level (meaning delivery of speech). In the last and final stage called *vaikharī* (nāma 371), the difference becomes gross and the sound is deciphered. But it should be understood that *Parā-Śaktī* Herself does not undergo these changes, but such changes happen at Her command in the inward psychic apparatus of an individual. She is known by these names during the different stages of evolution of speech. These stages are discussed in the subsequent nāma-s. The transition between *madhyamā* and *vaikharī* contains eight stages and the third stage is called *nāda* and their *samaṣṭi* (aggregate) is also known as *nāda*. In general this nāma says that She is in the form of sound. She is *Śabda Brahman*. Further details are discussed in the respective nāma-s.}

Nāma-rūpa-vivarjitā नाम-रूप-विवर्जिता (300)

She is without name (nāma) and form (*rūpa*). *Vivarjitā* means devoid. She is beyond names and forms, an exclusive quality of the Brahman. Every creation has two aspects. One is *cit* and another *a-cit*. *Cit* means the universal consciousness and *a-cit* means individual consciousness. Both *cit* and *a-cit* are derived from the Supreme Consciousness or the divine consciousness. *Cit* is again sub-divided into existence, knowledge and bliss. The Brahman is the cause for these three. *A-cit* consists of nāma and *rūpā* (name and form) and this is opposed to *cit* in the sense, it does not represent the Brahman. When the union of empirical "I" with the "I" consciousness of *Śiva* takes place, creation happens. The derivatives of "I" consciousness of *Śiva* are existence, knowledge

and bliss. Name and form are the products of empirical consciousness. Since the nāma says She is beyond nāma and *rūpā* (name and form), it is implied that She belongs to *Cit*, the Supreme Consciousness which is also known as the Brahman. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VIII.14.1) says, "That which is described as space manifests names and forms. These names and forms are within Brahman. Brahman is immortal. It is the Self". *Vāc Devi-s* utilize every opportunity to mention Her as the Supreme Brahman. The Brahman can be described either through negations or through affirmations. Here the quality of the Brahman is described by negation.

Hrīṁkārī ह्रींकारी (301)

She is in the form of *māyā bīja hrīṁ*. *Hrīṁ* is also called *śākta praṇava* or *śaktī praṇava*, which means that the worshippers of *śaktī, call hrīṁ* as *praṇava bīja* of *Śaktī*. This is also known as *Bhuvaneśvarī bījā* (Nāma 294 is *Bhuvaneśvarī*). *Praṇava* is the supreme ॐ. The power of *hrīṁ bīja* is as powerful as ॐ. That is why in *Pañcadaśī mantra* every *kūṭa* or group ends with the *bīja hrīṁ*. *Hrīṁ* is the combination of ha (ह) + *ra* (र) + *ī* (ई) + *ma* (म) + *bindu* ('). *Ha* refers to manifestation, *ra* indicates involution (action of enfolding, the action of māyā), *ī* indicates perfection and the *bindu*, a dot on top of the *bīja* controls all the three. Therefore *hrīṁ* means manifestation, involution and perfection. The appearance of the bodily form enfolded by perfection is the literal meaning of the *bīja hrīṁ*. This means that *māyā* or illusion is causing a veil around the Brahman and this veil can be removed only if one realizes the Supreme Consciousness of *Śaktī*. Unless the kinetic energy (*Śaktī)* is fully realized, it is not possible to feel the pulsation of *Śiva*, the static energy. In fact this *bīja* can also be called as *Śiva-Śaktī bīja* as *ha* stands for *Śiva bījā* and *kāmakalā - īṁ* (ईं) stands for *Śaktī bīja*. The *bīja ra* (र) conjoins these two *bīja-s* to form a single *Śiva-Śaktī bīja*. The role of *ra* in any *bīja* is significant. The sound of *ra* is the

chief of all the sounds. Whenever *hrīṁ* is chanted, it endues peace and auspiciousness.

In any *bīja* the *bindu* is important and most of the *bīja-s* have *bindu*. For example take the letter *ha* (ह). When a dot is placed at the top of this ha it becomes *haṁ* (हं). Without *bindu* an alphabet remains as an alphabet and becomes a *bījā* only if a 'dot' is placed above the alphabet. The *bindu* though tiny, is yet very powerful. There are three major sub divisions in a *bindu* leading to the union of *Śiva* and *Śaktī*, from where the three exclusive actions of the Brahman viz. creation, sustenance and destruction originate. The three major sub divisions are *bindu* representing *Śiva*, *bīja* representing *Śaktī* and *nāda* representing their union. A *bindu* above *ha*, one of the alphabets of *hrīṁ* spells like *haṁ*. This *bīja haṁ*, a component of *hrīṁ* represents creation (*h*), sustenance (*a*) and destruction (*ṁ*) the three functions of the Brahman.

The *bindu* undergoes subtle changes from its origin to delivery. It originates as *Parā Śaktī* and gets modified as *paśyantī, madhyamā* and delivered at *vaikari*, (Please refer nāma 299 for additional details.) At the time of delivery it undergoes modifications through eight stages) by deriving power from five basic elements and gets blessed by *Brahma*, *Viṣṇu* and *Rudra*. It begins its journey from the heart *cakra* with the letter 'a' (अ), moves to the throat *cakra* and conjoins with '*u*'(उ) and further goes up to palate where it conjoins with 'ṁ' (ं), the three components of OM (*a* + *u* + *ṁ*). From the palate it moves to forehead where it derives its cosmic energy received through the crown *cakra*, enters the world of *śūnya* (cosmic vacuum) where no energy operates, moves further up towards the top of the skull establishing a link through *brahmarandhra* with *mahā śūnya* (the great cosmic vacuum), where the Creation takes place. When it moves further, the creation becomes transcendental energy and the life begins to exist out of the Self illuminating cosmic brilliance. That is why *bindu* is said to be in the form of a luminous dot like the sun, born out of the union of *Śiva* and *Śaktī*.

There is no differentiation between the *bīja hrīṁ* and *Śiva-Śaktī* combine, the point of origin and the point of annihilation of this universe.

Hrīmatī ह्रीमती (302)

Hrī means modesty. Veda-s describe Her as endowment of modesty, mind, satisfaction, desire and nourishment. All these indicate *māyā*. Her *māyā* or illusory form is described in this nāma. It is also said that Her modesty prevents Her in participating in the rituals performed with pomp and vanity. She is ashamed of participating in such rituals. The worship of *Śaktī* should always be secretive in nature. She has a liking for such secretive worships and these worships are performed only internally. By worshipping Her internally, one realizes Her subtle forms viz. *kāmakalā* and *kuṇḍalinī* forms. Realization through internal worship is much faster than by performing external rituals.

Hṛdyā हृद्या (303)

She resides in the heart. Soul is said to be in the centre of the heart. Heart also stands for compassion and love. Since She is the Divine Mother, these qualities are in built in Her. Or it could also mean that She is loved by everybody.

Katha Upaniṣad (II.i.13) says, "The thumb sized *puruṣaḥ* (soul) is seen as smokeless flame rests in the centre of the body."

Heyopādeya-varjitā हेयोपादेय-वर्जिता (304)

She has nothing to reject and nothing to accept. Rejection and acceptance (do this and do not do this) are laid down by scriptures. The source of these scriptures is the Veda-s and based on certain procedures followed by our ancestors. These are the rules and regulations that permit certain actions and prohibit certain others. These are also known as *śāstra*-s. *Śāstra*-s generally can be explained as compendium of rules or a book of treatise. Many of the

śāstra-s are based on the procedures followed by our ancestors. The guideline that was applicable centuries ago may not be applicable in today's situation. Therefore, there is no point in following *śāstra*-s without understanding their significance. Adjusting to the present day living is not a sin. Such rejections and acceptances are applicable only to human beings and not to the Brahman.

Rājarājārcitā राजराजार्चिता (305)

She is worshipped by king of kings and emperors. This nāma is to be read with the next nāma. *Rājarājā* means king of kings, *Śiva*. Since She is the dear wife of *Śiva*, *Śiva* worships Her seems to be an appropriate interpretation. Women are worshipped for their mother hood and *Śiva* who is the universal teacher follows what He preaches.

There is another interpretation for this nāma. *Rājarājā* means *Kubera*, *Manu* and ten others making twelve *Rājarājā*-s. Please refer nāma 238 for further details. Each of them worships Her in their own way and accordingly their *Pañcadaśī mantra* also gets modified without changing the basics of the mantra (the fifteen *bīja*-s). All the twelve names find a place in this *Sahasranāma*. She is said to have been worshipped by these twelve *Rājarāja*-s. They are known as *Rājarāja*-s because of their sincere devotion to Her and She confers on them the status of king of kings.

Rājñī राज्ञी (306)

The queen. This is in line with the previous nāma. Being *Śiva*'s (*Rājarāja* or king of kings) wife, She becomes the queen for the kingdom of this universe. The universe is ruled by *Śiva* and *Śaktī*. Possibly this could also be a reason for calling Her as the universal Mother or in the shortened form as *Mā*. When one calls Her as *Mā*, he will have a feeling that She belongs to you and closer to you.

Ramyā रम्या (307)

She is the most beautiful of all.

Rājivalocanā राजिवलोचना (308)

The choice of words by *Vāc Devi*-s is amazing. *Rājiva* means deer, fish or lotus, depending upon the context and *locanā* means eyes. Eyes of Mā look like the eyes of deer or appear like a fish or look like a lotus flower. They could have addressed Her as *Mīnākṣī* (refer nāma 18) (eyes look like fish) or could have used *kamala-nayanā* (eyes look like lotus) (refer nāma 62). They have used only *Mṛgākṣī* (nāma 561) meaning eyes look like the eyes of deer and this nāma to describe Her eyes.

The intended meaning of this nāma is that Her eyes are not comparable to anything. Her eyes are full of grace and compassion. By mere winking of eyes, She performs three actions of creation, sustenance and destruction (nāma 281). *Rājiva* also means king and *rājivalocanā* means eyes of one who is dependent on king. It has been already seen that *Śiva* is known as *Rājarāja* and dependent refers to His devotees. She blesses His devotees with the grace of Her eyes.

Rañjanī रञ्जनी (309)

She gives happiness to Her devotees during this birth and also in the Heavens, possibly meaning no-rebirth. The appropriate interpretation of this nāma would be: *Rañjana* means the act of colouring and also pleasing, charming, rejoicing, delighting, befriending, etc. From this point of view, everything associated with Her is red. *Śiva* is beyond colour and is pellucid like crystal. When She sits with Him, *Śiva*'s complexion also turns into red. His crystal complexion becomes radiant with the red complexion of the Supreme *Mā*. *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 92) explains this scenario in a different way. "*Śiva* with His clear lustre has transformed Himself into an apparent bed-cover reddened by your reflected lustre, as the embodied erotic sentiment and yields joy to your eyes."

Ramaṇī रमणी (310)

She plays around. She plays with Her devotees. Devotees are everything for Her. She gives happiness to them and She plays with them too. Providing happiness to one's children and playing with them is one of the motherly qualities. Her motherly attribute is highlighted here. But devotees always keep a distance from Her out of fear and respect. This is the biggest setback in God realization. Fear and respect should pave way for love and affection. Unfortunately, She is being considered as a different entity from one's own self. When we say that She is omnipresent, why should we consider Her as a different person?

This is what *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* VIII.12.3 says "In the same way, the joyful self arises from the body and attaining the light of the Cosmic Self, appears in his own form. This is the *Paramātman*, the Cosmic Self. He then freely moves about eating, playing, or enjoying himself with women, carriages or relatives, not remembering at all, the body in which he was born. Just as horses or bullocks are harnessed to carriages, similarly life remains harnessed to the body due to *karma*".

The articulation by this *Upaniṣad* clearly proves that Self is not different from the Brahman. If one feels the difference, it is due to *māyā* or illusion. When we eat meat, She also eats meat with us. When we relish onion, She also relishes onion with us. When we are poor, She is also poor and when we are rich She is also rich. This is the uniqueness of omnipresence.

Arjuna says to *Kṛṣṇa* after seeing his universal form (*viśva-rūpa-darśan*) "Overjoyed I am, that gazed upon a vision never seen before, yet my mind is afflicted with fear. Be merciful to me and show only your God form (the original form of *Kṛṣṇa*)" (*Bhagavad Gīta* XI.45). We should never feel that God is different from our Self. The God within you and within him is one and the same. The only difference is the soul. Certain souls realize God and certain

others do not realize God and this purely depends upon one's *karma*.

Rasyā रस्या (311)

She is in the form of essence of *Ātman*. The meaning of *rasa* (essence) can be understood from *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (II.vii) which says *raso vai saḥ*. The meaning is "That is to be identified with sweetness." It further says that "anyone who has this sweetness is happy" and the source of sweetness comes from the Self. Happiness is bliss and it says that bliss can be attained only if individual Self is realized. 'That' means the Supreme Self. The nāma says that She is in the form of That Supreme Self. The Supreme Self is the condensed form of the universe realized as the empirical Self.

Raṇatkiṅkiṇi-mekhalā रणत्किङ्किणि-मेखला (312)

She is wearing a waistband with small bells hanging from it. The same narration also finds a place in *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 7) which says, "Your slender waist which is adorned by jingling girdle string (belt-like gold wait ornament called *odyāṇa*) having small tinkling gold bells attached." Therefore the recital given here cannot be the intended interpretation. Possibly this could mean the origin of sound. When She walks, these tiny bells make tinkling sound from where the sound originates. The sound originates from the naval chakra, where the waist belt is worn. It is also said that the sound originates from the drum (*damaru*) of *Śiva*. In the same way it can be said that sound originates from Her waist belt.

It is also said that these descriptions enable the beginners to visualise Her gross form. She has four types of forms, gross (*sthūla*), subtle (*sūkṣma rūpa*), subtler (*sūkṣmatara*) which is also known as Her *kāmakalā* dorm and Her subtlest form is *kuṇḍalinī* form. Her gross form is described in nāma-s twelve to fifty one. Her subtle form (*mantra*-s) is described in nāma-s 85 to 89. Her subtler form (*kāmakalā*) is described in 88 and 89. (Nāma 322 is

kāmakalā rūpa.) Finally, Her subtlest form *kuṇḍalinī* is described in 90 to 111. (Psychic *cakra*-s are discussed in 475 to 534).

Ramā रमा (313)

Ramā means *Lakṣmī*, (consort of *Viṣṇu*) the goddess of wealth. She is in the form of *Lakṣmī* and bestows wealth on Her devotees. The wealth indicates both materialistic wealth and spiritual wealth. Nāma-s 313, 314 and 315 together form *kāmakalā bīja* ' ईँ ' (ई). This nāma gives the alphabet 'Ī' (ई).

Rākenduvadanā राकेन्दुवदना (314)

Her face is compared to the full moon. Full moon is without blemishes. The full moon represents the dot (*bindu*) above the letter 'Ī' which gives rise to the *bīja īṁ* (ई). At this stage the letter Ī (ई) has only a dot above it making it as *īṁ* (ई), which is yet to transform as *kāmakalā.*

Ratirūpā रतिरूपा (315)

She is in the form of *Rati*, the wife of love god *Manmatha*, who is also known as *Kāma* (lust). In the earlier two nāma-s, the *bīja īँ* originated and delivered as a *bīja* in this nāma. *Rati* and her spouse *Kāma* or *Manmatha* are known for their lecherousness. The *kāmakalā* is full of auspiciousness and subtly indicates the creation. The *bīja īṁ* formed in the previous nāma transforms into *kāmakalā* in this nāma. *īṁ* becomes *īँ*. *Kāmakalā* is discussed in detail in nāma 322 *kāmakalā rūpā*.

Ratipriyā रतिप्रिया (316)

She is fond of *Rati*, the wife of *Kāma*. There is a *yakṣiṇī* (lower form of demigoddess) called *Ratipriyā* who gives wealth. She is said to be *Kubera's* wife. *Kubera* is the chief of *yakṣa-s*. *Ratipriyā's mantra* is short and one should chant this *mantra* in the

night sitting on the top of a banyan tree. It is said that the She will appear in person and gives wealth. Her *mantra* is '*om raṁ śrīṁ hrīṁ dhaṁ dhanate ratipriye svāhā*' (ॐ रं श्रीं ह्रीं धं धनते रतिप्रिये स्वाहा॥). This is to be chanted 100,000 times followed by *puraścaraṇa*.

Rakṣākarī रक्षाकरी (317)

The one who protects. She is the sustainer of this universe, hence this nāma. There is another interpretation. In specified fire rituals, oblations also consist of herbs. When they are burnt into ashes by the tongs of fire, the ashes are filled in an amulet and worn on the self of a person for the purpose of protection from evils. As ashes are used for protection and in that sense She is the protector. Secondly, ashes also mean the mortal remains of one who existed earlier. In this sense She is the destroyer. Out of the three actions of the Brahman, two are mentioned here. She is in the form of such oblations that will be discussed in later nāma-s (535 and 536).

Rākṣasaghnī राक्षसघ्नी (318)

The destroyer of demons. *Kṛṣṇa* says (*Bhagavad Gīta* IV.8) "I appear from age to age to protect the virtuous and to destroy the evil doers in order to re-establish righteousness". This is the famous saying of *Bhagavad Gīta:*

paritrāṇāya sādhūnāṁ vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām|
dharmasaṁsthāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yuge yuge||

परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम्।
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय सम्भवामि युगे युगे॥

Demons mean the evils. It is believed that when evil prevails everywhere, the great dissolution of the universe takes place and the creation happens again.

Rāmā रामा (319)

She is the embodiment of women. *Liṅga Purāṇa* says that all men are *Śaṃkara* (*Śiva*) and all women are *Śaktī*. It is also said that women should be respected. If they are ill-treated, their lineage would be destroyed. *Ram* means to delight. It is *agni bīja* (ṙ). *Agni bīja* is considered as a potent *bīja* and when combined with other *bīja*-s, it increases their potency. *Bīja*-s in right combination with *agni bīja* provides blessedness. Yogi-s enjoy when they are submerged in bliss, when *Śaktī* and *Śiva* unite at *sahasrāra*. They are delighted in the stage of bliss, hence she is known as *Rāmā*.

(Lord *Rāmā* is the delight of yogis; hence He is known as *Rāmā.*)

Ramaṇa-lampaṭā रमण-लम्पटा (320)

She enjoys Her moments with Her consort *Śiva* at *sahasrāra*. She enjoys the marital bliss. She loves to play around with *Śiva*. She makes women devoted to their husbands, since She is the embodiment of women (previous nāma).

Kāmyā काम्या (321)

Kāmyā means longing for. She is desired by the seekers of liberation. Liberation is possible only through knowledge and She is that knowledge (nāma 980). The 12th night of dark lunar fortnight is known as *kāmyā*.

Kāmakalā rūpā कामकला रूपा (322)

She is in the form of *kāmakalā*. This is Her subtler form which is known only to Her spouse *Śiva*. The subtlest form is Her *kuṇḍalinī* form in *sahasrāra*, where She conjoins Her spouse. *Kuṇḍalinī* in lower *cakra*-s does not become subtlest and it attains the subtlest form only in *sahasrāra. Kāma* refers to the object of adoration, the object that is desired. Here, *Śiva* becomes the most desired of all, as

He is the Supreme Reality or *Paramārtha*. *Śiva* being the Supreme Ruler, He is addressed as *Kāmeśvara*. By addressing Him thus, He not only becomes the object of desire (*Kāma*), but also becomes the Supreme Ruler (*Īśvara*). This how He becomes *Kāma + Īśvara = Kāmeśvara. Kalā* refers to *vimarśa* form of *Śiva*, *Mahātripurasundarī. Śiva* alone is Self-illuminating and *Śaktī* illuminates the universe with the brilliance of *Śiva*. Their conjoined form is *Kāmakalā*.

Kāmakalā consists of three *bindu*-s (dots) forming a triangle and below this triangle there is an inverted triangle (*hārda-kalā*) where the three *kūṭa-s* of *Pañcadasī mantra* are placed. From this lower inverted triangle all triads are born which ultimately leads to the creation of this universe. The two parallel dots are Her bosoms by which this universe is nurtured and a single dot above these two dots is Her third eye. *Kāma* means intent to create and *kalā* refers to a part of the main object, in this case, *Śiva*. The conjugation of *Kāma* and *kalā* leads to the manifestation of *Kāmeśvara* and *Kāmeśvarī* forms. *Śiva* and *Śaktī* unite only in their *kāma* forms i.e. *kāma + īśvarī* and *kāma + īśvara*. These two, are Their highest forms that cause Creation. She is known as '*Mahā-tripura-sundarī'* in the *Kāmakalā* form and is also known as *bindutraya samaṣti rūpa divyākṣara rūpiṇi*. *Mahā* means supreme, *tripura* means three cities (could mean entire triads, the cause for creation that are ruled by Her). The deeper meaning of *tripura* is Her three actions viz. creation, sustenance and destruction. *Sundarī* means beauty. So '*Mahā-tripura-sundarī'* means the beautiful and Supreme Mother, who creates, nourishes and dissolves. These three acts are subtly mentioned in *Kāmakalā*.

The three *bindu-s* are extremely powerful. They represent sun, moon and fire. *Bindu* is called the highest light. The highest form of light naturally should be the origin of light from which all others should have emerged. Self illuminating light is *Śiva* and that is why He is called as *prakāśa* form. *Śaktī* reflects and distributes the light received from *prakāśa* form and that is why She is called as *vimarśa* form. *Vimarśa* can be explained as knowledge with reasoning. The

light of *Śiva* will not be reflected unless *Śaktī* is by His side. These three *bindu-s* are therefore the three different forms of *Śaktī* and each of which represent three divine energies viz. *Vāma, Jyeśta* and *Raudrī*. These goddesses represent Her three acts of creation, nourishment and absorption. This is as far as the upper triangle is concerned. It must be remembered that there is no triangle here but only three *bindu-s* (*Bindu*-s are further elaborated in nāma 905). It is called as a triangle because if these dots are joined by straight lines, a triangle is formed.

This upper conceived triangle is coupled with the lower *hārda-kalā* or the lower inverted triangle. Each of the three lines of the triangle represents the three *kūṭa-s* of *Pañcadasī mantra*. From this lower triangle which is formed out of the three *kūṭa-s* of the supreme *Pañcadasī mantra*, all other *mantra*-s are born leading to the creation of the universe. Thus the lower triangle is known as the organ of creation from which the universe was created. In the upper triangle the two lower *bindu-s* mean the sustenance or nourishment and the upper most triangle is the *bindu* for destruction. These *bindu-s* are also known as sun, moon and fire possibly indicating sustenance (sun-without which the universe cannot function), sustenance (moon – moon is the symbolic representation of love) and fire (one of the qualities of fire is destruction). This can be in fact compared to the three *kūṭa-s* of *Pañcadasī* where the *kūṭa-s* are also known as *agni* (fire) *kūṭa, Sūrya* (sun) *kūṭa* and *Chandra* (moon) *kūṭa*.

The same interpretation is given in *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 19) which says, "The one who meditates on your *Kāmakalā* form, treating your face as the *bindu* (the upper *bindu*) and the pair of your bosom (the two lower *bindu-s*) and the half of the letter H below it (the lower triangle), at once impassions women, is but a triviality."

It is not appropriate to provide a detailed interpretation, which should be known only from a learned guru of *Śrī Vidya* cult. But those who do not have a guru, but are deeply attached to *Śrī Mātā*, the Divine Mother *MĀ,* should not be deprived of the opportunity to

know the significance of *Kāmakalā.* Hence, a moderate interpretation is given here. The usage of this *Kāmakalā* in *ṣoḍaśī mantra* in an appropriate place will provide early *siddhi* of the *mantra*.

Kadamba-kusuma-priyā कदम्ब-कुसुम-प्रिया (323)

She is fond of *kadamba* flowers, amidst the tress of which She lives (nāma 60). The same nāma appears in *Lalitā Triśatī* as nāma 11. *Lalitā Triśatī* consists of 300 nāma-s. This 300 is arrived at by multiplying fifteen *bīja-s* of *Pañcadaśī* by twenty. The first *bīja* in *Pañcadaśī* is '*ka*' (क). The first twenty nāma-s begin with this *bīja* and the next twenty nāma-s begin with next alphabet of *Pañcadaśī* '*e*' (ए). *Triśatī* is considered very powerful as it originates from the *Pañcadaśī mantra*.

There are said to be five types of sacred trees and *kadamba* tree is one among them. These five sacred trees said to represent the four components of *antaḥkaraṇa* viz. mind, intellect, consciousness and ego and the fifth being the heart where the soul is said to reside (Some modern interpretations point out that the soul resides within the pineal gland, the gland of divinity). The smell of these flowers is compared to the modifications of the mind.

Kalyāṇī कल्याणी (324)

She is the embodiment of auspiciousness. *Kalyāṇa* means illustrious, noble, generous, virtuous, good etc. *Rig-Veda* (ऋग्वेद) I.31.9 uses the word *Kalyāṇa*. The Veda says, "तनूक्रद बोधि परमतिश्च कारवे तवं कल्याण वसु विश्वमोपिषे *tanūkrda bodhi paramatiśca kārave tavaṃ kalyāṇa vasu viśvamopiṣe*", where *Kalyāṇa* is used to mean worthy. The same nāma appears in *Lalitā Triśatī* as nāma 2. The power of auspiciousness in the form of positive energy can be realised through powerful vibrations.

Jagatī -kandā जगती -कन्दा (325)

She is the cause of the universe. The cause for the origin of the universe is attributed to the Brahman. Her Brahmanic stature is repeatedly emphasized in this *Sahasranāma* through various attributes. She is '*prakāśa vimarśa mahā māyā svarūpinī'* by which She creates the universe.

Karuṇārasa-sāgarā करुणारस-सागरा (326)

The ocean of compassion. *Karuṇa* means compassion, *rasa* means essence and *sāgara* means ocean. Compassion is Her natural quality, because She is the universal mother. *Lalitā Triśatī* nāma 9 is '*karuṇāmrta sāgarā'*, which conveys the same meaning. *Śaṇkarā*, the great saint has given the following interpretation: "Ocean, without making a move is the cause for rain and the entire universe sustains on this water. A drop of water gets itself detached from the clouds and enters a different plane (leaving *ākāś* and reaching earth) merely to sustain this universe. The water itself does not get any benefit out of its own action. Such is Her compassion." This compassion is called the Supreme because, She does not differentiate. As far as She is concerned, all are equal before Her, yet another reasoning for addressing Her as the universal Mother.

Kalāvatī कलावती (327)

She has sixty four types of arts or She is the possessor of these sixty four types of arts, which have been already discussed in nāma 236 and the interpretation is reproduced here. (She is the embodiment of sixty four types of arts. *Kalā* means art. There are sixty four types of arts in tantra *śāstra*-s. No concrete evidence is available either to confirm or dispute these sixty four arts (arts can be explained as either science or art or doctrine. They are all in the form of dialogue between *Śiva* and His consort *Pārvatī*. But, these sixty four types of arts originate from *aṣṭama siddhi*-s (the eight super human powers). Śiva himself tells *Pārvatī* about these sixty four arts.

Saundarya Laharī verse 31 says, "*catuḥ-ṣaṣṭyā tantraiḥ sakalm*" meaning that the sixty four *tantra-s* constitute everything. The sixty four *tantra-s* originate from the *Pañcadaśī mantra* and culminate in the *Pañcadaśī mantra*. This is evident from the fact that the same *Saundarya Laharī* verse says '*idam te tantraṃ*' possibly meaning the *Pañcadaśī mantra* that is declared in the next verse of *Saundarya Laharī*. Since there is no differentiation between Her and the *Pañcadaśī mantra*, She is said to be in the form of all the sixty four types of tantric arts. These sixty four types of tantric arts are declared to the world by *Śiva* at the instance of His consort. The difference between nāma-s 236 and 327 is very subtle. The former says that She is in the form of these sixty four fine arts and this nāma says that She has these sixty four types of arts. The difference is between possession and reflection or *prākaśa* (Self illuminating) and *vimarśa* (reflecting).

Kalālāpā कलालापा (328)

Her speech itself is an art. *Lalitā Triśatī* nāma 156 is also '*Kalālāpā*'. *Kalā* generally means sixty four types of fine arts. But, *kala* refers melodious voice. *Ālāpa* also means speech. This nāma refers to Her melodious voice as art or *Kalā*.

Saundarya Laharī (verse 38) mentions eighteen types of arts "as a result of whose conversation, the maturation of the eighteen arts takes place". These eighteen arts are interpreted in different ways. The first one says, that the sixteen *bīja-s* of *ṣodaśī mahā mantra*, *Devi* and one's guru make the eighteen. This is called *aṣṭādaśaguṇitavidyā* अष्टादशगुणितविद्या. Another interpretation refers to eighteen types of *vidyā-s* - *śikṣā, kalpa, vyākaraṇa, nirukta, jyotiṣa, candas, Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sāma Veda, Atharva Veda, pūva and uttara mīmāṁsā, nyāya, purāṇa, dharma śāstra, Āyurveda, dhaṇurveda, gāndharva* and *nīti śāstra*. This means, that from the melodious speech of *Devi*, the eighteen *vidya-s* originate and by attaining these *vidya-s* a person is able to distinguish between good and bad through the means of his mind.

Kāntā कान्ता (329)

She is beautiful. Nāma 324 discussed about vibration of Her auspiciousness. This nāma says that Her beauty is vibrating and radiating. This is with regard to Her gross form. This nāma also talks about Her Brahman form. *Ka* means the Brahman and *antā* means the ultimate. Therefore *kāntā* also means the Supreme Brahman, the Ultimate (refer nāma 325).

Kādambarī-priyā कादम्बरी-प्रिया (330)

Kādambara is spirituous liquor distilled from the flowers of the *Cadamba*. The rain water which collects in hollow places of the tree *Nauclea Cadamba* (botanical name) when the flowers are in perfection and impregnated with honey is known as *Kādambarī*. It is a type of intoxicating drink. It is one of the five 'M's that we have discussed under tantra sastra. In *navāvarana pūja* (ritual worship of *Śrī cakra pūja*) a special drink (*viśeṣa arghya*) is prepared and offered to the Goddess. Generally special drink consists of components of these five M-s - *madhya* (wine) *māmasa* (meat) *matsya* (fish) *maithuna* (procreation) and *mudrā* (reckoning of fingers). This sort of worship is called left hand worship. To practice this, one needs to have a masterly guru. In general this practice is not ideal for regular worship and not encouraged. The Supreme Goddesses is known for Her liking for such intoxicating drinks. In reality this does not mean intoxicating drink; but it refers to the ambrosia that is generated when *kuṇḍalinī* reaches the *sahasrāra*. Or it could also mean the devotion expressed by Her devotees and She gets intoxicated by such true devotion (refer nāma 118 *bhakti-priyā*). It is also interesting to note that there are other nāma-s in this *Sahasranāma* about Her liking for intoxication that convey different interpretations depending upon the context.

Varadā वरदा (331)

The one who grants boons. In *Viṣṇu Sahasranāma* nāma 330 is also *Varadā*. Granting boons is the general quality of all Gods and Goddesses. In certain forms of Gods and Goddesses the right palm is used as a gesture of granting boons. There is a special significance for this nāma. She does not grant boons through Her palms. Her sacred feet give boons. She is *kāmadāyinī* (nāma 63). Otherwise nāma 83 will not have any meaning. The significance of this nāma is further strengthened by nāma 117.

Saundarya Laharī (verse 4) perfectly describes this nāma. It says, "You are the refuge of all the worlds! All gods except you vouchsafe protection to devotees and grant their desires by gestures of their hands. You alone do not show *varada* and *abhaya* gestures. It is so because Your feet are by themselves powerful to protect those in the grip of fear and grant more that what is desired for by devotees." Such niceties describe the ease with which She grants boons.

It is also said that She is to be worshipped by concentration (through meditation) on ninth lunar day (*navami*) when She becomes the giver of boons to all the worlds.

Vāma-nayanā वाम-नयना (332)

Literally this nāma means 'beautiful eyes'. *Vāma* also means fruits of action and *nayat* means leading to. *Vāma-nayanā* therefore means 'the fruits of one's actions lead to Her', indicating the final liberation.

This is substantiated in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* in IV.15.2. It says '*saṁyād-vāma'* (concentration of all good things) which means that one who knows the Self (Her Brahman form as the Supreme Self) becomes a container of all good things. He carries the fruits of good things according to what they deserve (as per their karmic account). The next verse of the *Upaniṣad* says '*sarvāni vāmāni nayati'* which means the source of all that is good and pure, indicating the Brahman. The word *vāmāni* is used in the *Upaniṣad* to mean the

One who carried the fruits of good work to all beings according to what they deserve. He is the support of all that is good.

Vāruṇi-mada-vihvalā वारुणि-मद-विह्वला (333)

Vāruṇi is the extract of dates that is allowed to brew and when consumed causes inebriation. By consuming this, She forgets the surroundings and concentrates on Her inner Self (possibly meaning Śiva) is the literal meaning of this nāma. This will be further explained in nāma 878.

There is a *nāḍi* (nerve) called *vāruṇi* which can be controlled by breath. This *nāḍi* plays a significant role in excretion of bodily waste. If this *nāḍi* is brought under control by proper breathing exercises, one will never feel tiredness in the body. Sages keep this *nāḍi* under their control to cope up with longer duration of meditation. She is said to be in form of this *nāḍi*. This nāma could not have been conceptualised by any human brain to convey such an intricate meaning, other than *Vāc-devi*-s.

Viśvādhikā विश्वाधिका (334)

She is beyond all *tattva-s*. There are thirty six important tattvas commencing from *Śiva tattva* downwards till *pṛthivi* (earth) *tattva*. She transcends all these *tattva-s*. All the living beings exist because of these *tattva-s* only. Thirty six *tattva*-s comprise of basic five elements, four components of *antaḥkaraṇa*, seven components of *māyā tattva* and five components of *Śiva tattva*.

Veda-vedyā वेद-वेद्या (335)

She can be known through Veda-s. All the Veda-s lead to the Supreme Reality, the Brahman. Brahman is the embodiment of Veda-s.

Kṛṣṇa says, (*Bhagavad Gīta* XV.15) "By all the Veda-s, I am to be known. …I am the knower of all Veda-s".

Veda-s can be known only through knowledge. In other words, unless one has knowledge, the Self-realization is not possible. Brahman is the essence of that knowledge. There is a difference between Veda-s and *Vedānta*. *Vedānta* refers to the teachings of *Upaniṣads*. Study of *Upaniṣads* gives the necessary impetus to the knowledge.

It is also said that *Śrī Cakra* has four gates on the four sides and each gate represents one Veda. Knowing Her through Veda-s is called *Śuddha Vidya* (the perfect knowledge) in contrast to *Śrī Vidya* that deals predominantly with rituals.

No doubt, some good interpretations on Veda-s are available, but the fact is that Veda-s are beyond human interpretation. If one looks at the Veda-s, one may tend to believe that they talk about external fire rituals. In fact they do not. They convey several subtle interpretations and only out of such interpretations, *Upaniṣads* originated. *Upaniṣads* do plain speaking and to the point. They make attempts to qualify the Brahman by affirmations and negations. She is in the form of essence of Veda-s.

{Further reading on Veda-s: The Veda-s (वेद) are the most important treatise to the humanity. They are in classical Sanskrit language that was widely used in ancient Aryan times. The Vedic verses can be interpreted from various angles like literature, spiritual, religious, grammar, philosophy etc. Though there are interpretations on Veda-s available today, it is doubtful whether they truly convey the intended meaning. This is not because of defective interpretations or lack of efficiency of the interpreters, but mainly due to the abilitie-s of Veda-s to communicate both gross and subtle renditions. A careful reading of Vedic verses reveals that they deal with symbolic separation of bodily organs of the performer and offered to higher energy fields for purification. Veda-s never advocated physical slaying of animals. But it is wrongly interpreted that various organs of an animal are offered as oblations. Veda-s originated from divine commune. For a long time, they were not penned down as the verses and were channeled from a master to his

disciples. The sages have chosen the oral path for communication as these verses relied more on orthoepy to prevent any distortions. Most of the texts of Veda-s are in the form of verses. These are called *mantra* verses and their oral delivery largely depends on phonics and rhythm. There are portions of prose as well and they are known as *Brāhmaṇa* (ब्राह्मण) passages. These passages explain the procedures for rituals and dwell more on the practical side.

There are four Veda-s, *Rig, Yajur, Sāma* and *Atharva* (ऋग्, यजुर्, साम, अथर्व). The first three are known as *trividyā* (त्रिविद्या) (literal translation – three types of knowledge). *Atharva Veda* is not included here because of its late origin. The origin of the other three Vedas is not known. But the fact remains that they defied Nature's fury and continued to guide even in this contemporary world. Vedas are also known as *Śruti-s* (श्रुति). Veda-s in their original form is too difficult to comprehend as they are considered to have been delivered by God Himself to the ancient sages and saints. The sages conglomerated the speech of God, by colligating their highest level of cosmic intelligence with the Supreme Consciousness. They memorized these verses and imparted them to their disciples orally. If the sages had chosen to contrive the Vedas into manuscripts, they could have been destroyed or modified, unable to stand the vagaries of the Mother Nature. It is beyond the human power to decrypt the speech of God. To make it possible to some extent, the study of Vedas were divided into various categories and each category was analyzed by the experts in the respective fields. This study is known as *vedāṅga* (वेदाङ्ग) that integrates study of phonetics, ritual injunctions, linguistics, grammar, etymology, lexicography, prosody, astronomy and astrology.

The elaborate study of Veda-s would not have been initiated, had it been easier to understand them. *Vedāṅga* attempted to corroborate various expert interpretations, thereby making it possible to first understand the gross interpretation and later its subtle conveyance. It was concluded that Vedas discuss about every act of a human being, from birth to death. This conclusion was divided into three

broad categories known as *jñāna, karma* and *upāsana*. *Jñāna* means wisdom. It is not the knowledge of literacy. This knowledge is known as wisdom. Knowledge is of mundane type, the psychological result of perception of learning and reasoning. Wisdom has the ability to apply knowledge gained for the purpose of practical judgment, discrimination and insight. This is the reason why wisdom is considered superior to knowledge. The Veda-s both directly and indirectly advocate acquiring of wisdom. As wisdom can be acquired only through experience, they prescribe *karma*-s. *Karma*-s mean actions. By repeated actions, experience is gained and by such experience, one is able to discriminate between good and bad. Next is *upāsana* which means performance, performance of rituals. *Upāsana* differs from *karma*. *Karma* means actions for sustenance. *Upāsana* means actions performed to realize God. The Veda-s give innumerable interpretations to the concept of God. The basic idea of the Veda-s is to make one realize God, which they call as the Brahman. To realize the Brahman, the Veda-s insist that one should be proficient in all the three categories. Therefore, it is made imperative to understand the Veda-s, in their archetypical form, as the verses of Veda-s have deeper implications.}

Vindhyācala-nivāsinī विन्ध्याचल-निवासिनी (336)

She lives in *Vindhyā* mountains. In *Durgā Saptasati* (Seven hundred verses like *Bhagavad Gīta* and is a part of *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*) XI.41, She says "I will be born in the house of *Nandagopa* (father of *Kṛṣṇa*) and will live in *Vindhyā* mountains, during which time I will kill these two demons (two demons called *Śumba* and *Niśumba*)". This verse is a definite clue identifying *Kṛṣṇa* as *Lalitāmbikā.* This could be the reason for various nāma-s in this *Sahasranāma* identifying Her with *Viṣṇu*. There are certain instances where She is said to be the sister of *Viṣṇu*. In this *Sahasranāma*, nāma 280 says that She is the sister of *Padmanābha*, one of many names.

Vidhātrī विधात्री (337)

Dhātrī means the motherhood. She being (*Śrī Mātā*) the Supreme Mother, She nourishes this universe. *Dhātrī* also means gooseberry (*Emblica Officinalis* or *amla*) and in this context it is said that She likes gooseberries. This tree is said to be a sacred tree attributed to Goddess *Lakṣmī*. The lord of creation, *Brahma*, is known as *Vidhātra* and his wife is *Vidhātrī*. The Supreme *Śiva* in the form of Brahman creates this universe, as *Viṣṇu* maintains it and as *Rudra* destroys it. His consorts in these three stages are known as *Sarasvatī, Lakṣmī* and *Rudrāṇī*. There are other nāma-s (457, 823, 826, 985) with the same meaning, that come up later in this *Sahasranāma*. In *Lalitā Sahasranāma* no nāma is repeated for the second time. But there are certain nāma-s that could convey the same meaning. If one goes deep into each nāma, one can realize that such nāma-s also convey different meanings altogether.

Veda-jananī वेद-जननी (338)

Creator of Veda-s. Literally this can be explained as 'She gave birth to Veda-s'. Veda-s originated from the Brahman in the form of sound. This sound was realized by the ancient sages and taught to their disciples orally. Only in the recent past, Veda-s are made available in textual forms. More than the text, the orthoepy is important in Veda-s and any wrong recitals or wrong notes (*svara*) leads to undesired results. This was the reason for teaching Veda-s orally. Veda-s originate from *Śabda Brahman* (*śabda* means sound).

Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad (I.i.5) gives a different interpretation. "There are two categories of knowledge, secular or *aparā* and spiritual or *parā*. *Aparā* comprises of four Veda-s, phonetics, rituals, grammar, etymology, metre and astronomy. But *parā* is that by which one knows the Brahman, which is ever the same and never decays."

But, *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (II.iv.10) puts this in a different perspective. "*Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sāma Veda, Atharva Veda*, history, mythology, arts, *Upaniṣads*, pithy verses, aphorisms,

elucidations and explanations are like the breath of this infinite Reality. They are like the breath of this Supreme Self."

Puruṣa-sūktam gives yet another interpretation. It says that 'the Veda-s originated from *sarvahuta yajñā* that was conducted by gods and great sages, invoking *Puruṣa* as the lord of this fire ritual. This *Puruṣa* is called the Brahman, from whom the Veda-s originated.

Even though the interpretations are different, all of them concur that the Veda-s or its subtle form sound, originated from the Supreme.

Viṣṇu-māyā विष्णु-माया (339)

She is the *māyā* of *Viṣṇu*. *Viṣṇu* is all-pervading maintainer of the universe. Brahman's sustaining act is known as *Viṣṇu*. *Nārāyaṇa Sūktam* says '*Viṣṇu* exists both internally and externally (of our physical body)'. *Śaktī* is in the form of *māyā* or illusion that forms a sort of veil around the Brahman. Unless the veil is removed, one cannot realize the Brahman and this is the reason why so much importance is attached to *Śaktī* worship. *Śiva* has given His independent autonomy (*svātantraya śaktī*) to *Śaktī* to administer the universe.

Kṛṣṇa says (*Bhagavad Gīta* VII.14) "It is difficult to transcend my *māyā* consisting of three qualities (three *guṇa*-s). Only those who surrender unto me can become free from the clutches of *māyā*". This verse of Gita should be considered as very significant. In a single verse *Kṛṣṇa* explains the concept of *māyā* and way to overcome it. *Māyā* is the combination of three *guṇa-s* viz. *satvic*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Manipulating these gunas cause manifestation. If one is able to transcend these three *guṇa-s*, the first step of removing the veil of *māyā* is achieved. The next step is to surrender unto Him. *Kṛṣṇa* says "*māmeva ye prapadyante māyāmetāṁ tarantidya* मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्तिदय." This means 'those who surrender unto me certainly overcome this illusion'.

Vilāsinī विलासिनी (340)

Vilāsa means playful. One interpretation is that She is interested in fun, associated with lusty acts with *Śiva*. Possibly this could mean that such acts are not considered as sins, as projected. If such acts do not exist, where is the question of procreation? If no procreation is happening, one of the God's acts, the creation itself will be in jeopardy. Even the ancient scriptures do not advocate abstaining from such acts. But, at the same time they do prescribe certain rigorous rules and regulations that are to be strictly adhered to.

Vilāsa also means the power of projection which is called *vikṣepa śakti* (power of projection, through which the projection of the world is possible). This is the true act of *māyā*, veiling the Ultimate Truth and projecting It is as something else, thereby causing illusion. This interpretation seems to be appropriate as this nāma follows the earlier nāma V*iṣṇu-māyā*'. When She is in the form *Viṣṇu*'s *māyā*, (*Viṣṇu* is all-pervading) naturally She causes illusion.

Kṣetra-svarūpā क्षेत्र-स्वरूपा (341)

Since the next few nāma-s deal with Her *Kṣetra* form, understanding *Kṣetra* becomes important. *Kṣetra* is the physical body and *kṣetrajña* is the soul. *Kṣetra* is made up of thirty six *tattva*-s (some take only twentyfour) or principles. There is an exclusive chapter (XIII) in *Bhagavad Gīta* on this subject. *Kṛṣṇa* opens this chapter by saying that "the body is called *kṣetra* (where *karma*-s are created and its effect executed) and which cognizes this is called *kṣetrajña*". *Liṇga Purāna* also says 'the Goddess (*Śaktī*), the beloved of the slayer of the three cities (*Śiva*) is *Kṣetra* while the Lord (*Śiva*) is *Kṣetrajña*'. *Kṣetra* is gross and *kṣetrajña* is subtle. *Kṣetra* is perishable, whereas the knower of *Kṣetra, kṣetrajña* is eternal and imperishable.

Kṛṣṇa concludes chapter XIII by saying, "Those who know the difference between *kṣetra* and *kṣetrajña* and the phenomenon of liberation from *Prakṛti* with her evolutes, reach the supreme eternal spirit."

She is said to be in the form of such *kṣetra*. This nāma means that She is the embodiment of all gross forms of this universe.

Kṣtreśī क्त्रेशी (342)

Wife of *Kṣetrajña* (*Śiva*) is *Kṣtreśī* (*Śaktī*). It is like *Bhairava* and *Bhairavī*. It must always be remembered that there is no difference between *Śiva* and *Śaktī*. Or it may also be said that She is the *Īśvarī* of all *kṣetra-s* (possible extension of the previous nāma).

Kṣetra-kṣetrajña-pālinī क्षेत्र-क्षेत्रज्ञ-पालिनी (343)

The protector of both *kṣetra* and *Kṣetrajña*. She protects both viz. the gross body and the soul. *Kṣetrajña-pālinī* could mean the protector of the soul or the protector of *Śiva*. Being *Śiva's* wife She has to necessarily protect Him. Being *Śrī Mātā* or the divine Mother, She has to protect Her children. That is why *Śiva* is called as the universal father and *Śaktī* as the universal mother. (Poet *Kālidāsa* says in his *Raghuvaṃśa* "*jagataḥ pitarau vande pārvati parameśvarau* जगतः पितरौ वन्दे पार्वति परमेश्वरौ।")

Kṣaya-vṛddhi-vinirmuktā क्षय-वृद्धि-विनिर्मुक्ता (344)

She is beyond growth and decay. These are associated with all mortals. One has to look at the beauty of this nāma. In nāma 341 She was addressed as the gross body, *Kṣetra-svarūpā*. In 342 She was addressed as *Kṣtreśī*, wife of *Kṣetrajña* (*Śiva*). In the next nāma 343 She was called as the protector of both the *Kṣetra* and *Kṣetrajña* (body and soul) and in this nāma *Vāc Devi*-s address Her as the One without growth or decay, the qualities of the Brahman. Without calling Her as the Brahman She is being addressed by Her various actions.

Kṛṣṇa explains soul thus (*Bhagavad Gīta* II.23): "The soul is never born or dies; nor does it become only after being born, imperishable, eternal and free from birth and decay....."

Bṛrhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (IV.iv.22) says "It is the controller of all…It does not grow better through good work nor worse through bad work"

Kṣetra-pāla-samarcitā क्षेत्र-पाल-समर्चिता (345)

She is worshipped by *Kṣetra-pāla-s*. *Kṣetra*, as discussed in nāma 341 is the body. *Pāla* means the Protector. This body is protected by *pañcabhūta* (the five elements viz. akash, air, fire, water and earth). Each of these elements is represented by a demigod. She is worshipped by them. This appears to be the appropriate interpretation.

There is an interesting story associated with this nāma. Goddess *Kālī* was created by *Śiva* to slain a demon called *Dāruka*. Even after killing him, the ferocity of Her anger could not be controlled. The entire universe was rattled by Her anger. To appease Her anger *Śiva* Himself assumed the form of an infant. After all She is the Supreme Mother. She started feeding the child (*Śiva*). While suckling, Śiva also sucked Her anger. This child is called *Kṣetrapāla*, because He protected this universe from a catastrophe. She was worshipped by this *Kṣetrapāla*.

The place where major *yajña* rituals take place is also called *kṣetra* and the god who protects it is called *Kṣetrapāla* and She is worshipped by him.

Vijayā विजया (346)

She is always victorious. She wins all Her battles against evil doers who are known as demons. It can also be said that She has conquered *Śiva's* love, hence victorious. During *dasara* festival, 10^{th} day evening (known as *vijaya dasami*, meaning victorious 10^{th} day of *dasara* festival) twilight time is considered as the most auspicious time to commence any event. There is a *tithi nitya devi* (worshipped in *Śrī Cakra*) by name *Vijayā*.

Vimalā विमला (347)

She is devoid of impurities. *Mala* means impurities arising out of ignorance. When She is the embodiment of knowledge, there is no question of impurities arising out of ignorance. The same meaning is also conveyed in nāma 135. *Vi* (वि) as a prefix to a word conveys the opposite meaning of the word. For example, *mala* means impurities and *vi-mala* means devoid of impurities.

Interpretation for nāma 135 *nirmalā* is repeated here. *Mala* means dirt arising out of impure matter. She is without such dirt. In nāma (134) impurity arising out of mind was discussed and in nāma 135 impurities arising out of matter is being discussed. It is to be recalled that mind and matter is *Śaktī*. *Mala* is a sense of imperfection that leads to ignorance about the soul and hampers the free expression of the Supreme Self. This ignorance is caused by ego which is called *āṇava-mala*.

This nāma says that if one gets rid of attachments towards matter and by dissolving ego, knowledge is attained. Presence of *mala* causes *avidyā* (lack of knowledge) which leads to confusion, dirt and darkness. This darkness etc can be dispelled by meditating on Her, thereby acquiring knowledge.

Vandyā वन्द्या (348)

She is adorable. We adore someone by merely seeing him and without even knowing him. This happens because he draws divine energy from the cosmos and this gets reflected through his body as vibrations. Such vibrations are normally drawn through an orifice in the crown *cakra* and also through medulla oblongata which is situated beneath the back of our head. The third eye, the pineal gland and the back head *cakra* are placed in a straight line. When one is able to look within through the *ājñā cakra*, the energy generated passes through the pineal gland and gets released through the back head *cakra* and in the process cleanses bio-plasma body.

This process not only accelerates one's spiritual progress but also rarely confers some super human powers (*siddhi-s*).

She is the embodiment of all the energies of the universe. She draws Her energy from the Supreme *Śiva* and transmits to the universe for its sustenance.

Vandāru-jana-vatsalā वन्दारु-जन-वत्सला (349)

This can be considered as an extension of the previous nāma. She loves Her devotees like a mother who loves her children. The vibration of love is emanated through one's body like fragrance of a flower. Because of caring and loving nature also She is known as *Vimalā* (nāma 347). One can notice this in daily life. When one serves food for his dog, by impulse he develops love for his dog and this is radiated through his body. The dog reads his vibrations and feels his love and wags its tail as a token of reciprocating his love.

Vāgvādinī वाग्वादिनी (350)

She prompts speech or She is in the form of speech itself. Goddess *Sarasvatī* is referred to as the goddess of speech. This nāma could mean that *Sarasvatī* acquired the control of speech from Her (like allocation of portfolios in a government). Since She is the origin of speech, She is *Vāgvādinī*

Vāmakeśī वामकेशी (351)

Wife of *Vāmakeśvarā* is *Vāmakeśī*. *Śiva* introduced twenty eight *tantra-s* (as per *Śaivasiddhānta*) to the universe and one among them is called *Vāmakeśa tantra*. This deals only with Her worship, hence She is called *Vāmakeśī*. *Vāmakā* means a man. *Śiva* is considered as the chief among men (*īśvarā*), hence He is known as *Vāmakeśvarā (vāmaka + īśvarā*). His wife is *Vāmakeśī*. It is like *Bhairava* and *Bhairavi*.

There are two nāma-s in *Lalita Sahasranāma* beginning with *Vāmakeśa*. The first one is this nāma, *Vāmakeśī* and the other one is nāma 945. *Vāmakeśvarī. Vāma* has innumerable meanings such as beautiful, splendid, Śiva, *Durgā, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī*, a beautiful woman, wife, left side, etc. *Keśa* means hair. Then this nāma means that She has beautiful hair. But this interpretation does not align well with the preceding and succeeding nāma-s. Nāma 350 refers to Goddess *Sarasvatī* and nāma 352 could mean *Durgā*. If these interpretations are correct, then this nāma should refer to Goddess *Lakṣmī*, which seems to be appropriate.

Nāma 945 is *Vāmakeśvarī* which refers to *Vāmakeśvara tantra*. This *tantra* is said to be the sixty fifth *tantra* apart from the sixty four discussed in *Saundarya Laharī* verse 31 and nāma 236 of this *Sahasranāma*. *Vāmakeśvara tantra* is said to be the most important *tantra* for *Śrī Vidyā* worship. This tantra discusses on internal worship of *Śaktī*. *Vāmakeśvarī* is said to be the source of this Universe.

Śaktī asks *Śiva* in *Vāmakeśvara tantra* "Lord, you revealed to me all the sixty four tantra-s. But you have not told me about sixteen *Vidyā-s*." *Śiva* answers by saying that this has not been declared yet and is hidden so far. Then *Śiva* begins declaring this tantra to Devi. Everything in this tantra has been revealed in a very subtle manner.

To cite an example the *bīja hrīṁ* is declared as the form of *Vidyā* protecting the self is *Śiva*, *agni*, *māyā* and *bindu*. Unless one knows the *bīja*-s of these gods and goddesses, it is difficult to make out the hidden *bīj*. *Śiva bījā* is *ha*, *Agni bījā* is *ra*, *māyā bīja* (root of *īṁ* ईं or *kāmakalā*) is '*ī'* and *bindu* is the dot. By joining all this, the *bīja hrīṁ* is arrived. *Śiva* declares a number of uncommon yet powerful *bīja-s* in this *tantra*.

Vāma-s mean those who worship Her through left hands. They do not follow the five principle *yajñā-s* that will be discussed in nāma 946 subsequently. She is the Goddess for these left hand worshippers. She is also known as *Vāmeśvarī*, which refers to Her

divine power which projects the universe out of *Śiva* (the Brahman without attributes) and produces the reverse (*vāma*) consciousness of difference.

Vāmadevā is the back face of *Śiva*.

Vahni-maṇḍala-vāsinī वह्नि-मण्डल-वासिनी (352)

She lives in the sphere of fire. *Vahni* means fire. The sphere of fire is said to be in *mūlādhāra cakra* and in *ākāś* or ether. Already nāma 99 *mūlādhārika nilaya* explained that She resides in the base *cakra*. The other interpretation that She resides in *ākāś* is based on the saying that *agni* prevails in ether as well. *Vahni* also means numeric three. This numeric three could mean the moon, the sun and the fire one below the other in the spine. The moon is in *sahasrāra*, the sun in *anāhata* and the fire in *mūlādhāra*. She is in the form all these three. The *Pañcadaśī mantra* consists of three *kūṭa-s* and this nāma could mean that She resides in this *mantra*. Possibly this could be the reason why *Pañcadaśī mantra* is considered as the supreme *mantra*.

Bhaktimat-kalpa-latikā भक्तिमत्-कल्प-लतिका (353)

Kalpa is a divine creeper that grants boon to those who sit under it. In the same way She gives boon to Her devotees. *Latika* means spread over. This indicates that Her devotees are spread over across the earth (devotees is a general term representing the whole humanity). *Kalpa* also means imperfection. Those who worship Her with imperfect devotion are made to acquire perfect devotion over several births and She gives them final liberation. There is difference between final liberation and reaching the Heavens which is called *mokṣa*. The final liberation means no re-birth and *mokṣa* means after exhausting all good *karma-s* in the Heaven (the heaven can be explained as a place where certain souls are rested for some period of time). Other souls are reborn immediately after leaving a body. The soul reaching the Heaven, does not attain perfection to

become eligible to get liberated. Such final salvation is possible only with Her grace. This is the inherent meaning of this nāma.

Kṛṣṇa says (*Bhagavad Gīta* XV.10) "The yogis striving for liberation see Him existing in themselves; but those who are un-purified and undisciplined are unable to perceive Him even when they struggle to do so."

Paśu-pāśa-vimocanī पशु-पाश-विमोचनी (354)

The concept of self-realization is best explained in *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (I.iv.10). It says "This self was indeed Brahman in the beginning. It knew only Itself as, 'I am Brahman.' Therefore, It became all. And whoever among the gods knew It also became That; and the same with sages and men." When one realizes the Brahman, he becomes everything. Those who do not have the requisite knowledge to know the Brahman are called *paśu-s*. *Paśu* generally means cattle; but in the present context it can be explained as the individual soul as distinct from the divine Soul of the universe. In other words, *paśu* here means those who do not possess knowledge about the Brahman. *Pāśa* means bondage arising out of ignorance. The cattle need just food and beyond food they do not think about anything, because they are incapable of thinking. That is why those who do not possess wisdom for knowing the Brahman are called *paśu-s*.

Liṅga Purāṇa says *paśu-s* are the individual souls and *pāśa* is the bondage and such bondage of *paśu-s* are destroyed by *Paśupatī*, the Lord of all *paśu-s* (*Śiva*).

It is better to know a little more on *paśu* as this word is more frequently used in many *Upaniṣads*. *Śiva Sutra* I.2 says *jñānam bandhaḥ*. *Jñānam* means vitiated knowledge and *bandhaḥ* means bondage. Limited knowledge is ignorance. Ignorance is the cause for bondage that veils the true Brahman. This phenomenon is called *āṇava mala*. *Mala* has been explained as ignorance that hampers the free expression of the Brahman. *Āṇava mala* means innate

ignorance of the soul. *Āṇava* is the word derived from the root a*ṇu* which means the empirical individual. This *āṇava mala* is subdivided into two. The first one is the ignorance innate in the very being of the individual Self and other is ignorance inherent in the intellect or *buddhi*. The *āṇava mala* is the cause of bondage. Those who are afflicted by such *āṇava mala* undergo birth and death. This nāma says that She removes this *āṇava mala* for Her devotees, which is a precondition for final liberation.

Saṃhṛtāśeṣa-pāṣaṇḍā संहृताशेष-पाषण्डा (355)

She is referred in this nāma as the destroyer of heretics. Heretics are those who do not follow the principles laid down by *Veda-s*. Fourteen places (which include the four *Veda-s* and their extensions are referred to as the principle domains of *dharma*. Those men who cross the boundaries of the principles of *dharma* are called *pāṣaṇḍa* or heresy. She destroys all those who act against the principles of *Veda-s*.

Sadācāra-pravartikā सदाचार-प्रवर्तिका (356)

She removes the innate ignorance of the soul to realize the Brahman. In this nāma, She is said to induce the ignorant men to perform noble acts. *Sat* refers those who perform noble deeds and *ācāra* means the righteous acts performed by them. She makes the ignorant people (ignorant means lack of knowledge of the Brahman. It could also mean the concept of duality) to pursue the righteous path to realize the Brahman. The principles of righteousness are expounded in epics. These principles form the basis of *dharma śāstra* (refer previous nāma).

Tāpatrayāgni-santapta-samāhlādana-candrikā तापत्रयाग्नि-सन्तप्त-समाह्लादन-चन्द्रिका (357)

Ancient scriptures talk about three types of afflictions, pertaining to body, elements and deities. These three are compared to three types

of fires. These three types of fires cause serious damage to the one who undergoes the sufferings of bondage called *saṁsāra*. She is like the moon light (grace) that gives happiness to those affected by the said three afflictions. The meaning of the nāma is that by Her sheer grace She destroys the miseries caused by these three afflictions and showers happiness to Her devotees.

The three types of miseries are: 1. *ādhyātmika* – this comprises of the four components of *antaḥkaraṇa*, five *karmendriya*-s and five *jñānendriya*-s. 2. *ādhibhautika* – comprises of five basic elements and sense organs. 3. *ādhidaivata* – influence of super human powers. All the three are called afflictions because they function on the basis of data provided by the sense organs.

Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (IV.iv.25) says, "That great birthless Self is un-decaying, immortal, undying, fearless..."

Taruṇī तरुणी (358)

She is eternally youthful. Eternal youth is possible only in the absence of modifications, an exclusive quality of the Brahman. The Brahman is non-decaying and immortal said *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*. The eternality of the Brahman is discussed in nāma-s 136, 292, and 344.

Tāpasārādhyā तापसाराध्या (359)

She is worshipped by ascetics. The ascetics are highly respectable as they abstain from all pleasurable objects in order to seek the Supreme Brahman. They do not worship demigods or goddesses as their only aim is to realize the Ultimate Reality. Worship by such ascetics goes to confirm that She is the Brahman.

There is yet another interpretation. *Tāpa* means bondage which is the root of all miseries. *Sārādhyā* is split into *sāra* (essence) + *ā* (deep) + *dhyā* (*dhyān* or meditation). The bondage arising out of

saṁsāra can only be removed by meditating on Her. Through the essence of deep meditation, bondage can be removed.

Tanumadhyā तनुमध्या (360)

She has slender waist. Please refer nāma 85 also. There is a meter by name *tanumadhya*. Meter or *chandas* refers to the number of alphabets or words in a verse as per Sanskrit literature. She is said to be in the form of this meter. *Kṛṣṇa* says, (*Bhagavad Gīta* X.35)" *Gāyatrī candasāmahaṁ* (गायत्री चन्दसामहं)" that He is in the form *Gāyatrī* meter.

Tamopahā तमोपहा (361)

Tamas means ignorance and its main components are mental darkness, ignorance, illusion, error. *Tamo guṇa* is one of the three *guṇa-s*. An ignorant person is said to have *tamo guṇa*.

There is a beautiful explanation for ignorance or darkness in *Īśā Upaniṣad* (verse 9). "Those who mechanically perform rituals go into darkness which is like being blind. But, those who merely worship God go into deeper darkness". Mundane worship never gives result. Any worship for material prosperity or personal upliftment will never be rewarded. Such men are called ignorant. She is said to remove this ignorance.

Citiḥ चितिः (362)

She is in the form of eternal knowledge. *Cit* can be explained as pure knowledge that helps in realizing the Brahman. The opposite of *cit* (*vidyā*) is nescience (*avidyā* or ignorance about the Brahman). Her *vimarśa* form is discussed here. Brahman has two forms *prakāśa* or the static and self illuminating energy and *vimarśa* or the kinetic and reflecting energy. The one without the other is not capable of sustaining this universe and this interdependency is called as the union of *Śiva* and *Śaktī*.

{Further reading on *cit*: Brahman is the essence of *sat* (eternity), *cit* (pure or foundational consciousness) and *ānanda* (the bliss). *Cit* is also known as spiritual conscience, which is also known as *citātma*. When *citātma* is reflected in universal nescience, it assumes the role of God. When *citātma* is reflected in individual nescience the role assumed as the individual souls. Both God and souls are nothing but mere reflections of purest form of consciousness of the Brahman. But there is a distinction between God and soul. God is the Lord of *prakṛti* and soul becomes liable to the bondages of *prakṛti*.}

Tatpada-lakṣyārthā तत्पद-लक्ष्यार्था (363)

Tat means that and *pada* means word. *Tatpada* (that word) means THAT referring the Brahman. *Lakṣyārthā* means indirect reference. *Tat-tvam-asi* or *you are That* is said to indicate that you are the Brahman where 'That' refers to the Brahman. This goes to prove the omnipresence nature of the Brahman and His non-dualistic nature. The previous nāma discussed about the two forms of the Brahman. *Prakāśa* form is without attributes and is eternally pure and *vimarśa* form is with attributes and though pure is subjected to modifications exclusively for the purpose of administering the universe. Though they are interdependent, in literal sense there appears to be no difference between these two as they are embodiments of pure knowledge or *cit*. In fact this undifferentiated form of the Brahman is known as That or *Cit*. In order to avoid any confusion arising out of the previous nāma, this nāma confirms Her *nir-guṇa* (unconditioned) Brahman status.

Cideka-rasa-rūpiṇī चिदेक-रस-रूपिणी (364)

She is the essence of knowledge. The difference between knowledge and the essence of knowledge is to be understood. The knowledge of the unconditioned Brahman or the *Prakāśa* form of the Brahman is different from the conditioned Brahman or the *vimarśa* form of the Brahman. The Brahman with attributes and

without attributes remains the same, so also their purity of knowledge. This is the reason for establishing the identity of the both as one. This nāma says that She is not different from *Cit* (nāma 362) or *That* (nāma 363), the qualities of the Brahman. There is no difference between conditioned and unconditioned Brahman as any modifications take place purely at the will of Brahman for the purpose of creation, sustenance and dissolution. When knowledge is extracted, the essence of knowledge is obtained, possibly from its gross form to its subtle form. But, the foundational nature of both gross and subtle forms of knowledge is not different. This can be compared to milk and its derivatives.

Svātmānanda-lavī-bhūta-brahmādyānanda-santatiḥ
स्वात्मानन्द-लवी-भूत-ब्रह्माद्यानन्द-सन्ततिः (365)

The sum total of bliss of Gods like Brahma and others is only a droplet of Her bliss. All gods and goddesses enjoy the *ānanda* or bliss. Brahma and other gods indicate the three actions of the Brahman viz. creation, sustenance and dissolution. Every action of the universe is said to be controlled by a form of god or goddesses. For example *Brahma* is said to be in charge of creation, *Viṣṇu* for sustenance and *Rudra* for destruction, *Varuṇa* for waters, *Agni* for fire, etc. But what is bliss? Our real nature is always in the state of bliss or happiness or *ānanda* whatever you call it. But this perennial nature of bliss is disturbed by the powerful tools of desire and associated losses. Desire is always for the one that one does not possess and loss is a situation where, what one had earlier is not with him now.

Taittirīya Upaniṣhad (II.8) beautifully describes bliss. "To give the idea of bliss that Brahman represents, take a young and honest man with a commanding personality, well versed in the scriptures, well built and strong. Suppose he owns the wealth of the entire world, then take his maximum stage of happiness as one unit and multiply it with infinity, is the bliss of the Brahman". In the next verse, the *Upaniṣhad* says "…being free from desires, he first attains the self represented by the vital breath, then the self represented by the

mind, then the self represented by the intellect and the self represented by bliss and finally merges into the cosmic self or the Brahman".

The bliss is the penultimate stage of the final salvation. Such a sort of bliss can be experienced only during the last stages of merger into the Brahman, the final stages of liberation, the state of *kaivalya*.

This nāma is in confirmation of nāma 363 which says that she is in fact the Supreme Brahman or the Brahman without attributes.

Parā परा (366)

In the next few nāma-s Her *Śabda* (sound) *Brahman* form is going to be discussed. The literal meaning of 'Brahman' is growing, developing, swelling, expanding, evolving etc. This nāma refers Her un-manifested form (of the Brahman).

In order to understand this nāma and the next few, origin and evolution of sound becomes a necessity.

Prakāśa and *vimarśa* form of the Brahman are quite frequently referred to while discussing the Supreme Reality or the Absolute. Generally it is to be understood that *prakāśa* form represent *Śiva* and *vimarśa* form represent *Śakthī*. *Śiva* or *Parameśvara* (*parama* means the highest) is pure and unblemished self-illuminating light and *Śakthī* or *vimarśa* is the realisation of this pure light. *Prakāśa* and *vimarśa* cannot be separated. There is a Sanskrit saying that word and its meaning cannot be separated; in the same way *Pārvatī* or *Śakthī* and *Parameśvaran* or *Śiva* cannot be separated from each other. When there is a brilliant light, one needs to have knowledge to realise it as light. Suppose, there is a candle burning, and on seeing the candle with light, one can say that the candle gives light. When one wants to see a candle light, he needs to have a lighted candle. The light and its visibility though separate, are interdependent. Visibility is the expression of light and without the source of the light, visibility becomes impossible. In the same way,

light is of no use, if it is not reflected making the visibility possible. Both light and its expression together is known as light. This is called *prakāśa vimarśa māyā* or the Absolute. Sound originates from this Absolute form.

This Absolute form is also called *parāvāc* form. This *parāvāc* is primeval stage. The sound in this stage can be called as a seed that has not yet germinated. When the seed begins its germination, the stage is called *paśyantī* (nāma 368). At this stage the seed has the desire to grow. The stem becomes visible and the seed is set to commence its journey of growth. Though it is known for certain that there is going to be a tree at a future date, one does not know how the tree would be, big or small, fruit bearing or barren etc. When the sapling grows to a certain height, one is able to see its leaves, he will be able to identify what type of tree that would be. This stage is called *madhyamā* (nāma 370). The sapling further grows to become a tree, when one is able to see its flowers and fruits. He is able to recognize the nature of this seed totally now. The complete form of the tree is known at this stage. This is called *vaikharī* stage. These three stages originated from the form of the Absolute, the seed in this example. Absolute form is called as *parāvāc*. *Parā* mean the highest form or the supreme form and *vāc* means sound. *Parāvāc* means the supreme form of sound. From this *parā* form or the seed form sound germinates, grows and yields words. The result is a full word with meaning.

In a human being this *parāvāc* is said to be in the form of *kuṇḍalinī* (nāma110) energy posited in *mūlādāra cakra* or base *cakra*. From the base *cakra*, the seed of the sound begins its ascent, reaches *manipūraka cakra* or navel *cakra* in the form of *paśyantī*, moves to *anāhat cakra* or heart *cakra* in the form *madhyamā* and reaches *viśuddhi* throat *cakra* as *vaikharī* where the final cleansing takes place. From the throat *cakra* the physical form of words are delivered. The vibration of *kuṇḍalinī* energy is the seed of the sound. When a desire of speech arises, it manifests as *Śabda Brahman* at *mūlādhāra* and moves up to take a physical form and delivered through throat *cakra* in the form of *vaikharī. Śabda*

Brahman is the Brahman in the form of sound. Like universe manifesting from the Brahman, words originate from *Śabda Brahman*. In reality, these two Brahman are not different.

To understand this better, we have go back to the creation. In terms of *Sāṁkhya* philosophy, the creation is based on twenty five *tattva-s* or principles (against twenty four *tattva-s* normally considered). The addition here is *Īśvara tattva*. These twenty five principles are 1. *Puruṣa* (the individual soul), 2. *Prakṛti* (nature), 3. *Buddhi* (intellect), 4. Ego, 5-9. *Jñānendriya-s* (cognitive senses, like ear, nose, etc), 10-14. *Karmendriya-s* (action senses like legs, hands, etc), 15-19. *Tanmātra-s* (subtle primary elements like taste, smell, etc), 20-24. *Mahā bhūta* (five basic elements like *ākāś*, air, etc) and finally as 25th *tattva, Īśvara*. Here *Īśvara* means the Brahman and *puruṣa* means the individual soul that gets various shapes and forms. The concept of Brahman is beyond all the other twenty four *tattva*-s. *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti* both are aboriginal principles, but there exist certain differences between them. *Puruṣa* is known as *jīva-ātma* or the individual soul which is a conscious spirit with positive principle. *Prakṛti* is unconscious matter with negative principle. When *puruṣa* interacts and conjoins with *prakṛti* (opposite energies are attracted to each other), the *prakṛti* manifests into other twenty one tattvas and binds the *puruṣa* or soul into subtle and then to gross matter. The gross matter is the physical form of man and subtle matter is *antaḥkaraṇa a* (mind, intellect, consciousness and ego). The stage before this union is called *avyakta* (nāma 398) or un-manifested form. In the stage of *avyakta*, when modifications in the form of manifestation is about to happen, *māyā* spreads its veil depending on the karmic density of the soul. This is how the creation is explained in the scriptures.

This un-manifested form or *avyakta* is called *kāraṇa bindu* because it is smaller than an atom. *Bindu* means a dot and *kāraṇa bindu* means origination of cause. When the time is ripe for *kāraṇa bindu* to manifest, it pulsates and vibrates getting ready to manifest and this gives rise to another dot called *kārya bindu* or effect dot, where the cause is manifested as effect. From this effect-dot or *kārya*

bindu, arises another dot called *nāda bindu* or sound-dot. The sound is ultimately delivered through *nāda bindu* after undergoing further refinement. The *kāraṇa bindu* resides in *mūlādhāra cakra* and during it's ascend undergoes these modifications and delivered in the form of audible sound.

Parā has three stages. Its original *parā* form is considered as supreme and is full of energy. In order to manifest, it gradually loses its supremacy and energy level and becomes *parā-parā* the mediocre level of supremacy. It further loses its strength at the exact time of manifestation and becomes a*parā* where it loses its supremacy and become manifested. These three stages are known as *Śiva*, *Śaktī* and *nara* (man). This way also She is known as *parā*. As the subsequent nāma-s discuss further about the evolution of sound from its *parā* or supreme form, therefore contextually this nāma is to be considered from the angle of *Śabda Brahman* only.

Rig Veda (I.164.45) also discusses this modification and it says,

catvāri vāk parimitā padāni tāni vidurbrāhmaṇā ye manīṣiṇaḥ |
guhā triṇi nihitā neṅgayanti turiyaṃ vāco manuṣyā vadanti ||

चत्वारि वाक् परिमिता पदानि तानि विदुर्ब्राहमणा ये मनीषिणः |
गुहा त्रिणि निहिता नेङ्गयन्ति तुरियं वाचो मनुष्या वदन्ति ||

"Four are the definite grades of speech; those learned who wise know them; three deposited in secret, indicate no meaning; men speak the fourth grade of speech. Four grades of speech are – ॐ, *Bhūḥ Bhuvaḥ Suvaḥ* and these are known as *Parā, paśyantī, madhyamā* and *vaikharī. Parā* is the innermost at the origin; *paśyantī* pertains to heart, *madhyamā* to intellect and *vaikharī* the phonetically expressed through organs of speech."

This nāma refers to Her *parā* form.

Pratyak-citī-rūpā प्रत्यक्-चिती-रूपा (367)

Pratyak means turned towards the inner soul and *cit* means consciousness. She is in the form of inner consciousness which is known as inner Self. *Pratyak* is opposed to *parāk*, which means turned outwards that happens with the help of senses. Inner consciousness is considered as the supreme level of consciousness. Life energy interacts with internal awareness, paving way for higher level of consciousness. The lower or higher level of consciousness purely depends upon the purity of the mind. Purity of the mind depends upon the level of usage of sensory organs. Looking within means, the process of interaction between life energy or *prāṇa* with consciousness or cit. This is called the Supreme Self or the Brahman in un-manifested form, which is the essential nature of the Brahman. When She is referred to as the inner consciousness, it means Her un-manifested Brahman form, discussed in nāma-s 397 and 398.

This is beautifully explained in *Katha Upaniṣad* (II.i.1) which says "The Self-created Lord has created the sense organs with the inherent defect that they are by nature outgoing. This is why beings see things outside and cannot see the Self within. Rarely is there found a wise person seeking immortality, who can withdraw his sense organs from external objects to the Self within."

Paśyantī पश्यन्ती (368)

Nāma 366 said that *paśyantī* is the second stage in the evolution of sound. The union of *Śiva* and *Śaktī* is the primary stage of sound which is called *parā*. This primary stage leads to the next stage called *paśyantī* where the first differentiation begins to appear in the process of evolution of speech. In this level, the sound becomes more perceptible but continues to be inaudible, though not yet isolated. The previous nāma suggested that one should look within to explore the inner consciousness. But what happens if inner consciousness is explored? It leads to the beginning of differentiation in the form of visionary wherein the Self begins to realize all others as its own. This nāma says that She is in this form

of speech. The concept is that She is the beginning and end of speech. It can also be said that speech originates and dissolves in Her.

Paradevatā परदेवता (369)

She transports power to other gods and goddesses, meaning that She is the supreme amongst gods and goddesses.

Madhyamā मध्यमा (370)

The next higher level of *paśyantī* is *madhyamā*. This stage is called intermediary stage between the origin and the end of speech. Here the duality begins to appear. This is the stage where the individual consciousness, the psychological result of perception, learning and reasoning, where the mind develops capacity to analyze and differentiate has not reached the empirical level. At this level, intellect, one of the components of *antaḥkaraṇa* begins to influence the consciousness which is in the impersonal stage of development. This is a stage where one can talk to himself. *Mantra-s* are chanted and recited in this stage only. This is because, while reciting *mantra japa*-s, only the inner Self alone should listen to the *mantra*-s and not anybody else, not even one's etheric body. In this stage only the uttering self alone can listen to the sound. Whisper develops from this stage. Step by step of Her manifestation in the form of sound is discussed in these nāma-s

Vaikhari-rūpā वैखरि-रूपा (371)

Vaikhari is the fourth and final form of sound in its evolution. This is the state wherein the sound is heard. This is called *vaikhari* because the sound is produced by a modified form of *prāṇa* called *vaikihari*. This is the stage which is called *aparā* or non-supreme stage in the evolution of sound where there exists fully developed materialization, combined with time and space, the components of *māyā*. In fact the theory of evolution of speech purely depends

upon the materialistic treatment of *prāṇa* or life energy. The whispering sound in the stage of *madhyama* fully transforms into speech and delivered in the form of *vaikhari*. It is said that will (*icchā*) forms the basis of speech to finally merge with consciousness. Importance of consciousness is repeatedly emphasised.

Bhakta-mānasa-haṁsikā भक्त-मानस-हंसिका (372)

There is a small story about associated with this nāma. *Brahma*, the God of creation created a lake called *Mānasarovar* at the top of mount *Kailāsa*. The water in this lake is known for its highest purity. The lake exists even today. Swans always prefer purity and hence flock around this lake. The lake is compared to the mind (which has to be pure) and the swans (normally a pair of swan) are compared to *jīvātma-s* (souls) and *Paramātma* (the Brahman)} are compared to *Lalitāmbikā*. This story says that Brahman has a great liking for a pure mind and chooses to stay there forever, guiding the aspirant from within.

Saundarya Laharī verse 38 provides further information on this nāma. In Hinduism, highly evolved souls are called *paramahaṃsa*-s (a religious man who has subdued all his senses by abstract meditation) which refers to the qualities of swans. The swans have a few exceptional qualities. If water and milk is mixed, swans consume only the milk leaving water alone. This is interpreted as that one should take cognizance of only good things, leaving bad things aside, though the world exists as the mixture of the two. Whenever swans are mentioned, they are always referred to in pairs, out of which one represents sense of hearing and another sense of seeing. Out of all the senses, only these two cause serious erosion of moral values. Like swans one should take notice of good things in life. That is why She is referred as swan.

Nāma 816 is *muni-mānasa-haṁsikā*.

Kāmeśvara-prāna-nāḍī कामेश्वर-प्रान-नाडी (373)

She is the vital force of ***Kāmeśvara***, the Supreme form of *Śiva*. This nāma is taken from *Veda-s*. *Śrī Rudraṁ* says (*Yajur Veda* IV.v.10) "Oh! *Rudra*! We invoke the auspicious form of yours, that is auspicious and ever healing along with the great auspicious form of *Śaktī*".

Saundarya Laharī (verse 28) also speaks about the importance of *Śaktī* in sustaining *Śiva*. *Śiva* swallowed the dreadful poison that was formed while churning the ocean of milk. It was due to the auspiciousness of Her ear ornaments, Śiva was saved from the disastrous effects of that poison. The point driven home here is that the eternal *Śiva* cannot function without *Śaktī* and by the effect of Her *māyā* the universe exists today. That is why She is called the life energy of *Śiva*

Kṛtajñā कृतज्ञा (374)

She is aware of all the actions of the universe. She is capable of transcending the secrecy or privacy, which ignorant men think that nobody is capable of hearing or seeing (recollect those two swans).

There are nine witnesses to all our actions. They are sun, moon, the lord of death (*Yama*), time (*kala*) and five basic elements *ākāś*, air, fire, water and earth. All these nine are under the control of *Śaktī* and that is why She is said to be the witness to all the actions of the universe. This can also be interpreted as 'she is the one who imparts knowledge'. In other words when one performs his karmas without expecting anything in return, pleased with his selfless nature, She imparts the Supreme knowledge (knowledge of the Brahman). In *Viṣṇu Sahasranāma* 82 is *Kṛtajñā*.

Cāndogya Upaniṣahad (IV.iii.8) says, *Prāṇa*, speech, the eyes, the ears and the mind – these five represent our physical self (*ādhyātimka*). Air, fire, sun, moon and water represent Nature (*ādhidaivika*) that surround us. The ten together are to the dice throw called *kṛta*. It is also said that *ādhyātimka* and *ādhidaivika* together represent the universe and hence is known as *Virāt* (the

Supreme Intellect located in a supposed aggregate of gross bodies). Living beings are known as *ādhibautika*.

In terms of *Cāndogya Upaniṣahad* (IV.i.4) *Kṛtajñā* means a person who includes within himself all the good things that other people do. He is the sum total of all good things in the world.

Kāma-pūjitā काम-पूजिता (375)

She is worshipped by the lord of love *Manmatha*. We have seen earlier that She is worshipped by twelve gods and godlessness, sages and saints through Her supreme *Pañcadaśī mantra* and *Manmatha* is one among the twelve (refer nāma 239). *Manmatha* is also known as *Kāma* and the worship by *Kāma* is called ***Kāma-pūjitā***. 586th nāma is *Kāma-sevitā*.

There is yet another interpretation. In *Śaktī* worship there is a reference to fifty one holy places (*Śaktī pīṭha*) that are considered sacred. But internally, there is a reference to four places called *kāmagiri pīṭha* (this nāma), *pūrṇagiri pīṭha* (next nāma), *jālandhara pīṭha* (nāma 378) and *oḍyāṇa pīṭha* (nāma 379) corresponding to base *cakra*, navel *cakra*, heart *cakra* and throat *cakra*. Sound evolves from the base *cakra* undergoes refinement and delivered as speech through the throat *cakra*. The four *pīṭha*-s referred above represent *Parā, paśyantī, madhyamā* and *vaikharī.* This has already been discussed in nāma-s 366 to 371.

Śṛṅgāra-rasa- saṁpūrṇā शृङ्गार-रस-संपूर्णा (376)

She is in the form of essence of love. Previous nāma discussed about four *pīṭha*-s and in particular the previous nāma referred to *kāmagiri pīṭha* or *mūlādhāra cakra*. In this nāma a reference is being made to the *pūrṇagiri pīṭha* or the navel *cakra*. The previous nāma made a reference to *kāmagiri pīṭha*. *Parā vāc* that originated from the *mūlādhāra cakra* or *kāmagiri pīṭha*, enters the next phase of evolution at the navel *cakra* or this *pūrṇagiri pīṭha*. The dot which was known as *kāraṇa bindu* at the navel *cakra*-s becomes

kārya bindu in this *cakra*. Details of these *bindu*-s have been been discussed in nāma 366.

Lalitāmbikā is said to be the embodiment of extracts (*rasa*) of finer things in life. There are said to be eight to ten types of *rasa*-s, though only nine types of *rasa*-s are generally mentioned. These ten *rasa*-s are love (*śṛṅgāra*), heroism, disgust, anger, mirth, fear, pity, amazement, tranquillity and warmth. *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 51) refers to eight types of *rasa*-s that She exhibits at different times. She exhibits the essence of love with *Śiva*, heroism while destroying evils, disgust while dealing with ignorant, fear on seeing the snakes on the person of *Śiva*, anger with goddess *Gaṅgā* (as *Śiva* holds her in His hair), amazement on seeing *Śiva*'s third eye, warmth while being with Her true devotees and *lāsya rasa* (expressing emotions as if dancing) while looking at Her attendants. This nāma talks about the essence of love that She exhibits while being with *Śiva*, all alone. The love between *Śiva* and *Śaktī* is beautifully described in various scriptures. The essence of love or *śṛṅgāra-rasa* is the cause for other *rasa*-s. Though these narrations go well while visualizing Her form, Her Absolute form is beyond all these qualities and attributes

There is one more interpretation for this nāma. *Śṛṅgāra* means primary, *arara* means veil, *sampūrṇa* means the Brahman. If interpreted this way, then it means that She is in the form of pure Brahman *nirguṇa Brahman* and also in the form of the Brahman with attributes (*māyā* form).

It is also said that *pūrṇagiri pīṭha* is referred in this nāma.

Jayā ज़या (377)

She remains victorious. She is the embodiment of victory. Possibly this could also indicate that Her victorious form can be realized only if one wins over his senses. Senses are considered as the worst enemies to Self realization as the mind gets corrupted due to their evil influence. But, if the mind is conditioned, such evil influences

will not cause any affliction to its serenity. *Viṣṇu Sahasranāma* 509 is *Jayā* and the interpretation given is 'the one who wins over all lives'.

Jālandhra-sthitā जालन्ध्र-स्थिता (378)

A reference is invited to *jālandhara pīṭha* or the heart *cakra*, where the sound is further refined, to become *madhyama*, the penultimate stage of sound before its actual delivery. This is one of Her *Śabda Brahman* forms.

Oḍyāṇa-pīṭha-nilayā ओड्याण-पीठ-निलया (379)

She abides in the *oḍyāṇa-pīṭha*, the fourth *pīṭha* of the gross body. The fully developed sound at this stage is delivered in the form of *vaikari*. The *oḍyāṇa-pīṭha*, corresponds to the throat *cakra* or *viśuddhi*.

Bindumaṇḍala-vāsini बिन्दुमण्डल-वासिनि (380)

She dwells in the *bindu maṇḍala*. The *bindu* is the central dot of *Śrī Cakra* where She resides along with Her consort *Kāmeśvara*. This point of *Śrī Cakra* is considered as the most powerful point because it is the abode of both *Kāmeśvara* and *Kāmeśvarī*.

The *bindu* is also referred to the orifice in the *sahasrāra* also known as *brahmarandhra* through which commune with God is established. The cosmic energy enters the human body only through this orifice in the crown *cakra* and medulla in the back head *cakra*. When these two places are exposed to Mother Nature and early morning sun, sufficient cosmic energy can be drawn by the gross body to have a disease free life.

Rahoyāga-kramāradhyā रहोयाग-क्रमारध्या (381)

This nāma and the next one discuss about worshipping Her secretively. Secretive worship means worshipping Her internally

without resorting to external rituals. Worshipping Her within is considered as a powerful tool to realize Her, as only Her subtlest forms can be worshipped within. Her subtlest form is Her *kuṇḍalinī* form. In *sahasrāra* or the crown *cakra*, She conjoins with *Śiva* and worshipping this *Śiva-Śaktī* union is considered as the secretive worship. Obviously, others cannot partake in this internal worship.

The internal worship, be it Her gross form, or Her subtler *kāmakalā* form or Her subtlest *kuṇḍalinī* form attains great importance. In the external rituals, the *sādhaka* or the practitioner is associated with actions. The concentration gets diverted and diffused from the focal point of the worship to the mundane form of the ritual. In the internal worship, the entire focus is fixed on Her and there are no distractions. Though distractions cannot be avoided in the beginning stages of internal worship, when the practice is intensified leading to the stage of bliss, a sort of addiction is developed by the practitioner to be with that bliss. The stage of bliss cannot be described in quotidian language and to understand it, one has to really make sincere attempts while pursuing the path of spirituality. Secondly, the stage of bliss does not vary depending upon the forms of God. Bliss is a unique phenomenon, applicable to all forms of worship.

In *Śri Vidyā* cult, there are two types of worship. One is called *samayācāra* worship, the internal worship. The other is *kulācāra* worship or the external rituals. *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 8) makes a reference to this *samayācāra* or internal worship. "You are seated in the middle of the ocean of nectar (sahasrāra), with *Śiva tattva* as the base and *Sadāśiva tattva* as the cushion, offering bliss. Only the blessed ones meditate on this form of yours" says this verse.

A question may arise, being *Śiva*'s wife how She can sit on a couch with *Śiva* as its base and *Sadāśiva* (the higher form of *Śiva*) as the cushion. In scientific parlance, two objects cannot occupy the same space at the same time. Therefore it becomes possible to interpret that *Śiva* and *Śaktī* are no way different from each other. That is why *Śiva- Śaktī* union assumes great importance. Scriptures also

point out, that the state of bliss can be attained, only by those who always remain with Her thought and not by those who solely resort to materialistic living.

Rahastarpaṇa-tarpitā रहस्तर्पण-तर्पिता (382)

In the initial stage of pursuing spiritual path and in order to control the mind, recitation and repetition of *mantra-s* is practiced, so that the mind does not get diverted to extraneous thoughts. Such *mantra-s* should be recited after understanding the meaning of the *mantra*. In the case of *Pañcadaśī mantra*, there are fifteen *bīja*-s in that *mantra* and each *bīja* has different meaning and significance. This has been dealt with in the introductory chapter. Two things are important while reciting a *mantra*. The first one is *dhyāna* verse or the meditative verse that describes the form of the god or goddess. This helps in visualizing the form of the deity. Second is the *mantra* itself that infuses life to the visualized form. This situation is applicable only in the initial stages and as one progresses, further guidance is received from the concerned deity itself by way of communion. This nāma says that such *mantra-s* should be recited only mentally.

There is another interpretation for this nāma. This nāma could also be interpreted as 'secretive oblations' offered into the internal fire (fire generated and persists at the *mūlādhāra cakra* to keep the body alive). The oblations consist of the thirty six *tattva*-s or the principles that are responsible for our *karma-s*, either good or bad. In *Śrī vidyā navāvaraṇa pūjā* there is one separate ritual called 'internal oblation' or *tatvaśodhana* wherein all the dualities are sacrificed as oblations in the internal fire.

Sadyaḥ-prasāidinī सद्यः-प्रसादिनी (383)

She bestows Her grace immediately for those who seek Her within. This has been discussed in the two previous nāma-s. By such internal worship, Her immediate grace is imminent.

Viśva-sākṣinī विश्व-साक्षिनी (384)

She is the witness of the universe. This is the unique quality of the Brahman without attributes, the supreme form of the Brahman. Only the Supreme Brahman stands as a witness to the happenings of the universe, without himself partaking in any of the activities.

Sākṣivarjitā साक्षिवर्जिता (385)

But She is without witness. The existence of the Supreme form of the Brahman cannot be witnessed by anyone, as this form of the Brahman has no known source of origin. Another quality of the pure Brahman is referred here.

ṣaḍaṅga-devādāyuktā षडङ्ग-देवादायुक्ता (386)

ṣaḍ (six) + *aṅga* (parts) means six parts. For every *mantra* there are six parts and each such part is under the control of a god/goddess called *aṅga devatā-s* of the presiding deity. These six parts are heart, head, tuft of hair, arms, eyes and weapons. Before and after the recitation of a *mantra*, the deities of these parts are worshipped in our bodies by touching the respective body parts with fingers. This is with regard to the external worship. *Śiva* has six types of known qualities and they are omniscience, completeness, supreme level of consciousness, freedom, everlasting power and infinity. These six are the qualities of the Brahman without attributes or *prakāśa* form of the Brahman. This nāma says that She is surrounded by these six *aṅga devatā-s*.

It is important to remember that She is described both as Brahman without attributes or the *prakāśa* form and as Brahman with attributes or the *vimarśa* form.

ṣāḍguṇya-paripūritā षाड्गुण्य-परिपूरिता (387)

She is endowed with six qualities that are considered auspicious. They are prosperity, righteousness, fame, material wealth, wisdom

and dispassion. Dispassion because, She will not show any special favours to a select few, transcending the law of karma. She does not encourage favouritism.

Nitya-klinnā नित्य-क्लिन्ना (388)

Her ever compassionate nature is referred here. This is an extension of nāma 326. *karuṇā-rasa-sāgarā*. *Nitya-klinnā* is the name of a *tithi nityā devi* (third day of the lunar fortnight).

Nirupamā निरुपमा (389)

She is without comparison. Brahman is infinite and a person with finite (limited) cannot describe Him. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (IV.19) says, "There is no way of describing Him. All you can say about Him is that He is what He is".

Śaṃkara says "There is nothing like Him and nothing to which He can be compared. He is one without a second. He is limitless. The only way you can describe Him is to refer to His uniqueness, which is really saying nothing."

There is a story about this concept. Two brothers were sent by their father to a guru to pursue the spiritual path. When they returned, father asked both of them to describe God. The elder brother gave an extensive lecture about God. When the younger one was asked, he kept quiet. Their father said 'You are not saying anything because, you realized that God is a subject about which nothing can be said without making a mistake'. This is the concept of God. Nobody can describe the Brahman in totality. At the most one can discuss about Him only by affirmations and negations.

Nirvāṇa-sukha-dāyinī निर्वाण-सुख-दायिनी (390)

Nir (freed) + *vāṇa* (derived from *bāṇa*, meaning body). When mind is freed from body, it leads to bliss. When higher level of consciousness is reached, physical body is forgotten. When bodily

afflictions are dissolved, what is derived is eternal bliss. She confers this bliss to those who worship Her as per nāma-s 381 and 382.

This stage is described by *Kṛṣṇa* "He who is happy within, who rejoices within, he obtains Absolute Freedom or *mokṣa*. Only that yogi who possesses the inner bliss, who rests on the inner foundation, who is one with inner light, becomes one with Spirit. With sins obliterated, doubts removed, senses subjugated, the sages contributing to the welfare of the mankind, attain emancipation in the Brahman". (*Bhagavad Gīta* V.24 and 25)

Nityā-ṣoḍaśikā-rūpā नित्या-षोडशिका-रूपा (391)

This is a reference to the sixteen deities representing sixteen lunar days and they are worshipped in *Śrī Cakra*. The sixteenth deity is *Lalitāmbikā* Herself. These fifteen deities are said to represent fifteen *bīja*-s of *Pañcadaśī mantra* and *Lalitāmbikā* as the sixteenth deity representing *ṣodaśī mantra*. *ṣodaśī mantra* has sixteen *bīja*-s, the additional *bīja* being श्रीं (*śrīṁ), the Lakṣmī bīja*. *ṣodaśī mantra* is considered as the most powerful *mantra* of all. This is the *mantra* meant only for the final liberation.

ṣodaśī also refers to a type of sacrifice called *agniṣṭoma,* a fire ritual where the performer maintains the sacred fire, the offering is the *Soma,* the deities to whom, the offering is made are Indra and other gods. The number of priests required is sixteen, the ceremonies continue for five days. This is based on strange *mantra*-s, full of interpolations, which are not found in *Rig Veda*, though they are referred in *Śrautra Sūtra*-s and *Brāhmaṇa*-s of *Rig Veda* and also occur in *Sāma Veda* and *Atharva Veda*. Both chants and recitations are complex and are considered particularly sacred and powerful.

This nāma says that She is pleased with those who recite Her *ṣodaśī mantra* than performing thousands of fire rituals discussed earlier. During the dark fortnight (waning) of the moon, *Lalitāmbikā* i is

said to be in the sun (*Sūrya maṇḍala*) and during bright fortnight (waxing) She is said to be in the moon (*Candra maṇḍala*). It has also been said that those who got initiated in *Pañcadaśī mantra* should use bright fortnight for perfecting this *mantra* and those who got initiated in *ṣodaśī mantra* should use dark fortnight for perfecting this *mantra* (attaining *mantra siddhi*). Those who recite *Pañcadaśī mantra* should practice it in day corresponding to the sun and those who practice *ṣodaśī mantra* should recite it in the night, corresponding to the moon.

Śrīkaṇṭhārdha-śarīriṇī श्रिकण्ठार्ध-शरीरिणी (392)

She has half the body of *Śiva*. *Śrīkaṇṭha* is another name of *Śiva*. *Śrī* also means poison and *kaṇṭha* means throat. Since *Śiva* holds poison in His throat, He is known as *Śrīkaṇṭha*. *Śrīkaṇṭha* also means beautiful neck. She has half the body of *Śiva*. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (I.iv.3) describes this condition thus: "He (*puruṣa* or soul) desired a mate (*prakṛti*). He became as big as, man and wife embracing each other. He parted this very body into two. From that came husband and wife. This is one- half of oneself, like one of the two halves of split pea. Therefore this pea is indeed filled by the wife. He was united with her. From that men were born."

There is another interpretation for this nāma. The first alphabet of Sanskrit is अ (*a*) which is also known *Śrīkaṇṭha*. The first alphabet is said to be in the form of *para* (nāma 366) form of sound which gets modified into *vaikharī* (nāma 371) at the time of delivery of speech. Since the first alphabet is considered as half of other alphabets put together, She is known as *Śrīkaṇṭhārdha-śarīriṇī*. The first letter is also known as *śrīkaṇṭhārdha*.

Prabhāvatī प्रभावती (393)

She is endowed with the power of effulgence. She is surrounded by eight *devi*-s each representing one of the *aṣṭama siddhi-s*. They are very powerful and illuminant and known as *aṇimā, laghimā*,

mahimā, īśitva, vaśitva, prākāmya, prāpti and *sarvakāma*. These eight *devi*-s are called *prabha*. *Prabhāvatī* is the One who is surrounded by *prabha*-s.

Saundarya Laharī (verse 30) says, "What wonder is there in *ārati* to the one who constantly meditates on you, surrounded by rays emanating from your feet as *aṇimā* and others..."

Prabhārūpā प्रभारूपा (394)

The luminous light emanating from Her and was referred to in the last nāma, is said to be powerful in this nāma. These *devi-s* derived their illumination from this brightness. She is said to be in the form of Supreme light.

Chāndogya Upaniṣad (III.14.2) describes this light "He is controlled by the mind. He has a subtle body and He is luminous (*bhārūpaḥ*)."

Prasiddhā प्रसिद्धा (395)

She is well known to everybody as She is highly celebrated. She is in the form of inner Self of all living beings. When someone says 'I', it actually means Her, as She is the Self.

Parameśvarī परमेश्वरी (396)

She is the supreme ruler. She is Supreme on two counts, one on Her own and second because of being the consort of Supreme *Śiva*. *Śiva* is *Parameśvara* and His wife is *Parameśvarī*. *Viṣṇu Sahasranāma* 377 is *Parameśvarā*. It is interpreted as the able administrator.

Bhagavad Gīta XIII.27 says, "He sees truly who perceives the Supreme Lord (*Parameśvara*) present equally in all creatures, the Imperishable (*Parameśvara*) amidst the perishing".###

Mūlaprakṛtiḥ मूलप्रकृतिः (397)

This nāma provides the reasoning for the previous nāma. She is the Supreme ruler (*Parameśvarī*) because She is the root of origin. *Prakṛti* at best can be explained as Nature. It can also be called as *māyā*. *Prakṛti* in combination with the individual soul, mind, intellect and ego form the creation. In fact soul has to depend on *prakṛti* to manifest. *Prakṛti* holds the three *guṇa*-s or qualities, *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* and three types of creative actions *icchā, jñāna*, and *kriya* (desire, wisdom and action) *śaktī*. At the time of manifestation of origin of life, the *prakṛti* beholds the individual soul by its sheer enticing powers of the *guṇa*-s and creative actions (the powers of *māyā* or illusion), makes the soul to manifest. The soul on its own is passive in nature and has to purely depend upon the *prakṛti* to get the *karma*-s embedded in it to unfold.

Prakṛti is said to be the kinetic form of energy. This is also known as *māyā* or the Brahman with attributes or *Śaktī* or *vimarśa* form of the Supreme. Without this kinetic *Śaktī*, the creation can never take place. Apart from playing a significant role in creation, the *prakṛti* plays a vital role in sustaining the creation. At the time of origin of the universe, the Supreme Self alone prevailed. When the origin manifests into creation, it first becomes space then air, fire, water and earth. From earth plants, animals, man etc unfolded. This is the teaching of *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (II.1).

Prakṛti in its un-manifested form is called *avyakta* (next nāma). This is the state of *prakṛti* where all the three *guṇa*-s are found in equilibrium. Any change in this equilibrium of *guṇa*-s in *prakṛti* leads to desire, wisdom and action. This in combination with ego and intellect give rise to further creation. Therefore, *prakṛti* is the root of all creations. This is also known as the Brahman with attributes or *saguṇa Brahman*. This is also known as *prakāśa-vimarśa mahā māyā svarūpinī* or *Śaktī*. Since *Śiva* has to totally depend upon this *Śaktī* for His creative aspect, She is known as the consort of *Śiva*. Beyond the state of *avyakta* there is the Brahman without attributes. *Katha Upaniṣad* says (III.10) "The Self is beyond thought and speech; the eyes cannot perceive it". The Brahman is the root of all creations as there in nothing beyond that.

Śaktī is called *mūlaprakṛtiḥ* because She is the part of Brahman or the *vimarśa* form of Brahman, without which creation is never possible.

Chāndogya Upaniṣad VI.ii.3 says "The Existence (the Brahman) decided, I shall be many, which refers to *prakṛti*. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (I.i.8) also confirms the above statements of *Katha Upaniṣad* and *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*. It says, "Brahman grows by penance." Whatever be the sayings of the scriptures, the root of creation is *prakṛti* on whom Brahman depends extensively to create and sustain the universe. This the meaning of this nāma.

{Further reading on soul and *prakṛti:* Soul: In the creation of God, there are countless souls (*puruṣa*-s) that manifest as the living beings. These souls do not undergo any changes at any point of time. They do not have energy and will and are passive in nature. Since it is said to be smaller than an atom, it is not visible even under a powerful microscope. Though clinically the presence of soul has not yet been established, sufficient research is underway to interpret the phenomenon. As the soul is considered as the divine secret, the ultimate result of any clinical study is doubtful. However, elaborate non-clinical studies more or less describe the soul in a unified voice. Soul is considered as the reflection of the transcendental essence of the Brahman. This goes to prove the statement that souls do not have energy and will of their own. This phenomenon of the Brahman – soul concept can be explained like the moon deriving its light from the sun. The light of the moon is illusionary making one to believe that the moon has its own light. However, the fact is that it gets reflected by the light of the sun. Moon is not self illuminating. So, by and large, the soul and the Brahman are not different, though there are certain subtle differences. Probably, the one main difference is the *karma*. The Brahman is not bound by *karma*, whereas the individual soul is bound by *karma*-s. There is another school of thought (The second and most important part of the *Mīmāṃsā* or third of the three great divisions of Hindu philosophy called *Vedānta* either as teaching the ultimate scope of the Veda or simply as explained in the *Upaniṣad*-s

which come at the end of the Veda), which advocates that the Brahman takes the form of *Ātman* or the individual soul, enabling the individual beings to act, but remains unconnected to the actions or to the results of actions. *Puruṣa* is the term used by *Sāṃkhya* school of thought (one of the three great divisions of Hindu philosophy and so called either from, discriminating in general, or, more probably, from reckoning up or enumerating twenty-five *tattva*-s twenty three of which are evolved out of *prakṛiti* the primordial essence or the first-producer viz. *buddhi* (intellect), *ahaṃkāra* (ego), the five *tanmātra*-s, the five *mahābhūta*-s (air, fire, etc)and mind and the twenty fifth being *puruṣa*) and *Ātman* is the term used by the *Vedāntic* school of thought. Both these terms refer to the individual soul. The soul continues to exist in a gross body as long as the body functions. Once the gross body ceases to function after death, the soul also leaves the body along with *prāṇa* which is also known as the vital force. The fate of the soul after death is determined by the law of *karma* that remains embedded in the soul, wherever it goes. *Karma* is like a voice recorder in an airplane, where in the results of all the actions and thoughts are recorded. If someone believes that he is doing an action unaware to anybody, he should always bear in mind that his actions are recorded in his *karmic* account. It is to be understood that *karma* is the result of various decisions made by the mind that ultimately determines the destiny of the soul after death. That is why pursuing spiritual path and firmly establishing spiritual progress are considered as essential factors in reducing the impact of *karma*. *Karmic* account is not only historical but also contains long forgotten evolutionary aspects as well. Therefore, ultimately the soul unfolds its actions in a physical body depending upon its *karmic* account. In such a situation, the soul does not undergo any change or modification based on the fact that it is a mere reflection of the Brahman or the Supreme Spirit. The soul can manifest only if it is associated with *prakṛti*.

Prakṛti: The soul or *puruṣa* can manifest only if it interacts with *prakṛti*, which is also known as the nature or creative self-unfolding act. This interpretation itself will explain the nature of *prakṛti*. It is

only the *prakṛti* that unfolds the act of creation. When the soul is associated with *prakṛti*, the latter unfolds first into the subtle non-materialistic form and later into the gross form. The gross form can be identified under three broad classifications such as *sthūla* (gross), *sūkṣma* (subtle), and *kāraṇa* (casual). A comparison can be drawn between an automobile tyre and the three types of bodies. An automobile tyre has an outer portion made up of rubber, beneath that lies the tube that holds the air inside. A car cannot run without the effective and coordinated functions of all the three. The outer tyre is the gross body, the tube holding the air is the subtle body and the air that is the inner most and invisible is the casual body. Similarly, without these three forms, existence is impossible. These bodies, in reality, are the reflections of the levels of consciousness. The respective bodies can be recognized only if the consciousness level is modified, refined and purified. Purer is the level of consciousness higher is the level of spirituality and finer is the type of body. These three types of bodies are the reflections of the prakṛti and this reflection is known as *māyā* or illusion.

The gross body reflects the materialistic world, the subtle body reflects the world of vitality and the casual body reflects the casual world. These three stages are realized in the three states of awake, dream and deep sleep. The gross and subtle bodies are the effects of the casual body. The basis of these types of bodies is the casual body, or the casual manifestation of consciousness. In certain schools of thoughts, a reference to another state called the fourth state or *turya* state is mentioned. In fact, this *turya* state is to be accepted by all. Only in this state, where the consciousness transcends all bodily afflictions gets purified and becomes fit enough to be called *Cit* (the Absolute or the foundational consciousness). *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* (I.7) authoritatively describes this *turya* state. "*Turya* is not consciousness of what is happening within. It is also not the consciousness of what is going on without. It is not consciousness of anything in between. It is not the consciousness of all objects simultaneously. It is not unconsciousness either. It is invisible, not susceptible to any kind of

usage, not within the reach of any organ of action. It is beyond perception of any organ, beyond thought and not to be indicated by any sound. In it there is only consciousness of the Self and there is a cessation of the world as such. It is the embodiment of peace and all that is good. It is one without a second. The fourth state is *turya*. Wise people consider this to be the Self. This Self is to be realised". The Self in *turya* state is the purest form of consciousness. In this stage, the consciousness remains all alone, without any affiliations.

The *prakṛti* is potentially a powerful tool that binds the soul to manifest in the form of bodies discussed above, just to manifest and unfold the *karma*-s embedded in the soul. When the soul is under the lustful embrace of *prakṛti*, the soul that was part of the Supreme Brahman forgets its own nature, and identifies itself with ego. The deceptive and illusionary nature of *prakṛti* engulfs the soul with all sorts of addictions, afflictions and confusions and makes the soul totally discombobulated. This particular stage of the soul is said to be ignorant or the state of *avidyā* contrary to vidyā or knowledge. The pure soul now stands veiled by the effects of *prakṛti* called *māyā* or illusion.

Avyaktā अव्यक्ता (398)

This could be considered as further extension of the previous nāma. *Avyakta* is the state of *prakṛti* in its un-manifested form, with the three *guṇa*-s in equal proportions. *Avyakta* is the first stage of the Brahman that cannot be explained, as this is the purest form of Brahman, without parentage. This stage is also known as *turya* or the fourth state of consciousness, the other three being sleep, dream and deep sleep. It is the non-dualistic state, where the Brahman without a second is realized.

This stage is explained by *Brahma Sūtra* (III.ii.23) which says *tadvyaktamāha hi* (तद्व्यक्तमाह हि). This means "That Brahman is un-manifest". This is further explained as 'It is not comprehended through the eye, or through speech, or through other senses. Nor it

is attained through austerity or *karma*. It is imperceptible, for It is never perceived'.

When the *nirguṇa Brahman* (the Brahman without attributes) desires to create, the *māyā* undergoes modifications and this modified stage of *māyā* is called *avyakta*.

Vyaktāvyakta-svarūpiṇī व्यक्ताव्यक्त-स्वरूपिणी (399)

It is *vyakta* (manifested) + *avyakta* (un-manifested) *svarūpiṇī*. She is both manifested and un-manifested form. Since this form is the first of manifested form, it is called *mahat* which means great. It is the fundamental tool of the phenomenal universe. This *mahat* is endowed with supreme knowledge. The undifferentiated *prakṛti* is *mahat*. From *mahat*, further evolution takes place. *Vyakta* means perishable and *a-vyakta* means imperishable. The soul-Brahman relationship is cited here. In general, this stage provides happiness and the final salvation. This nāma means the first signs of creation and final liberation are both caused by *Lalitāmbikā*.

Vyāpinī व्यापिनी (400)

She is all pervading. Because She is *mūlaprakṛtiḥ* and *avykatā*, She is all pervading. She is also called *eka* elsewhere, because She is the one who is all pervading, the nature of the Brahman.

Vividhākārā विविधाकारा (401)

She has many forms. All these forms arise out of *mūla-prakṛti* (*nāma 397*). She takes different forms while performing different functions. As the creator, She is the Supreme Mother or *Brahma rūpa* (nāma 265). As the sustainer, She is *Viṣṇu rūpinī* (nāma 893). As the destroyer, She is *Rudra rūpā* (nāma 269). As a witness to the total dissolution, She is *mahā pralaya sākṣiṇī* (nāma 571).

This nāma encases all Her forms. As seen above, each of Her acts is represented by a form. She is also addressed as *bahu-rūpā* in nāma 824.

Vidyāvidyā svarūpinī विद्याविद्या स्वरूपिनी (402)

She is the form of knowledge and ignorance. *Vidyā* is not just knowledge. It is the supreme knowledge leading to self-realization. *Avidyā* is the opposite of *vidyā*. *Īśa upaniṣad* (11) explains *vidyā* and *avidyā* thus; "He who worships gods and goddesses (*vidyā*) and also performs sacrifices (*avidyā*) attains immortality by sacrifices (*avidyā*) and attains bliss by worshipping gods and goddesses (*vidyā*)." *Vidyā* is pure knowledge leading to the Brahman or the Supreme Self. *Avidyā* means ignorance about the Brahman. In the stage of *avidyā*, one continues to be associated with performing rituals like fire rituals, external worship etc. But when these two (one is the knowledge about the Brahman and second is performing prescribed rituals without attachment to the fruits of actions) are combined, that is performing rituals etc, without any selfish motive and without any attachments to the end result of an action, along with internal search and exploration through meditation, one is said to benefit from both, leading to bliss. But only when *avidyā* dissolves into *vidyā*, the final liberation is attained. She is in the form of both knowledge and ignorance. She is the giver of knowledge (path to spirituality) as well as ignorance (delusion). Ignorance about Brahman is caused by *māyā*.

Kṛṣṇa says, (*Bhagavad Gīta* V.12) "Offering the fruits of actions to God, the *karmayogi* attains everlasting peace in the shape of God-realisation; whereas he who works with a selfish motive, being attached to the fruit of actions through desire, gets tied down."

Mahā-kāmeśa-nayana-kumudahlāda-kaumudī महा-कामेश-नयन-कुमुदह्लाद-कौमुदी (403)

Mahā-kāmeśa is *Śiva*, *nayana* – eyes, *kaumuda* – the moon of second half of November and first half of December (the month of *Kārttika*), *kumuda* – lotus flower. On seeing *Lalitāmbikā*, *Śiva*'s eyes become wide open like lotus flower blossoming when the moon shines. *Śiva's* happiness is reflected through his eyes on seeing Her. The moon in the month of *Kārttika* is said to be bright.

There is another interpretation. *Kumuda* is made up of *ku* + *mud*. *Ku* means inferior and *mud* means pleasure. Therefore, *kumuda* means worldly pleasures. Worldly pleasures are always considered as inferior because it ultimately leads to miseries and pains. *Lalitāmbikā*, being the Supreme Mother, takes pity on those who indulge in worldly pleasures and take them to *Śiva* for final liberation. This means that She makes them to pursue the spiritual path for ultimate liberation.

If Her motherly care is properly understood, anyone can get rid of his difficulties. The only thing that is required from his side, is to realize Her.

Bhakta-hārda-tamo-bheda-bhānumad-bhānu-santatiḥ भक्त-हार्द-तमो-भेद-भानुमद्-भानु-सन्ततिः (404)

She dispels the darkness of ignorance of Her devotees. This is compared to the sun dispelling the darkness when it rises. She being the supreme mother does this out of compassion. The very thought of Her, dispels ignorance.

Kṛṣṇa describes this compassion in *Bhagavad Gīta* (X.11) "Out of mere compassion for them, I, dwelling within their hearts, destroy the darkness born of ignorance by the luminous Lamp of knowledge." The darkness referred here is born out of ignorance.

Śivadūtī शिवदूती (405)

She requested *Śiva* to be Her messenger to two demons. Since *Śiva* Himself acted as Her messenger or She made *Śiva* as messenger,

She is known as *Śivadūtī*. *Śivadūtī* is one of the fifteen *tithi nitya devi*-s in *Śrī Cakra*.

Śivārādhyā शिवाराध्या (406)

She is worshipped by *Śiva* Himself. *Śiva* by meditating on Her, obtained his *Ardhanārīśvara* (half *Śiva* and half *Śaktī*) form. As a result of meditating on Her, *Śiva* became the lord of all *siddhi*-s. These *siddhi*-s or superhuman powers originate from Her, through Her subtlest *kuṇḍalinī* form. This nāma conveys this subtle message.

Saundarya Laharī (verse 1) says "*Śiva* united with *Śaktī* is able to manifest. Otherwise, *Śiva* does not even know how to pulsate".

Śivamūrtiḥ शिवमूर्तिः (407)

Her form itself is *Śiva*. In fact, there is no difference between *Śiva* and *Śaktī*. *Śiva* means auspiciousness. Because She is the embodiment of auspiciousness, She is called *Śivamūrtiḥ*.

Rig Veda says (X.92.9) "With reverence, we present your hymn today to the mighty *Rudra*, the ruler of heroes, the rapid and ardent deities with whom the gracious (*Śivaḥ*) and opulent (*Rudra*) who derives his renown himself, protects us from the sky." *Śiva* is full of grace and happiness and considered as the Supreme protector. When She is said to be in the form *Śiva* Himself, it is considered as a great honour for Her. This could also mean *nirguṇa* Brahman or Brahman without any attributes. This *Sahasranāma* ends by saying *Śrī Śiva* (998), *Śiva-Śaktī aikya rūpinī* (nāma 999) and *Lalitāmbikā* (nāma 1000).

Śiva also means the liberation and *mūrtī* means form. The final liberation is attained only by self-realisation which is possible only through knowledge or *vidyā*. That is why Her worship is known as *Śrī vidyā* or the supreme knowledge.

Śivaṁkarī शिवंकरी (408)

She dispenses happiness. *Śiva* means auspiciousness and *karī* means giver. She does this to Her devotees by dispelling their ignorance called *avidyā*. When *avidyā* is dispelled, knowledge is attained paving the way for Self-realization. She is *sarva maṅagala māṅgalye* (the provider of all types of happiness) says *Durgā Saptasati*.

Śivapriyā शिवप्रिया (409)

She is the beloved of *Śiva*. *Śiva* is loved by Her. *Śiva* is dear to Her. Their love is mutual, as otherwise, *Śiva* would not have given His left vertical half to Her.

Śivaparā शिवपरा (410)

Having compared Her to *Śiva*, now *Vāc Devi*-s proceed to say that She transcends *Śiva* Himself. *Parā* can be explained as follows: Pertaining to the ultimate or supreme as opposed to the immanent here and now aspect of reality which is *aparā*. Brahman can be conceived from two angles. One is *Parā Brahman*, the Supreme of the two and other is *aparā Brahman*, the deficient of the two. The former is devoid of attributes and hence is inconceivable. Since She transcends the stage of *Śiva*, She is considered as the Supreme Brahman. This is because *Śiva* becomes inert without Her. That is why She is known as *Parā*. Knowing Her is *parā vidyā* or the supreme knowledge. The appropriate interpretation of this nāma is that She reveals the Supreme or *Parā Śiva* or *Paramaśiva* to Her devotees. *Paramaśiva* can be explained as 'the Absolute, understood as the casual substance for everything apparent'. This explanation is also in agreement with Her *prakāśa vimarśa mahā māyā svarūpinī* form.

Nāma-s 405 to 410 explained Her attributes with particular reference to *Śiva*.

Śiṣṭeṣṭā शिष्टेष्टा (411)

Śiṣṭa-s are those who follow the righteousness prescribed by *śāstra-s*. *Śiṣṭa*-s is also explained to mean those who control their senses and knower of Veda-s. Their actions are based on the *śāstra-s* that are derived from Veda-s. She likes these *śiṣṭa*-s. *Viṣṇu* is known for His righteousness. It is also said that one should worship God, as prescribed by their respective orders and not simply by flowers, etc. *Viṣṇu Sahasranāma* nāma 310 is also *Śiṣṭeṣṭā* and the interpretation given there to, is that He (*Viṣṇu*) likes men of knowledge (*jñāni*).

Kṛṣṇa Himself says this in *Bhagavad Gīta* (VII.17) "Chief among them is *jñāni*, ever constant and one pointed in devotion. I am exceedingly dear to him and he is exceedingly dear to me". *Kṛṣṇa* did not stop with this. He proceeds to say "A man so illuminated is hard to find and such a stage is reached after many incarnations" (VII.19).

Śiṣṭapūjitā शिष्टपूजिता (412)

She is worshipped by such *śiṣṭa*-s referred to in the previous nāma. *Jñāni* does not worship someone who is not worthy of worship. He will worship only the Supreme Self, the Brahman. This nāma is an extension of the previous nāma which confirms Her Supreme stature.

Aprameyā अप्रमेया (413)

She cannot be measured. Brahman alone cannot be measured. Because She is *aprameyā*, She is worshipped by *jñāni*-s and *śiṣṭa*-s.

Viṣṇu Sahasranāma nāma 46 is also *aprameyā*. He cannot be known through senses as He is devoid of qualities such as sound, etc. He cannot be visualized because He is beyond visualisation. He cannot be known through examples because there is nothing to make a comparison (this is based on the simple logic that a rat cannot be compared to a lion though both have four legs, a tail etc.).

He cannot be known either by affirmations or by negations as we do not have any basis for such affirmations and negations. But Veda-s and *Upaniṣads* try to explore (though by affirmations and negations, as the perceptive knowledge can be inferred only by such affirmations and negations only) Him as "That" and says that He exists as self-illuminating light witnessing the activities of His creation.

Kena Upaniṣad (I.6) explains this point more elaborately. "Know that alone to be Brahman which the mind cannot comprehend and which yogi-s say makes the mind function. Brahman is not this sense world, which people worship". The *Upaniṣad* continues to say "If you think (guru addressing his disciple) 'I know the Brahman well' then it is for certain that you know little about the nature of the Brahman. You know only Its manifestation in the individual self, the gods, and the phenomenal world. Therefore, Brahman should still be thoroughly investigated". But, we need some basic inputs to know Him. This is explained in the next nāma.

Svaprakāśā स्वप्रकाशा (414)

She is Self-illuminating. Brahman alone is self-illuminating and all other illuminating objects like sun, moon, stars etc derive their light only from the Brahman. Only because of this self-illuminating light, we are able to see this materialistic world.

This concept is explained in *Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad* (IV.iv.9) which says "revealing His own lustre by His own light". This is the state where the light is free from everything else, let it be even the five basic elements. He is not afraid of any one, because, there is no one besides Him.

Kaṭha (कठ) *Upaniṣad* says (II.ii.15) "In the presence of Brahman the sun does not shine, nor the moon and stars, nor does the lightning, let alone this fire. When Brahman shines, everything else follows. By Its light all these are lighted". This nāma also reaffirms Her as the Brahman.

{Further reading on Self-illumination: The soul which is also known as *jīva* when placed in an empirical self, the divine transcendental light ever shines within its glory, but unfortunately hidden from our perception because of our thought constructs. This Self-illuminating light is known as *prakāśa* form of the Brahman and referred to as *Śiva.* This is also known as the Supreme consciousness or Supreme light of consciousness. When there is a harmonious synthesis of *prakāśa* form of *Śiva* and *vimarśa* form of *Śaktī,* manifestation of the universe takes place. *Vimarśa* form reflects the Self-illuminating light of *prakāśa* form and the one without the other becomes incapable of causing manifestation.}

Mano-vacāmagocarā मनो-वचामगोचरा (415)

The qualities of *aprameyā* (nāma 413) are now being explained. She is beyond mind and speech. This stage has been explained by *Kena Upaniṣad* which has been discussed earlier. If She is known as the One beyond the perception of mind, everything else is struck down as they are only intersections of mind.

Taittirīya Upaniṣad (II.ix) also explains this situation. "That from which, words come back, they turn away. How can words express the Self? Can that which is finite express the Infinite? No. It is beyond words, beyond thought. The mind also cannot grasp this Brahman. You can think of something that is familiar, that is known to you, but how can you think of something about which you have had no experience at all? Our thoughts are always limited by experience".

This nāma says that She can be realized only through pure knowledge, the knowledge to which we are never exposed to.

Cicchaktiḥ चिच्छक्तिः (416)

Cit means pure consciousness and the pure knowledge. The Brahman (without attributes or *nirguṇa Brahman*) is made up of three important aspects. They are *sat* (perpetual existence), *cit* (the

present nāma – pure form of consciousness) and *ānanda* (the bliss). These three attributes together is called *saccidānanda* (सच्चिदान्द) and the Brahman is also known by this name. *Saccidānanda* means existence (*sat*), consciousness (*cit*) and bliss (*ānanda*). The pure consciousness here means the spiritual consciousness. Only the pure and un-afflicted knowledge is capable of producing spiritual consciousness.

{Further reading on *Cit*. It is also known as *cidātma*. When this is reflected in universal nescience, it is known as the *Īśvara* and when reflected in individual nescience it is known as soul. *Īśvara* is not the Brahman as it is the reflection of universal nescience. There are two aspects to this interpretation. Here, *Īśvara* is said to be only reflective in nature and not self-illuminating. Self-illumination is the exclusive quality of the Brahman. Secondly, the Brahman can never be associated with nescience. This *Īśvara* is said to be the Lord of *prakṛti* or the Nature. When the soul or individual nescience comes into contact with *prakṛti*, the soul induces evolution of a new physical body, for the *karma*-s embedded in it to manifest. However, *Īśvara* remains in an unconditioned form, but the soul continues its conditioned form afflicted by the lower levels of consciousness, which is also known as individual conscience. *Īśvara* remains un-afflicted by the influence of three *guṇa*-s and the soul gets influenced by three *guṇa-s*, leading to creation. *Īśvara* can be interpreted as the cosmic counter part of soul. *Īśvara* and *prakṛti* in combination with other twenty four principles or *tattva*-s cause the creation. Therefore, we get introduced to a new principle in this nāma that is known *Īśvara tattva* or the principle of *Īśvara* in this *Sahasranāma*.

Since *Īśvara* is said to be the Lord of *prakṛti*, it can also be called as the aggregate aspect of *māyā* and the individual souls are aggregative. This principle or *tattva* of *Īśvara* is one among the four distinctive states of the Brahman, the other three being *avyakta* (nāma 398), *hiraṇyagarbha* (nāma 638). it is within the subtle body.

It binds all the constituents of the universe together) and *virāt* (nāma 778. the universal cosmic form).

Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (V.1) also refers to this phenomenon. '*Para Brahman* is higher than *hiraṇyagarbha*. Knowledge and ignorance are both hidden in *Para Brahman*. Ignorance is the cause of birth and death, but knowledge leads to immortality. He who controls ignorance and knowledge is separate from both. That is Brahman (pure and without attributes) the supreme'.

This nāma says that She is in this form of *ciccakti* (*cit śakti*).

Cetanā rūpā चेतना रुपा (417)

It is called *caitanya*, the pure and unconditioned form of consciousness, in its functional state. It can also be explained as the purer form of the preceding nāma. The entire universe emerges from this *caitanya* that has two sides. The first one is gross and the other one is subtle. The gross form is made up of name and form and the subtle form is made up of mind and its modifications called *antaḥkaraṇa* (mind, intellect, consciousness and ego). The gross form gives direct experience and the subtle form gives internal experience. In the stage of *caitanya*, both objective and subjective worlds get formulated as experiences. Her *cetana* form or *caitanya* form is also known as Her *vimarśa* form.

Jaḍa-śaktiḥ जड-शक्तिः (418)

She is the power of inanimate energy (*jaḍa*). Generally, two types of energies are referred to in the process of creation. One is the non-pulsating (inanimate) energy and the other is pulsating energy. Both are creative energies. The latter is also known as dynamic aspect of the Brahman. This nāma discusses on the non-pulsating nature of creation. Inanimate energy or *aparā-prakṛti* is considered to be of the lower grade when compared to *parā-prakṛti* or pure energy (nāma 366 is *parā*). These two forms of *prakṛti* are the different modifications of *māyā* or illusion, which forms part of the

Brahman. Without *māyā*, the Brahman on its own cannot function. In nāma 416 She was referred to as *Cicchaktiḥ*. This nāma refers exactly the opposite of *Cicchakti*. But the creation is not possible without the combination of *Cicchakti* and *Jaḍaśakti*.

Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad Gīta* (VII.4 and 5) "My manifested nature has eight fold differentiations: earth, water, fire, air and *ākāś* (ether) in combination with mind, intellect and ego (three of the four components of *antaḥkaraṇa*). This is my lower nature (*aparā-prakṛti*). But understand that my different and higher nature (*parā-prakṛti*) is the *jīva*, the self-consciousness and life-principle that sustains the cosmos".

Jaḍaśakti forms part of the *saguṇa Brahman* (the Brahman with attributes). This *saguṇa Brahman* uses both inanimate and animate energies for creation. This is based on the principle that two factors are needed to create a third. *Jaḍaśakti* is responsible for creating the objective world (conscious mind is objective in nature) that is described in the next nāma.

Jaḍātmikā जडात्मिका (419)

She exists as the objective world of *māyā* that has been discussed in the previous nāma. Except the Brahman, everything else is called *māyā*. When the universe is called as object, then realizing the Brahman can be called as the subject.

{Further reading on subject and object: Let us now understand the subject and object concept of the Brahman. What we are not able to see is not an object. If Brahman is object it has to be seen first before realizing. We are not able to see Brahman. Scriptures also never gave any form to Brahman. Secondly anything could be an object except our own self. Why 'I' is not called the object because we use our knowledge in realising the Brahman. How do we get our knowledge? We get knowledge from the objects around us. Tree is an object and we gain knowledge about tree by seeing it. We use our sensory organs to gain knowledge. Knowledge is gained out of the

objects only. All objects will perish one day as they exist physically. In the same way, if you look at Brahman as an object, He has to exist physically. If He exists physically, he has to perish one day. Brahman is not visible to us nor is he going to perish like all other living beings. This is yet another confirmation that Brahman is not an object. Only for our convenience we make Him as object by defining various forms. But these forms are not without deeper significance which we shall discuss later. On the basis of the foregoing we can conclude that Brahman is not an object. If He is not an object, then is He the subject? Let us find out.

Subject is defined as matter for discussion and a cause to experience. Brahman is the subject taken up for discussion and we are waiting to experience the Brahman. Therefore Brahman could be the subject. But we need more proof to confirm this. You call a tree as an object. How do you know it is an object? You are able to see the tree, the object with your eyes. Who is experiencing the vision of the tree? It is you, your sense organ eye experiencing the vision of the tree. So it is you who is experiencing. Does it mean that you are the subject? Possibly yes. You could be the subject. If you are subject, then what is the position of the Brahman? We have been referring the Brahman as the subject. When Brahman, the Supreme is the subject, how can you too be the subject? Does it mean that the subject, you as an individual and the Brahman are one and the same? Does it mean that the knower and the known are the same? Who is the knower? You are the knower. Who is the known? Brahman is the known. How we can call the Brahman as the known? We cannot call him the known at this stage. He can be called as known only after really knowing him. Discussion about the Brahman does not mean that you know him. By these discussions we are only trying to realise the universal existence of the Brahman. The Brahman within you or me or the tree is one and the same as He exists much smaller than an atom.}

Gāyatrī गायत्री (420)

She is in the form of goddess *Gāyatrī* or *Gāyatrī mantra*. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (III.12.1) says "All that exists in this world, whatever there is, is *Gāyatrī*. It is the word that is *Gāyatrī*, for the word gives names to all things and it also tells them not to fear." The *Upaniṣad* also says that the *Gāyatrī mantra* protects and saves a person who repeats this *mantra*.

There is a story in *Padma Purāna* about *Gāyatrī* which goes like this: When Lord *Brahma* was performing a fire ritual, He called his wife *Sāvitri*. She said that she would come with *Lakṣmī* and other goddesses. Brahma became wild and substituted a cowherd's daughter (*Kṛṣṇa*'s dynasty) for his wife. He named her as *Gāyatrī*. Accompanied by her, *Brahma* decided to hasten the fire ritual. At that time, *Viṣṇu* told Brahma to marry her in the *gandharva* form of marriage (mental union of a man and a woman) and Brahma thus married *Gāyatrī*.

Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad Gīta* X.35 'among poetic meters I am *Gāyatrī*. *Kṛṣṇa* elaborates in chapter X, verses 21 to 41 'His prominent manifestations among the beings, forces and objects that are the causes and the results of His creative, preservative and terminative activities of the cosmos'. Therefore, *Gāyatrī* is considered as the powerful of all the poetic meters. *Lalitāmbikā* is said to be in the form of *Gāyatrī*. The appropriate way of interpretation is that *Gāyatrī* is one among the multitude manifestations of *Lalitāmbikā.*

{Further reading on *Gāyatrī mantra*: *Gāyatrī mantra* is considered as one of the holiest and powerful *mantra*-s that finds a place in three Veda-s and a few *Upaniṣads*. The main difference between Veda-s and *Upaniṣad* is that the former talks about the Brahman and the latter shows the ways and means of realising the Brahman revealed by the *Veda*-s. In practical applications, *Upaniṣads* play an important role than the Veda-s as *Veda*-s mostly talk about *mantra*-s and rituals. Amongst all the mantras, *Gāyatrī mantra* is considered as the most sacred one. Let us now understand *Gāyatrī mantra*.

Each *mantra* is made up of certain number of syllables and a *mantra* with twenty four syllables is called *Gāyatrī chandas*. This *mantra* was first realized by sage *Viśvāmitra*. He attained enormous *siddhi*-s by chanting this *mantra*. The twenty four syllables are placed in three lines or *pāda*-s and each *pāda* has eight *bīja*-s. The *mantra* proper is preceded by ॐ and then by three *vyāhṛti*-s. *Vyāhṛti*-s represent the three types of worlds. (The names of the seven worlds are *bhūḥ, bhuvaḥ, svaḥ, mahaḥ, janaḥ, tapaḥ, satyaṁ*. The first three are called the great *vyāhṛiti*-s and recited after ॐ by many, before commencing their daily prayers and are personified as the daughters of *Savitṛi* and *Pṛiśni*.) Then follow the *Gāyatrī mantra* proper. ॐ or *praṇava* is the first manifestation of *Śabda Brahman*. Before ॐ could manifest into A, U and M it was in the form of *nāda-bindu* (un-manifested form of sound), the creative power of the universe. All sounds originated from *Śiva*'s drum. We have already seen that *Śiva* is the static energy, originated on His own. *Śaktī* was created out of this static energy by means of abnormal pulsation. Possibly this is the only instance when the static energy pulsated. The pulsation of *Śiva* manifested as *Śaktī* and from *Śaktī* all other manifestations such as *prakṛti* originated. From *prakṛti*, five elements originated. This is how the creation was commenced by the Supreme *Śaktī*, in her *vimarśa* form. From the *nāda-bindu* (*Śiva* and *Śaktī* combine) three syllables A, U and M originated, representing various triads. These are *Brahma, Viṣṇu* and *Rudra* (one of the forms of *Śiva* is *Rudra* and this *Rudra* should not be confused with *ekādaśa* (11) *Rudra*-s); creation, sustenance and dissolution; past, present and future and desire, knowledge and action. Thus the Gāyatrī mantra begins with OM, the original manifested sound of the Brahman.

Next to *praṇava* are three *vyāhṛti-s bhūḥ, bhuvaḥ* and *svaḥ*. These *vyāhṛti*-s represent further manifestation of OM and this manifestation is called origin of speech and said to represent the three worlds of this universe. These three worlds originated from the three letters A, U, M of OM or अ, उ म of ॐ. From these *vyāhṛti*-s ,

was derived the *Gāyatrī mantra*. *Gāyatrī mantra* is the origin of three Veda-s (*Rig, yajur* and *Sama* Veda-s). Three *loka-s* or worlds mean the three stages of consciousness. *Bhūr* means the lower level of consciousness and lower planes. *Bhuvar* means the ordinary or normal level of consciousness that is associated with our day to day activities. *Svar* means higher level of consciousness. Thus, the three *vyāhṛti*-s in fact mean the modifications in the level of consciousness. Three *loka-s* are also commonly enumerated, viz. heaven, earth, and the atmosphere or lower regions. *Bhūr-loka*, the earth; Bhuvar-*loka* the space between the earth and sun inhabited by sages and saints; *Svar-loka*, *Indra's* Heaven above the sun or between it and the polar star.

After OM and three *vyāhṛti*-s, the famous *Gāyatrī mantra* of twenty four syllables are placed. It has three *pāda*-s or lines. The first line of eight *bīja*-s is *tat saviturvareṇyaṁ* तत् सवितुर्वरेण्यं. *tat* means that, *savitur* means the Creator, *vareṇyaṁ* means the Supreme. The first *pāda* means 'That Supreme creator'. The second *pāda* or line of eight *bīja*-s is *bhargo devasya dhīmahi* भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि. *bhargo* means illuminating form, *devasya* means that belongs to the Brahman, *dhīmahi* means meditate. The second pada means we meditate on the illuminating form that belongs to the Brahman. The third *pāda* or line of eight *bīja*-s is *dhīyo yo naḥ pracodayāt* धीयो यो नः प्रचोदयात्. *dhiyo* means the modifications of the mind, *yo* means that Brahman, *naḥ* means ours, *pracodayāt* means inducing. The third line means modification of our mind is induced by that Brahman. As a whole this is the meaning of *Gāyatrī mantra* without *vyāhṛti*-s and *pranava*. "We meditate on that illuminating form of the Supreme Creator, who induces modifications in our mind (mental modifications)." It is to be understood that such mental modifications do not happen if our consciousness is in the same frequency as that of the Brahman. Mental modifications happen only in the lower planes.

Any *mantra* with *gāyatrī* meter will have twenty four *bīja*-s and this meter is supposed to protect our gross body. The gross body is

nourished by the vital force or *prāṇa* and the first *pāda* of *Gāyatrī mantra* represents this vital force. The second *pāda* gives knowledge. Knowledge means, knowledge about the Brahman. This knowledge is gained through Veda-s and *Upaniṣads*. In ancient days, a disciple is sent to a Guru for learning Veda-s at a very young age. As the first step towards learning Veda-s, the disciple is initiated into *Gāyatrī mantra*. The third *pāda* of this *mantra* refers to *turya* stage, a stage beyond the three stages of sleep, dream and deep sleep. The process of Brahman realisation or Self-realisation happens if this fourth state of *turya* is reached and transcended. Only when one moves away from all types of consciousness, the Supreme Self-illuminating Brahman can be realized. When the mind gets totally detached from consciousness, the state of void is reached.

Gāyatrī mantra is often said to represent the sun. In fact this is true to a large extent. Sun fits perfectly the description of the Brahman. Without sun, the world cannot function. The energy itself is derived from the sun. Sun is also self illuminating like the Brahman. The light of the sun alone illuminates other objects, or other objects are known only with the rays of the sun. Since all the qualities of the Brahman perfectly fit the sun, it is referred to as the creator. That is why the word *savitur* in the first *pāda* is said to mean the sun. But it should not be construed that *Gāyatrī mantra* is about sun. Sun is one of the creations of *Śaktī* and it is not the Brahman that we are discussing. The main qualities of the Brahman like illumination, creation etc happens only through the light of the sun and we realize that these acts happen because of sun's energy. The internal Self illumination that is several times powerful than the sun and when realized within, is known as Self. Therefore, *Gāyatrī mantra* is about the Supreme Brahman. That is why the *mantra* itself uses the word 'meditate'. Only through meditation, modifications of the mind can take place that can ultimately lead to un-conscious state of the mind where the self illuminating Brahman is realized.

If *Pañcadaśī mantra* of *Lalitāmbikā* is recited once, it is equivalent to three recitations of *Gāyatrī mantra*. Each line of *Pañcadaśī*

mantra is equivalent to one recitation of *pūrṇa Gāyatrī mantra*. The *Gāyatrī mantra* has got several curses from various gods and sages. The sage *Viśvāmitra* himself has cursed this *mantra* and there are certain *mantra*-s that are to be recited to remove all such curses. Unless these curses are removed, none can attain *siddhi* in this *mahā mantra.*}

Vyāhṛtiḥ व्याहृतिः (421)

She is in the form of *vyāhṛti*-s of *Gāyatrī mantra* as discussed in the previous nāma.

Sandhyā सन्ध्या (422)

Sandhyā means non-separation. It means non-separation of our mind with *caitanya* which is said to be in the sun. *Caitanya* is nothing but *cit* (pure consciousness) in its operational state that has been already discussed in nāma 416. Both the external experience caused by the senses and the internal experience caused by the mind happen only in *cit* or consciousness. It is here that both subjective and objective worlds develop as experience. So consciousness can also be called as the place of all experiences. *Vedānta* calls this as the Brahman and science terms this as consciousness. Non-duality is referred to by different names and forms and the word *sandhyā* is one among them. Everything that exists in this universe is only the manifestation of this *cit* or the Brahman. When sun itself gets its light only from the Self-illuminating Brahman, why *caitanya* is said to be in the sun? The answer is obvious. Everyone knows that earth cannot survive without sun. Secondly, sun is visible to our eyes. Since it is difficult for most of us to manifest the Brahman without form, for easy visualization, Brahman's domicile is referred to as the sun and its rays are referred to the various creations of the Brahman. The time of dawn and dusk is also known as *sandhya*. Meditating during these times is said to provide the necessary impetus to the process of non-separation. *Śiva Sūtra* III.25 declares the result of such non-separation. It says,"*Śivatulyo jāyate* शिवतुल्यो

जायते". This *Sūtra* talks about final stages of liberation of a yogi. A yogi, who has not merged with *Śiva* but appears like *Śiva*. The difference between merging with *Śiva* and appearing like *Śiva* is significant. Merger with Śiva happens only in the stage of *kaivalya*, the ultimate stage.

Therefore, this non-separation means that our mind should stand united with the Brahman, destroying the evil effects of *māyā* or illusion. Destruction of duality is advocated in this nāma. *Sandhya* is also known as the kinetic power of *Śiva* or the *vimarśa* form of the Brahman. The *prakāśa* form of the Brahman is *Śiva*.

There is a story which says that *Sandhya* is the daughter of *Brahma*, the Lord of creation. She was born to *Brahma* during his meditation. She performed supreme penance and left her mortal body to be reborn as *Arundhatī,* {the little and scarcely visible star Alcor (belonging to the Great Bear, and personified as the wife of one of its seven chief stars, *Vasiṣṭha*, or of all the seven, the so-called seven *riṣi*-s}, wife of sage *Vasiṣṭha*.

The three important *nādi*-s in *kuṇḍalinī* meditation *iḍā*, *piṅgalā* and *suṣumna* meet at *ājñā cakra*. This place is called *sandhya* as *sandhya* also means joining.

Dvijabṛnda-niṣevitā द्विजबृन्द-निषेविता (423)

She is worshipped by those who recite *Gāyatrī mantra*. Those who recite *Gāyatrī mantra* are called *dvijā*-s or twice born. Twice born because, first birth through the mother and second birth is the initiation of *Gāyatrī mantra*. It is generally said that without initiation, *Gāyatrī mantra* should not be recited. Generally, father initiates *Gāyatrī mantra* to his sons.

Nāma-s 421, 422 and 423 said to mean the three stages of consciousness viz. sleep, dream and deep sleep. *Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad* (IV.iii.18) compares the first two stages of sleep and dream to that of a fish. It says "As a fish swims alternatively to

both the banks of a river, so does this infinite being moves to both these states. In the first stage, awareness (with reference to mind) is total. In the second stage, awareness is partial. We are not aware of the happenings in the stage of deep sleep." This stage is described in *Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad* (IV.iii.19). "As a hawk flying in the sky becomes tired, and stretching its wings, is bound for its nest, so does this infinite being run for this state, where falling asleep, he craves no desire and sees no dream".

But *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VI.viii.1) explains all these three stages. "When we are awake, both body and mind are functioning. When we are dreaming, body is not functioning and the mind is still functioning (partially). In the deep sleep stage, the mind also ceases to function. When a person is said to be sleeping, he becomes one with the Self and he attains his real Self."

In the stage of deep sleep, we become unconscious. This is the stage where the individual consciousness stands merged with cosmic energy and in the process derives the necessary energy for sustenance of the body. This is the stage where one realizes the Brahman. For the world, he is said to be in the stage of unconsciousness, but he knows that his consciousness stands united with the Brahman. This process is called transcending consciousness, the stage of *turya* and beyond.

Tatvāsanā तत्वासना (424)

Tattva-s mean the principles, either twenty four or thirty six. She is seated on these *tattva*-s or these *tattva*-s form Her throne. Tattva-s function both internally and externally. Mind, intellect, consciousness and ego together called *antaḥkaraṇa* or internal tools, work internally. Senses work externally. Senses are the extensions of the five basic elements.

Five basic elements are *ākāś*, air, fire, water and earth. Five *karmendriya-s* are mouth, legs, hands, organ of excretion and organ of procreation. Five *jñānendriya*-s are ears, eyes, nose, mouth and

skin. Five *tanmātra*-s are sound, taste, smell, light, and touch. All these make twenty and with *antaḥkaraṇa*, they become twenty four. The principles or *tattva*-s become thirty six if we add five *tattva*-s of *Śiva* and seven *tattva*-s of *Śaktī* (1. *prākaśa* 2. *vimarśa* 3. *sādākhya*, 4. *aiśvarya*, 5. *Śuddha vidyā*, 6. *kāla*, 7. *vidyā*, 8. rāga, 9. *kāla*, 10. *niyati*, 11. *puruṣa* and 12. *prakṛti*).

It can also be said that She is beyond these *tattva*-s. A reference can be made to nāma-s 906 and 907.

Tat तत् (425)

The Brahman is referred to by three qualities. They are '*om*' '*tat*' '*sat*' (*Om tat sat*). *Tat* means "That". She is That and this That means the Brahman. *Viṣṇu Sahasranāma* nāma 731 is also *Tat*.

Bhagavad Gīta (XVII.25) says "The seekers of liberation then perform various rites of sacrifice and austerities while concentrating on *Tat* without desiring results". The highest level of God consciousness is called *Tat*. She is said to be in the form of the highest level of consciousness. The purest level of consciousness is Brahman.

Tvam त्वम् (426)

Tvam means you, indicating Her. Here *tvam* means the Brahman and is aptly described in *Kena Upaniṣad* (I.4) which says "That Brahman is different from all known and familiar objects. It is beyond even unknown objects." Self realisation is nothing but union of this "That" and "I". This reality will dawn one day like a sudden flash.

There is a great saying "*Tat tvam asi*" (*Tat* means That (Brahman), *tvam* means you and *asi* means are) which means 'you are That'. That means the Brahman. You are That Brahman, the famous *mahā vākya*.

Ayi अयि (427)

Ayi is a way of addressing mother or sister. Since She is the supreme mother of the universe, She is addressed as *ayi*. When someone is addressed as *ayi*, it expresses more love than respect. This also means auspiciousness.

It is pertinent to note that nāma-s 425, 426 and 427 together form '*tattvamayi*' and this is nāma 907 of this *Sahasranāma*. This is the beauty of this *Sahasranāma.* As it progresses, the interpretation of nāma-s also transform from gross to subtle, indicating the spiritual progression.

Pañca-kośāntra-sthitā पञ्च-कोशान्त्र-स्थिता (428)

She resides in the five sheaths. These sheaths form the covering of human organism, which is also called *piṇḍa śarīra*. The soul is covered by three overlapping vestures. They are causal body, subtle body and gross body. The casual body is the innermost and gross body is the outermost. The gross body is perishable, subtle body sustains for longer time and the casual body is permanent till the final liberation of the soul. The soul along with karmic account is embedded in the casual body. According to *Vedānta* philosophy, there are five superimposed sheaths known as *kośa*. The inner most is *ānandamaya kośa* (the sheath of bliss), which corresponds to the casual body. The next three layers are *vijñānamaya kośa* (the sheath of intellect and knowledge), *manomaya kośa,* the sheath of mind, *prānamaya kośa,* the sheath of vital airs like *prāna, apāna*, etc. These three, *vijñānamaya kośa, manomaya kośa* and *prānamaya kośa* correspond to the subtle body. The fifth and the outer sheath is *annamaya kośa,* the sheath of food that corresponds to the gross body. The entire sheathing structure of the human organism hides the soul or *puruṣa* or the self, deep within and falsely projecting itself as the microcosm and bringing forth the illusion of the world as the macrocosm.

Apart from the above interpretation, there is another explanation. While performing *navāvaraṇa pūja*, after the ninth *āvaraṇa* there is a ritual called *pañcapaṁcikā pūja*. Here, five *Devi*-s are worshiped one above the other, at the *bindu* (the central point of *Śrī Cakra*). The details may not be necessary for the interpretation of this nāma, as the main interpretation should be based on the five sheaths of the body. These coverings could also mean five different stages of *samādhi*. To reach the final stage of *nirvikalpa samādhi*, one has to transcend the other stages of *samādhi*.

Niḥsīma-mahimā निःसीम-महिमा (429)

Her greatness has no boundaries, as the Brahman is omnipresent. *Niḥsīman* means immeasurable.

Nitya-yauvanā नित्य-यौवना (430)

She is eternally youthful, as She is beyond space and time.

Mada-śālinī मद-शालिनी (431)

She is in the stage of *ānanda*, the stage of bliss. Normally, bliss is a stage where one's thoughts are totally unified with the Brahman, resulting in emotional happiness. But being the Brahman Herself, She is in the stage of bliss by associating Her thoughts with Her spouse and creator *Śiva*. Though She is in the stage of bliss, She continues to perform Her duties of creation, sustenance and dissolution. This is a typical example of *karma yoga* that *Kṛṣṇa* talks about in *Bhagavad Gīta.*

The effects of this bliss on Her person is described in the next two nāma-s.

Mada-ghūrṇita-raktākṣī मद-घूर्णित-रक्ताक्षी (432)

Her eyes have natural red tinge. This tinge is due to the reflection of redness associated with Her. This nāma says that Her eyes are

red due to bliss. One's eyes will turn red after a deep and intense meditation. This naturally happens due to the heat generated in the body during meditation. Drinking plenty of water and consuming fresh fruits always help in controlling this heat. By transforming this heat into energy, one can develop healing abilities.

Mada-pāṭala-ganda-bhuḥ मद-पाटल-गन्द-भ्ुः (433)

Because of Her blissful state, Her cheeks blush with red colour. If a person regularly meditates, his body turns into golden sheen. This is because, during intense meditation, the consciousness detaches from external objects and focuses internally, providing sheen to the body, as the awareness moves towards the Self-illuminating light of the Brahman.

Candana-drava-digdhāṅgī चन्दन-द्रव-दिग्धाङ्गी (434)

Her body is smeared with sandal paste. Sandal paste is said to cool down the internal body heat.

Cāmpeya-kusuma-priyā चाम्पेय-कुसुम-प्रिया (435)

She is fond of *campaka* flower *(michelia Campaka)*. Her liking for this flower is already mentioned in nāma 13.

Kuśalā कुशला (436)

She is skilful. Because She handles all the three acts of divinity with such an ease, She is addressed as skilful.

Komalākārā कोमलाकारा (437)

She has beautiful and tender body. She has a graceful form.

Kurukullā कुरुकुल्ला (438)

Kurukullā is a goddess who dwells in *Śrī Cakra* between the boundaries of ego and consciousness. The *Bhāvanopaniṣad* considers goddess *Vārāhi* as father and *Kurukullā* as mother. It says, "*Vārāhi pitṛurūpā kurukullā balidevatā mātā* (वाराहि पितृरूपा कुरुकुल्ला बलिदेवता माता)." This is based on the principle that our body consists of sensory organs along with flesh and blood that cause the feeling of bodily lust. The physical description of *Kurukullā* is terrifying, probably indicating that lust is one of the factors that form a stumbling block to the spiritual progression.

Kuleśvarī कुलेश्वरी (439)

She is the ruler of the triad *kula*. The triad consists of cognisor, cognized and cognition (the psychological level of perception). She controls this triad that leads to Self-realisation. If all the three become one, She is realised.

Kulakuṇḍālayā कुलकुण्डालया (440)

Kulakuṇda is a small orifice in *mūlādhāra cakra*, where She takes rest.

Saundarya Laharī (verse 10) also says, "Reaching your own ground *mūlādhāra* and coverting yourself into a serpent with three coils and half, You sleep in the crevice in the centre of *mūlādhāra* lotus."

A practitioner's spiritual pursuit begins from *Kulakuṇda* that transcends upwards to *turya* and *turyātīta* stages where bliss and salvation take place.

Kaula-mārga-tatpara-sevitā कौल-मार्ग-तत्पर-सेविता (441)

She is worshipped by those who follow the *kaula* tradition. This nāma means that She is worshipped through the methods followed by one's lineage. The worship differs based on the rituals followed. In Her worship there are three main paths called *samaya*, *kaula* and *miśra*. *Samaya* path follows the teachings of Veda-s. *Kaula* way of

worship is purely based on tantric rituals. This is considered as the lower level of worship as it advocates the five M-s or *makāra*-s [*makāra*-s because they begin with letter M in Sanskrit and they are *mudra* (finger gestures), fish (*matsya*), meat (māṃsa), *mada*, (a type of intoxicating drink) and conjugation (*mithuna*). Sometimes, *mudra* or finger gestures replace *mada*], never accepted by Vedic scholars. However, this worship has its own tough rituals. The third is *miśra* or the mixed way of worship, consisting of both Vedic and tantric rituals.

Kumāra-gaṇanāthāmbā कुमार-गणनाथाम्बा (442)

Mother of *Kārttikeya* or *Skanda* and *Gaṇeśa*.

There is a deeper meaning to this nāma. The nāma is split into *ku* (inferior) + *māragaṇa* (modification of intense passion or emotion) + *nāthā* (lords of the above) + *ambā* (the one who binds). This gets translated as 'the lord of the inferior and intense passion or emotion, who causes binding to the materialistic world, known as ego. *Kumara* is said to be the lord of ego. *Viṣṇu* or *Śiva* is known as *Puruṣa*. *Lakṣmī* or *Pārvatī,* their consorts are known as *avyakta* (the un-manifested form of *prakṛti*). Ego arises during the union of *puruṣa* and *avyakta*. *Puruṣa* is the king, *avyakta* is the queen and ego is the chief of army.

Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad Gīta* (X.24), "among generals, I am *Skanda*." It is also said that by worshipping *Skanda*, one can destroy one's ego.

Kānchi Śaṃkarācārya said, "Whatever God one may choose for worship only if *Gaṇeśa's* benedicition is obtained first, prayers will fructify without hindrance."

Tuṣṭiḥ तुष्टिः (443)

Beginning with this nāma, next seven nāma-s describe Her seven specific qualities.

She is in the form of happiness. This happiness is due to contentment. She is only a giver. She derives happiness in giving.

Puṣṭiḥ पुष्टिः (444)

She is in the form fullness, fullness of the body and mind.

Matiḥ मतिः (445)

She is in the form of intellect. Intelligence is gained by experience when *puruṣa* or the soul manifests. She is in the form such intelligence. It is also said that *Śiva* is called *mati* because of His knowledge about Veda-s.

Dhṛtiḥ धृतिः (446)

She is in the form of courageousness and steadfastness, the qualities that are required to administer the universe.

Śāntiḥ शान्तिः (447)

She is known for Her quietude. *Śānti* means the eternal peace of mind derived from controlling senses. Fifteen inches from the tip of the nose is where the soul gets purified (this could also mean the exhalation of carbon dioxide and inhalation of air containing more oxygen). This is called sixteenth *kalā* and this *kalā* is known as *Śānti*. She is in the form of *Śānti,* purifying the souls, subject to their *karma*-s.

Svastimatī स्वस्तिमती (448)

The Absolute Reality. The absolute reality is beyond empirical reality and manifestations. *Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad* (II.i.20) refers this situation as "Truth of truth (the absolute reality), has a transcendental import and it is difficult to understand".

Kāntiḥ कान्तिः (449)

This nāma refers to the Self-illuminating nature of the Brahman. This is the will of the Brahman to sustain. Because of this illumination, sun shines and sustains the universe.

With this, the seven nāma-s describing of Her seven qualities end.

Nandinī नन्दिनी (450)

A type of holy cow that is capable giving whatever is asked for. This also means the river *Gaṅgā*. She is in the form of river *Gaṅgā* who is known for her purifying qualities.

Vighnanāśinī विघ्ननाशिनी (451)

The one who destroys all obstacles. She destroys the obstacles while acquiring knowledge of the Brahman.

Tejovatī तेजोवती (452)

She is radiating. This nāma is more or less in line with nāma 449 *kāntiḥ* discussed earlier. But there is subtle difference between these two. The earlier nāma is the will of the Brahman and this nāma talks about the creative aspect of the Brahman. Both for creation and sustenance, light is required. This nāma more explicitly explains Her luminous nature, from which other luminaries derive light. This nāma further confirms the fact that Brahman alone is Self-illuminating.

Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad (III.viii.9) says, "the sun and moon are in their positions under the mighty rule of this Immutable."

Trinayanā त्रिनयना (453)

Three eyed. Her three eyes are sun, moon and fire. In the subtler sense, this can also mean Her *kāmakalā* form (nāma 322). *Śiva* has three eyes representing speech, inference and observation. Since She is not different from *Śiva,* She too has three eyes. This has been

more fully described by sage *Patañjali* in his master piece *yoga sūtra*-s (I.7). To know that something is right, one has to depend upon three factors viz. *pratyakṣa* or direct perception, *anumāna* or inference and *āgamāḥ* or spiritual knowledge (spiritual knowledge is also known as wisdom).

Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad (II.iv.5) expounds it further by saying "by the realisation of the Self through hearing, reflection and meditation all this is known." These three are said to be the three eyes of spiritually awakened persons. *Trinayanā* could also mean *ājñā cakra* or the third eye that is capable of developing one's clairvoyance.

There are three types of Her worship and they are left hand worship, right hand worship and Vedic worship. She leads these worshippers in the proper way in any of the paths chosen by them. Though the paths are different, the ultimate destination is the Brahman. Typically, these paths mean the mental attitude of the pursuer.

Lolākṣī-kāma-rūpinī लोलाक्षी-काम-रूपिनी (454)

She is in the form of desire of women. Lolākṣī means a woman. This desire is explained by *Kṛṣṇa* in *Bhagavad Gīta* (VII.11)"I am that desire in men which is in keeping with *dharma* (righteousness)". The desire that *Kṛṣṇa* refers to is the liberation. Probably Her desire is for *Śiva* (nāma 320), as otherwise She has everything and there is no need for any desires for Her. It is also interpreted that Her desire is not for *Śiva* alone, but for everyone. As an indicative nature for the all the living beings, the word women is used. This could be based on the principle that without desires of women, procreation is not possible, highlighting the holiness of motherhood.

She is also said to be in the form of a deity called *Yogeśvarī*, the goddess of desire. There are eight mothers (*aṣṭa māta-s*), representing eight different human qualities. They are 1. *Yogeśvarī* representing desire, 2. *Māheśvarī* for anger, 3. *Vaiṣṇavī* for greed, 4.

Brāhmaṇī for passion, 5. *Kalyāṇī* for bewilderment, 6. *Indrajā* for envy, 7. *Vārāhī* for disdain and 8. *Yamadaṇḍā* for death. There are variations in their names from the one mentioned above, while worshipping them in *Śrī Cakra.* They are worshipped in *Śrī Cakra* as *Brāhmī, Māheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī, Māhendrī, Cāmuṇḍā* and *Mahālakṣmī.* These goddesses are worshiped in the first *āvaraṇa* in *Śrī Cakra* worship.

Aṣṭa māta-s also refer to eight veins on both sides of human neck.

Mālinī मालिनी (455)

She is wearing garland. This garland is made up fiftyone alphabets of Sanskrit. Since She is *Śabda Brahman*, all the alphabets originate from Her and it is logical to say that She wears these alphabets in the form of a garland (refer nāma-s 366 – 371). *Mālinī* is the goddess of fifty one alphabets of Sanskrit. *Mātṛkā Mālinī* connotes the fifty one alphabets of the Sanskrit in the regular order. *Mātṛkā* means unknown mother or the divine mother. *Mālinī* means the one who holds the universe within Herself. As opposed to *Mātṛkā Mālinī, Mālinī* refers to fifty one letters of Sanskrit alphabet in an irregular order. Following is an example - न ऋ ॠ ....द फ

There is a story in *Varāha Purāṇa*. *Mālinī* is a close friend of *Lalitai*. At the time of *Lalitai*'s marriage with *Śiva*, *Mālinī* held the foot of *Śiva* firmly and refused to release it. *Śiva* asked *Mālinī* to release His foot for which He was willing to grant any boons. *Mālinī* asked *Śiva* to shower on her friend *Lalitai*, all His prosperities in exchange for releasing His foot. *Śiva* told *Mālinī* that He had already conferred His fortunes on Her and that She can now release His foot.

There is a tantra by name *Mālinī tantra*. *Mālinī* also means the successive destructive way of I consciousness.

Mālinī also refers to a girl of seven year old.

Haṁsinī हंसिनी (456)

In the form of *haṁsa mantra*, also known as *ajapa mantra*, a method of *mantra* recitation from dawn to dawn concentrating on the psychic *cakra*-s. *Ajapa japa* also relies on inhalation and exhalation.

Swans are known for their agility of walking. Poetic parlance of *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 91) describes this situation as 'the swans that are nurtured in the house of *Paramaśiva* (Her house as well) practice your walking agility'.

Mātā माता (457)

The first nāma of this *Sahasranāma* is *Śrī Mātā* meaning universal mother. *Lalitā Sahasranāma* is the only *Sahasranāma* where a nāma is not repeated twice. In this nāma, *Śrī* that was a prefix in the first nāma is not used. Another example like this are nāma-s 53 *Śiva* and 998 *Śrī Śiva*. In view of the contextual reference of this nāma i.e. while dealing with *mantra*-s (nāma-s 453, 455, 456), this nāma can be interpreted as 'She is the mother of *mantra*-s'. She is also known as *Mātṛkā* meaning the mother of letters.

Malayācala vāsinī मलयाचल वासिनी (458)

In Kerala, a state of India, She is worshipped as *Bhagavatī*. The state of Kerala is known as *Malayācala*. Malayalam is the language spoken in Kerala. *Malayācala* mountain has rich growth of sandalwood trees and therefore, has natural fragrance. This place is also known as the garden of Indra, the chief of demigods and goddesses. The subtle meaning conveyed by this nāma is that She has natural fragrance emanating because of *mantra*-s. By drawing a comparison to natural fragrance, the power of *mantra*-s is portrayed.

Sumukhī सुमुखी (459)

She has a beautiful face. Face is the reflective part of wisdom. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (IV.14.2) says "your face is shining like that of a knower of Brahman. Who has taught you?" (The *Upaniṣad* proceeds to say that a person who has known the Brahman remains pure and nothing could taint him. He is incompetent of doing anything wrong). If one advances spiritually, his face becomes radiant and glows. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (VI.15) also says "I, a seeker of liberation, take refuge in that luminous Lord, who reveals Self-knowledge in the mind". Self can be identified only with luminosity. *Viṣṇu Sahasranāma* nāma 456 *Sumukhā* which gives the same meaning.

Mantra initiation should be taken only from these types of gurus, not from the one who is associated only with rituals. Only then, the purpose of initiation is attained.

Nalinī नलिनी (460)

Her limbs are compared to a lotus flower. Nāma 278 said that She is seated on a lotus seat. This nāma says that She Herself looks like a lotus flower. The beauty of Her sculptured figure is described by making a subtle comparison to a lotus flower.

River *Gaṅgā* is also known as *Nalinī*. It is said that there is a river by name *Gaṅgā* in the heaven, which is also known as *Nalinī*.

Subhrūḥ सुभ्रूः (461)

She has beautiful eyebrows. Nāma 17 already described about Her eyebrows by drawing a comparison to festoons. *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 47) beautifully describes Her eyes. "Oh! *Umā*! Ever bent on dispelling the fears of the world! I take your two slightly knit eye-brows to be the bow of the consort of *Rati*." The verse says that Her eyebrows are arched like a bow and the two eyes appearing like bees down below and *Śrī Śaṃkara* superimposes a bowstring connecting the two eyes. The bow thus formed is ready to destroy

fear of Her devotees. Like anger, fear is also one of the worst enemies of mankind.

Śobhanā शोभना (462)

Her exceptional beauty is portrayed. *Vāc Devi*-s have failed in their attempts to describe Her beauty by drawing comparisons to the objects of mankind. Since they could not amply describe Her beauty, they ended up with this nāma while delineating Her beauty. *Śobhanā* means the beauty embodied and endowed with auspiciousness. This is called the divine beauty. The word *śobha* also means divine, anything propitious, auspicious, welfare, prosperity, moral good and virtue.

Suranāyikā सुरनायिका (463)

She is the head of *Deva*-s. *Deva*-s mean all types of gods and goddesses that include *Brahma*, *Viṣṇu*, *Rudra*, *Sarasvatī*, *Lakṣmī*, etc. The difference between Gods and demigods is that the former directly partake in the three important activity of the Brahman, creation, sustenance and dissolution, whereas the latter do not. Typically the difference is between the highest authority and a mediocre authority.

Kālakaṇṭhī कालकण्ठी (464)

Śiva is also known as *Kālakaṇṭha* because of blue colour of the poison in his throat. *Kaṇṭha* means throat. This poison is called *kālakūṭa* or *kālahāla* the deadliest poison got out of churning ocean, which was swallowed by *Śiva*. She being the wife of *Śiva* is known as *Kālakaṇṭhī*. It is also said that when *Śiva* was consuming the poison, She held His throat, preventing Him to swallow the poison. *Kālakaṇṭhī,* a deity, is said to be the creation of *Śiva* along with *Kālī* for destroying demons.

Kala also means soft sound and *kaṇṭhī* means throat. This could mean Her sweet and soft voice (refer nāma 27).

Kāntimatī कान्तिमती (465)

She is resplendent and radiating. Refer nāma 449 *Kāntī.* Matī means many things, such as intelligence, etc. This nāma says that Her intelligence is radiating.

Kṣobhiṇī क्षोभिणी (466)

She causes creative pulsation or throbbing in *Śiva* for creation. *Kṣobha* means shaking or agitation. As a result of this throbbing *Śiva* makes the souls or *puruṣa*-s to merge with *prakṛti* to commence the process of creation. The soul or *puruṣa* can manifest only if it interacts with *prakṛti,* which is also known as the Nature. This process is known as the creative Self-unfolding act. It is only the *prakṛti* that unfolds the act of creation. When the soul is associated with *prakṛti,* the latter unfolds first into the subtle non-materialistic form and later into the gross form. Once the gross forms emerge, the *karma*-s of souls begin to manifest, thereby initiating the activities of creation. This process is known as *spanda*, the dynamic aspect of *Śiva*.

Śūkṣmarūpiṇī शूक्ष्मरूपिणी (467)

This nāma refers to Her subtle form. As already discussed, She is known through three forms. The first one is Her gross (*sthūla rūpa*) form that is described in the *dhyāna* verses of this *Sahasranāma*. Her subtle form is *kāmakalā* (nāma 322) the *sūkṣma rūpa,* the present nāma. Her subtlest form is Her *kuṇḍalinī*, the *parā-rūpa* (nāma 366) (*kuṇḍalinī* - nāma 110). All these three forms are amply discussed throughout this *Sahasranāma*.

Kaṭha (कठ) *Upaniṣad* explains this subtle form (I.ii.20). It says *aṇoḥ aṇīyān* meaning smaller than the smallest. The Self is smaller than the smallest and bigger than the biggest and from this arises all existence and the one who knows this process is called self-realised person.

Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad (I.i.6) says *susūkṣmaṁ* which again means smaller than the smallest. It is eternal, the cause for creation and He is realised by those who long for Him.

Viṣṇu Sahasranāma 457 is *sūkṣma* conveying the same meaning. *Arjuna* addresses *Kṛṣṇa* in Bhagavad Gita (XI.18), "Your form is difficult to see because of its glaring effulgence, spreading on all sides, like blazing fire on the immeasurable radiance of the sun. Yet I see this glowing form everywhere".

Sūkṣma is also known as a type of internal fire oblations, in the ever existing fire of *kuṇḍalinī,* in *mūlādhāra cakra*. As this is performed mentally, it is called *sūkṣma homa* (*homa* is the act of making an oblation to the Devas or gods by casting clarified butter into the fire)

Vajreśvarī वज्रेश्वरी (468)

She is the sixth *nitya devi* worshipped in *Śrī Cakra* in *jālandhara pīṭha,* situated in *viśuddhi cakra,* also known as throat *cakra*. Again, in the *Śrī Cakra* worship, in the eighth *āvaraṇa*, there is a deity by name *Mahā-Vajreśvarī* who is worshipped in the innermost triangle of *Śrī Cakra*. This *devi* represents *vidyā tattva,* sustenance of the universe, dream state, *jñāna śakti*, Her *kāmakalā* form, etc. *Śrī Cakra* worship is to be looked into from an entirely different angle. There are so many deities representing various acts of the Brahman. Each such activity is realised by way of worshipping in the form of deities. Without understanding such acts of the Brahman, mere ritualistic worship does not lead to realization. After worshipping the attributes of the Brahman, in the centre of *Śrī Cakra*, at the *bindu* point *Śiva* and *Śaktī* are worshipped, the focal point of Creation in the form of *prakāśa* and *vimarśa*.

There is an invisible river called *Vajra* where pleasant musical notes of swans are flowing. On the banks of this river, there is a deity called *Vajreśī* adorned with diamond ornaments. She is worshipped by lord *Indra*, the chief of demigods and goddesses.

It is also said that *Indra* obtained his famous and the deadliest of his armouries called *vajrāyudha* after performing penance on Her. She was pleased with *Indra*'s penance and gave him this armour and then only *Indra* could return to his world.

Vāmadevī वामदेवी (469)

Wife of *Vāmadeva*, yet another form of *Śiva*. In Hindu mythology, *Śiva* has five faces namely *Īśāna, Tatpuruṣa, Aghora, Vāmadeva* and *Sadyojāta*. Each of these faces represents five elements like *ākāś*, etc. Ancient scriptures say that only three faces of *Śiva* are visible. The fourth one is on his back and the fifth face called *Vāmadeva* is on the top of His head. This head represents the element of ether or *ākāś*. *Liṅga Purāṇa* describes *Śiva*'s *Vāmadeva* form like this: 'He was adorned in red ornaments. He wore red garlands and clothes. His eyes were red. He was valorous.' *Vāmadeva mantra* of *Śiva* is "ॐ *namo brahmane Vāmadevāya*. ॐ नमो ब्रह्मने वामदेवाय". It is said that if one regularly chants this *mantra*, he is absolved of his sins and is not born again.

The combined form of *Śiva* and *Śaktī* is known as *Ardhanārīśvara* form. This form is also known as *Vāmadeva* form, because She occupies His left portion. It can also be said that *Śiva*'s *Vāmadeva* form is red because, She is occupying His left side and Her red complexion gets reflected in His crystal white colour. Left is also known as *vāma* and hence *Vāmadevī.* She is also worshipped through *vāmācāra*, the rituals performed with left hand. Even today, this type of worship is being followed widely, though it is against the teachings of Veda-s.

Vayo'vasthā-vivarjitā वयोऽवस्था-विवर्जिता (470)

She is beyond the effects of aging. This is the quality of the Brahman, who does not undergo changes.

Siddheśvarī सिद्धेश्वरी (471)

She is the *Īśvarī* of *Siddha*-s. *Siddha*-s worship Her. *Siddha*-s are those who have attained the powers of *aṣṭama siddhi* or eight types of super human powers. Such powers are attained only through *kuṇḍalinī* meditation. As per the concept of *Siddha*-s, *Śiva* stays in the crown *cakra* or *sahasrāra* without any movement. It is only *Śaktī*, in the form of *kuṇḍalinī* moving towards *Śiva*. She is worshipped in the form of *kuṇḍalinī* by such yogis. Hence, She is called *Siddheśvarī*.

Siddha-vidyā सिद्ध-विद्या (472)

The eternal *mantra* of *Pañcadaśī* is called *siddhi-vidyā*. All *mantra*-s have the potency of facilitating auspiciousness to a person who recites *mantra*-s with dedication and devotion. *Mantra* of god (he) is known as *mantra* itself and *mantra* of goddesses (she) is known as *vidyā*. When someone is to get an initiation of *mantra*, his guru will test the suitability of a *mantra* to that person. If a *mantra* does not suit a person, it causes more harm than good. That is why, knowledgeable gurus initiates their disciples with an *ātma bīja* (the letter of the soul), and prefixing this *ātma bīja* to any *mantra* will only rains in auspiciousness. For quicker results, the *ātma bīja* can also be prefixed and suffixed to a *mantra* or a *mantra* can be encased between *ātma bīja-s*, by prefixing and suffixing. However, such intricate subjects are to be decided by one's guru.

But, *Pañcadaśī mantra* is exempted from testing its suitability. This *mantra* will not cause any harm under any circumstances. *Pañcadaśī mantra* has been described in detail in the introduction. Normally *mantra*-s are initiated during an auspicious time. For *Pañcadaśī mantra*, such astrological calculations are not necessary. This is based on the principle that all the planets function under Her control.

Siddha-mātā सिद्ध-माता (473)

She is worshipped as their mother by *Siddha*-s or *yogi*-s. Even for a *sannyasin*, mother remains as an exception. The supremacy of

motherhood is well known. *Siddha*-s renounce everything and always stay connected with *Śiva* and *Śaktī*. There are certain yogi-s who get into deep meditation, without even taking food for years. They are able to survive because of the power of *kuṇḍalinī*, through which they stand connected to the cosmos. Such yogi-s address Her as *Ma* and hence She is known as mother of such yogi-s. Already, Her supreme motherhood has been discussed in nāma-s 1 (*Śrī Māta*) and 457 (*Māta*). She protects such yogi-s as their mother.

Yaśasvinī यशस्विनी (474)

The most renowned. She is famous because of Her multitude of capabilities. *Śiva*, after creating Her, does not get involved with any of the activities of the universe. She administers the entire universe independently. *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* (I.10) beautifully explains this situation. It says "No person ever grasped by his understanding the upward limit of this *Paramātma*, nor his limit across, nor his middle portion. His name is 'great glory'." Such is the type of Her greatness.

INTRODUCTION TO YOGINI-S

From nāma 475 to 534 (60 nāma-s) discuss in detail about the six *cakra*-s or psychic centres of *kuṇḍalinī* and *sahasrārā*. Each *cakra* or psychic centre is presided over by a deity called *yogini* and there are seven such *yogini*-s. The seven *cakra*-s in the body (considering *sahasrāra* as a *cakra* for easier understanding) represent particular body element such as skin, blood, muscle, fat, bone, marrow and semen or egg. Each *yogini* is described in 10 or 9 or 7 nāma-s. It is to be clearly understood that these nāma-s are not direct reference to *Lalitāmbikā*. Since *Lalitāmbikā* is described to be in the form of *kuṇḍalinī* energy, and the *kuṇḍalinī* energy has to transcend these *cakra*-s to reach *sahasrāra* from *mūlādhāra*, worshipping the

presiding deities of these *cakra*-s have been undertaken *Vāc Devi*-s. However, the order of worship neither commences from the base *cakra* to the crown *cakra* nor from the crown *cakra* to the base *cakra*. It begins with *viśuddhi cakra*, goes down to the lower *cakra*-s then to *ājñā* and ends with *sahasrāra*. Each of these *yogini*-s has their own *dhyāna* verses, *japa mantra*-s, etc. They have their own assistants and the most important among them is also referred against each of the *yogini*-s. Their complexion, their armouries, qualities, the food they like, etc have also been described. Sanskrit acoustics has fifty alphabets. All these fifty alphabets are placed in the six *cakra*-s. A detailed discussion is provided on the number of Sanskrit alphabets in nāma 833. The order in which they are mentioned in this *Sahasranāma* is based on two concepts. Each of these *yogini*-s has many faces. The *yogini* at *viśuddhi cakra* has one face and the *yogini* at *sahasrāra* has many faces. Probably *Vāc Devi*-s could have prioritized these *yogini*-s based on the number their faces. Alternatively, *Vāc Devi*-s could have chosen this order based on the type of bodily element, each of these *yogini*-s represent. First, we have skin followed by blood, muscle and other elements one below the other. The food that we consume is literally cooked by the internal fire in our stomach called *jadarāgni*. This 'cooked food' undergoes suitable changes, modifications and conversions and infused to the respective bodily elements and the finest essence of all is converted into semen and eggs (they are sometimes wrongly interpreted as *ojas*) that are capable of reproduction. *Bhavanopaniṣad* (verse 4) says that father of these elements is goddess *Vārāhī* (nāma 70) and mother is goddess *Kurukullā* (nāma 438).

Sanskrit has fifty alphabets that are divided into sixteen vowels known as 'letters of life' (verbatim translation) and the balance is called 'letters of body'. Each *cakra* has certain number of lotus petals and each of these petals represent a particular alphabet of Sanskrit. For example, the throat *cakra* or *viśuddhi cakra* has sixteen lotus petals, which represent sixteen vowels. The explanation provided here is nothing to do with *kuṇḍalinī*

meditation. What we are going to discuss is concerned about the presiding deity of each *cakra* and related narrations. It has already been discussed that Her subtlest form is *kuṇḍalinī*. With this brief introduction, we now proceed to discuss about *yogini*-s presiding over the seven *cakra*-s (including *sahasrāra*) in the next sixty nāma-s.

Before we proceed with the next 60 nāma-s, it is to be understood that these nāma-s do not refer *Lalitāmbikā*, but Her important attendants known as *yogini*-s. They refer only to the presiding *yogini*-s of mystic *cakra*-s, through which *Śaktī* passes through, to reach *Śiva* at the crown *cakra*. There are six *cakra*-s that are subtle in nature in the spinal cord, beginning with the base *cakra* or *mūlādhāra* and ending with ājñā *cakra* or third eye. The crown or the *sahasrāra* is not called as *cakra*. *Vāc Devi*-s now commence their description of these *cakra*-s in detail.

Viśuddhi-cakra-nilayā विशुद्धि-चक्र-निलया (475)

Viśuddhi cakra is also known as throat *cakra*. *Viśuddhi cakra* is smoky purple in colour. It appears as a sixteen petal lotus with sixteen vowels of Sanskrit with *bindu*-s (dots) inscribed on each of the petals. Each of these *cakra*-s has one predominant *bīja* and *bīja* for *Viśuddhi cakra* is *haṁ* (हं). This *bīja* is white in colour, representing *ākāś tattva* and seated on a white elephant. *Vāc Devi*-s begin with *viśuddhi cakra*, through which speech is delivered in the form of *vaikharī* (nāma 371). The descriptions of these *cakra*-s begin with the name of the *cakra* and ends with the name of the *yogini* who is the presiding deity of that *cakra*. For example, this nāma says *viśuddhi-cakra-nilayā* which means 'she resides in *viśuddhi cakra'*. But who resides in this *cakra* is mentioned only in nāma 484, which says *ḍākinīsvarī*, the name of the *yogini* who controls this *cakra*. Unless all the nāma-s (normally 7 to 10 nāma-s for a *cakra*) pertaining to a particular *cakra* are studied, understanding of a particular *cakra* will remain incomplete.

Āraktavarṇā आरक्तवर्णा (476)

The *yogini*'s (*ḍākinī*) complexion is mild red.

Trilocanā त्रिलोचना (477)

Dākinī has three eyes.

Khaṭvāṅgādi-praharaṇā खट्वाङ्गादि-प्रहरणा (478)

Khaṭvāṅgā is a club fitted with human skull. *Dākinī* holds this club. It is her weapon.

Vadanaika-samanvitā वदनैक-समन्विता (479)

She has a single face. The order of priority of the *cakra*-s is based upon the number of faces each *yogini* has. *Dākinī* is single faced and she represents *ākāś tattva*.

Pāyasanna-priyā पायसन्न-प्रिया (480)

Pāyasanna is a kind of semi solid sweet normally offered to gods and goddesses on festive occasions. This is made out of rice or cereal cooked with sugar and milk. This nāma says that *yogini* of *viśuddhi cakra, Dākinī* is fond of this preparation.

Tvaksthā त्वक्स्था (481)

Dākinī presides over skin and sensation of touch. Skin being the outermost covering of a living being is another reason for *Vāc Devi*-s to commence the narration of the *cakra*-s commencing from *viśuddhi cakra*.

Paśuloka-bhayankarī पशुलोक-भयन्करी (482)

Paśu means those who are ignorant. Here ignorance means lack of knowledge about the Brahman or those who are afflicted with

duality. *Dākinīśvarī* is frightful to those who are ignorant. This type of ignorance is explained in *Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad* (I.iv.10) thus."Even the gods cannot prevail against him, for he becomes their self. While he who worships another god thinking, 'He is one, and I am another' does not know. He is like an animal to the gods."

The same *Upaniṣad* further explains about the fear arising out of ignorance. "He was afraid. Therefore, people are afraid to be alone. He thought 'If there is nothing else but me, what am I afraid of?' From that alone his fear was gone, for what was there to fear? It is from a second entity that fear comes" (I.iv.2).

Taittirīya Upaniṣad also explains this fear (II.7). "When a person rests fearlessly in that Self, he is no longer afraid of anything. So long as he sees the least difference between himself and the Cosmic Self, he is not altogether free from fear. A person may be learned, but if he still thinks he is separate from Brahman, Brahman itself becomes a source of terror."

The presiding deity of *viśuddhi cakra Dākinīśvarī* causes this fear arising out of ignorance. If proper steps are initiated to realise the Brahman within, fear can be overpowered which otherwise will remain as a huge hindrance while pursuing the path of spirituality. Nāma 354 is *paśu pāśa vimocanī* referred to *Lalitāmbikā* and this nāma refers to *Dākinīśvarī*. There is difference between these two nāma-s. In 354 *Lalitāmbikā*'s ability to remove the ignorance is mentioned, whereas in this nāma *Dākinīśvarī* is simply mentioned as the goddess who induces a sense of fear amongst the ignorant. This difference indicates the quality of the Supreme Brahman and a *yogini*.

Amṛtādi-mahā-śakti-saṁvṛtā अमृतादि-महा-शक्ति-संवृता (483)

Dākinīśvarī is surrounded by sixteen *śakti*-s. Each of these sixteen *śakti*-s presides over each of the sixteen petals. Each vowel is represented by a *śakti*. Names of these *śakti*-s begin with all the

sixteen vowels. For example, alphabet अ is presided over by *śakti Amṛtā*, the next vowel आ is presided over by *Ākarśanī*, etc. *Śakti-s* in this context refer to the lower level of goddesses controlled by *Dākinīśvarī*. This nāma specifically says that these *śakti-s* are powerful by using the word *mahā* which means great.

Dākinīśvarī डाकिनीश्वरी (484)

The name of *yogini* who has been described from nāma 475 to 484 is *Dākinīśvarī*, the presiding deity of *viśuddhi cakra*

Anāhatābja-nilayā अनाहताब्ज-निलया (485)

Anāhata cakra is known as heart *cakra*, which is below the throat *carka* or *viśuddhi cakra* in the heart area (nāma 475) in the spinal cord. There is an imaginary lotus with twelve petals that is dull red in colour. This is the *cakra* where sound is produced without any friction. This sound is called *Śabda Brahman*. Veda-s says that the soul which is also known as *puruṣa* resides here. "The thumb sized *puruṣa* is seen as a smokeless flame in their hearts" says *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (II.1.13). Below this *anāhata cakra*, there is a small eight petal lotus where one's *Iṣṭa Devata* is meditated. The difference between soul and *Iṣṭa Devata* is clearly distinguished here and should not be confused with the Brahman. The first twelve consonants with *bindu*-s are conceived in each of the petals. The pericarp of the lotus is a hexagonal structure. This *cakra* represents air element and *yaṁ* (यं) is the *bīja* for this *cakra*. *Yaṁ bīja* is the *bīja* meant for protection and is capable of fulfilling desires. *Ātma bīja* for an individual is elicited by taking into account various such factors. *Yogini* who presides over this *cakra* is *Rākiṇī* (nāma 494). It is to be noted that the names of the *yogini*-s who preside over all these *cakra*-s differ from the texts that deal exclusively with *kuṇḍalinī*. For example, in this *Sahasranāma* the *yogini* of this *cakra* is referred as *Rākiṇī*, whereas in other texts her name is mentioned as *Kākiṇī*. *Kākiṇī* is the presiding *yogini* of *svādhiṣṭhāna cakra* in this *Sahasranāma*.

This nāma says that *Rākiṇī*, who is depicted in the next nine nāma-s resides in the heart *cakra* is ever alert to pave way for *Lalitāmbikā* to reach the *sahasrāra*. Every time when She passes through this *cakra*, the soul which is embedded here gets blessed by Her. When this happens, the intensity of the *karmic* manifestation gets reduced, thereby making a person devout.

Śyāmābhā श्यामाभा (486)

The description of *Rākiṇī* now begins. She has greenish dark complexion and of sixteen years of age.

Vadanadvayā वदनद्वया (487)

Rākiṇī has two faces. *Yogini Dākinīśvarī* of *viśuddhi cakra* has one face (nāma 479) and as per the ascending order of faces on which the *cakra*-s are denoted in this *Sahasranāma*, *Rākiṇī* has two faces.

Daṁṣṭrojvalā दंष्ट्रोज्वला (488)

Rākiṇī has terrifying teeth (also referred as tusk) like that of a wild boar.

Akṣamālādi-dharā अक्षमालादि-धरा (489)

Rākiṇī is wearing a garland made of fifty one beads, representing all the fifty one alphabets of Sanskrit. Since sound is heard in this *cakra* without arising from any cause of friction (normally sound can be produced with the aid of any two objects, for example clapping, wherein we need to use both the palms). Since this *cakra* is capable of producing sound on its own (during deep meditation, the sound of ॐ is heard from this *cakra*) and sound is carried by air, the *Vāc Devi*-s have fittingly chosen *Rākiṇī* for wearing this garland of letters.

There is an *Upaniṣad* called *Akṣamālika Upaniṣad* that discusses about fifty one alphabets of Sanskrit. It says that one should make a

garland (*mālā*) of fifty one beads made up of different gems and metals strung with gold or silver string. This should be consecrated by the procedures laid down therein. Any *japa* done with this *mālā* would make any *mantra* fructify early. In general, all *japa mālā-s* should be consecrated before using it for counting. Such *mālā-s* should be treated as sacred as *mantra*-s.

Rudhira-saṁsthitā रुधिर-संस्थिता (490)

Rākiṇī presides over blood, the element next to the skin. This is another reason for *Vāc Devi*-s to formulate *anāhata cakra* next to *viśuddhi*.

Kālarātryādi-śaktyaughavṛtā कालरात्र्यादि-शक्त्यौघवृता (491)

Rākiṇī is surrounded by twelve of her assistants like *Kālarātrī devi*, each presiding over a petal. It is said that *Kālarātrī devi* was born out of *tamo guṇa* of *Rudra* who is described like this. "She is three eyed, whose lustre is like that of rising sun, whose plaits are loose and dishevelled, who is in black garments, who holds in her four hands *Liṅga*, *Bhuvana*, truncheon and boon, who is brilliant with the lustre of different kinds of ornaments, who is cheerful and is served by the group of *deva*-s and whose body is torn and bruised by the arrows of the mind-born lord of love." Recitation of her *mantra* causes destruction of one's enemies. She is also said to be a form of Durgā.

It is also said that on the eve of one's death, this *devi* appears in dream bespeaking the death.

Kālarātrī also refers to a particular night in the life of a man on the seventh day of the seventh month of the seventy-seventh year, after which period a man is exempt from attending to ordinances prescribed by *dharma śāstra*-s.

Snigdhaudana-priyā स्निग्धौदन-प्रिया (492)

Rākiṇī is fond of rice mixed with ghee. This food item is capable of producing quality blood.

Mahāvīrendra-varadā महावीरेन्द्र-वरदा (493)

She (*Rākiṇī*) grants boons to warriors. Here warriors mean eloquent orators and such eloquence is the boon given by *Rākiṇī*. This epithet augurs well with *mālā* made of fifty one alphabets, the element of air and the manifestation of *anāhata* sound.

Śiva Sūtra (I.11) says "Being an enjoyer of the rapture of 'I' consciousness in waking, dreaming and deep sleep stages becomes the warrior of his senses." *Vīra* mean the senses and one who wins over these *Vīra -s* is called *vīrendra*. In this context, *vīrendra* means all those who are able to reach the fourth state of *turya* where bliss is enjoyed. The next higher stage of *turya* is known as *turyātīta* where Self-realisation takes place. These are the stages of one's own consciousness.

It is also said that one who has transcended the concepts of "I" and "this" is called *Vīra* and she derives pleasure in granting them boons (she holds boon in her hand – nāma 491).

Rākiṇyambā-svarūpiṇī राकिण्यम्बा-स्वरूपिणी (494)

She assumes the form of *Rākiṇī*, who has been described from nāma 485 to 494 (ten nāma-s).

Maṇipūrābja-nilayā मणिपूराब्ज-निलया (495)

Maṇipūraka cakra is the navel *cakra* and the *yogini* who presides over this *cakra* is *Lākinī*. From this nāma till nāma 503 (nine nāma-s) describe this *yogini*. This *cakra* has ten lotus petals and each petal is inscribed with another ten consonants with *bindu*-s (dots). The pericarp of this *cakra* is in the form of an inverted triangle, which is red in colour. Each of the three sides of this triangle has swastika symbol. This *cakra* represents the element of fire and the

bīja of fire *raṁ* (रं) is placed in the centre of the triangle. The *bīja raṁ* is extraordinarily powerful and aids in acquiring supernatural powers. This *bīja* is capable of providing powers of creation and destruction, depending upon its combination with other *bīja-s*. Most of the important *bīja-s* like *hrīṁ, śrīṁ*, etc contain *raṁ bīja*. This *bīja* is said to have the power of twelve suns. This *bīja* can play a vital role while formulating *ātma bīja*. Scriptures on *kuṇḍalinī* also refer this *yogini* as *Lākinī*. Meditating on this *cakra* gives powers for creation as well as destruction. *jaṭharāgni,* the internal fire that enables digestion in our body functions from this *cakra*. The fire that generates lust is also situated here. Normally, a fully awakened *kuṇḍalinī* does not descend below this *cakra*.

Vadanatraya-saṁyutā वदनत्रय-संयुता (496)

Lākinī has three faces; hence, this *cakra* is discussed as the third *cakra* in this *Sahasranāma*.

Vajrādikāyudhopetā वज्रादिकायुधोपेता (497)

Lākinī has thunderbolt and other weapons. She has four arms, two of them holding a thunderbolt and a *śakti* weapon. The other two hands have *vara mudra* (a *mudra* that grants boon. Almost all the gods and goddesses have this *mudra*) and *abhaya mudra* (a *mudra* that protects by dispelling fear).

ḍāmaryādibhi-rāvṛtā डामर्यादिभि-रावृता (498)

Lākinī is surrounded by ten of her assistants like *Damarī*.

Raktavarnā रक्तवर्ना (499)

Her complexion is blood red in colour.

Māṁsa-niṣṭā मांस-निष्टा (500)

Lākinī presides over flesh. Flesh is found beneath skin and blood. This is yet another reason for *Vāc Devi*-s to discuss *maṇipūraka cakra* as the third *cakra* in this *Sahasranāma*.

Guḍānnaprīta-mānasā गुडान्नप्रीत-मानसा (501)

Guḍānna refers to rice cooked with jaggery (jaggery is unprocessed sugar made out of sugarcane). *Lākinī* has a liking for this preparation.

Samasta-bhakta-sukhadā समस्त-भक्त-सुखदा (502)

Lākinī confers happiness to all the devotees of *Lalitāmbikā*.

Lākinyambā-svarūpiṇī लाकिन्यम्बा-स्वरूपिणी (503)

She (the yogini) is in the form of *Lākinī* or her name is *Lākinī*. (*Lākinī* + *ambā* = mother *Lākinī*)

Svādhiṣṭānāmbuja -gatā स्वाधिष्टानाम्बुज-गता (504)

Yogini of *svādhiṣṭāna cakra* is known as *Kākinī*. From this nāma till nāma 513 (ten nāma-s) describes this *yogini*. This *cakra* is in coccyx area just above *mūlādharā cakra* and has six lotus petals. Each of these petals is inscribed with the next six consonants with *bindu*-s above them. The pericarp of this *cakra* appears like an eight petal lotus with half moon in the centre. Inside this half moon, the *bīja* of *Varuṇa* (lord of water) *vaṁ* (वं) is placed. *Varuṇa bīja vaṁ* in proper combination with *agni bīja raṁ* gives certain supernatural powers. *Varuṇa bīja* also indicates prosperity.

Caturvaktra-manoharā चतुर्वक्त्र-मनोहरा (505)

Kākinī has four beautiful faces, hence described by *Vāc Devi*-s as the fourth *cakra*.

Saundarya Laharī (verse 14) mentions about certain rays that radiate from the psychic centres. From *mūlādhārā* to *ājñā cakra* the verse mentions about 360 rays corresponding to 360 degrees of a circle or 360 days of a calendar year (for certain calculations the number of days per year is taken as 360 only).

Śulādyāyudha-saṁpannā शुलाद्यायुध-संपन्ना (506)

Kākinī has four hands that hold trident, noose, skull and elephant hook (*aṅkuśa*) as her weaponries. Some other scriptures mention conch shell, discuss, club (*gada*), and lotus as her weaponries. There are certain variations between *Lalitā Sahasranāma* and other scriptures on *kuṇḍalinī* about the description of the presiding deities of the *cakra*-s.

Pītavarṇā पीतवर्णा (507)

Kākinī has golden complexion.

Ati-garvitā अति-गर्विता (508)

Kākinī is extremely proud. She is proud of her beauty. But *Lalitāmbikā* is not proud (nāma 158. *Nirmadā*, says that She is without pride. When one has something that others do not have, it gives rise to pride. She has everything and everything comes out of Her.)

Medo-niṣṭā मेदो-निष्टा (509)

Kākinī presides over fat. Fat is fourth layer beneath our skin hence this *cakra* is mentioned as the fourth *cakra* by *Vāc Devi*-s.

Madhu-prītā मधु-प्रीता (510)

Madhu means honey. *Kākinī* is fond of honey. *Madhu* also means liquor (liquor also referes to the liquid in which vegetables or meat

have been cooked) obviously indicating that *Kākinī* is fond of this kind of liquor.

In fire rituals to appease certain goddesses, along with ghee (clarified butter), honey and milk are also mixed in small quantities. Offering honey to goddesses is also referred in the Veda-s.

Bandhinyādi-samanvitā बन्धिन्यादि-समन्विता (511)

Kākinī is surrounded by six assistants like *Bandhinī*. Each of her assistants presides over each of the petals. Apart from *Bandhinī,* other important deities are *Badhrakālī* and *Mahāmāyā*.

Dadhyannāsakta-hṛdayā दध्यन्नासक्त-हृदया (512)

Kākinī is fond of curd rice.

Kākinī-rūpa-dhariṇī काकिनी-रूप-धरिणी (513)

The presiding devi of *svādhiṣṭhāna cakra* is *Kākinī* who has been described in these ten nāma-s.

Mūlādhārambujā-rūḍhāa मूलाधारम्बुजा-रूढा (514)

Yogini who presides over this chakra is *Sākinī,* who is described in the next seven nāma-s till nāma 520. This *cakra* is situated at the perineum area and has four lotus petals that are red in colour. Each petal is inscribed with four consonants with *bindu*-s. The pericarp of this *cakra* is square in shape with eight spears protruding outwardly. Inside this pericarp, the *bīja* of this *cakra laṁ* (लं) is placed. There is a red inverted triangle within the pericarp that flashes like lightning. Inside this triangle, the powerful *klīṁ bīja* (क्लीं), also known as *kāma bīja*, is placed. The *bīja* for earth is *laṁ* and this is appropriate because *mūlādhāra cakra* is the lowest *cakra* which is also known as the base *cakra*. Inside this triangle, there is a *Liṅga* (one of the prominent forms of *Śiva*). *Kuṇḍalinī* energy in the form of a snake coiled around this *Liṅga* three and half times.

There is a hole which is called *dvāra* in Sanskrit in this *cakra*, through which *Kuṇḍalinī* ascends and descends. Under normal circumstances, the mouth of this hole is blocked by the head of this snake. This is the most important *cakra* as it holds the life energy in the form of *Kuṇḍalinī* here. *Lalitāmbikā* dwells in this cakra in the form of *Kuṇḍalinī*, Her subtlest form. Ancient scriptures refer the presiding deity of this *cakra* as *Dākinī* who is the presiding deity of *viśuddhi cakra* as per this *Sahasranāma*.

The *bīja laṁ* is used for acquiring material prosperity. The other *bīja klīṁ* which is placed inside the triangle also gives prosperity. It is to be noted that *kāmakalā* (nāma 322), the subtler form of *Lalitāmbikā* is different from *kāma bīja klīṁ* referred here.

Pañca-vaktrā पञ्च-वक्त्रा (515)

Sākinī is five faced, hence described in this *Sahasranāma* as the fifth *cakra*. Each of these faces represents five elements like *ākāś*, air, etc.

There is a *yantra* called *pañca-vaktrā,* which is five faced, which was given by *Śiva* to *Rāvaṇa,* in appreciation of his penance. This is mentioned in the epic *Rāmāyaṇa*,.

Asthi-saṁsthitā अस्थि-संस्थिता (516)

Sākinī presides over bones, the fifth layer from the skin. This is also one of the reasons for taking up this *cakra* as the fifth in this *Sahasranāma*.

Aṅkuśādi-praharaṇā अङ्कुशादि-प्रहरणा (517)

Sākinī has weapons like elephant-hook. She is said to have four arms and apart from elephant-hook, she also carries lotus, book and *cin mudra* (*mudra* of knowledge or *jñāna mudra*). But scriptures disagree with these armories. Scriptures talk about *śūla* (trident), staff (a long stick with a flag tied at the top. Generally it is carried

by *sanyāsi* -s), gourd (*kamaṇḍalu*, a copper or brass vessel with a nostril like opening containing water) and *rudrākṣa mālā*. These are the symbols of a *sanyāsi*.

Varadādi-niṣevitā वरदादि-निषेविता (518)

Sākinī is surrounded by her assistants like *Varadā* and three others. The three others are *Śrī* (possibly indicating prosperity as *Śrī* means *Lakṣmī*), *Śandā* and *Sarasvatī* (goddess of knowledge).

Mudgaudanāsakta-cittā मुद्गौदनासक्त-चित्ता (519)

Sākinī is fond of food of made of green gram. The combination of *mudgaudannā* is rice mixed with green gram, jaggary, coconut, *jīraka*, ghee and milk. For offering this to goddess, there is a specific method by which this is to be prepared.

Sākinyambā-svarupiṇī साकिन्यम्बा-स्वरुपिणी (520)

The presiding deity of the *mūlādhāra cakra* is in the form of *Sākinī* who has been described in these seven nāma-s.

Ājñā-cakrābja nilayā आज्ञा-चक्राब्ज निलया (521)

The next seven nāma-s discuss about the presiding deity of *ājñā cakra*, *Hākinī*. *Ājñā cakra* is considered as the most important *cakra* and is located between the two eye brows. This *cakra* has two lotus petals and *bīja*-s *haṁ* (हं) and *kṣaṁ* (क्षं) are inscribed in those white petals. The *yogini*'s complexion is white and she has six faces with three eyes on each, all red in colour. She has six arms and is majestically seated on a white lotus. Each of her six hands holds *varada mudra* (granting boons), *abhaya mudra* (dispelling fear), a *rudrākṣa* rosary, a human skull, a small drum and a book. The mind in its subtlest forms dwells here. The most important *bīja* of all, ॐ is placed here and when *kuṇḍalinī* reaches this *cakra*, superhuman powers are granted to the practitioner. The pericarp is

in the form of inverted triangle. Above this triangle, a half moon is located. During proper meditation on *ājñā cakra*, the first illumination would be only a half moon, above the triangle. This moon transforms into an illuminating flame during further progress in meditation, indicating the progress of Self-realization. The illumination of the flame is extraordinarily bright because sun, moon and fire unite in this *cakra* (*iḍa*, *piṅgala* and *suṣumna*). Both *Śaktī* and *Śiva* begin to manifest here. One's guru lineage is worshipped in this *cakra*. Guru, irrespective of the place of his existence, gives command to his disciples through this *cakra*.

These are the words of *Kṛṣṇa* in *Bhagavad Gīta* (VIII.9, 10): "One should know the Brahman as the knower of all in inconceivable form, shining like the sun, beyond all materialistic attributes. One who at the time of death by his yogic powers fixes his consciousness between his two eye brows (*ājñā cakra*), with mind fixed on the Brahman attains Him."

Śukla-varṇā शुक्ल-वर्णा (522)

Hākinī has fair complexion. This could be due to the purity of *ājñā cakra*.

ṣaḍānanā षडानना (523)

Hākinī has six faces and hence described as the sixth *cakra* in this *Sahasranāma*. *Ājñā cakra* is the controlling centre for the five lower *cakra*-s, each of which representing five *mahā bhūta*-s or elements. *Ājñā cakra*, the sixth *cakra* controls the mind. Hence, *Hākinī* is described with six faces, one representing mind and other five representing five elements, particularly *tanmātra*-s such as sound, taste, etc.

Majjā-saṁsthā मज्जा-संस्था (524)

Hākinī presides over bone marrow, the sixth layer from the skin hence *ājñā cakra* is discussed as the sixth *cakra* in this *Sahasranāma*.

Hamsavatī-mukhya śakti-samanvitā हम्सवती-मुख्य शक्ति-समन्विता (525)

Hākinī is attended by two of her assistants. They are *Haṁsavati* and *Kṣamāvati*, representing the two *bīja*-s *haṁ* (हं) and *kṣaṁ* (क्षं). In all these *cakra*-s, the names of the assistants to the *yogini*-s begin with the respective alphabets inscribed in the lotus petals of the concerned *cakra*-s. Alphabets, complexion of the *yogini*-s, faces and hands of the *yogini*-s, the shape of the pericarp of the *cakra*-s have great relevance to the attributes assigned to these *cakra*-s.

Haridrānnaika-rasikā हरिद्रान्नैक-रसिका (526)

Hākinī is fond of rice cooked with saffron.

Hākinī rūpa-dhāriṇī हाकिनी रूप-धारिणी (527)

The *yogini* who has been described in the preceding six nāma-s is known as *Hākinī*.

Sahasradala-padmasthā सहस्रदल-पद्मस्था (528)

The next seven nāma-s discuss about *yogini Yākinī*, the last among the *yogini*-s who are being discussed. *Sahasrāra* or the crown *cakra* is presided by *yogini Yākinī*. *Sahasrāra* is in the form of a thousand petal lotus. This is not categorized under *cakra*-s and *sahasrāra* is difficult to explain. The commune (the divine energy) between the soul and the cosmos happens through an extremely small aperture at the top of the head known as *brahmarandhra* (ब्रह्मरन्ध्र). This pericarp of the *sahasrāra* is said to be more lustrous than a full moon. The rays of this moon is multi coloured, predominantly VIBGYOR, the seven colours of the rain bow. The colour of these

cakra-s begin with red at *mūlādhāra*, orange at *svādhiṣṭhāna*, yellow at *maṇipūra*, green at *anāhata*, blue at *viśuddhi*, indigo at *ājñā* and violet at *sahasrāra*. Though violet is said to be the overriding colour of *sahasrāra*, multi colour is visible during its activation. *Śaktī*-s union with *Śiva* takes place here.

There is a *bindu* in the midst of *sahasrāra* and is called *śūnya*, or emptiness which is the root of liberation and is in the size of a ten millionth of the width of human hair. *Śiva* is manifested here as the pure Brahman, and *Śaktī* conjoins Him unfolding eternal bliss leading to final liberation. The mind that was totally purified at *ājñā cakra* begins to realise the oneness of self (*ātma*) and the Brahman (*paramātma*). The practitioner who could activate this orifice is not born again. He is freed from all his *karma*-s.

Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad Gīta* (XVIII.49), "A person can attain liberation by freeing himself from *karma*-s by practicing renunciation." At this stage, the practitioner does not use his free will (surrenders his free will to God) and functions only at the will of God. Such a situation is possible only if *sahasrāra* is well activated. *Śaktī* who has ascended from *mūlādhāra* unites with *Śiva* at *sahasrāra* and the blissful ambrosia is released and is felt at the throat, providing the divine nourishment which makes the practitioner to realise "I am That", indicating the end of one's spiritual quest. The union of *Śaktī* (I) and *Śiva* (That) takes place here in their subtlest forms.

All the alphabets are placed continuously in all the petals of the lotus. It is also said that the alphabet *kṣa* (क्ष) is excluded from the fifty one alphabets of Sanskrit, thereby making it only fifty letters. These fifty alphabets are placed twenty times in succession to make one thousand. The feet of the Brahman (some refer this as the feet of one's Guru and either way there is no differentiation in the subject conveyed as Guru and the Brahman are not different) is worshipped here causing removal of *sañcita karma* (the total sum of *karma* of all previous births that have not yet fructified). In the pericarp of *sahasrāra* there is a moon and inside this moon there is a

triangle and inside this triangle, there is *unmani*, a *tattva* that nullifies all the adversities of mind. *Unmani* is explained as the supranormal *Śaktī* of *Paramaśiva* in its primal movement towards manifestation, though inseparable from Him and is known as *unmanā* or *unmani* This is one of the foremost reasons for attaining bliss, as the influences on mind is overruled here.

Sarva-varṇopa-śobhitā सर्व-वर्णोप-शोभिता (529)

Yākinī shines in all colours. *varṇa* also indicates letters that are inscribed in the one thousand petals. There is also an interpretation that letters are placed first from *a* (अ) to *kṣa* (क्ष) and then *kṣa* (क्ष) to a (अ) and again from अ to क्ष and so on.

Sarvāyudha-dharā सर्वायुध-धरा (530)

Yākinī has all types of weaponries. In *sahasrāra*, everything is infinite because *sahasrāra* is beyond any human explanation. Further, the experience at *sahasrāra* will differ from person to person.

Śrī Rudraṁ (Yajur Veda IV.v.10.verse 12) says 'a thousand fold in thousands are the missiles in your arms.'

Such references are available in plenty in Veda-s and *Upaniṣads.*

Śukla-saṁsthitā शुक्ल-संस्थिता (531)

Yākinī is in the form of subtlest product of the human body – semen or ova. *Yākinī* represents the creation of human body and destruction of the human mind.

Sarvatomukhī सर्वतोमुखी (532)

Yākinī has infinite faces.

'Infinite faces facing all directions' is the concept of the Brahman. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (I.13) says "having eyes everywhere, having hands everywhere, having feet everywhere."

Bhagavad Gīta XIII.13 says "He dwells in the world, enveloping all, His hands and feet present everywhere. His eyes and ears, His mouth and heads present on all sides."

Puruṣa sūktaṁ opens by saying "*Puruṣa* (the Brahman) has thousands of heads, thousands of eyes, thousands of feet."

How does that *Puruṣa* appear, answers *Bhagavad Gīta* XI.12 by saying "if a thousand suns appeared simultaneously in the sky, they might dimly resemble Him."

Sarvaudana-prīta-cittā सर्वौदन-प्रीत-चित्ता (533)

Yākinī likes all types of food.

The important point to be noted with *sahasrāra* is the nature infinitude. The *yogini* presiding over *sahasrāra* is beyond everything.

Yākinyambā-svarūpiṇī याकिन्यम्बा-स्वरूपिणी (534)

Yogini presiding over *sahasrāra* is known as mother *Yākinī*, who has been described from nāma 528 till 534 (7 nāma-s).

With this, the description of *yogini*-s is concluded

Svāhā स्वाहा (535)

After describing *yogini*-s, *Vāc Devi*-s continue with their description of *Lalitāmbikā*.

Lalitāmbikā is in the form of oblations offered to gods and goddesses. The *mantra*-s for such oblations end with *svāhā*. More details are provided in the next nāma.

Liṅga Purāṇa (13.9) says wife of *Paśupatī* (the fiery form of *Śiva*) in the form of fire is *Svāhā* and the mother of Lord *Kārttikeya*.

Svadhā स्वधा (536)

She is in the form of oblations offered to the departed souls of ancestors (*pitṛ*) and such *mantra*-s end with *svadhā*.

Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa (26.6-9) personifies a *grahasta* (a married man leading family life) as a holy cow. Cow's back is *Rig Veda*, her loins is *Yajur Veda*, her face and neck is *Sāma Veda*, her horns are pious acts, her hair are the words of wise men, her ordure and urine are tranquillity and prosperity, her four feet are the four classes of humanity, *svāhā, svadhā, vaṣaṭ*, and *hanta* are her teats. The epic proceeds to say that such a man should nourishe gods, *ṛṣi*-s, *pitṛ-s*, fellow men and other living beings as his own body (This act of a *grahasta* is called *pañca-yajña*. (refer nāma 946 *pañca-yajña-priyā*).

It is also said that *Svāhā* and *Svadhā* are the two wives of Lord *Agni*.

Amatiḥ अमतिः (537)

She is in the form of *avidyā* or ignorance. The creation in the beginning was devoid of consciousness, known as *avyakta* form (nāma 398). From *mūlaprakṛti* (nāma 397) *avyakta*, *mahat* (intellect), (nāma 774) ego, etc were created. The intellect in such un-manifested stage is known as *amati*. This is the stage of *prakṛti* where all the three *guṇa*-s are found in equilibrium. Any change in this equilibrium of *guṇa*-s in *prakṛti* leads to desire, wisdom and action.

Medhā मेधा (538)

She in the form of *amati*, transforms into *medha* or intelligence, along with evolution. This is also to confirm Her existence from the

beginning of creation. These two nāma-s explain the development of intellect from its un-manifested form to manifested form. She is in the form of both, which go to prove Her Brahman form or the omnipresence nature. *Medha* particularly refers to individual intelligence.

Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad (49.1) says "May the all-penetrating goddess of intellect who is beneficial, favorably disposed to and delighting in us, visit us" (*Medha sūktaṁ* 1).

Atharva Veda (VI.108) says "Oh! Wisdom (*medha*)! Come first to us with cows, with horses, you with the sun's rays, you are reverent to us. The next verse proceeds to say "I call first, unto the aid of gods, wisdom filled with Brahman, quickened by Brahman, praised by seers……"

Intellect is considered as one of the important factors to realise the Brahman.

She is said to be in the form of such an intellect.

Śrutiḥ श्रुतिः (539)

Śruti means Veda-s. She is in the form of all the four Veda-s or all the Veda-s represent Her form.

Smṛtiḥ स्मृतिः (540)

Veda-s are difficult to understand and the message of the Brahman is conveyed through them in secretive manner. Veda-s need proper interpretation to understand their conveyance. *Smṛti*-s, derived from Veda-s deliver the message of the Brahman in understandable terms. She is in the form of such *Smṛti*-s. *Smṛti* also refers to the power of recollection and memory. *Upaniṣads* are classified under *Smṛti*-s.

Kṛṣṇa says (*Bhagavad Gīta* X.34) "I am the power of speech, memory, intelligence, grasping faculty……."

Anuttamā अनुत्तमा (541)

No one is superior to Her, an exclusive of the qualitiy of the Brahman.

This situation is best explained in *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (VI.8) which says "No one is His equal; no one is superior either. He possesses many gifts of a high order."

The same situation finds a place in *Bhagavad Gīta* (XI.43). "Unparalleled by any other in the three worlds, who may surpass Him, the Lord of power incomparable."

Anuttamā also means intellect not derived from others. She is the embodiment of intellect.

Puṇyakīrtiḥ पुण्यकीर्तिः (542)

She is known for virtues. She gives fame to Her devotees. The very thought of Her, sanctifies a person.

Viṣṇu Sahasranāma nāma 688 is *Puṇyakīrti* which means He is capable of eradicating sins of His devotees.

Puṇyalabhyā पुण्यलभ्या (543)

She is attainable through virtues. *Puṇya* means virtues. It is said that 'She is attained by those who are virtuous and have knowledge of Veda-s. Those who are desirous do not see Her.'

Saundarya Laharī (verse 1) explains this. 'You are worshiped even by *Brahma*, *Viṣṇu* and *Rudra*. Unless one has accumulated virtues of previous births (good *karma*-s), how can anyone be capable of singing Your praise or prostrate before You.'

Puṇya-śravaṇa-kīrtanā पुण्य-श्रवण-कीर्तना (544)

Recitation of verses in praise of Her (like this *Lalitā Sahasranāma*), or listening to such praises are virtuous acts.

Viṣṇu Sahasranāma 922 conveys the same meaning. The *uttara-bhāga* (the concluding part) of *Viṣṇu Sahasranāma* verse 2 and the concluding part of this *Lalitā Sahasranāma* also conveys the same meaning.

Pulomajārcitā पुलोमजार्चिता (545)

Indrāṇī is the wife of Lord *Indra* and Her father is known by name *Puloman*. She is an ardent devotee of *Lalitāmbikā*. This nāma is included in this *Sahasranāma* to highlight the importance of morality and the benefits attained on worshipping *Lalitāmbikā*. This nāma means that She is worshipped by the daughter of *Puloman*, i.e. *Indrāṇī*

There is a story in *Devi Bhāgavata* (chapter VI) which goes like this: There was a demon by name *Puloman*. He had a daughter known as *Śaśī. Indrā* killed *Puloman* and married his daughter *Śaśī.* Thus, *Śaśī* became *Indrāṇī*. *Indra* befriended with another demon by name *Vṛiddāsura*. *Vṛiddāsura*'s father *Dvaṣṭā* forewarned his son not to entertain friendship with *Indra*. As the fate would have it, *Vṛiddāsura* did not listen to his father's advice. At an appropriate time, *Indra* killed the demon with the help of *Lalitai*, *Viṣṇu* and others. Since *Indra* killed his friend through foul means, he was afflicted with *brahmahatyā doṣa* (sins accruing on account of murdering a Vedic scholar) as cursed by *Dvaṣṭā*. Nobody came to his rescue. When *Viṣṇu* and *Lalitai* helped *Indra*, everyone helped him. But when *Viṣṇu* and *Lalitai* were no longer willing to help him, none came forward to help him. As a result, *Indra* left his empire, came to the earth and started living in a lotus stem. Nobody could find him. The absence of *Indra* was felt in the universe. There was no rain which resulted in acute famine all over. Demigods, goddesses and sages appointed a demon by name *Nahuṣa* for the post of *Indra*, to overcome the famine. *Nahuṣa*, impressed by the beauty of *Indrāṇī* wanted to flirt with her.

Knowing this *Indrāṇī* went to *Brahma*. He could not offer a lasting solution. Then along with demigods, etc *Indrāṇī* went to *Viṣṇu* for a solution. *Viṣṇu* advised all of them to worship *Parāśaktī*. With Her grace, *Indra* was found by *Indrāṇī*. *Indrāṇī* told *Indra* that her chastity is in jeopardy with *Nahuṣa* occupying *Indra*'s throne. *Indra* told her that their time is not auspicious and that she should go back to *Indraloka*. He also told her that to protect a woman's chastity nobody can be of help except her own will power and determination. She went back to *Indraloka* and told *Nahuṣa* that she would oblige him if he comes to her place in a palanquin carried by the seven great sages (*sapta riṣi-s*). Accordingly, *Nahuṣa* summoned *sapta riṣi-s*. *Sapta riṣi-s* obliged *Nahuṣa* as they were aware of what is in store for *Nahuṣa*. Out of the seven *riṣi-s*, *Agastya* was very short and when he walked with the palanquin, it tilted towards his side. Angered by this, *Nahuṣa* beat *Agastya* and kept his foot on his head. *Agastya* is a very powerful sage who had once consumed the entire water of all the oceans. *Agastya* cursed *Nahuṣa* to become a python and immediately he fell down in a forest with the body of a python. Knowing this, *Indra* returned to his kingdom. *Indra* was restored to his throne with the grace of *Lalitāmbikā*.

Bandha-mocanī बन्ध-मोचनी (546)

She liberates from bondage. Bondage is caused by ignorance or *avidyā*. Bondage means a soul remaining afflicted by desires and attachments. She removes such bondage for those who surrender to Her, beginning of the process of liberation.

Barbarālakā बर्बरालका (547)

In some texts, this nāma is mentioned as *bandhūrālakā*. She has curly hair that appears like waves and flowing into Her forehead.

Vimarśa-rūpiṇī विमर्श-रूपिणी (548)

Brahman is the combination of *prakāśa* and *vimarśa* forms. *Prakāśa* is the Self-illuminating light the origin of which is not known. It is the beginning of creation or creation begins from *prakāśa*. Without this Self illuminating eternal light, nothing can exist. It is *Śiva*. The reflection of *Śiva* is known as *vimarśa*, which is known as *Śaktī*. Without the presence of *vimarśa* or *Śaktī*, *Śiva* cannot act. *Śiva* is the creator and *Śaktī* is the doer. It is said that 'if ultimate Reality were merely *prakāśa* without *vimarśa*, it would be hibernating.' Without *Śiva* or *prakāśa* form of the Brahman, the presence of *Śaktī* or *vimarśa* of the Brahman is not possible. Without *Śaktī* or *vimarśa* of the Brahman, the creation is not possible as without *Śaktī*, *Śiva* becomes inert. *Śiva* is devoid of activity with singular exception of *Śaktī* got abstracted from *Śiva*. That is why soul is said to the representative of *Śiva*, as soul on its own cannot act unless combined with *prakṛti* or Nature. If *Śiva* can be called as the Brahman, then *Śaktī* is to be called *māyā*. Without the presence of *māyā*, activities in the universe cannot happen, as *māyā* is the expressive nature of the Brahman. This appears logical as the Creator status of the Brahman is not divested. Though *Śiva* has desired to create, He executes His acts of creation only through *Śaktī* which makes *Śaktī* the most sought after form of the Brahman. *Śaktī* in Her capacity as the administrator of the universe has multifarious activities such as creation, sustenance, fusion, total dissolution and finally re-creation (nāma 274). *Śiva* therefore is the static energy and *Śaktī* becomes the kinetic energy. When these two energies join together it known as '*Śiva-Śaktī*' (nāma 999) or *Ardhanārīśvara* form (half male and half female)

This nāma mentions Her creative aspect.

Vidyā विद्या (549)

Vidyā means 'to deliberate'. She is the giver of knowledge that is capable of providing final liberation. This is an extension of the previous nāma. After having spoken about Her vast powers in the previous nāma, *Vāc Devi*-s talk about the final liberation in this

nāma, which can be granted only by Her. Final liberation cannot be attained without understanding the Brahman for which the highest form of pure knowledge or *Śuddhavidyā* is required. This nāma says either She is in the form of that supreme knowledge or She gives that supreme knowledge for those who seek it.

Śiva Sūtra 21 says, *Śuddhavidyodayāccakreśatvasiddhiḥ* (शुद्धविद्योदयाच्चक्रेशत्वसिद्धिः). "Full acquisition of mastery over the collective whole of the *śaktī-s* through the appearance of *Śuddhavidyā* or pure knowledge." It is said that She is the highest of *vidyā*-s and on the appearance of this *vidyā*, a practitioner acquires infinite knowledge and *siddhi*-s. This becomes possible because, by providing this pure knowledge She makes a person to think about *Śiva* in the form of primordial light, thereby becoming *Śiva* Himself.

Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad talks about two types of knowledge, one is *apara* the lowest and another is *parā* the highest. She is in the form of this *parā* knowledge.

Viyadādi-jagat-prasūḥ वियदादि-जगत्-प्रसूः (550)

She is the Creator of the five principles of *ākāś* (ether) air, etc. According to *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (II.1) "From that Self (the Brahman) sprang up *ākāś*, from *ākāś* air, from air fire, from fire water and from water earth." During great dissolution, the reverse process unfolds." She is referred as that Self or the Brahman. This nāma augurs well with nāma 397 *mūlaprakṛti*.

Sarva-vyādhi-praśamanī सर्व-व्याधि-प्रशमनी (551)

She cures all diseases. By *sarva-vyādhi* it means disease of both body and mind. It is not enough to have purity of mind alone. One need to have a healthy body to realise the Brahman within. The divine energy is extraordinarily powerful and body should have the stamina to withstand the cosmic energy. Nāma 876 *nirāmayā* says that She is without disease.

Sarva-mṛtyu-nivāriṇī सर्व-मृत्यु-निवारिणी (552)

Mṛtyu means death. There are different types of deaths such as premature death arising out of accidents, disease or untimely deaths.

Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (IV.15) explains about death thus: "If you know your oneness with Him, you become free from shackles of death."

Kaṭha Upaniṣad (I.iii.15) also endorses this view. "Having known that Self, one can be free from death."

The concept of self-realisation is conveyed in this nāma. If one becomes immortal, it is against the laws of the Divine. *Mṛtyu* means averting rebirths. Birth and death is only for gross bodies. When immortality (eternal) is referred, it always means the Supreme Self. A soul manifests in the form of gross body to undergo pleasure or pain according to its *karmic* account. At the time of death, soul leaves the body and enters another body till its entire *karmic* account is exhausted. The death here indicates the final liberation of the soul to merge with the Brahman. The nāma means that She is liberator of such souls.

Karma is like fuel of a vehicle. The vehicle runs till the fuel lasts. Fuel is the karmic account and the vehicle is the body. The quantum of distance traversed by the vehicle is directly related to fuel. Similarly, the karmic account determines the duration of a bodily form.

Agra-gaṇyā अग्र-गण्या (553)

She is the First, first among the entire creation. *Śiva* has no parentage. *Śiva* created Her in the form of kinetic power to create and sustain this universe. This nāma refers to Her own creation. At the time of first creation, none was there except *Śiva* and *Śaktī*. At the time of annihilation only *Śiva* and *Śaktī* alone remain. *Śiva* and

Śaktī continue to remain during the end of one *yug* and the commencement of next *yug* (discussed in nāma 555.)

Śivananda Laharī (verse 100) conveys the same meaning. "Gods like Brahma know You as the first amongst the most worshipful ones. You are known as the best among the best of grains."

Acintya-rūpā अचिन्त्य-रूपा (554)

She is in inconceivable form, a quality of the Brahman. Reference can also be made to nāma-s 139 and 415 which say that She is beyond comprehension by mind. This is one of the unique qualities of the Brahman and confirms that the Brahman is amorphous and omnipresent. She is beyond all qualities and *guṇa*-s. Forms appear only if the soul interacts with *prakṛti* along with elements. She is the embodiment of all souls and She Herself is the *prakṛti*.

A soul is known as *puruṣa* and is supposed to be masculine. On the other hand *prakṛti* is described as feminine. Any creation unfolds only if *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* conjoin which accentuates the significance of *Śiva-Śaktī* union in the form of *Liṅga,* and considered as not only powerful, but also highly auspicious.

Kali-kalmaṣa-nāśinī कलि-कल्मष-नाशिनी (555)

She destroys the sins committed during *kali yug*.

The following reading from *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* (Chapter 43 Verses 26-30) is about the duration of each *yug*. At the end of each *yug* the total dissolution takes place and the next re-creation is known by the succeeding *yug*. Currently we are going through 5111th year of *kali yug* ((2010-11) out of 360,000 human years.

"360 human years is equal to one divine year. 12,000 divine years (4,320,000 human years) consists the four ages called *Kṛita yug* (4000 divine years), *Tretā yug* (3000 divine years), *Dvāpara yug* (2000 divine years) and *Kali yug* (1000 divine years). The balance of 2000 divine years has been calculated for twilight period of each

yug." Out of the four, *kali yug* is supposed to have more sinners and She in the form of Goddess *Kali* destroys sins committed during *kali yug*."

An age of the world, long mundane period of years, of which the first three have already elapsed, while the *Kali*, which began at midnight between the 17th and 18th of Feb. 3102 B. C. is that in which we live. The duration of each is said to be respectively 1,728,000, 1,296,000, 864,000, and 432,000 years of men, the descending numbers representing a similar physical and moral deterioration of men in each age. The four *Yuga*-s comprise an aggregate of 4,320,000 years and constitute a *great Yuga* or *Mahā-yug*.

Kātyāyanī कात्यायनी (556)

She is the sum total of the effulgence (*tejas*) of all gods and goddesses. *Vāma Purāṇa* says that brightness which is the best is known by the name *Kātyāyanī. Kātyāyanī* is the presiding deity of *oḍyāṇa pīṭhā*, situated at *ājñā cakra*. Other *pīṭhā*-s are *kāma giri pīṭhā* at *mūlādhāra cakra*, *pūrṇa giri pīṭhā* at *anāhata cakra*, *jālandhara pīṭhā* at *viśuddhi cakra*.

There is another interpretation. *ka* (क) means *Brahma*, the Creator or head or a stone. She rests on this *ka*; (with particular reference to stone meaning the universe) therefore She is known as *Kātyāyanī*.

Kālahantrī कालहन्त्री (557)

Kāla means death. She is the destroyer of death. She destroys death for those who are Self-realized. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* says *kālakāraḥ*, which means that the Brahman is the creator of time. Death occurs only when the soul is about to transcend its prescribed time fixed by the law of *karma* also known as the law of the Lord. Please refer nāma 552 *sarva-mṛtyu-nivāriṇī* for additional details.

The unique nature of this *Sahasranāma* is no nāma has been repeated. But there are instances where the same meaning has been conveyed through more than one nāma. This is to emphasize the importance of certain activities that are considered as more important. For example through nāma-s 552 and 557 it is said that She destroys death. The secretive meaning of these nāma-s is Self-realisation. Those who have realized Her within transcends death, which means that they are not reborn. Every living being born in this universe has to necessarily undergo the process of death, the dissolution of the respective physical bodies. Self-realization can be attained by removing *avidyā* or ignorance.

Kamalākṣa-niṣevitā कमलाक्ष-निषेविता (558)

She is worshiped by *Viṣṇu*, the lotus eyed. *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 5) confirms this by saying *haristvām ārādhyā* meaning *Viṣṇu* worshiped you. It is said that *Viṣṇu* by worshipping Her, got His *mohinī* (nāma 562) form (form of a woman) to destroy the demons. Possibly sanctity of the woman hood is highlighted by *Vāc Devi*-s in this nāma. Women are always treated as sacred attributes by Indian scriptures. *Kamalākṣa* means lotus eyed. *Viṣṇu* has beautiful eyes resembling lotus flower.

Tāmbhūla-pūrita-mukhī ताम्भूल-पूरित-मुखी (559)

She is fond of chewing betel leaves with *karpūra vīṭikā* (nāma 26). The betel leaves turn Her lips into red colour. This nāma says that Her face shines with betel leaves In Her mouth. The fragrance of betel leaves with *karpūra vīṭikā* emanates pleasing fragrance.

Dāḍimī-kusuma-prabhā दाडिमी-कुसुम-प्रभा (560)

She radiates like a pomegranate flower. They are dark red in colour. The flowers of pomegranate are considered as the most auspicious amongst the flowers for worshipping Her. Next is hibiscus flower, which too has deep red petals and is widely used for worshipping

Her. The last verse of *Abhirāmi andhādhī* (A poetize consisting of 100 Tamil verses in praise of Her. This is more or less like *Saundarya Laharī)* also compares pomegranate flower to Her complexion. Everything associated with Her is red. Her red complexion has been repeatedly emphasized in this *Sahasranāma*. The reason for such repetitions is provided in nāma 557.

Mṛgākṣī मृगाक्षी (561)

Her eyes appear like that of a deer. Since the description of the Brahman is not possible, a reference is always made to the best known object. A deer's eyes look gorgeous and will always be revolving, glancing at all the sides at the same time. *Lalitāmbikā* being the administrator of the entire universe looks all-round for two reasons. First, She administers the universe by personally overseeing all the activities. Secondly, while doing so, She liberates Her true devotees by glancing at them. She does not want them to wait even for a second to attain liberation. She grants them liberation by a mere glance.

Lalitā triśatī nāma 103 *hariṇekṣṇā* conveys the same meaning.

Mohinī मोहिनी (562)

She bewitches. Unable to find proper words to describe Her beauty, *Vāc Devi*-s used this word. Bewitchment is not possible without being splendiferous. She is the beauty incarnate, because Her beauty is made up of knowledge, efficiency and compassion.

When *Viṣṇu* got His *mohinī* form by worshipping Her, He bewitched the demons (refer nāma 558).

Mukhyā मुख्या (563)

She is the first in the universe. *Mukhya* also means important. She is authoritative amongst all gods and goddesses. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (III.x.6) says "I am That which was born before anything.

I was born before the gods and goddesses". This nāma says that She is not only first among the creations, but also part of creation itself and assumes importance amongst all gods and goddesses.

Mṛḍānī मृडानी (564)

Mṛḍa means *Śiva*. Consort of *Mṛḍa* is *Mṛḍānī*. It also means giver of happiness that is provided by the *vimarśa* form of *Śiva*, i.e. *Śaktī*.

Mitra-rūpiṇī मित्र-रूपिणी (565)

Mitra means a friend. Sun is considered as a friend of the universe, as it sustains existence. She is in the form of sun. Sun is the best friend of all organisms. In *Śrī vidyā* worship, *Śiva* is represented by *agni*, *Śaktī* is represented by moon and the union of *Śiva-Śaktī* is represented by sun. This nāma indicates Her closeness and easy accessibility to those who seek Her.

Nitya-tṛptā नित्य-तृप्ता (566)

She remains eternally contended, because She has no requirements. Non-requirement is one of the qualities of the Brahman. It is said "That is infinite and this is infinite. The infinite proceeds from the infinite, taking the infinite of the infinite, it remains as the infinite alone." Because She being infinite, She remains eternally contended.

Nāma 815 is *anitya-tṛptā*, (this is a typical example of usage of double negatives to mean a positive factor) which means She is contended even with perishable offerings. Based on this interpretation, the present nāma can be explained as 'She remains contended with eternal non-perishable offering, which is *Ātman*.'

Bhakta-nidhiḥ भक्त-निधिः (567)

She is the treasure house for Her devotees. She shares this treasure with Her devotees whenever sought for vide nāma 989.

Niyantrī नियन्त्री (568)

She is the guide to the universe. Since She administers the universe, She is addressed in this nāma as its guide.

Nikhileśvarī निखिलेश्वरी (569)

This is an extension of the previous nāma. Because of being the only guide to the universe, a quality of the Brahman, She assumes the position of Supreme Ruler, which is conveyed in this nāma. *Nikhila* means complete or total.

Maitryadi-vāsanā-labhyā मैत्र्यदि-वासना-लभ्या (570)

She can be attained through qualities like kindness, etc.

Patañjali yoga sūtra I.33 says "Friendship, mercy, gladness and indifference being thought of in regard to subjects, happy, unhappy and good and evil respectively, pacify the mind stuff." For attaining perfection, one has to remove evil thoughts. One should not become felicitous on knowing the sufferings of another. One should not become jealous on knowing the wealth of another. When someone is suffering, one has to help him to come out of his sufferings. Converting hatred into love, converting sadness into happiness etc are some of the ways to attain perfection. But practicing positivism to countervail the effects of negativities, mind attains perfection, which leads to the stage of *samādhi*. Such devotees can easily reach the stage of bliss and ultimate merger with the Brahman (*kaivalya*).

This nāma says that She can be attained by developing positive thoughts. She can be attained by positive *vāsanā*-s or impressions.

Mahā-pralaya-sakṣiṇī महा-प्रलय-सक्षिणी (571)

Mahā-pralaya is the total dissolution that has been discussed in nāma 232 *maheśvara-mahākalpa-mahā-tāṇḍava-sākṣiṇī*. When

annihilation unfolds, the entire universe gets dissolved into *Śiva*. This happens exactly in the reverse process of creation. At the time of creation *ākāś* was born out of the Brahman, air was born out of *ākāś*, etc. At the time of annihilation, air gets dissolved into *ākāś* and *ākāś* gets dissolved into *Śiva*. This process is known as involution as opposed to evolution, a process that happens during creation.

This nāma says that She is the only witness to the great dissolution. Such a great dissolution unfolds at the command of *Śiva*. He begins His famous cosmic dance during annihilation. Macrocosm gets dissolved into *Śiva* and She is the only witness to such a mind boggling event.

Saundarya Laharī (verse 26) describes this event. "*Brahma*, *Viṣṇu*, *Yama, Kubera*, *Indra* all gets annihilated. But your consort *Śiva* plays around with you."

Parāśaktiḥ पराशक्तिः (572)

She is *Parāśaktī*. Consort of *Paramaśiva* is *Parāśaktī*. She is the supreme (***parā***) *Śaktī*. Reference to nāma 366 ***parā*** can be made. In a human body there are ten substances called *dhātu-s*. Skin, blood, flesh, fat and bone originated from *Śaktī*. Marrow, semen/ova, *prāṇa* and *jīva* (soul) originated from *Śiva*. The tenth *dhātu* is *Paraśaktī*.

Śiva can manifest only if He is conjoined with *Śaktī*. This is explained in *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 1) which says, '*Śiva* united with *Śaktī*, becomes able to manifest. Otherwise, *Śiva* cannot even pulsate.' *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (VI.8) says 'He possesses powers of knowledge and powers of action, all of which are natural to Him'. This is not possible for Him without His *Śaktī*.

Parā-trīśikā-vivaraṇa (an ancient treatise of *Kashmir Saivism*) says the following. "The revered goddess and the supreme divine consciousness that at once transcends three divisions of creation,

sustenance and destruction is *Parāśaktī.* She moves freely in all fields of knowledge. Entire universal existence has two aspects. One is the original universe and another is its reflection. The original universe is *Parāśaktī* and the entire manifestation is said to be Her expression. In the womb of *Parāśaktī* lies *parā-vāc,* from where the speech originates. The reduced consciousness, because of its retention within itself of all objectivity, is like the udder of celestial cow *kāmadhenu*. It upholds the multitude of entire objectivity, becomes manifest, wide spreading *jñāna śaktī*. Without bringing about the limited experience of the knower and known, reside in the pure state of awareness, it is the perfect *Parāśaktī* of seventeen *kalā*-s. "

Parāśaktī is the Supreme Divine kinetic energy and His mirror image which becomes responsible for all the acts of Divine. It is said in *Liṅga Purāṇa* that powers of all objects of existence in the universe is *Śaktī* and the objects themselves are *Śiva*.

Parā-niṣṭhā परा-निष्ठा (573)

Niṣṭha means steadfast position. The mind of a self realized person becomes steadfast, perpetually united with the Brahman. For reaching this stage, the highest level of knowledge is required. *Kṛṣṇa* explains this in *Bhagavad Gītā* (IV.33). "Sacrifice performed with knowledge is superior to material sacrifices. All actions (cause, effect and karma) consummated in entirety in knowledge." For changing over from external rituals to internal search, knowledge is important. Without acquiring such supreme knowledge, one continues to be associated with materialistic rituals failing to realize the Brahman within. The latter is capable of giving salvation at a faster pace than the former, which is an extremely slow process. Internal search requires nothing except a steadfast mind whereas for the materialistic rituals time, space and wealth become essential requirements. The kind of knowledge can be obtained only from ancient scriptures. Particularly, *Upaniṣad*-s provide extraordinary inputs to understand the Brahman and seek Him within. The

acquiring of knowledge leads to experience. When this knowledge and experience turns steadfast, it is called *parā-niṣṭhā*. She is in the form of *parā-niṣṭhā*. Without Her help, reaching this stage is not possible. She is the embodiment of power (parā-śaktī) and knowledge (*parā-niṣṭhā*).

Prajñāna-ghana-rūpiṇī प्रज्ञान-घन-रूपिणी (574)

An extension of the previous nāma, which said that knowledge and experience are the essential components for self-realisation. This nāma goes to explain the kind of knowledge discussed in the previous nāma. *Prajāna-ghana-rūpiṇī* means concentration of superior knowledge. Superior concentrated knowledge means the knowledge that remains unpolluted by ignorance. Knowledge becomes polluted by senses.

Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad (V.v.15) says "the Self without interior or exterior. It is entire and pure intelligence alone." When everything dissolves into this pure knowledge, Self-realisation begins to happen. She is in the form of such pure and concentrated knowledge.

Mādhvīpānālasā माध्वीपानालसा (575)

She is in languorous stage, because of consuming an intoxicated drink made out of honey (some texts quote that it is mixture of grape extract and honey). The secretive meaning of this nāma is that She is in a state of *samādhi* and enjoying the ultimate bliss. She always meditates on Her creator *Śiva*. During the higher levels of *kuṇḍalinī* meditation, a honey like fluid, generally called ambrosia drips into throat, also known as *madhu* (*madhu* means honey) because of its taste and viscosity that resemble honey. *Madhu* is known as spiritual intoxicant and said to possess intoxicating qualities of eight kinds. The secretion of ambrosia happens in the stage of bliss where a person remains lackadaisical as his consciousness remains fixed with the Brahman. She is said to be in this stage of bliss, the eternal happiness.

Though this nāma is interpreted as above, in reality She is the cause of bliss. Without Her knowledge, blissfulness cannot be attained. This nāma confirms earlier discussions that She gives what She has. She is the possessor of everything and She is capable of giving anything.

Mattā मत्ता (576)

Because of consuming the drink referred in the previous nāma, She is in the stage of intoxication. This intoxication is because of the reasons given in the previous nāma. It is also said that She represents ego of Śiva. Since She is in the stage of introversion, She appears inebriated.

These two nāma-s possibly elucidate the stage of bliss and its importance. Bliss can be attained by either progressing in kuṇḍalinī meditation or remaining as an introvert and exploring the Self within.

Matṛkā-varṇa-rūpinī मतृका-वर्न-रूपिनी (577)

She is in the form of 51 alphabets of Sanskrit called *matṛkā*. These fifty alphabets are split into six groups and worshipped in the six *cakra*-s from *mūlādhāra* to *ājñā*. These alphabets have different colours and is said to be closely related to cosmological studies. A comparative narration is drawn between *Śiva* and Śaktī and vowels and consonants. Vowels are always active and dynamic in nature and therefore vowels are compared to *Śaktī*; consonants are compared to *Śiva*. Without *Śiva-Śaktī* combine, the universe cannot exist, as they are two different aspects of the Brahman. In the same way, sound cannot exist without vowels-consonants combine. The sound originates from *Śabda Brahman* whereas the universe originates from the Brahman. She is the *Śabda Brahman*.

She wears a garland made up of fifty one alphabets, which was discussed in nāma 489 *akṣa-māladi-dharā*. Another interpretation says that She is the Mother (*matṛkā*) of all letters (*varṇa-rūpinī*).

This theory goes to prove that She is the creator of all the alphabets. These alphabets are the foundation of Śrī Cakra. Based upon the theory that *Śrī Cakra* is a human body, these alphabets form the foundation of human existence. The difference between animals and man is the decoding and understanding of sound, which becomes possible because of *Śabda Brahman*. Meditating on *matṛkā*-s and *Śrī Cakra* as one, is a way of worshipping *Śrī Cakra*. This is called *Kailāsa prastāra*. There are two more *prastāra*-s. They are *meru-prastāra* where tithi *nitya devi*-s and *Śrī Cakra* are meditated upon as one and meditating *Vāc devi*-s (authors of this Sahasranāma) and *Śrī Cakra* as one is called *bhū-prastāra*. *Prastāra* means flight of steps.Please refer nāma 833 for Sanskrit alphabets.

Mahā-kailāsa-nilayā महा-कैलास-निलया (578)

Mahā-kailāsa is the abode of *Śiva*. This is far away from the existing *Kailāsa* mountains. In fact, *mahā-kailāsa* is beyond human comprehension. *Śiva* has various forms and *mahā-kailāsa* is the abode of *Paramaśiva*. Since *Lalitāmbikā* is always present with *Śiva, mahā-kailāsa* is referred to as the abode of *Lalithāi* as well. This interpretation is given in epics.

The orifice (*bindu*) in *sahasrāra* is known as *mahā-kailāsa*. *Sahasrāra* is beyond the *six-cakra*-s (*mūlādhāra* to *ājñā*) in the human body. *Śiva* is visualised here in the form of a *bindu* (dot). Since She conjoins *Śiva* here in Her subtlest form, it is also referred as Her abode. In the previous nāma three *prastāra-s* were discussed and one among them was *Kailāsa prastāra*, which is beyond the reach of *Vāc Devi*-s, the authors of this *Sahasranāma*. They have used prefix *mahā* to mean Her best qualities and there are thirty seven such nāma-s in this *Sahasranāma*.

Mṛuṇāla-mṛdu-dorlatā मृणाल-मृदु-दोर्लता (579)

Her arms are tender like lotus stalks. Her subtlest form is *kuṇḍalinī*. This form is compared to that of a lotus stem in nāma 111.

Mahānīyā महानीया (580)

She is adorable. Whatever praise one showers on Her, She becomes worthy of it. Possibly this could be the reason for using prefix *mahā* (great) in a number of nāma-s.

Dayāmūrtī दयामूर्ती (581)

She is the embodiment of compassion, which is one of Her predominant qualities. This is the reason for commencing this *Sahasranāma* with *Śrī Mātā*, the compassionate mother of the universe. To emphasize Her compassion, this quality has been repeated in nāma-s 197, 326 and 992. Compassion becomes Her predominant quality because She also sustains those who do not think about Her even for a moment. This means that they are losing out opportunities of liberation, offered by Her.

Mahā-sāmrājya-śālinī महा-साम्राज्य-शालिनी (582)

She magnificently controls all the planets forming part of this universe. Normally *sāmrājya* refers to cluster of kingdoms. For Her, kingdoms mean planets and earth forming only a tiny part of the universe controlled by Her. Even the *mahā-kailāsa* is ruled by Her in Her capacity as the consort of *Śiva*.

Ātma-vidyā आत्म-विद्या (583)

This nāma and the next two nāma-s talk about three types of *vidyā*-s (knowledge).

Ātma vidyā means the knowledge about the Brahman, *Brahma vidyā*. Brahman is also known as *Ātman*. Nāma 727 is *Śiva jñāna pradāyinī*, which means that She imparts knowledge on *Śiva* who is known as the Brahman without attributes. Since She imparts knowledge (*vidyā)* of the Supreme *Ātman*, she is addressed as *Ātma-vidyā*.

Turya Gāyatrī is also said be *Ātma-vidyā*. *Turya Gāyatrī* is

ka-e-la-hrīṁ-vākbaveśvarī-vidmahe ha-sa-ka-ha-la-hrīṁ-kāmeśvarī-ca-dhīmahī ।

sa-ha-la-hrīṁ-tanna-śaktiḥ-pracodayāt ॥

क-ए-ल-ह्रीं-वाक्बवेश्वरी-विद्महे ह-स-क-ह-ल-ह्रीं-कामेश्वरी-च-धीमही । स-ह-ल-ह्रीं-तन्न-शक्तिः-प्रचोदयात् ॥

There is a *mantra* called *ātma-aṣṭākṣara mantra*. The *mantra* is

om-hrīṁ-hamsaḥ-sohaṁ-svāhā॥ ॐ -ह्रीं-हम्सः-सोहं-स्वाहा ॥

(this *mantra* is a part of *Śrī vidyā* cult). She is said to be in the forms of *turīya Gāyatrī* and *ātma-aṣṭākṣara vidyā* (*aṣṭākṣara* means eight alphabets).

Mahā-vidyā महा-विद्या (584)

Knowing *Ātman* within, is the process of Self-realization and such knowledge is known as *mahā vidyā* as per the previous nāma. This nāma says that *Ātma-vidyā* is the best of all *vidyā-s* (knowledge). Knowing the *Ātman* within makes a person not to distinguish between pleasures and pains. Such a person always stays connected with Her and enjoys perpetual bliss, leading to no more births. Pleasure and pain are felt only if one is born.

There is another interpretation which says that *Vanadurgā vidyā* is *mahā vidyā*. There is a scripture by name *Vanadurgā saptasatī* consisting of seven hundred verses. Almost every verse consists of *mūla mantra.* This is extremely powerful and its recitation is sure to drive away all evil forces. . *Mūla mantra* of *Vanadurgā* consists of thirty seven *bīja*-s and is as follows:

ॐ uttiṣṭa puruṣi kiṁ svāpiṣi bhayaṁ me samupasthitaṁ yadi śakyamaśakyaṁ vā tanme bhagavati śamaya svāhā ॥

ॐ उत्तिष्ट पुरुषि किं स्वापिषि भयं मे समुपस्थितं यदि शक्यमशक्यं वा तन्मे भगवति शमय स्वाहा॥

Śrī-vidyā श्री-विद्या (585)

Śrī-vidyā is *Pañcadaśī mantra*. *Viṣṇu purāṇa* refers to four types of *vidyā*-s. They are *yajñā-vidyā* (deals with *karma*-s), *mahā-vidyā* (rituals), *guhya-vidyā* (secretive worship), *ātma-vidyā* (knowledge of Self). *Pañcadaśī* and *ṣodaśī mantra*-s are considered as most secretive. These *mantra*-s, if properly initiated and recited as per the prescribed rules, one is bound to attain liberation.

Kāmasevitā कामसेविता (586)

Kāma means the lord of love, *Manmatha*. She is worshipped by *Manmatha*. *Pañcadaśī mantra* was formulated by twelve of Her great devotees and *Manmatha* is one among them. Names of all the worshippers have been mentioned in nāma 228.

Kāmaḥ (कामः) also means *Mahā Kāmeśvarā* (the highest form of *Śiva*) who is also Her devotee. Possibly this nāma could also refer to His worship (this is based on the fact that *Śiva* cannot function without *Śaktī*). *Śiva* and *Śaktī* alternatively assumed the roles of guru and disciple. On many occasions *Śiva* initiated *Śaktī* and on certain occasions *Śaktī* initiated *Śiva* on various aspects of *mantra śāstra*-s. In *pūrva bhāg* of *Lalitā triśatī* (verse 13), it is said that *Lalitā triśatī* was told to *Hayagrīvā* jointly by *Kāmeśvarā* and *Kāmeśvarī*. *Lalitā triśatī* is extremely auspicious and contains three hundred nāma-s.

Kāmaḥ signifies *Manmatha* without bodily form (*man* means mind and *matha* means agitating. Therefore *Manmahta* refers to agitating mind due to desire) There is a story in *Liṅga Purāṇa*, chapter 101 regarding the bodiless form of *Manmatha*. *Śiva* was doing penance forgetting his wife *Umā*. *Brahma* and *Indra* summoned *Manamatha* and his wife *Rati* to break *Śiva*'s penance and to unite *Umā* with

Śiva. *Manmatha* and his wife *Ratī* reached the cave where *Śiva* was doing His penance. *Śiva* knew the purpose of *Manmatha*'s visit. The fire blazed from *Śiva*'s third eye and burnt *Manmatha*. *Ratī* who stood by *Manmatha's* side inconsolably cried. *Śiva* took pity on her and gave *Manmatha* a bodiless form for the purpose of dalliance. This nāma says that body is not necessary for mental worship. Bodily form is required only to perform rituals that are only secondary in nature when compared to mental worship (meditation). This nāma also implies that without understanding the essential natures of *Śiva* and *Śaktī (prakāśa* and *vimarśa* forms), worship may not fructify. For further reading on *Manmatha* please refer nāma-s 84 and 375.

Saundarya Laharī (verse 5) says that *Manmatha* got his power to induce coquetry by worshipping *Śaktī*.

Pañcadaśī mantra has fifteen *bīja*-s. If the repetitive *bīja*-s are removed, the balance would be nine *bīja*-s. *Mahā Lakṣmī* (consort of *Viṣṇu*) taught 108 nāma-s of *Lalitāmbikā* (nine *bīja*-s multiplied by numeric twelve making 108) to *Manmatha* beginning with these nine *bīja*-s of *Pañcadaśī*.

Śrī-ṣoḍaśākṣarī-vidyā श्री-षोडशाक्षरी-विद्या (587)

ṣoḍaśī mantra is superior to *Pañcadaśī*. *ṣoḍaśan* means sixteen and *ṣoḍaśaḥ* means sixteenth. *ṣoḍaśī mantra* is derived by adding one more *bīja* to *Pañcadaśī mantra*. In fact, *ṣoḍaśī mantra* consists of twenty eight *bīja-s* and formed like this. The first *Om* is excluded for computation, as all the mantras begin with ॐ.

1. *Om* ॐ
2. *śrīṁ - hrīṁ - klīṁ - aiṁ - sauḥ:* श्रीं ह्रीं क्लीं ऐं सौः (5 *bīja*-s)
3. *om - hrīṁ - śrīṁ* ॐ ह्रीं श्रीं (3 *bīja*-s)
4. *ka – e - ī – la- hrīṁ* क ए ई ल ह्रीं (5 *bīja*-s)
5. *ha - sa – ka – ha - la - hrīṁ* ह स क ह ल ह्रीं (6 *bīja*-s)
6. *sa – ka - la - hrīṁ* स क ल ह्रीं (4 *bīja*-s)

7. *sauḥ - aiṁ - klīṁ - hrīṁ - śrīṁ* सौः ऐं क्लीं ह्रीं श्रीं (5 *bīja*-s)

If this *mantra* is observed, one can find lines 4, 5 and 6 are the *Pañcadaśī mantra* and each line representing one *kūṭa* of *Pañcadaśī*. If lines 2 and 7 are observed, the *bīja*-s contained in the 2nd line are placed in the 7th line in reversed order. For example, the last *bīja* in line two is *sauḥ:* and this is placed as the first *bīja* of the 7th line.

This mantra is known as *ṣoḍaśī* because of sixteen *bīja*-s, each *kalā* (*kalā* means a part) representing a *kalā* of moon. This is arrived at by adding *Lakṣmī bīja śrīṁ* (श्रीं) at the end of *Pañcadaśī mantra*. These sixteen *bīja*-s are arrived at by considering each *kūṭa* of *Pañcadaśī mantra* as one *bīja*. This way, lines 4, 5 and 6 are considered as one *bīja* each, thus forming three *bīja*-s. The sixteen *bīja*-s are arrived by adding 5+3+1+1+1+5 (from line 2 to 7). There are two ॐ in this *mantra*. The first ॐ is not considered for calculation. The second ॐ in line 3 is replaced by *ātma bīja* of the practitioner and this is decided by one's guru. Such a decision can be made by a guru if he is conversant with *mantra*-s and *bīja*-s. A wrong *bīja* is capable of destroying the practitioner.

ṣoḍaśī mantra is meant exclusively for liberation and those who seek liberation alone should be initiated in this *mantra*. *ṣoḍaśī mantra* is the ultimate of all *mantra*-s and there is no other *mantra* superior to this. It is said that *ṣoḍaśī mantra* yields fruits after reciting 900,000 times. Those who are initiated into this *mantra* are not supposed to prostrate before anyone except his guru.

Śaktī is worshipped in ten different forms and this is known as *daśa mahā vidyā* and *ṣoḍaśī* is one among them. *ṣoḍaśī vidyā* has too many prescribed rituals.

{Further reading on *bīja sauḥ* सौः This *bīja sauḥ* सौः is known as *prāsāda* (*ŚIva sūtra* II.1). It contains within itself the entire panorama of manifestation. This *bīja* represents all the thrity six

tattva-s. This *bīja* is also known as *hṛdaya bīja*, the heart of *Śiva.* It is also said that, whoever masters this *bīja* will be identified with Supreme I consciousness.}

Trikūṭā त्रिकूटा (588)

She is in the form of triads. In spirituality there are a number of triads. OM consists of three letters a + u + m. In *Gāyatrī mantra* three worlds are mentioned *bhūr, bhuva* and *suvaḥ*. Gods of creation, sustenance and death are known as *Brahma, Viṣṇu* and *Rudra.* Three stages of consciousness awake, dream and deep sleep. Three *guṇa*-s *sattva, rajas* and *tamas*. Three stages of time past, present and future. *Pañcadaśī mantra* consists of three *kūṭa*-s *agni, surya* and *candra*. *Icchā śakti, jñāna śakti* and *kriyā śakti*-s. Triads are associated only with Her.

In this nāma She is said to be the Lord of creation, sustenance and dissolution. This nāma endorses nāma 249 pañcapretāsanāsīnā. A reference can also be made to nāma 626.

Kāmakoṭikā कामकोटिका (589)

The Brahman has two forms. One is *Śiva* (*nirguṇa Brahman* or Brahman without attributes and another is *Śaktī* (*saguṇa Brahman* or Brahman with attributes). The *Śivaśaktī aikya* form is known as Brahman. *Śiva-Śaktī* aikya happens in two forms. One is *Śaktī* sitting on the lap of *Śiva* and another is *Ardhanārīśvara* form, where one vertical form is *Śiva* and another is *Śaktī.* This is referred to in this nāma. *Kāma* refers to *Śiva* and *koṭi* means vertical.

***Lalitā Triśatī* nāma 259 is *kāmakoṭi nilayā* which conveys the same meaning.**

Kaṭākṣa-kiṅkarī-bhūta-kamalā-koṭi-sevitā कटाक्ष-किङ्करी-भूत-कमला-कोटि-सेविता(590)

By Her mere glance She is attended by millions of *Lakṣmī*-s, the Goddess of wealth. If *Lakṣmī* glances at a person his richness grows. This nāma says that *Lalitāmbikā* is attended to by countless number of *Lakṣmī*-s, signifying Her incomprehensible nature of wealth and prosperity.

Śiraḥsthitā शिरःस्थिता (591)

She is in the head. Head means the *sahasrāra* at the top of the head. Apart from *Śiva* and *Śaktī*, one's Guru is also worshipped in s*ahasrāra*. This nāma could also mean that She is the supreme Guru who is worthy of worship in *sahasrāra*.

Guru is the one who not only initiates into *mantra*-s but also imparts knowledge about the Brahman. A learned guru always makes his disciple to progress in both. Based upon disciple's progress, guru advises his disciple to gradually move away from rituals to internal exploration, paving way for the ultimate Self-realization. No progress in Self- realization can be achieved if one continues to be associated with ritualistic worship alone. Only those gurus who are capable of imparting such supreme knowledge about the Brahman are to be worshipped in *sahasrāra*, as *sahasrāra* is the sanctum sanctorum of human body.

Candra-nibhā चन्द्र-निभा (592)

The shine of the moon is visualized just below *sahasrāra*. The visibility of moon is a strong indication to know the progress achieved in *kuṇḍalinī* meditation. The third *kūṭa* of *Pañcadaśī mantra* is *candra kūṭa*. She is like this moon. A reference can also be made to nāma 240.

Bhālasthā भालस्था (593)

She is in the form of the bindu of *bīja hrīṁ* in *ājñā cakra*. *Hrīṁ bīja* is formed out of twelve components, out of which three are

letters and the rest are subtle modifications of sound. The *bindu* of *bīja hrīṁ* is placed above the alphabet *ī* (ई). In *Śrī Cakra, Śiva* is in the form of *bindu* and *Śaktī* is in the form of innermost triangle. This nāma says that She resides in *ājñā cakra* in the forehead.

Indra-dhanuḥ-prabhā इन्द्र-धनुः-प्रभा (594)

Indra dhanu in literal sense is *Indra*'s bow. But, in this context it indicates rainbow. In fact, this nāma is an extension of the previous nāma. There is a rainbow just above the *bindu* of *hrīṁ* (ह्रीं) that has been referred in the previous nāma. The *bindu* itself shines. Apart from *bindu*, this rainbow like structure that is quarter of the size of the *bindu* also shines. The *bindu* and rainbow like formation which is also known as *ardhacandra* (half the shape of the moon thereby forming a rainbow), are visualised while worshipping *kāmakalā* form of *Lalitāmbikā*.

Reference to rainbow is used as it consists of seven colours (VIBGYOR) that get exploded at sahasrara. These colours originate here.

Varivasyā-rahasya (I.22) says, "The *bindu*, in circular form, shines forth like a lamp with its seat in the middle of the forehead."

Hrdayasthā हृदयस्था (595)

She resides in the heart. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (II.2.12) says 'residing in heart'. The same *Upaniṣad* says again in (II.1.12) says 'Brahman resides in the centre of the body in the size of a thumb.' This nāma reaffirms Her stature as the Brahman.

This nāma could mean that she is to be meditated in heart *cakra*. One of the ancient scriptures says that one who knows the heart of Brahman enjoys eternal happiness. The heart of the Brahman is the store house of universal love.

Raviprakhyā रविप्रख्या (596)

The second *kūṭa* of *Pañcadaśī mantra* is situated in *anāhata cakra*. This is called *sūrya kūṭa*. This nāma says that She shines like the sun, residing in one's heart. She shines in every *kūṭa*, but the nature of illumination differs.

Trikoṇāntara-dīpikā त्रिकोणान्तर-दीपिका (597)

She shines like a flame in the triangle of *mūlādhāra cakra*. The first *kūṭa* of *Pañcadaśī mantra*, the *agni kūṭa* is mentioned here.

{Further reading on nāma 591 to 597: In these nāma-s the subtle nature of the three *kūṭa*-s of *Pañcadaśī mantra*, are explained. The first *kūṭa* is visualised in the centre of *mūlādhāra cakra* as a flame of fire. The second *kūṭa* is visualised in the form of a rainbow in *anāhata cakra*. The third *kūṭa* is visualised at a place just below the *sahasrāra*. The *Pañcadaśī mantra* sprouts as the first *kūṭa* in the *mūlādhāra cakra* develops further by adding the second *kūṭa* in the *anāhata cakra* and blossoms fully just below *sahasrāra*, where the third *kūṭa* is added. This is beautifully explained in *Mūka-Pañcaśatī* (I.50) which says "In the centre of the heart, in the middle of the forehead and in the centre of the head, She shines like sun, *Indra*'s *dhanu* and moon." (*mūka* means dumb}.

Dākṣāyaṇī दाक्षायणी (598)

She was born to *Dakṣa* and got married to *Śiva*. This nāma talks about Her lineage.

Certain fire rituals are performed on full moon and new moon days continuously. These are known as *darśa-pūrṇa-māsa yajña* and the oblations offered during these rituals are known as *Dākṣāyana yajña*. These yajnas are considered as powerful and She is said to be in the form of those *yajña-s*.

Dakṣa also means strength of will, energy and disposition. It also refers to the strengthening intellectual faculties.

It is also said that *Dakṣa* has twenty seven daughters who became the wives of Moon and they form the asterisms. He is also identified with *Prajā-pati* and known as *Dakṣa Prajā-pati*.

Further reading on *darśa-pūrṇa-māsa yajna: Darśapūrṇamāsa* is one of the *śrauta* rituals. There are three main categories. The first is called *iṣṭi* or *haviryajñā* in which the oblations are of rice or barley. The second is animal sacrifice and the third is soma ritual. In the first category there are five types of rituals and they are *agnyādheya, punarādheya, agnihotra, darśapūrṇamāsa* and *cāturmāsya*. *Darśapūrṇamāsa* is full and new moon ceremonies incorporate recitations from two Veda-s, *Rig* and *Yajur* and require the services of four priests. The full and new moon sacrifice (*darśapūrṇamāsa)* is the paradigm of all the *iṣṭi-s.*}

Daitya-hantri दैत्य-हन्त्रि (599)

Daitya means evil and represented as demons in epics. She is the slayer of all evil acts (demonic qualities). Reference can be made to nāma 318.

Dakṣa-yajña-vināśinī दक्ष-यज्ञ-विनाशिनी (600)

She destroyed the sacrificial rites of two *Dakṣa*-s. There existed two *Dakṣa*-s. One is known as *Dakṣa Prajā-pati*, a superhuman character and another is the human incarnation of the former. They did not respect *Śiva*. In all the *yajña-s*, a portion of the oblations are offered to all gods and goddesses. Due to their egoistic nature they did not give such oblations to *Śiva*. *Śiva* got wild and their *yajña-s* were destroyed by *Śiva*'s army. She is said to be the cause behind such destruction. This nāma signifies this cause. Two *Dakṣa*-s existed at different times. *Śiva* cursed superhuman *Dakṣa* to be born as a human.

Darāndolita-dīrghākṣī दरान्दोलित-दीर्घाक्षी (601)

She has shapely eyes that almost touch Her ears. Her eyes rotate all-round to dispel the fear of Her devotees.

In *Mūka Pañcaśatī* (मूक पञ्चशती) there are 101 verses praising Her eyes. In *Saundarya Laharī* also there are verses praising Her eyes. Her eyes express Her compassion and concern for Her devotees and that is why She is glancing all round to shower Her grace on those who surrender to Her. Her compassion is predominant in Her capacity as the Universal Mother or *Mā*. When someone calls Her as *Mā* Her eyes move towards the direction of the sound. This is the reason for frequent rotation of Her eyes on all directions.

Darahāsojjvalan-mukhī दरहासोज्ज्वलन्-मुखी (602)

This nāma describes Her smile. This smile attracts everyone to become Her devotee. One's compassion and mercy are expressed through eyes and smile.

Gurumūrtiḥ गुरुमूर्तिः (603)

She is in the form of Guru. In *Śrī vidyā* cult, Guru, *mantra* and the deity should not be differentiated. *Varivasyā-rahasya* (which explains *Pañcadaśī mantra* in detail) verse 102 says, 'The identity of the Mother, the *Vidyā*, the *Cakra* (*Śrī Cakra*), the Guru and the disciple himself should be practiced.' The earlier verse (101) says that 'one's Guru is identical with *Devatā*, *Vidyā* and *Śrī Cakra*....with the grace of Guru, the practitioner attains identity therewith.'

Guru means dispeller of darkness. Guru also means a person who possesses the Supreme knowledge about the Brahman. In this context, She is said to be the Supreme Guru.

Viṣṇu Sahasranāma 209 addresses *Viṣṇu* as Guru.

Guṇanidhiḥ गुणनिधिः (604)

She is the storehouse of *guṇa*-s. *Guṇa*-s are of three types: *sattvic*, *rajas* and *tamas*. When these *guṇa*-s or qualities vary in proportions, countless *guṇa*-s arise. All the combinations of *guṇa*-s arise from Her.

Sāṁkhya sūtra (I.128) says, "Through the properties of lightness, etc. The constituents agree with, and differ from each other."

Guṇa-s also mean conglomeration of nine qualities. *Śiva*, is said to possess nine qualities. These nine qualities are: 1. time (*kalā*), 2. lineage (*kulā*), 3. names (*nāma*), 4. Knowledge (*jñāna*), 5. consciousness or mind (*cit*), 6. *nāda* (subtle sounds arising within the body while practicing *prāṇāyāma*), 7. *bindu* (consisting of sixteen *kalā*-s that include *prāṇa*, sincerity, five elements, *indriya*-s - *karmendriya-s* and *jñānendriya-s*, mind, food, vitality, penance, *mantra*-s, *karma*-s, worlds and names. 8. *kalpa* and 9. *jīva*. These nine qualities are different from their common usage.

There is a story associated with this nāma. *Guṇa* also means rope. During great annihilation, *Viṣṇu* attained the form of a fish (*matsya avatār*), bundled the entire seeds of *jīva-s*, placed them in a boat and pulled them with a rope that was tied to the nose of the fish. Devi took the form of the rope making the rope strong.

Praśna Upaniṣad, chapter (VI.2) says, "*saḥ puruṣo yasminnetāḥ ṣoḍaśakalāḥ prabhavantīti*", which means 'sixteen parts emerge from this Self.' *ṣoḍaśakalāḥ* means sixteen parts. These parts are explained in (VI.4). "That *Puruṣa* (*nirguṇa Brahman*) created *Hiraṇyagarbha* (*prāṇātmā*); from *Hiraṇyagarbha* came faith; from faith came space; from space, air; from air, fire; from fire, water; from water earth; from earth, organs. Next He created mind and then food; from food, virility, austerities, the Veda-s, the sacrifices, heaven, other worlds and then various designations."

Gomātā गोमाता (605)

She is the Mother of all cows. Cows are considered sacred. This nāma also could mean the holy cow *kāmadhenu* capable of yielding any quantity of food at anytime. The word *go* (गो) is frequently used in Veda-s, meaning knowledge while practicing inner *yajñā* and in outer *yajñā* it means four legged animals. The word *gauḥ* also means speech, rays, heaven, etc indicating that they have originated from Her.

Guhajanma-bhūḥ गुहजन्म-भूः (606)

Guha means hide, conceal or secret. *Janma-bhūḥ* means the birth place. A soul is born, covered or concealed by *avidyā* or ignorance. These souls are born from Her, the Brahman.

This is explained in *Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad* (II.i.20) which says "from a fire tiny sparks fly in all directions, so from this Self emanate .....all beings." Souls are the tiny sparks and the Self is the Brahman, our own *Lalitāmbikā*. This particular angle of creation is elaborated in almost all the *Upaniṣad-s*. If this nāma is viewed through the interpretation of the first nāma *Śrī Mātā*, the universal mother giving birth to all beings perfectly fits into the teachings of the *Upaniṣad-s*.

Guha also means *Kārttikeya* (He is also known as *Subrahmaṇya* and *Skanda*). This nāma also could mean that She had given birth to *Kārttikeya*. *Kṛṣṇa* says in *Bhagavad Gīta* (X.24), "*senānīnāmahaṁ skandaḥ*", which means "among generals, I am *Skanda*."

Deveśī देवेशी (607)

She is the *Īśvarī* for *Deva*-s (gods), which means that She is the Supreme among all gods and goddesses. She is the source for all divinities.

Daṇḍa-nītisthā दण्ड-नीतिस्था (608)

Daṇḍa-nīti means encumbering those who resort to evil ways and making them to pursue the path of goodness. She punishes those ignorant men who are unwilling to pursue the virtuous path. *Kṛṣṇa* says in *Bhagavad Gīta* (X.38) 'I am the rod of punishment'. According to The Bible 'rod' means the law of *karma*. The Bible says "I will fear no evil: thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" (Old Testament. Psalms 23:4). God administers the universe through the law of *karma* and those who follow the virtuous path need not worry about the divine punishment. "Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them" (The Bible. OT. Job 21:9) and "how oft cometh their destruction upon them! God distributeth sorrows in his anger" (Job 21:17).

This is the reason for carrying a rod when a Judge enters a court hall. This is practiced by several parliaments when a presiding officer enters the parliament. They are the sustainers of justice. In the same way She administers the universe with Her justness (law of *karma*).

Daharākāśa-rūpiṇī दहराकाश-रूपिणी (609)

In the hearts of all beings is Her subtle form. Better interpretations are available in various scriptures.

Kaṭha Upaniṣad ((I.iii.1) mentions this place as "In this superior space of the heart, present in the cave of the intellect". It further says (II.i.12), "Of the size of a thumb, the Brahman resides in the centre of the body".

Chāndogya Upaniṣad says "This body is the city of the Brahman. Within it is an abode in the shape of a lotus (meaning heart) and within that there is a small space (Please note the word. It is 'space' and not 'place'. Space is infinite and place is definite). One must search within this space and earnestly desire to know what is there? (Self-realization)"

Brahma sūtra (I.iii.14) says "*dahara uttarebhyaḥ* दहर उत्तरेभ्यः" referring to the small space in the heart. It proceeds to say, "That is which is inside, that is sought for, that is surely to be inquired into", indicating the process of Self-realisation.

This nāma says that She is in That form (the Brahman), that can only be realized. This nāma also reiterates Her status as the Brahman.

Pratipan-mukhya-rākānta-tithi-maṇḍala-pujitā प्रतिपन्-मुख्य-राकान्त-तिथि-मण्डल-पुजिता (610)

Pratipad means the first lunar day and *rākā* means the full moon. In *Śrī Cakra*, She is surrounded by fifteen *tithi nitya devi-s*, five on each side of the inner most triangle. The *bindu*, the central point of *Śrī Cakra*, where *Śaktī* is sitting on the lap of *Śiva* is covered by this inner most triangle. Each of the lunar day is represented by one *tithi nitya devi*. In *Śrī vidyā* cult, all these deities are worshipped during ritual worship of *Śrī Cakra*. *Lalitāmbikā* is worshipped as *mahā-nitya*. This interpretation is as per *tantra śāstrā*-s. *Tithi maṇḍala* is also referred to in Veda-s, which mentions fifteen names representing fifteen lunar days or *tithi*-s of waxing moon. In addition to the names of the fifteen deities, Veda-s also refer to one more deity by name *Sadā* (meaning perpetually) which is known as the 16th *kalā* of moon. Moon has sixteen *kalā*-s. Each *kalā* is represented by a goddess beginning with *Amṛtā* and ending with *Pūrṇāmṛtā* and their names are prefixed with each vowel (there are sixteen vowels in Sanskrit).

A reference can be made to nāma 391.

Kalātmikā कलात्मिका (611)

She is in the form of *kalā*-s. *Kalā* means digit or minute parts of an entity. The moon has sixteen such *kalā*-s, the sun has twelve *kalā*-s and *agni* (fire) has ten *kalā*-s. When it is said that the moon has

sixteen *kalā*-s, it means moon is made up of sixteen parts. During waning period of moon one *kalā* is reduced on each day leading to no moon (new moon day or *amāvāsya*) on the 15th day. Similarly one *kalā* is added each day during waxing period of moon leading to the full moon comprising of all the fifteen *kalā*-s. The 16th *kalā* of the moon is *Lalitāmbikā* who is present in the moon without waxing and waning. This is yet another example to confirm that the Brahman is without any modification. This nāma says that She is present even in the subtlest part of an object confirming the omnipresent nature of the Brahman. Examples of the moon, sun and fire are taken because of their illuminating nature. They are not self-illuminating in nature but simply reflect the illumination of the Brahman.

There are four stages of consciousness. They are awake, dream, deep sleep and *turya* stages. Each of these stages has four *kalā*-s making a total of sixteen *kalā*-s. The awake stage is said to be in the form *Lalitāmbikā.* The four *kalā*-s of awake stages are rising, waking, consciousness and mental action.

In nāma 236, 64 *kalā*-s s have been referred. In that context, *kalā*-s means art. There are many such *kalā*-s referred to in the scriptures.

Kalānāthā कलानाथा (612)

She is ruler of *kalā*-s discussed above. All subtle matters that make a gross matter are administered by Her. Hence, She is known as the ruler of *kalā*-s.

The chief of *kalā*-s of the moon is known as *Kalānātha*, which also means the lord of digits of the moon. The disc of the moon is compared to *Śrī Cakra*. Since She resides in *Śrī Cakra*, She is also known as *Kalānāthā*.

Kāvyālāpa-vinodinī काव्यालाप-विनोदिनी (613)

Kāvyā-s mean the great epics. Epics have eighteen types of qualities. The *Rāmāyaṇa* of the great sage *Vālmīki* has all the eighteen qualities and is said to be the first among the epics. She is delighted when She listens to such great epics that fulfil all the eighteen qualities. The eighteen qualities are serenity, regularity, absence of vanity, sincerity, simplicity, veracity, equanimity, fixity, non-irritability, adaptability, humility, tenacity, integrity, nobility, magnanimity, charity, generosity and purity.

It is said that by properly worshipping Her, one attains poetization capabilities. The two known examples are in the form of poet *Kālidāsa* (author of *Śakuntalā, Mālavikāgnimitra*, *Megha-dūta*, and *Raghu-vaṃśa* and dumb turned poet *Mūka kavi* (*mūk* means dumb and *kavi* means poet).

Saundarya Laharī (verse 17) conveys the same meaning. It says when She is contemplated along with eight *Vāc Devi*-s, (*Bhū prastāra* – refer nāma 577) the authors of this *Sahasranāma*, one gets poetic capabilities.

Nāma 798 says that She is in the form of those great poetic epics.

Sacāmara-ramā-vāṇī-savyadakṣiṇa-sevitā सचामर-रमा-वाणी-सव्यदक्षिण-सेविता (614)

Goddess *Lakṣmī* (*Ramā*) and Goddess *Sarasvatī* (*Vāṇī*) stand by Her side and fan Her. This nāma means that those who contemplate Her get wealth and intelligence without even asking for them. This concept is discussed in *Saundarya Laharī* verse 99, *Lalitā triśatī* nāma-s 63 and 194.

Ādiśaktiḥ आदिशक्तिः (615)

She is the primordial energy of creation. *Śiva* has no creator. *Śiva*'s only creation is *Śaktī* who in turn created the universe. Hence She is called as *Ādi* (first) *Śaktī* (energy). In fact, *Śaktī* is the creative

pulsation of *Śiva*. It is only because of *Śaktī*, empiric individual realises his essential divine nature.

{Further reading: *Śaktī* asks many questions to *Śiva*. The questions of *Śaktī* and answers of *Śiva* are in the form of various *tantra śāstra-s*. There are three positions from which *Śaktī* seeks answers from *Śiva*. The first position is *Śaktī* sitting by the side of *Śiva*. The questions asked from this position are only preliminaries. The next position is *Śaktī* sitting on the lap of *Śiva*. Questions asked from this position are towards attaining *Śiva*. When She gets clarifications from *Śiva* and through the knowledge gained during the question answer sessions, She merges with *Śiva* and becomes a part of *Śiva* – the *Ardhanārīśvara* form. This form leads to *Liṅga* form, the Ultimate Reality. This is a typical example of realisation. When one is at the beginning stage of spirituality there is a gap between the Brahman and the seeker. When he acquires knowledge of *advaita*, he moves closer to Him. When He realizes the Brahman, he merges with Him and his consciousness loses duality. Finally he transforms into "I am That".}

Ameyā अमेया (616)

She is immeasurable. Mortals are measureable and eternal is not measureable. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* explains this phenomenon. It says "smaller than the smallest and bigger than the biggest" (I.ii.20). This is a popular verse among all the *Upaniṣad*. The original Sanskrit version goes like this "*aṇoraṇīyānmahato mahīyānātmā*....." This is the unique nature of the Brahman.

Ātmā आत्मा (617)

Like Self and self *ātma* is also known by *Ātma* and *ātma*. self or *ātma* indicates the soul and Self or *Ātma* indicates the Brahman. When one realizes self as the Self, it is known as Self-realization. This nāma means soul (*ātma* as the next nāma makes a reference to the Brahman. *ātma* is also known as *jīva*. When *jīva* is covered by body, it is known as *jīvan*.

Soul is also known as *puruṣa*. Soul worships *Ātma* by means of meditation. The soul within a shape and form is known as *yajamāna* or the master. The object of meditation is *Ātma* and meditation is a process by which *ātma* seeks the *Ātma* by modification of his mind. The fact remains that *Ātma* remains in *ātma* right from the primeval stage, but due to illusion and ignorance, It is not realised. The fruit of mediation is the bliss leading to the merger of *ātma* with *Ātma*. *Ātma* means *Śiva* and *ātma* refers to *Śaktī* and the merger between the two is known as *Śiva- Śaktī aikya*. (*aikya* – union. Refer nāma 999). This process happens at *sahasrāra*.

Paramā परमा (618)

The previous nāma addresses Her as *ātma* and this nāma addresses Her as *Ātma* also known as the Brahman. From these two nāma-s one can understand that She is both *saguṇa Brahman* (Brahman with attributes) and *nirguṇa Brahman* (Brahman without attributes), confirming Her Superior status.

Para + *asya* + *ma* make *paramā*. *Para* means Universal soul or the Brahman; *asya* means of this; *ma* means me. Therefore *paramā* means 'I am this Universal soul", the concept of Self-realisation. This can also be interpreted as *parasya* + *ma* meaning that She is the wife of *Śiva* (*paras* memans beyond). Being the wife of *Śiva*, She helps spiritual seekers in realising *Śiva*.

Liṅga Purāṇa (Chapter 86. Verses 97 – 99) says "*Ātman* is neither having intellectual awareness within nor having intellectual awareness without, nor is He in both ways. He is neither perfect knowledge nor wise nor having ignorance. Brahman is neither the one that is known, nor the one to be known. In fact He is extinction, devoid of ailments, immortal, imperishable, *Parama-Ātman*, (*Parama* means most excellent) Brahman, *parātpara* (greater than the greatest), devoid of doubtful alternatives, devoid of fallacious appearances, knowledge. All these are synonyms." She is in this form.

Para-Brahman (the Supreme Brahman, *Śiva* and *Śaktī* combine) has four forms. They are the *puruṣa* (soul), un-manifested, manifested and time. She has transcended all these four forms to remain as the Supreme.

Pāvanākṛitiḥ पावनाकृतिः (619)

She is the embodiment of purity. It also means that She performs all auspicious acts such as creation, sustenance and liberation. She is the cause for Self-realization as She alone can lead to *Śiva*. A soul gets purified through penance and knowledge. Realising the Brahman is possible, only by acquiring the highest form of intellect. This purification process can happen only with Her grace. It is also said that one gets purified by simply cogitating Her. Perpetual cerebration about Her is the highest of all spiritual acts. All other acts such as meditation and rituals are considered inferior and ineffective. These processes are merely tools to access the ceaseless cognitive process which ultimately leads to Divine commune, bliss and liberation.

Reference can also be made to nāma 542.

Aneka-koṭi-brahmāṇḍa-jananī अनेक-कोटि-ब्रह्माण्ड-जननी (620)

She has given birth to billions of worlds is the literal meaning. This is based on Her attributes of causing creation, sustenance and death. The universe is said to contain millions of planets like earth with their own galaxies. Man has four predominant level of consciousness – sleep, dream, deep sleep and *turya* stages. These four stages of consciousness are related to souls or microcosms. In the same way, the Brahman or the macrocosm has four different stages. They are *avyakta*, *Īśvara*, *hiraṇyagarbha* and *virāt*.

Avyakta is the state of *prakṛti* in its un-manifested form, with the three *guṇa-s* in equal proportions. *Avyakta* is the first stage of the Brahman that cannot be explained, as this is the purest form of the Brahman, without parentage. This stage is also known as *turya* or

the fourth state of consciousness. It is the non-dualistic state, where the Brahman without a second is realized. It is highly subtle in nature endowed with tranquillity and bliss (cloud nine stage).

The second stage is *Īśvara*. The concept of God begins here. This stage is the cause of creation, sustenance and death and the stage of 'all-knowing'. *Māyā* which is known as illusion is associated with this stage. This forms the casual body or *kāraṇa śarīra*.

The third stage is *hiraṇyagarbha*. This is the binding factor of the universe. It holds all the creations together. This forms the subtle body or *liṅga śarīra* or *sūkṣma śarīra*.

The fourth stage is *virāṭ*. This is also known as *vaiśvānara*. This is where manifestation of forms takes place and the gross form of the world is realized and is seen with biological eyes. But this is not everything. It is only a miniscule of the Brahman. Gross forms become perceivable when *vaiśvānara* or *virāṭ* gets associated with *māyā*. This forms the gross body or *sthūla śarīra*.

When soul or *puruṣa* gets associated with *prakṛti*, the birth of a living being happens. When *virāṭ* gets associated with *māyā*, the birth of the universe happens. The former is microcosm and the latter is macrocosm. All these four stages are referred in this *Sahasranāma*. *Avyakta* in nāma 398, *Īśvara* (Īśvarī) in nāma 271, *hiraṇyagarbha* (*svarṇa-garbha*) in nāma 638 and *virāṭ* (*virāṭ-rūpa*) in nāma 778. This nāma refers to the combination of these four stages.

Aitareya Upaniṣad opens by saying "In the beginning this was but the absolute Self alone. There was nothing else whatsoever that winked. It thought 'let Me create the worlds'". This talks about the Will of the Brahman to create and the process of creation.

Divya-vigrahā दिव्य-विग्रहा (621)

She has a divinely shaped body the beauty of which is possible only for the Divine. This nāma has another interpretation. *Divya* also

means divine world and *vigrahā* means war. In *Śrī Devi Māhātmyam*, it is said that She had climbed to *ākāś* without support and fought the battle against the demon *Śuṁbha*.

Klīṁkārī क्लींकारी (622)

She is in the form of *kāma bīja klīṁ* (क्लीं). It is also known as *Manmatha* (*Kāmadeva*) *bīja*, the *bīja* of the love god. *Ka* (क) refers to *Kāmadeva*, *la* (ल) refers to Lord *Indra*, *ī* (ई) refers to contentment and *bindu* is the cause of pleasure or pain depending upon one's karmic account. This interpretation is given by *Śiva* to *Śaktī* out of His love for Her. *Klīṁ bīja* is used to please the Goddess of wealth *Lakṣmī*.

Klīṁkāra is *Śiva* and his wife is *Klīṁkārī* and this way *Ka* means *Śiva* and *la* means *Śaktī* and *īṁ* (ईं) is *kāmakalā* (nāma 322). Therefore *klīṁ* also means *Śiva-Śaktī* union.

Kevalā केवला (623)

She is The Absolute. Absolute because, She is devoid of qualities and modifications, the unique feature of the *nirguṇa Brahman*. *Śiva sūtra* (III.34) explains thus "Completely free from the influence of pleasure and pain, he is rather alone – fully established in his real Self as sheer consciousness." This *sūtra* uses a word *kevali* meaning 'one whose knowership consists in sheer consciousness.'

The *bīja klīṁ* discussed in the previous nāma is made up of *ka* + *la* + *īṁ*. *Kevalā* in this nāma means *īṁ*, the *kāmakalā*. When the other two *bīja-s* are removed from *klīṁ*, the *bīja* that remains is *kāmakalā* that is capable of giving liberation. The word *puruṣārtha* means the end of human life. *puruṣārtha* consists of *dharma* (righteousness), *artha* (wealth), *kāma* (desires) and *mokṣa* (the final liberation). *Kāmakalā*, which forms part of *klīṁ* is capable of liberating a soul.

Kāma bīja is *klīṁ* and *Kāmakalā* is *īṁ*. *Kāmakalā* forms part of *kāma bīja*. Both these *bīja-s* are auspicious and powerful.

Guhyā गुह्या (624)

She is secretive both in form and in nature. It is repeatedly said that Her worship should be of secretive in nature. She cannot be worshipped in the presence of those who do not have fundamental knowledge about Her. *Navāvaraṇa pūja* should not be performed in the presence of those who are not initiated into Her *mantra*-s. The secrecy in Her worship is advocated because She provides certain superhuman powers to the worshipper, provided the ritual is performed without any deviations. But Self-realisation happens beyond all religious rites and rituals (*Katha Upaniṣad* I.ii.14)

This nāma also confirms Her status as the Supreme, as the Supreme resides in a secretive cave in the heart. *Katha Upaniṣad* (II.1.12) says 'In the size of the thumb the Brahman rests in the body'. This resting place of the Brahman appears like a lotus (the biological heart) and inside this lotus there is a small empty space. This empty space is filled by the Brahman in the form of Self illuminating smoke. The *Upaniṣad* proceeds to say "She manifests Herself as *prāṇa* (cosmic energy). She is also the five elements. She is present in the heart of every being (II.i.7)".

Taittirīya Upaniṣad (II.1) also says "It is in the space within the heart which is like a cave". It continues to say "He who realizes the Self there not only realizes the all-knowing Brahman, but also attains everything he wants." From the Supreme Self comes space and from space the five elements come into existence. This cave in the heart is known as *parame vyoman*.

Kaivalyapada-dāyinī कैवल्यपद-दायिनी (625)

Kaivalya is the final stage of life of a living being. Nobody is there with that being during that time. He is all alone without any help around and he has to achieve on his own. This is the final stage of

one's evolution. The soul is about to leave its present body and getting ready to merge with the Brahman. *Kaivalya* is liberation or salvation and hence it is called the final stage. This final stage can be reached in two ways. One is the mundane stage associated with desires and attachments where soul gets ready for rebirth. The other stage is the stage of *samādi*, where the soul gets ready for its union with the Brahman not to be born again. This is *kaivalya*. *Lalitāmbikā* is the giver of this stage.

Pada means four types of consciousness. They are *sālokya, sarūpa*, *samībha* and *sāyujya*. Beyond this is *kaivalya*. *Sālokya* is the stage where one performs ritual worship, worshipping idols or portraits of gods. In *sarūpa* he leaves idol worship and does not differentiate himself from god. In *samībha* he goes near the god and in *sāyujya* stage he merges with god. These are the stages of one's consciousness that finally lead to *kaivalya*. One has to progress from one stage to another and this progression happens depending upon the level of spirituality. By being spiritual does not mean one has to be religious. Spirituality transcends religious affinities, though religion forms the foundation of spirituality.

To attain *kaivalya* stage one has to progress from ritual worship to mental worship (meditation). By making sufficient progress in meditation, one has to search for the Brahman within. Once the Brahman is located and realized within, the practitioner moves to the stage of *kaivalya*, by detaching himself from worldly affinities by staying connected with his Creator. His soul is now under preparation to merge with Him, for final liberation. Finally, he gets liberated with no further transmigration for that soul.

Tripurā त्रिपुरा (626)

There is an ancient scripture titled *Tripura rahasya* in the form of dialogue between sage *Bhārgava* and sage *Dattatreya*. The original text consists of three parts – The glory of *Devi*, Her rituals and knowledge about Her.

This nāma could also mean that She is in the form of all triads. For example, She is in the form of *Brahma*, *Viṣṇu* and *Rudra*; *Icchā*, *jñāna* and *kriyā śakti*-s; the three *kūṭa*-s of *Pañcadaśī*; creation, sustenance and destruction; the three *nādi*-s, *iḍā*, *piṅgala* and *suṣumna*; three worlds, *bhūr*, *bhuva*, *suvaḥ*; three *guṇa*-s *sattvic*, *rajasic* and *tamsic*. She is in the form of all such triads and once these triads are transcended, the Brahman is attained.

Brahman is pure consciousness and can be visualized in three ways. The first one is *paramātṛ-caitanya* (consciousness limited by intellect). The second one is *pramāṇa-caitanya* (consciousness limited by knowledge). The third one is *jīva-caitanya* (consciousness limited by individual soul). These three types of consciousness are also known as triad.

Trijagad vandyā त्रिजगद् वन्द्या (627)

She is worshipped in all the three worlds viz. *bhūr, bhuvar, suvar*. The three worlds are represented by three *vyāhṛti*-s of *Gāyatrī mantra*. These three worlds are nothing but the three stages of consciousness. The lowest level of consciousness is materialistic in nature and the highest-level consciousness is pure in nature. The purest form of consciousness is the Brahman.

Trimurtiḥ त्रिमुर्तिः (628)

Trimurti-s are *Brahma*, *Viṣṇu* and *Rudra*. She is the combined form of these three Gods.

There is a story associated with this nāma. *Brahma*, *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva* looked at each other and in the process there appeared a young girl. On seeing the girl, these Lords asked her who she is. She replied saying that She is the *Śaktī*, the combined form of all the three of them. They named the girl as *Tripura*. *Tripura* form of Devi was born out of subtle looks of Gods of creation, sustenance and dissolution. She is made of three colours, white, black and red. White colour is *Brahma*. He is *sattvic* in nature and hence described

as white. Next is black representing *Viṣṇu's rajo guṇa*. The third colour is red, representing the red colour of *Rudra,* a form of *Śiva*, *tamo guṇa*. However, the *guṇa-s* of *Brahma, Viṣṇu* and *Śiva* are interpreted differently. It is said that the Brahman has divided into three, *Brahma, Viṣṇu* and *Rudra*. The same three combined to form *Śaktī*. She is One into many and many into One. That one is the Brahman. Brahman is the cause and *Śaktī* is the effect. For every cause there has to be effect/s.

This nāma says that She is in the form of the three *guṇa-s* and thus represents the three aspects of the Brahman - creation, sustenance and dissolution. Please refer nāma-s 763 and 984.

Tridaśeśvarī त्रिदशेश्वरी (629)

She is *Īśvarī* to all gods and goddesses. She is the *Īśvarī* of *tri-daśa*-s. In human, there are four stages – child, youth, middle age and old age. However, gods have only one stage

of eternal youthfulness. . Hence gods and goddesses are known as *tri-daśa*. She is the chief of all *tri-daśa*-s (gods and goddesses).

Tri means three and *daśa* means ten. 3 x 10 gives numeric 30. Another three is to be added to this making it as 33. Twelve *Āditya*-s, eight *Vasu*-s, eleven *Rudra*-s, and two *Aśvin*-s, thus making thirty three. She is the chief of all these thirty three gods. Each of these thirty three gods has 10,000,000 (ten million or one crore) assistants and they can be explained as demigods and demigoddesses. This explains 33 crore gods (330 million).

She is also the *Īśvarī* for three stages of human consciousness – sleep, dream and deep sleep stages.

Tryakṣarī त्र्यक्षरी (630)

She is in the form three *bīja*-s. For example, *Bālā mantra* has three *bīja*-s – *aiṁ - klīṁ- sauḥ* (ऐं- क्लीं- सौः). In *ṣodaśī mantra*, the three *kūṭa-s* of *Pañcadaśī* are treated as three *bīja*-s.

Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad (V.iii.1) says that *hṛdaya* (हृदय) has three syllables (*hṛ + da+ ya*). In the same *Upaniṣad* it is also said (V.v.1) that *satya* (सत्य) has three syllables (*sa + t + ya*). Both heart and truth means the Brahman. All those that have three syllables lead to Her. For example, Brahman is said to be residing in the heart. *satyaṁ jñānamanantaṁ* is the Brahman.

Divya-gandhāḍhyā दिव्य-गन्धाढ्या (631)

She is endowed with divine fragrance. This fragrance is possible from three sources. Her form itself is full of fragrance. She is surrounded by demigods and goddesses who have natural fragrance. Their natural fragrance in combination with Her divine fragrance diffuses across the worlds. Men worship Her with sandal and other fragrant materials. The fragrance thus offered by Her devotees imbues to all the worlds.

When someone mediates on Her with great devotion, at the peak of meditation a pleasant fragrance emanates from him, making his surrounding fragrant. For this, one needs to transcend his cogitated level. *Patañjali yoga sūtra* talks about transcending sensory perceptions (III.42). Every sensory perception has its own process and limitations. If one is able to transcend that limit that particular sensory perception, linked with mind and consciousness, takes him beyond his perceptions.

Sindūra-tilakāñcitā सिन्दूर-तिलकाञ्चिता (632)

She is adorned with vermillion mark on Her forehead. This nāma also means that She is surrounded by she elephants. Vermillion mark is a sign of auspiciousness.

Umā उमा (633)

Her name is *Umā*. She is the wife of *Maheśvara* and is known as *Umā Maheśvara*. She was born to *Himavān*, the king of mountains and his wife *Mena*. She started Her penance at the age of five to attain *Maheśvara* (*Śiva*) as Her husband.

Śiva sūtra (I.13) says *Icchā śaktir umā kumārī*. Here *Umā* means splendour of *Śiva*. One's will power in constant commune with *Śiva* is also known as *Umā*. The ever present "I" consciousness of *Śiva* which is free in knowing and doing all acts is known as *Umā*.

Umā is the combination of three letters of OM – U + M + A, the *praṇava*. U refers to creation, M refers to destruction and A refers to sustenance. Therefore *Umā* also means the three acts of the Brahman. *Liṅga Purāṇa* (133.44) says 'the goddess is the mother of worlds'. *Liṅga Purāṇa* further says "The goddess born of *Rudra*'s body rebuked *Dakṣa* and was born as *Umā*, the daughter of *Himavān*. She is bowed to, by all the worlds. Let her try to captivate the mind of *Rudra* by means of her beauty. Through their union Lord *Skanda* will be born."

The *anāhata* sound of heart *cakra* is also known as *Umā*.

Umā is also known as *Śaktī praṇava* (*klīṁ* is also known as *Śaktī praṇava*).

Six year old girl is known as *Umā*.

Kena Upaniṣad (III.12) says, *bahuśobhamānām umāṁ haimavatīṁ* which means a woman wearing many ornaments. She is the combination of self-knowledge, splendour and grandeur.

Śailendra-tanayā शैलेन्द्र-तनया (634)

Daughter of king of mountains, *Himavān*. Mountain is immovable. She is pure *caitanya*. *Caitanya* means pure consciousness. Pure consciousness arises out of pure knowledge. This is called the

zfourth state or *turya* state. This nāma indirectly says that even in immovable, the Brahman dwells. *Tanaya* means offspring.

Gaurī गौरी (635)

She is in golden colour, a combination of white and yellow. It is said that when She was born, Her complexion looked like combined colour of conch, jasmine flower and moon. Not only they are whitish yellow in colour, but also they are considered as highly auspicious objects.

Varuṇa's (god of waters) wife is also known as *Gaurī*.

A ten year old girl is known as *Gaurī*.

Gandharva-sevitā गन्धर्व-सेविता (636)

Liṅga Purāṇa refers to twelve excellent *gandharva*-s. They are set to reside in sky, or the region of the air and the heavenly waters. They are celestial singers. Their names are 1. *Tumburu*, 2. *Nārada*, 3. *Hāhā*, 4. *Hūhū*, 5. *Viśvāvasu*, 6. *Ugrasena*, 7. *Surugi*, 8. *Parāvasu*, 9. *Citrasena*, 10. *Ūrṅāyu*, 11. *Dhṛtarāṣṭra* and 12. *Sūryavarcas*.

Lalitā triśatī nāma 177. *Hāhā Hūhū mukha stutyā* which says that She is worshipped by *gandharva*-s *Hāhā* and *Hūhū*. They worship the sun by means of their songs. Out of the twelve *gandharva*-s, two of them are active in each month. They are also subjected to miseries. They worship Her.

Viśva-garbhā विश्व-गर्भा (637)

She has the universe in Her womb or the universe was delivered from Her womb. She delivers the universe and this is referred to in nāma 934 *Viśva-mātā*. *Viśva* means all that is visible, the whole universe. Because She delivered the universe from Her womb, She is addressed as *Viśva-mātā.*

Svarṇa-garbhā स्वर्ण-गर्भा (638)

She has the golden egg in her womb or She was born from a golden egg. *Svarṇa* means gold and *hiraṇya* also means gold. *Vedānta Paribhāsā* a 17th century scripture explains *hiraṇyagarbha*. It says "*Hiraṇyagarbha* is the first soul to be born and is different from *Brahma, Viṣṇu* and *Śiva*." The subtle body consisting of the five vital forces, the mind, the intellect and the ten organs is produced from the five basic elements. This paves the way for the soul to experience the result of actions or in other words it causes *karma*-s. The subtle body is of two kinds, superior and inferior. The superior one is the subtle body of *hiraṇyagarbha* and the inferior is the subtle body of living beings. The subtle body of *hiraṇyagarbha* is called as *mahat* or the cosmic intellect and the subtle body of living beings is called ego.

Su means splendid, *arṇa* means letters that form *mantra*-s and *garbhaḥ* is shining or conceiving. This way the nāma also means that She holds the sacred *mantra*-s in Her womb. This means that She is the cause of all *mantra*-s. Hence She is said to be in the form of *mātṛkā*-s (*akṣara*-s or alphabets). This has already been discussed in nāma 577 *mātṛkā-varṇa-rūpinī*. The alphabets lie shining in Her womb.

Avaradā अवरदा (639)

She is the destroyer of evil doers, known as demons. Evil doer does not merely mean the one who indulges in evil acts. It also means those who have evil thoughts. Evil thoughts culminate in evil actions.

Vāgadhīśvarī वागधीश्वरी (640)

She is the ruler of speech. *Saundarya Laharī* ends (100th verse) by saying 'this was composed with your own words'. Nāma 577 can

also be referred here. Origin of sound has already been discussed in detail under various nāma-s.

Dhyāna-gamyā ध्यान-गम्या (641)

She can be attained by meditation. Meditation is a process that enables one to explore the entire human potential within. Meditation is not simply thinking about some super human forms. It is a complex task of researching internally. It is a process of spiritual transformation. It is the progressive level of consciousness accelerated by the combined factors of intention and attention.

Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (I.ii.3) says "The sages went into deep meditation and saw the power of the luminous Cosmic Self as the cause of the universe. *Māyā* hides the Self behind the universe. The Self controls everything including the individual self and time." She is that Cosmic Self.

Aparicchedyā अपरिच्छेद्या (642)

She is incomprehensible hence, infinite. She is ubiquitous, the unique quality of the Brahman. Yet Her devotees can attain Her through meditation (previous nāma).

Jñānadā ज्ञानदा (643)

She is the giver of knowledge, the kind of knowledge that is needed to realize Her absolute form. For realizing the Brahman one needs to have pure knowledge unafflicted by senses. She alone is capable of providing that knowledge. Through the process of meditation, mundane knowledge is transformed into consummate knowledge. First She provides the requisite knowledge then She reveals Herself and finally She makes him merge with Her. Knowledge is the primary step in Self-realisation and She provides that knowledge.

Śiva sūtra (I.2) says *jñānam bandhaḥ* This means limited knowledge is bondage. Therefore, it implies that un-vitiated knowledge gives liberation.

Jñāna-vigrahā ज्ञान-विग्रहा (644)

Her body itself is knowledge. The previous nāma said that She gives knowledge and the source of such knowledge is Her entire body.

Ramaṇa Mahariṣi (sage Ramana) did not initiate any one through *mantra*-s. He used to initiate his disciples by a simple glance. That glance used to transform a person. What is the result of such transformation? Recent scientific study explains thus. "Conscious experience is much more than physics plus biology. What sets human consciousness apart from other biologically evolved phenomena is that it makes the reality appear within itself."

Sarva-vedānta-saṁvedyā सर्व-वेदान्त-संवेद्या (645)

She is known through *Vedanta*. *Vedānta* literally means 'the highest knowledge'. *Veda*-s are the source of highest knowledge. *Veda*-s are classified into four categories. They are *mantra*-s, *brāhmaṇa*, *āraṇyaka* and *Upaniṣad-s*. *Mantra*-s are collection of Vedic hymns. *Brāhmaṇa* deals with Vedic rituals or sacrifices. *Āraṇyaka* is the combination of rituals and study of atman or Brahman. Finally, the *Upaniṣad-s*. They are the monument of spirituality. *Veda*-s lead to spirituality from gross level to subtle level. Since *Upaniṣad-s* provide the highest knowledge, the knowledge about the Brahman, they are known as *Vedānta*. There are several *Upaniṣad-s* and studying all of them is a time consuming process. This led sage *Vyāsa* to write *Brahma sūtra*-s, which is the condensed form of *Upaniṣad-s*, without diluting their teachings.

Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad Gīta* (XV.15) "I am the only object worth knowing through Veda-s. I alone am the father of *Vedanta* and knower of the Veda-s too."

This nāma says that She can be realised through *Vedānta* (*Upaniṣad-s*). In other words, Her true form can be realized only through *Vedanta* that provides the subtle knowledge required to realise the Brahman.

{Further reading on *Vedānta*: *Advaita Vedānta* is the highest view of Reality, born of experience. *Vedānta* forms the end portion of Veda-s. *Śrī Śaṁkara* says, "*sarvāsāṁ upaniṣadām ātma-yāthātmya-nirūpaṇenaiva upakṣayāt* सर्वासां उपनिषदाम् आत्म-याथात्म्य-निरूपणेनैव उपक्षयात्॥ This means all the *Upaniṣad-s* exhaust themselves in discussing *Ātman*. It is felt that *Ātman* alone is worth discussing. Everything else is superimposed on *Ātman*. *Ātman* when present in a living being is called *ātman* or soul and the collective forms of all the souls of the universe or all the *ātman*-s put together is known as Brahman. The entire elucidations of *Upaniṣad-s* is provided in a condensed form in *Brahma sūtra*-s. In order to avert any confusion, Lord *Kṛṣṇa* told *Arjuna* the secrets of Brahman in the form *Bhagavad Gīta.* Out of this sacred triad, *Bhagavad Gīta* is easily understandable, as the Brahman Himself (Lord *Kṛṣṇa*) says what is needed to attain liberation. Thorough understanding of *Bhagavad Gīta* is bound to provide liberation.

Vedānta does not preach religion and its associated rituals. *Vedānta* has no known bounds. *Vedānta* evolves in three stages in human life and they are *dvaita*, *viśiśtādvaita* and *advaita*. When a person chooses to pursue spiritual path and when he makes enquiries to understand the Brahman, these three stages dawn one after another.

Vedānta Paribhāṣā says that the aim of *Vedānta* is of two kinds, primary and secondary. Of these pleasure and absence of pain are primary aims and the means to either of them is secondary aim. Again pleasure is of two kinds – relative and absolute. The relative pleasure is a particular manifestation of a modicum of bliss caused by difference in the mental state generated by a contact with objects. In general a *Vedāntin* acquires knowledge through the following six means – perception, inference, comparison, verbal testimony,

presumption and non-apprehension. *Vedānta* says that pure consciousness has three forms – the one associated with the subject or the knower limited by the mind, the second is associated with the object and the third one is associated with the mental state. The arena of the mental state serves to remove nescience or *avidyā*. Therefore, *Vedānta* is composite and comprehensive philosophy that leads to the Supreme Reality, the Brahman.}

Satyānanda-svarūpiṇī सत्यानन्द-स्वरूपिणी (646)

She is in the form of truth (*satya*) and eternal happiness (*ānanda*). The eternal happiness cannot be attained without knowing the truth. Truth leads to eternal happiness. To attain bliss, truth cannot be overlooked. Here truth means the philosophy of *advaita* or non-dualism which leads to the Brahman. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* says (II.vi) "Brahman manifested itself as all things around us, those who know Brahman call it "Truth". Therefore Truth means the Brahman, the one and the only one that exists all across the universe in the form of different objects. If this truth is realized, it leads to *ānanda*, the happiness.

This nāma also refers to Her eternity, the unequalled nature of the Brahman, *sat-cit- ānanda*. When one progresses spiritually, first he realizes bliss (*ānanda*), before realising the Brahman.

Lopāmudrārcitā लोपामुद्रार्चिता (647)

Lopāmudrā is the wife of sage *Agastya*. This nāma says that She is worshipped by *Lopāmudrā*.

The following scene is narrated in *Lalitā triśatī pūrva bhāga*. When *Hayagrīva* was reluctant to share *triśatī* with sage *Agastya* due to the restrictions imposed by *Lalitāmbikā,* She appeared along with *Śiva* before *Hayagrīva* and asked him to initiate sage *Agastya* into *triśatī.* She said "*triśatī* rendered by both of us (*Śaktī* and *Śiva*) is known as *sarva pūrtikarī* (completion of everything). By reciting this, all unfinished *karma*-s are fulfilled (leading to liberation). You

can initiate this to *Agastya*, whose wife worships me with great devotion." Such was the devotion of *Lopāmudrā* to *Lalitāmbikā*. *Lopāmudrā* worshipped Her with Her *Pañcadaśī mantra*. A reference can be made to nāma 238.

Līlā-klṛpta-brahmāṇḍa-maṇḍalā लीला-क्लृप्त-ब्रह्माण्ड-मण्डला (648)

She handles creation of the universe with ease, as if it is a sport. She framed rules and regulations for the three acts, creation, sustenance and death. The divine law is the 'law of *karma'*. Since She is not transgressing the law framed by Her, She finds Her job easy. A reference can be made to nāma 281.

Adṛśyā अदृश्या (649)

She is invisible. She cannot be seen through biological eyes or any other senses. She can only be realized in consciousness, as She is so subtle (*kāmakalā* and *kuṇḍalinī*) and is beyond visual perception. *Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad* (III.iv.2) explains this situation. "You cannot see that is the witness of vision." Vision is an act involving objects. But it does not reveal the inner Self that pervades it. Her form can only be realized through meditation.

Dṛśyarahitā द्रृश्यरहिता (650)

She transcends visibility. This is an extension of the previous nāma. It can also be said that the previous nāma refers to Her *kāmakalā* form and this nāma refers to Her *kuṇḍalinī* form. She is in the form of supreme knowledge that is beyond comprehension.

Vijñātrī विज्ञात्री (651)

She is the knower. She knows all. Knowing it all is an exclusive quality of the Brahman. *Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad* (II.iv.14) explains this. "Through what should one know That, owing to which all this is known. Through what, should one know the

Knower?" Here That and Knower mean the Brahman. A Self-realised person could discriminate between Real from unreal. There remains only the subject, which is Absolute and without a second. She is that Absolute form, an embodiment of knowledge.

Vedyavarjitā वेद्यवर्जिता (652)

She has nothing to know, again a quality of the Brahman. She is omniscient. This is an affirmation to the previous nāma.

Yoginī योगिनी (653)

She is the in the form of yoga. Yoga means the union of Self and self. She stands united with *Śiva*. Yoga is the process of harmonising body, mind and soul with an intent to free the soul from bondage that leads to its final liberation. Final liberation of the soul is also known as emancipation, salvation, etc.

This nāma could also be referring to the *yogini*-s who preside over the nine *āvaraṇa-s* (roundabouts) of *Śrī Cakra*.

Yogini also refers to a particular time-effect in Indian astrology.

Yogini-s like *ḍākinī* control seven *cakra*-s of the cerebro-spinal system that has already been discussed in this *Sahasranāma* (introduction to *yogini*-s and in nāma-s 475 to 534)

Yogadā योगदा (654)

She bestows yoga on Her devotees. The desire for yoga (union of soul with God) arises because of Her grace.

Yogyā योग्या (655)

She can be attained by yoga. She is yoga Herself, She is the giver of yoga and can be attained by yoga. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (I.12) says that one has to know the Brahman residing within and affirms that there is nothing higher than the knowledge that is required to

know the Brahman. The enjoyer (nāma 653), the object of enjoyment (present nāma) and the provider of enjoyment (nāma 654) are all Brahman.

Kṛṣṇa says (*Bhagavad Gīta*VI.23) "That state called yoga, which is free from the contract of sorrow, should be known and should be resolutely practiced with an unwearied mind."

Sage *Patañjali* says in his *yoga sūtra* (I.2) "Yoga is the control of the urges, modifications or tendencies that arise out of the mind stuff."

Kṛṣṇa explains yoga in *Bhagavad Gīta* in an elaborate manner.

Yogānandā योगानन्दा (656)

She is in the form of bliss that is attained through yoga. She attains bliss when She attains *Śiva*. We derive bliss when we attain Her. Till the stage of bliss two different objects are required and if one transcends bliss, there exists only One, no second. It is said that the stage of deep sleep is the typical example of bliss, where one is totally disconnected from the external world. Internally the mind alone ceases to function and all other biological organs continue to function. This stage is known as *yoga* + *ānanda* or *yogānandā*. *Nārasiṃha* (*Narasiṃha*) avatar of *Viṣṇu* is also known as *Yogānanda*.

Yogānandā is the combination of *ayoga* + *nanda*. *Ayoga* means without attachment. *Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad* (III.ix.26) says, "It is imperceptible, for It is never perceived. It is imperishable, because It never decays. It is unattached, because It is never attached." *Nanda* refers to the river Ganges. *Nanda* also refers to Her birth to *Nandagopan* (*Śrīmad Bhāgavata*). River *Sarasvatī* at the foot of Himalayas is also known as *Nanda*. *Nanda* also refers to certain lunar days. *Nanda* also means happiness. Then the nāma means that She remains in the state of bliss without any attachment.

This could also mean that one can attain the state of bliss if one remains unattached to the materialistic world.

Yugandharā युगन्धरा (657)

Yuga means a time period. The existence of the universe is divided into four time periods. Several years form a *yuga*. The four *yuga*-s are 1. *Kṛita* or *Satya*, 2. *Tretā*, 3. *Dvāpara*, 4. *Kali*, of which the first three have already elapsed, while the *Kali* began at midnight between the 17th and 18th of Feb. 3102 B. C. Each *yuga* said to consist of thousands of years forming a cycle and the total period of all *yuga*-s is 4.32 million years. At the end of this cycle, *mahā-pralaya* or the great dissolution (annihilation) takes place and the next cycle of creation begins. She is the controller of this cycle of time.

The word *yuga* also means yoke or a connection between two objects of the same group or a pair. In this context it can be said that She connects *Śiva* with Herself. This goes to prove the fact either *Śiva* or *Śaktī* as an independent entity cannot function without this yoke.

Icchāśakti-jñānaśakti-kriyāśakti-svarūpiṇī इच्छाशक्ति-ज्ञानशक्ति-क्रियाशक्ति-स्वरूपिणी (658)

She is in the form of three energies – the energy of will, the energy of wisdom and the energy of action. These energies form a part of *trīśikā*. *Trīśikā* (*tri* + *iśikā*) means analysis of three. *Tri* means three and *iśikā* means *Īśvarī*, the power, abiding in divine consciousness. She is the controller of all triads in the process of creation. For example, the three acts of the Brahman, creation, sustenance and dissolution. Though She is said to be *Īśvarī* of creation, etc, She is not different from *Śiva*. The supreme divine consciousness on the point of expansion according to Her inherent nature is *Icchā śakthi*. The actual process of expansion is *jñāna śakti* and the process of diversity leading to creation of the universe

is *kriyā śakti*. The One who is the possessor of all three *śakti-s* or energies is known as *parā-śakti* or the Supreme energy.

Śrī Tantrālokaḥ (III.111) says "When the power of action reflects upon *soma* (the essence of ecstasy), *sūrya* (the sun) and *agni* (the fire) and we attain the indivisible Light that is our absolute *bindu*." When *kriyā Śaktī* is accomplished in the phases represented by *icchā śaktī* and *jñāna śaktī*, in the inner manifestation, the Supreme Reality of *Śiva* is realized.

Sarvādhārā सर्वाधारा (659)

She supports everything in this universe or everything rests on Her. She supports the universe with the aid of three energies discussed in the previous nāma. She is in the form of both gross matters and subtle matters (Her subtlest form is *kuṇḍalinī*). All that exists between these two extremes are supported by Her. She has the will to support, She has the knowledge to support and She supports with Her actions (creation, sustenance and dissolution).

Supratiṣṭā सुप्रतिष्टा (660)

She is the foundation of all existence. This nāma signifies that without Her will, knowledge and action none can exist. Foundation is deeper than support. *Kṛṣṇa* says (*Bhagavad Gīta* VIII.20, 21) "Beyond this Unmanifest, there is yet another unmanifest Existence, that Supreme Divine Person, who does not perish even though all beings perish. The same Unmanifest which has been spoken of as the Indestructible is also called the supreme goal; that again is My supreme abode, attaining which, they return not to this mortal world."

Sadasad-rūpa-dhāriṇī सदसद्-रूप-धारिणी (661)

She is in the form of *sat* and *asat*. *Sat* means permanent and *asat* means not permanent. There is nothing permanent except the Brahman, therefore Brahman is *sat*. All are impermanent except the

Brahman and therefore the universe with all its existence is *asat*. She is in the form of both permanent and impermanent or existent and non-existent. Impermanency is the product of permanency.

Taittirīya Upaniṣad (II.vii) says, "At first there was no world. There was only Brahman. The world was then in Brahman, who was unmanifested. The world, with all its names and forms then manifested itself." The exact wording of the *Upaniṣad* is '*idam agre asat vai asit.* (*idam* – this phenomenal world; *agre* – originally; *asat vai asit* – was non-existent.)

Chāndogya Upaniṣad (VI.ii.2) asks, "What proof is there for this that from nothing something has emerged? Before this universe came into existence, there was only one existence without a second."

Sage *Patañjali* also says, (I.9) "Verbal delusion follows from words having no corresponding reality."

This nāma says that *asat* came into being from *sat* or the universe came into existence from the Brahman. If the Brahman is known as *Śiva*, then the universe is known as *Śaktī*. There is no difference between *Śiva* and *Śaktī* (refer nāma 999). Impermanency follows permanency or *asat* follows *sat*. *Sat* and *asat* coexist. If they do not co-exist, then there is neither Brahman nor universe. *Sat* and *asat* are human perception but in reality they are not different. *Asat* is the mirror image of *sat*.

Aṣṭamūrtiḥ अष्टमूर्तिः (662)

She is eight fold. Both *Śiva* and *Śaktī* are eight fold. Eight forms of *Śiva* are *Bhava, Śarva, Īśāna, Paśupati, Rudra, Ugra, Bhīma and Maha. Śaktī's* eight forms are known through *Brāhmī, Māheśvarī, Kaumāri, Vaiśnavī, Vārahī, Māhendri, Cāmundā and Mahālakṣmī.* It is said that a soul is divided into eight categories based on the quality of the soul. If soul is embedded with more *karma*-s, it is not considered as pure and the soul with least *karmic* account is

considered as pure. The purest forms of the souls are not born in the earth, but born as angels or super human forms. Taking these as the two extremes, the eight forms of the soul are classified as follows. 1. Soul or *jīva*, 2. Inner self or *antarātman*, 3. Supreme Self or *Paramātman*, 4. untainted-*ātman* or *nirmalātman*, 5. pure self or *śudhātman*, 6. knowledgeable self or *jñānātman*, 7. great self or *mahātman*, 8. basic self or *bhūtātman*.

The five basic elements and sun, moon and soul are considered as the eight types of bodies. The authors of this *Sahasranāma* are eight *Vāc Devi*-s.

Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad Gīta*(VII.4 and 5) "Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, reason and ego constitute my eightfold. This indeed is My lower nature." When *Kṛṣṇa* says lower nature, naturally there has to be a higher nature which is known as the Supreme Consciousness or the Brahman.

Based on the principle of omnipresent nature of the Brahman, whatever form of existence is the beingness of the Brahman only. These eight dimensional forms or attributes merge together to form the Brahman. It would be wise to say that these eight dimensional forms originated from the Brahman and each of the eight forms of *Śiva* or *Śaktī* represents an aspect of the Brahman. Be it multidimensional or non-dimensional, every part of existence is Her form only, which is in conformity of Her omnipresent nature.

Ajā-jetrī अजा-जेत्री (663)

Ajā means ignorance and *jetri* means victory. She has overcome ignorance. After all, She is the embodiment of knowledge and where is the question of ignorance in Her?

Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (IV.5) uses the word *ajā* frequently. It says "Nature creates creatures like Her (which means all the living beings are represented by Her). They are made up of fire, water and earth. An ignorant man is drawn towards the sense world and

happily remains there. But a knowledgeable man from his earlier experience rejects the world of senses." Therefore, knowledge means the ability to discriminate between good and bad. This capacity to discriminate is known as knowledge. This nāma says that She helps Her devotees to gain this knowledge.

The above *Upaniṣad* also says that *aja* is a state without manifestation, possibly indicating the stage of *avyaktā* (nāma 398).

Loga-yātrā-vidhāyinī लोग-यात्रा-विधायिनी (664)

The three acts of God are referred as *loga-yātrā* which means the journey of the world. A physical body begins its journey into this world by birth, nourished by the act of sustenance and destroyed by death. This happens continuously. A soul born in a form today enters another form after the death of the physical body. This process continues. There are exceptional souls that are not reborn. This nāma says that She is responsible for this cycle of birth-death-rebirth.

Ekākinī एकाकिनी (665)

She is alone. All the three acts of Divine creation, sustenance and dissolution are done by Her all alone. *Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad* says (I.iv.2) 'If there is nothing else except me, what I am afraid of.' This is the advantage of being alone. Fear is a major impediment in spiritual progress.

Chāndogya Upaniṣad (VI.ii.1) says "*ekam eva advitiyam*" which means 'the one without a second'. Before the manifestation of the universe, creation was in the form of *avyaktā* without a second. She exists without anyone else co-existing with Her. This can be viewed from another angle as well. All the living beings in this universe are nothing but the reflections of the Brahman, who is all alone. The fact of Brahman being all alone is discussed in all *Upaniṣad-s*.

Kaṭha Upaniṣad says (II.ii.9) 'The same Self is in every living being that are different in forms. Due to our ignorance we consider every living being as different'.

Rig Veda (I.164.46) says "*ekaṁ sad viprā bahudha vadanty"* which means 'learned call One by many names'.

Viṣṇu Sahasranāma nāma 725 is '*ekahā'* which conveys the same meaning.

This nāma says that the entire administration of the universe is being carried out exclusively by Her. She need not consult another person for any of Her acts. The question may now arise about other deities that are spoken of in this *Sahasranāma*. They merely follow up the work initiated by Her. There is difference between decision and implementation. She decides and others implement.

Bhūmarūpā भूमरूपा (666)

Bhūma means the Brahman. She is in the form of Brahman. Having discussed the qualities of the Brahman in the previous nāma-s, once again *Vāc Devi*-s confirm Her as the Brahman.

Brahma Sūtra (I.iii.8) says, "*Bhūman*" which means infinite. There is no difference between Brahman and *Bhūma*.

Chāndogya Upaniṣad (VII.23) says "*Yah vai bhūma tat sukham*" which means that which is infinite that is happiness. The *Upaniṣad* further says "there is no happiness in the finite and happiness is only in the infinite. But one must try to understand the nature of That infinite." For understanding the infinite only meditation coupled with self enquiry alone helps.

Kūrma Purāṇa says that one energy, the wife of *Śiva* becomes many through limitation and She does the entire acts in His presence like a play. Limitation means limiting factors of size, shape, form, qualities that are applicable to all living beings. No living species

can ever cross the prescribed limitations. Limitlessness or infinity is the quality of the Brahman.

Nirdvaitā निर्द्वैता (667)

She is without duality. *Dvaita* means two, which means dualism. There are three types of *Vedantic* schools. The first one is *dvaita*, the second one is *viśiṣṭādvaita* or qualified non-dualism and the third one is *advaita* or non-dualism. Broadly there are three ways of realising the Supreme Self. In duality or *dvaita* God, soul and cosmos are considered as different. In non-dualism (*nir-dvaita*) or *advaita* God, soul and cosmos are the same and soul is not different from God. Souls appear as different because of *māyā*. In *viśiṣṭādvaita* or qualified non-dualism accepts God, soul and cosmos and the latter two depend upon God for existence. If God is not there, soul and cosmos are not there.

This nāma says that She is the Brahman without duality, which was earlier confirmed in nāma 665. Brahman is the lonesome factor in *advaita*.

Dvaita-varjitā द्वैत-वर्जिता (668)

She is devoid of duality. The philosophy of *dvaita* considers the Brahman and soul as different. This nāma is an extension of the previous nāma and confirms Her status as the Brahman. Brahman is devoid of duality, as all beings are only Her reflections. Duality or *dvaita* will not lead to Self-realisation.

Annadā अन्नदा (669)

'*Annam*' means food. She is the provider of food to the universe for its sustenance. *Annam* originates from its root word '*ad*' meaning 'to eat'. 'Whatever beings exist in this world are products of food. They are sustained by food and in the end they dissolve into food. Food is called the remedy of all ills of living beings', says *Taittirīya*

Upaniṣad (II.2). Her act of sustenance is affirmed through this nāma.

Vasudā वसुदा (670)

She is the giver of wealth. *Vasu* means precious metals, stones and that kind of wealth. *Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad* (IV.iv.24) says "that great, birth-less Self is the eater of food and the giver of wealth. He who knows this as such receives wealth". The *Upaniṣad* further says that the 'birth-less Self' is to be meditated upon to derive the result (wealth).

Vasu has other meanings as well such as excellent, good and beneficent. It also refers to eight types of Vedic gods whose chief is Lord *Indra*. Vedic gods represent each aspect of natural phenomena. For example, water is represented by *Varuṇa* also known as *Āpa*. According to *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, the eight *Vasu-s* are 1. *Āpa* (water) 2. *Dhruva*, the Pole-star. 3. *Soma*, the Moon 4. *Dhava* or *Dhara*. 5. *Anila*, the wind 6. *Anala* or *Pāvaka*, the fire 7. *Pratyusha*, the dawn and 8. *Prabhāsa*, the light.

Vṛddhā वृद्धा (671)

Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (IV.3) says "You are a woman, you are a man, you are a boy and you are also a girl. You are an old person walking with the support of a stick. You are born in all possible forms". This is one of the finest interpretations of "I am That".

This nāma says that She is the oldest, because She is *mūlaprakṛtiḥ* (nāma 397) and *ādi śaktī* (nāma 615). Being born as the first, She is said to be oldest. *Śiva* created Her and She created others. But She is beyond aging, a process applicable to all mortals. She is beyond modifications. This nāma means Her primordial nature.

Brahmātmaikya-svarūpiṇī ब्रह्मात्मैक्य-स्वरूपिणी (672)

We have to look at the beauty of this *Sahasranāma*. *Vāc Devi*-s after having discussed about the qualities of the Brahman now say that She is in the form of 'Brahman-soul' *aikya* (merger or union) form. Realising "*ahaṁ Brahmaṁ asmi* " which means "I am the Brahman" is the end of spiritual pursuits.

The nāma can be arranged as follows. *Brahman + ātman + aikya + sva + rūpiṇī*. Brahman means *Śiva*, *ātman* means *jīva* or the soul, *aikya* means combined, *sva* means *haṃsa mantra* and *rūpiṇi* means Her form. This means that She is in the form of *haṃsa mantra*, which unites the self with the Self (soul with the Brahman). This concept is referred to in *Lalitā triśatī* nāma 173 '*haṃsa-mantra-artha- rūpiṇī* which means that She is the import of *haṃsa mantra*, where '*ha*' means *Śaktī* and '*sa*' means *Śiva*. The mental recitation of this *mantra* is related to inhalation and exhalation. When one could synchronize this *mantra* with his inhalation and exhalation of 21600 times a day, he realizes the Self. It is calculated that one inhalation and exhalation under normal circumstances takes about 4 seconds. In a minute there are 15 such inhalations/exhalations. In one hour (15 x 60) there are 900 inhalations/exhalations. In day (900 x 24) we breathe 21600 times. When *haṃsa mantra* is synchronised with our breath, we recite this *mantra* 21600 times daily. This is also known as *ajapa japa*. *Ajapa* means automatically.

This nāma says that She is 'That' representing Brahman in the form of Brahman and representing *ātman* also in the form of Brahman thereby proving that everything that exists in this universe is the Brahman. This is *advaita* philosophy.

Bṛhatī बृहती (673)

She is great. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (I.ii.20) says *mahato mahīyān* which means bigger than the biggest.

Bṛhatī also refers to thirty six syllable metre.

Brāhmaṇī ब्राह्मणी (674)

Śiva belongs to *Brahmin* community. Hence He is called *Brāahmaṇā* and his wife is *Brāahmaṇī*. It is like *Bhairava* and *Bhairavī*. "May I attain the fame of a Brahmin" asks *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VIII.14). *Brahmin-s* are those who are well versed in *Brāhmaṇa* (Vedic rituals) or one who has knowledge about the Brahman is known as *Brahmin*. Caste as religious doctrine of Hindu philosophy is often misinterpreted.

Bhagavad Gīta (XVIII.42) gives a definition of *Brahmin*: "Serenity (controlling mind from running into world-of-objects seeking sense enjoyment), self-restraint (controlling the sense organs which are the gateways through which external world of stimuli infiltrates into our mental domain and mars our peace), austerity (conscious physical self-denial in order to economise the expenditure of human energy so lavishly spent in the wrong channels of sense-indulgence and conserving it for reaching the higher unfoldment within called *tapas*, purity (both external cleanliness and internal purity), forbearance (to be patient and forgiving and thus to live without struggling even against wrongs done against one), uprightness (this is the quality which make an individual straightforward in all his dealings and his uprightness makes him fearless in life), knowledge (about the highest goal of life, of the nature of spirit, in short, knowledge of all that the *Upaniṣads* deal with), wisdom (knowledge digested and assimilated brings home to man an inward experience and thereafter, he comes to live his life, guided by this deep inner experience. Knowledge can be imparted, but wisdom is to be found by the individual in himself), faith (unless one has a deep faith in what one has studied and lived, the living itself will not be enthusiastic and full)." These are the words of *Swami Chinmayananda* in his book *The holy Geeta*.

Brāhmī ब्राह्मी (675)

Brāhmī is the Goddess of speech and also known as *Sarasvatī*. *Brāhmī* is said to be the feminine gender of Brahman. *Brahman – Brāhmī*. This is like *Bhairava* and *Bhairavī*. She is one of the *aṣṭa mātā-s*.

Brahmānandā ब्रह्मानन्दा (676)

She is in the form of eternal bliss. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (III.6) says "He came to know that bliss is Brahman, for it is from bliss that all these beings are born. Having been born, these are supported by bliss and when they perish they go back to bliss and disappear into it". This is the bliss that is realized in the sheath of knowledge says this *Upaniṣad*.

Bali-priyā बलि-प्रिया (677)

Bali means offering daily, a portion of a meal to all creatures. This is also known as *bhūta yajñā*. She is fond of those who make such offerings to creatures daily (refer nāma 946. *pañca yajñā priyā*). *Bhūta yajñā* is one of the five *yajñā-s*.

Bali also means mighty warriors who are able to win over internal and external enemies. Internal enemies are senses and mind. For enlightenment, one needs strong physical body and mind. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (III.ii.4) says "Ātman is not attained by those who do not have strength". *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (II.viii) also uses words such as *dṛḍhiṣṭhaḥ* meaning well built and *baliṣṭhaḥ* meaning very strong, the two among many requirements to have an idea of happiness that the Brahman represents. She is fond of such people who have physical as well as mental strength to realise Her.

Bali also means offerings made to other gods and goddesses. She is fond of such offerings made to Her assistants as all gods and goddesses are ruled by Her.

Bhāṣā-rūpā भाषा-रूपा (678)

She is in the form of languages. Languages are the source of learning and understanding through sound. This nāma implies that She is the cause for learning and understanding. She is the *Śabda Brahman*. It is said that *Śaktī* represents sound and *Śiva* represents meaning. *Śiva* and *Śaktī* are united like word and its meaning. When word and its meaning are separated, the word or the sound becomes meaningless. They are interdependent. So are *Śiva* and *Śaktī*.

Bṛhat-senā बृहत्-सेना (679)

She has a mighty army. She administers the universe with the help of this army. This nāma is to be read along with nāma 677.

Bhāvābhāva-vivarjitā भावाभाव-विवर्जिता (680)

She is free from existence as well as non-existence. *Bhāva* and *abhāva* are the terms of *Vedanta*. *Bhāva* means existence and *abhāva* means non-existence. Experimentation and observation, rather than theory of existence is *bhāva*. *Māyā* or illusion is the material cause for *abhāva* or non-existence. *Abhāva* is of four types. 1. *Prāgabhāva*: Non-existence of a thing prior to its production. Cloth is made out of yarn. When yarn existed, cloth did not exist. Yarn was transformed into cloth. 2. *Dhvaṁsābhāva*: Non-existence after destruction. Yarn in its original form did not exist after cloth was produced. 3. *Atyantābhāva*: Absolute non-existence. According to *advaita* philosophy, only the Brahman is the absolute non-existence. 4. *Anyonyābhāva*: Mutual non-existence. For example a pot is not cloth, nor is a piece of cloth a pot. This is known as 'this is not that'. *Upaniṣad-s* elucidate Brahman by saying 'not this, not this' (*neti, neti*). An ignorant man considers soul as different from the Brahman. But according to *advaita*, soul and the Brahman are the same. They are considered as different because of ignorance or *avidyā*.

Abhāva or non-existence of an object or an attribute is cognized neither by sense perception nor by inference, but is known directly

by its non-apprehension or non-perception. *Brahma Sūtra* (II.ii.28) says "*nābhāva upalabdheḥ* नाभाव उपलब्धेः" which means that external objects are non-existent, for they are perceived. This talks about internal awareness through which alone the Existent can be realized.

This nāma says that She is both existent, eternal and non-perishable (the Brahman) and non-existent limited and perishable (*māyā*).

Sukhārādhyā सुखाराध्या (681)

She can be worshipped without undergoing any difficulties. For example, fasting, walking on fire, etc. When someone is harming his body during worship, he harms Her (in literal sense) within. Body should not be made to suffer while seeking Her within. A healthy body is pre-requisite for Self-realisation. Only ignorant people choose to afflict their bodies in the name of asceticism. Body is like a temple, heart chakra is sanctum-sanctorum and the Brahman within is the idol.

Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad Gīta* (XVII.6) "Those men who perform stern austerities, not enjoined by the scripture, due to hypocrisy and egoism, impelled by desire and attachment, who torment the elements (*pañcabhūta*-s or five elements), in the body, know these ignorant people, to be demoniacal resolves."

While worshipping Her, none should cause harm to his body, as this amounts causing injury to Her within (though She is incapable of being injured. If one develops such feelings of oneness with the Divine, realisation automatically happens). Nothing is achieved by fasting or other austerities. But this does not mean that one can overindulge. Ultimately, it is only the meditation coupled with moderation lead to Self-realization.

Subhakarī सुभकरी (682)

One may nurse doubts that by not following austerities, She may cause harm. In order to avert this confusion, *Vāc Devi*-s have

placed this nāma here. She always does good things for Her devotees. This nāma says that even if She is imperfectly worshipped, She does only auspicious things for Her worshippers. After all She is *Śrī Mātā*. What is required in Her worship is True Love for Her. Mere thought about Her brings auspiciousness.

Śiva means auspiciousness. She is *Śiva*'s consort and hence She provides auspiciousness.

Śobhanā-sulabhā-gatiḥ शोभना-सुलभा-गतिः (683)

This nāma is an extension of the previous nāma. What type auspiciousness does She give? This nāma answers this question. *Śobhana* means anything propitious or auspicious (the underlying meaning is liberation), *sulabh* means easily accessible or attainable and *gati* means path. The path of worshipping Her easily provides salvation or liberation. Technically *mokṣa* is different from salvation. In the case of *mokṣa* the soul is reborn after remaining dormant for some time in the Heavens. This period of its sojourn depends upon its positive *karmic* account. If this is exhausted, the soul is born again to undergo the negative *karmic* account. But in the case of liberation, the soul is eternally freed from births and deaths by merging with the Brahman.

Nāma 462 *Śobhanā* meaning the beauty embodied and endowed with auspiciousness. Nāma 972 is *aśobhanā* also meaning beautiful. *Śobhan* in Sanskrit means shining, splendid, beautiful, lovely, good, auspiciousness, fortunate, lustre, brilliant, etc. *Vāc Devi*-s have used *śobhanā* three times in this *Sahasranāma* and each of them conveys different meanings.

Some divide this nāma into two nāma-s: *Śobhanā* and *sulabhā-gatiḥ*. Some others divide this into three nāms: *Śobhana*, *sulabha* and *agatiḥ*. In whatever manner this nāma is divided, there is no significant change in the meaning.

It is also said that one who got initiated into *Pañcadaśī* and *ṣodaśī mantra*-s by the right Guru is not reborn.

Rāja-rājeśvarī राज-राजेश्वरी (684)

Nāma-s 684 to 689 begin with *Rāja*

She is *Īśvarī* for *Brahma, Viṣṇu* and *Rudra* who are known as *Rāja*-s or kings. *Kubera*, the god of wealth is also known as *Rājā-rāja*. Since She is worshipped by him, She is known as *Rāja-rājeśvarī*. *Śiva* is *Rājarājeśvarā* and His consort is *Rājarājeśvarī*.

Ādi Śaṅakarā describes *Rājarājeśvarī* in his *Śrī Mantra Mātṛkā Puṣpamālā* as follows. "The one who has *akṣara hrīṁ* as the last *bīja* of each of three *kūṭa*-s of *Pañcadaśī mantra*, the one who is fond of *saṃyā*, a type of mental worship, the one who considers all beings as Her family and being worshiped through *haṁsa* (*ajapa mantra*) *mantra* in tantric way, the one who is in the form of compassion known as *Kāmākṣī*, the one who is known through the *bīja śrīṁ* (श्रीं) of *śodaśī mantra* (If *śrīṁ* is added to *Pañcadaśī mantra*, the fifteen lettered *Pañcadaśī mantra*, becomes sixteen lettered *śodaśī mantra*. But in application, *śodaśī mantra* is recited in a different way. Please refer nāma 587), the one who is in the form of three Gods, *Brahma, Viṣṇu* and *Rudra* and the one who derives immense happiness in *Śrī Cakra* worship, I bow to this *Rājarājeśvarī*."

Rājya-dāyinī राज्य-दायिनी (685)

Rājya-dāyinī means the one who is the giver of right to live in territories like *Vaikuṇṭha* (the abode of *Viṣṇu*) or *Kailāsa* (the abode of *Śiva*). Since She is the administrator of the universe, the destinations of the souls are decided by Her. The souls with good karmic account rest in dominions like *Vaikuṇṭha* and *Kailāsa*. This does not mean that these souls will not be incarnated. They will be born again after the expiry of their good *karmic* account. This process is called *mokṣa*. Liberation of the soul is different, where

the soul merges with the Brahman not to be reborn again. Liberation can be attained only if there is no balance in *karmic* account, either good or bad. If one has the worst *karmic* account, his soul reaches the hell and undergoes sufferings and born again.

Rājya-vallabhā राज्य-वल्लभा (686)

She is *Rājarājeśvarī*, the queen of queens and capable of administering the universe. *Brahma*, *Viṣṇu*, *Rudra*, *Indra* and other gods and goddesses live in *Śrī Cakra*, the abode of *Lalitāmbikā*. It can be said that *Rājya* in these nāma-s refer to *Śrī Cakra*, where the entire gods and goddesses live. She is the ruler of *Śrī Cakra*, the abode of all gods and goddesses. This nāma is in confirmation of nāma 684.

Rājat-kṛpā राजत्-कृपा (687)

She is embodiment of radiating compassion, the primary quality of *Śrī Mātā*. *Kṛpā* means compassion.

Rājapīṭha-niveśita-nijāśritā राजपीठ-निवेशित-निजाश्रिता (688)

She establishes Her devotees in thrones. It is said in *Śrī Devi Mahātmya* (XV.19-21) that She had offered thrones to those who had surrendered unto Her. By offering corporeal prosperities like thrones, She tests one's will power to resist materialistic temptations. If one chooses to ignore such material gains, She gives them a place in Her domain. This is how gods and goddesses were offered places in *Śrī Cakra*. Please refer to the quotation from *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* in nāma 693.

Rājayalakṣmīḥ राजयलक्ष्मीः (689)

Entire universe is Her *Rājya* or kingdom. Her kingdom has no territories, as the boundary of this universe is beyond human comprehension and infinite. She holds the entire wealth of this

universe. This nama originates from *Rājarājeśvarī* (684) as only the Supreme authority can control the wealth of the universe.

Kośanāthā कोशनाथा (690)

Kośa means the wealth of a government. Since She is in total control of various *Rājya-s* or kingdoms, She is known as *Kośanāthā*.

Kośa also means sheaths of physical body. As per *Vedānta* philosophy, there are five superimposed layers covering the human soul. Nāma 428 discussed about five *kośa-s* which means sheaths or layers or coverings. They are *prāṇa-maya kośa, mano-maya kośa, vijñāna-maya kośa*, *ānanda-maya kośa and anna-maya kośa*. The Self-illuminating *Ātman* inside our self is covered by these layers or coverings. She is in the form of That *Ātman*

Caturaṅga-baleśvarī चतुरङ्ग-बलेश्वरी (691)

Caturaṅga means four. She has the mighty army of cavalry, elephants, chariots and infantry. Internally, it means *antaḥkaraṇa* (internal tools) consisting of mind, intellect, conscience (lower level of consciousness) and ego. Either way, She rules army (external) as well as *antaḥkaraṇa* (internal). *Antaḥkaraṇa* of a person is very powerful like an army and can wreck mayhem.

Sāmrājya-dāyinī साम्राज्य-दायिनी (692)

Nāma 685 is *Rājya-dāyinī* and this nāma is *Sāmrājya-dāyinī*. *Sāmrājya* is higher than *Rājya*. *Rājya* is a kingdom ruled by a king or queen and *Sāmrājya* is the combination of many *Rājya-s* or kingdoms, known as empire.

Assuming that kingdoms of *Brahma*, *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva* as *Rājya-s*, Her domain, encompassing these three worlds. *Brahma loka, Vaikuṇṭha and Kailāsa* is *Śrī Cakra*. She offers a place in *Śrī Cakra* to those who worship Her with dedication. In *Śrī Cakra*, between ninth and

tenth forts, *siddha*-s (sages and saints) reside, reciting verses in Her praise. Therefore *Sāmrājya* means *Śrī Cakra*.

There is a *yajñā* called *Rājasūya yajñā*. This *yajñā* is performed only be emperors and great rulers. The one who performed this *yajñā* is called *samrāṭ*. She is the bestower of *samrāṭ* as without Her grace *Rājasūya yajñā* is not possible.

Taittirīya Upaniṣad (I.vi.2) says, *āpnoti svārājyam,* which means 'realising his identity with the Brahman'. *Sāmrājya* is possible for those who have established their identities with the Brahman. They are known as Self-realized persons.

Satyasandhā सत्यसन्धा (693)

She has determination towards truth therefore She determines everything based on truth only. This nāma talks about the importance of Truth in Her administration. The vows made by Her cannot be defeated by any other force in this universe. She makes vow to sustain this universe as *Śrī Mātā.*

Chāndogya Upaniṣad (VIII.i.5) says *satyakāmaḥ* meaning love of Truth and *satyasaṅkalpaḥ* which means committed to Truth. The *Upaniṣad* says 'It is the cause of love of Truth and the cause of dedication to Truth. If a person strictly follows whatever the ruler of a country commands, he may then get as a reward some land, or even an estate.'

Śrīmad Bhāgavata (X.iii.25) says 'We seek shelter in you....prompter of truthful speech as well as undifferentiating vision consisting of Truth, which is the highest means of attaining you.'

Viṣṇu Sahasranāma 510 is also *Satyasandhā*. This nāma gives extreme importance to Truth.

Sāgara-mekhalā सागर-मेखला (694)

She wears the girdle made of oceans. The famous saying of *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (I.ii.20) *aṇoḥ aṇīyān mahataḥ mahīyān* which means that the Brahman is smaller than the smallest and bigger than the biggest. Irrespective of the size of beings, they all come from the Supreme Self. In this context, this nāma describes Her as bigger than the biggest. That is why *Vāc Devi*-s talk about oceans, the huge water bodies forming Her girdle. Being the controller of the universe, this nāma says that She is in the form of earth, one of the planets of this universe and the entire water bodies of the planet earth forming Her girdle.

From nāma 684 *Rājarājeśsvarī* till this nāma described the qualities of *Rājarājeśsvarī*.

Dīkṣitā दीक्षिता (695)

A guru can give *dīkṣā* to his disciples. *Dīkṣā* is also known as initiation. In *Śrī vidyā* cult, first a *mantra* is initiated and depending upon the progress of the disciple *dīkṣā* is given purely at the discretion of guru. At that time a *dīkṣā* name is also conferred on the disciple like *Ānandānanda*, *Kṛṣṇānanda*, etc. As a principle, all such *dīkṣā* names end with *ānanda,* indicating the stage of bliss. Generally, *dīkṣā* is given based upon one's knowledge that is required to realise the Brahman. This nāma says that She gives *dīkṣā* to Her disciples, in Her capacity as guru. Her status of guru was already discussed in nāma 603 *gurumūrtiḥ*. During initiation of *mantra*, sins of the disciple are destroyed. As She is an embodiment of compassion, She gives *dīkṣā* to Her devotees in order to absolve them of their sins. (This interpretation contradicts the Law of *Karma* which is also known as the Law of the Lord, which says, that the Brahman does not overrule His own laws. Sometimes, poetization permits these types of descriptions.) This nāma probably says that the guru who initiates is in Her form as *Śrī vidyā* cult does not differentiate between guru, *mantra* and *devatā*. These three are considered as a single entity.

Daitya-śamanī दैत्य-शमनी (696)

She is the destroyer of demons. Demons mean evil forces (anger, lust, etc) operating within, thereby preventing Self-realisation. She destroys such evil forces. The very thought of Her is capable of destroying mental adversities.

Sarva-loka-vaśankari सर्व-लोक-वशंकरी (697)

She subjugates all the worlds. *Gāyatrī mantra* talks about three worlds, *bhūḥ bhuvaḥ* and *suvaḥ*. But the *Brahhma Gāyatrī mantra* refers to seven worlds. They are *bhūḥ, bhuvaḥ, suvaḥ, mahaḥ, janaḥ, tapaḥ* and *satyaṁ*. *Satya* (Truth) *loka* (world) is the abode of the Brahman and *bhūh* is the earth. One has to move from the lowest world of *bhūh* to the highest world of *satyaṁ*. These worlds mean the different levels of consciousness. Since She is the Supreme administrator of the universe, Her authority of subjugation is implied.

Sarvārtha-dātrī सर्वार्थ-दात्री (698)

She is the bestower of all human desires. There is a specific way of leading human life through *puruṣārtha*-s which means the end of human life. The end becomes complete only if one lives as per *puruṣārtha*-s which comprises of *dharma* (righteousness), *artha* (wealth), *kāma* (desire) and *mokṣa* (the liberation). These are known as *caturvidha puruṣārtha*-s. Literally speaking *puruṣārtha*-s mean 'what is sought by men'. Out of these four, *dharma* and *mokṣa* are the purpose of Vedas as they explain their true nature and guide one to properly understand these two. These two are therefore considered as supreme among the four *puruṣārtha*-s and considered as spiritual in nature. The other two *puruṣārtha*-s, *artha* and *kāma* do not necessarily mean lower values. But the path of pursuing these two makes all the difference. If they are pursued with passion and desire, they become dangerous and if they are pursued for the purpose of simpatico existence, they are considered as benevolent.

This nāma says that She is the provider of all such *puruṣārtha*-s. She provides this as the Supreme empress or *Rājarājeśvarī* (nāma 684) and *Śrī Mātā* (nāma 1).

Sāvitrī सावित्री (699)

She is in the form of *Devi Sāvitrī*. *Gāyatrī mantra* consists of *vyāhṛti* of *bhūḥ, bhuvaḥ* and *svaḥ* and twenty four lettered *Gāyatrī mantra*. This twenty four lettered *Gāyatrī mantra* is known as *Sāvitrī*.

Śiva is known as *Savitā* meaning the Creator and His wife is *Sāvitrī*. Sun is also known as *Savitā* and *Sāvitrī*. There is an *Upaniṣad* called *Sāvitrī Upaniṣad*'. It says *Agni* is *Savitā* and air is *Sāvitrī*. God of water *Varuṇa* is *Savitā* and water is *Sāvitrī*. Air is *Savitā* and *ākāś* is *Sāvitrī*. Therefore, it can be understood that *Savitā* and *Sāvitrī* are the combined factors of Creation and mean *Śiva* and *Śaktī*. She is addressed in this nāma as the Creator. This nāma also means Her purity and hence She is worshipped by all gods and goddesses. Purity of thought and action is reflected in the body of a person, particularly his face, making him worthy of worship.

Saccidānanda-rūpiṇī सच्चिदानन्द-रूपिणी (700)

She is in the form of *sat-cit- ānanda*. These three qualities constitute the Brahman. *Sat* means the existence, *Cit* means pure consciousness and *ānanda* means infinite bliss. In reality, these are not the constituents of the Brahman, as Brahman is without any attributes. They are the three fold aspects of the Brahman. But at the human level, they appear as separate attributes due to illusion or *māyā*. They succeed one after another during spiritual quest. First, the existence is realised, second the level of consciousness is improved to higher planes by purifying it and finally bliss is realised. This is the reason for realising them as individual attributes in a human being. In the Brahman they remain united as a single aspect.

This nāma reaffirms Her status as the Brahman.

Deśa-kālā-paricchinnā देश-काला-परिच्छिन्ना (701)

She is not limited by space (*deśa*) and time (*kālā*). Sage *Patañjali* in his *yoga sūtra* (aphorisms on yoga) says "He (the Brahman) is the teacher of teachers, not limited by time (I.26)". This is the unique quality of the Brahman. All the beings are bound by space and time.

In this *Sahasranāma*, there are many nāma-s that confirm the status of Brahman on *Lalitāmbikā*. But each of these nāma-s convey different qualities of the Brahman. It is also pertinent to note that Brahman is beyond qualities and attributes. For easier understanding Brahman is classified into two categories – *saguṇa Brahman* (with attributes) and *nirguṇa Brahman* (without attributes). *Saguṇa Brahman* is *Śaktī* and *Nirguṇa Brahman* is *Śiva*. One without the other becomes non-functional.

Sarvagā सर्वगा (702)

She is omnipresent. This is the result of the previous nāma. When time and space are transcended, the resultant factor is omnipresence, yet another quality of the Brahman. There is a story about Her omnipresent nature. When She was doing penance, Brahma appeared before Her and offered a boon and She asked for the boon of being omnipresent. But this cannot be correlated with this *Sahasranāma* particularly in view of nāma-s 58 *pañca-brahmāsana-sthitā* and 249 *pañca -pretāsanāsīnā*.

Because of being *Sarvagā*, She is also *Sarvajṇā* (nāma 196), knower of everything (omniscient). The omnipresent nature also indicates that She is the soul of living beings. *Īśa Upaniṣad* says (5) "*asya sarvasya antaḥ, asya sarvasya bāhyataḥ*" which means the inner most being of all that constitutes its outside also'. *Nārāyaṇa sūktam* says (*Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* 13.5), "*antar bhahisca tat sarvam vyāypya nārāyaṇa stitaḥ*" which means 'all that pervade both inside

and outside is *Nārāyaṇa*. *Śrī Devi Māhātmiyam* 598 says, *sarva svarupe sarveśe sarva śakti samanvite* which means "embodiment of all beings, the supreme ruler and embodiment of all the powers". This is the nature of *Sarvagā*.

Sarva-mohinī सर्व-मोहिनी (703)

She casts Her spell on everybody. She casts Her spell through the effect of *māyā*. Omnipresent means that She is present in all the objects, whether perishable or non-perishable, present as contradictory attributes, present as opposites. This leads to bewilderment of Her nature. This nāma solves this bewilderment.

This is explained in *Śrī Devi Māhātmiyam* (I.55) *mahāmāyā ..... jñāninām api cetāṃsi devī bhagavatī hi sā* meaning that 'the great *māyā* form of *Devī Bhagavatī* attracts even the minds of *jñānī*-s by casting Her spell.' *Śiva* says in *Kūrma Purāṇa* "this supreme *Śaktī* is in me and is Brahman. This *māyā* is dear to me, it is infinite and the universe is bewildered by this."

Bhagavad Gīta (V.16) explains how She casts Her spell. "The omnipresent God (refer nāma 702 above) does not receive the virtue or sin of anyone. Knowledge is enveloped in ignorance. Hence it is those beings which are constantly falling prey to delusion (*māyā*)." *Māyā* means that power by which experience can be measured, as opposed to the Brahman which is immeasurable, as Brahman is omnipresent. That is why She is known as *Prakāśa Vimarśa mahā māyā svarūpinī*.

Māyā is a deterrent factor in realising the Brahman. She will withdraw Her spell of *māyā* only for those who are spiritually advancing.

{Further study on *Prakāśa Vimarśa mahā māyā svarūpinī*: The objective manifestation is "I am this". This is called *prakṛti*. It has three *guṇa*-s namely *sattva, rajas* and *tamas*. They originate from three *śaktī*-s namely *icchā*, *jñāna* and *kriyā*. When one does not

possess anything, where is the question of any object? When there is no object where is the question of 'this'? At this stage both subject and object do not exist. When subject and object no longer exists, where is the question of will, or three śaktī-s namely, *icchā*, *jñāna* and *kriyā*. Here, out of the thirty six *tattva*-s thirty four are destroyed. By simply understanding that nothing belongs to him, one is able to remove the thirty four *tattva*-s that were preventing him to identify himself with the Supreme Self. Now he has only two more tattva-s remaining. They are *Prakāśa* and *Vimarśa*. All these thirty four *tattva*-s were created and controlled by *Vimarśa* only. Since *Vimarśa* is the sole reason for *māyā*, we can call *Vimarśa* as *Vimarśa mahā māyā svarūpini*. Why *mahā* and svarūpini. *Mahā* means great. *Māyā* is the greatest cause of all illusions and is the cause of ignorance. So *mahā* is added. Why *svarūpini*? *Svarūpini* means form. *Vimarśa* is *Śaktī*, the feminine gender. Why *Śaktī*-s is considered as feminine gender? Because, She not only creates the universe, but also nurtures it. When one understands this, he is close to realising the *mahā māyā svarūpini*. The next stage is to realise *Prakāśa*, which alone is Self-illuminating. *Vimarśa* with the help of Self-illuminating *Prakāśa*, reflects the Self illuminating light to the universe, without which universe cannot function. Therefore, to realise *Prakāśa* is anyone's ultimate aspiration.

It has already been seen that *Vimarśa* is the only creation of *Prakāśa. Vimarśa* is the absolute freedom of Will of *Prakāśa*, which is also known as *svātantrya śakti.* Prakāśa has given all powers to *Vimarśa* to create, sustain, delude, conceive and bless the universe. Without *Vimarśa*, *Prakāśa* cannot do these acts. *Prakāśa* is always alone and it does not have a second. It is ādi (beginning with or the first) and *anādi* (existing from eternity). This means, it exists from eternity. We always need a second one for creation. One alone cannot create. Same principle applies here. When Vimarśa identifies itself and unites with *Prakāśa* it is called the Absolute. We can call *Vimarśa* at this stage as *Prakāśa vimarśa mahā māyā svarūpini*". Here Vimarśa is still with *Prakāśa*. This is called "the Absolute".

One has to surely go through *Śaktī* alone to realise the *Śiva*. It is argued that *Śaktī* alone, in the form of Vimarśa or Cit, can lead to realizing *Śiva*. It is also considered that Śaktī is feminine gender and *Śiva* is the masculine gender. *Śaktī* cannot function without Śiva and Śiva also cannot function without *Śaktī*. Both are interdependent. Therefore, when *Śaktī* stays with the *Śiva*, She is called the Absolute.}

Sarasvatī सरस्वती (704)

She is in the form of *Sarasvatī*, the Goddess for knowledge. Brahman is the embodiment of knowledge. Due to the effect of *māyā* people are bound by dyads. *Sarasvatī* is the form that is capable of dispelling the ignorance, the impediment in realizing the Brahman. *Bhagavad Gīta* (V.15) explains this reality by saying "Knowledge is enveloped in ignorance". The entire universe is Her manifestation. To understand this, knowledge is required. She is the store house of knowledge (nāma 644 *jñāna vigrahā*) and She gives knowledge to those who seek this supreme knowledge (nāma 643 *jñānadhā*). She gives knowledge to those who are worthy of it. From the sinners, the highest form of knowledge is concealed by ignorance. Real knowledge is of no use for those who do not seek it. *Sarasvatī* is the wife of *Brahma*, the Creator. *Brahma* is different from the Brahman.

Nāma 614 is *sacāmara-ramā vāṇī-savya-dakṣiṇa-sevitā* which says that Goddess *Lakṣmī* (*Ramā*) and Goddess *Sarasvatī* (*Vāṇī*) stand by Her side and fan Her'. In the present nāma it is said that She is *Sarasvatī* Herself. *Sarasvatī* is considered here as an attribute of the Brahman. Nāma 614 refers to the Brahman without attributes. *Sarasvatī* is one of the functional natures of *Lalitāmbikā*. Other functional natures are discussed in the next nāma. Vedas describe different functions of the Brahman in the form gods and goddesses.

Two year old girl is known as *Sarasvatī*. According to ancient scriptures, *Sarasvatī* resides in the tongue of all human beings causing speech.

In *Śrī Devi Māhātmyam* there are three main chapters – *prathama caritra, madhyama caritra and uthama caritra*. Each of these *caritra-s* is represented by Goddesses *Durgā* (nāma 190), *Mahā Lakṣmī* (nāma 210) and ***Sarasvatī*** (the present nāma). The combined form (*samaṣṭi)* of all these three Goddesses is *Caṇḍikā* चण्डिका (nāma 755).

Śāstramayī शास्त्रमयी (705)

She is in the form of *śāstra*-s (rules of righteousness). The bewilderment arises due to the influence of *māyā*. She is ***mahā māyā svarūpinī***, which means that She is in the form of great delusion. *Māyā* is the confusion resulting from failure to understand. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (III.14.1) says *sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ brahma* which means 'all this, no doubt is Brahman.' The *Upaniṣad* says this with authority. If *Upaniṣads* do not affirm this, we have to understand the Brahman only through our inference. Hence *Upaniṣads* are considered as the source of knowledge. They make only affirmations and they do not draw inferences. That is why, *Brahma Sūtra* (I.i.3) says *śāstra-yonitvāt* which means '*śāstra*-s are the source of knowledge' to realize the Brahman. *Upaniṣad-s* and *śāstra*-s provide valuable inputs to enable us to understand and realize the Brahman. These inputs are in the form of both affirmations and negations. For example, *Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad* (III.ix.9) affirms, "The vital force is Brahman, which is called That". This is emphasised by the last *kūṭa* of *Pañcadaśī mantra* '*sa + ka + la = sakala* (*sakala* means all) + *hrīṁ* (refers to *Śiva* + *Śaktī*) which says that everything in this universe (*sakala*) is *Śiva* and *Śaktī* (*hrīṁ*) (*nirguṇa Brahman* and *saguna Brahman*).

This nāma means that entire parts of Her body is made up of *śāstra*-s only. Her breath is Veda-s (nāma 338), Her ego is *mantra*-s (nāma 204), Her words created epics (nāma 798), Her tongue created goddess *Sarasvatī* (nāma 704), Her chin created *Vedāṅga*-s. From upper portion of Her throat all the *śāstra*-s (this nāma), from the middle of Her throat medicine and archery, from the bottom of Her

throat sixty four tantra-s (nāma 236) and from Her shoulders love (*Brahmāṇḍa Purāna*).

{Further reading on *Vedāṅga* and *Vedānta: Vedāṅga* a limb of Veda-s, regarded as auxiliary to and even in some sense as part of the Veda-s and mostly written as *Sūtra* or aphoristic style. They are six in number

1. *Śikṣā*, the science of proper articulation and pronunciation, comprising the knowledge of letters, accents, quantity, the use of the organs of pronunciation, and phonetics generally, but especially the laws of euphony peculiar to the Veda. Many short treatises and a chapter of the *Taittirīya-āraṇyaka* are regarded as the representatives of this subject.

2. C*handas*, the metre, represented by a treatise ascribed to *Piṅgala-nāga*, which, however, treats of *Prākṛit* as well as *Saṃskṛit* metres, and includes only a few of the leading Vedic metres.

3. *Vyākaraṇa*, linguistic analysis or grammar, represented by *Pāṇini*'s celebrated *Sūtra*-s.

4. *Nirukta*, explanation of difficult Vedic words.

5. *Jyotiṣa*, astronomy, or rather the Vedic calendar represented by a small tract, the object of which is to fix the most auspicious days for sacrifices. This is also known as astrology or *jyotis*.

6. *Kalpa*, ceremonial, represented by a large number of *Sūtra* works.

Vedānta is complete knowledge of the Veda.

This is the second and most important part of the *Mīmāṃsā* or third of the three great divisions of *Hindū philosophy* called *Vedānta* either as teaching the ultimate scope of the Veda or simply as explained in the *Upaniṣads* which come at the end of the Veda.

This system, although belonging to the *Mīmāṃsā* and sometimes called *Uttara-mīmāṃsā*, examination of the later portion or *jñāna-*

kāṇḍa of the Veda, is really the one sole orthodox exponent of the pantheistic creed of the *Hindūs* of the present day - a creed which underlies all the polytheism and multiform mythology of the people.

Its chief doctrine, as expounded by *Śaṃkara* is that of *Advaita* i.e. that nothing really exists but the One Self or Soul of the Universe called Brahman or *Paramātman*, and that the *Jīvātman* or individual human soul and indeed all the phenomena of nature are really identical with the *Paramātman*, and that their existence is only the result of *ajñāna*, otherwise called *avidyā* or an assumed ignorance on the part of that one universal Soul which is described as both Creator and Creation.

It is existence, knowledge and Joy, and as devoid of the three qualities or *guṇa*-s.

The liberation of the human soul, its deliverance from transmigrations, and re-union with the *Paramātman*, with which it is really identified, is only to be effected by a removal of that ignorance through a proper understanding of the *Vedānta*.

This system is also called *Brahma-mīmāṃsā* and *Śārīrakamīmāṃsā*, inquiring into Spirit or embodied Spirit.

The founder of the school is said to have been *Vyāsa*, also called *Bādarāyaṇa*, and its most eminent teacher was *Śaṃkarācārya*. All the *Upaniṣad-s* are works on the *Vedānta* philosophy.

The first and second of these *Vedāṅga*-s are said to be intended to secure the correct reading or recitation of the Veda, the third and fourth the understanding of it, and the fifth and sixth its proper employment at sacrifices.}

Guhāmbā गुहाम्बा (706)

There are two interpretations possible for this nāma. 1. *Guhā* means Lord *Kārttikeya* or *Subrahmaṇya* and *ambā* means Mother. She is *Kārttikeya*'s mother. *Subrahmaṇya* or *Skanda* is the son of *Śiva* and

Pārvatī. There are many stories regarding the birth of *Guhā*. But He was created for the purpose of destroying demons (demons mean evil acts or persons indulging in evil acts).

2. *Guhā* also means concealed and *ambā* means Mother. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (I.iii.1) says "*guhām praviṣṭau*" which means 'present in the cave of the intellect'. The *Upaniṣad* further explains that the two (Self and self) enjoy the fruits of actions, residing in the cave of the intellect, which is the best place for realization. It is said that self and Self are related to each other like light and shade. When self and Self are referred, it appears as if scriptures endorse duality, because self is not different from Self. But reasoning for this type of interpretation is provided in subsequent nāma-s. This nāma says that She is in a secret place.

Guhya rūpiṇī गुह्य रूपिणी (707)

This is an extension of the previous nāma. The previous nāma said that She is in a secret place and this nāma goes further and says that Her form itself is secretive. Duality is gross and non-duality is subtle. *Guhāmbā* (mother of *Guhā*) is gross and *guhya rūpiṇī* is subtle. Her *kāmakalā* form is subtler and Her *kuṇḍalinī* form is the subtlest. Further, duality is perishable and it does not transcend time and space. Non-duality is imperishable and transcends time and space. Everything associated with Her is secretive in nature. For example, Her *Pañcadaśī* or *ṣodaśī mantra-s*, Her rituals such as *navāvaraṇa pūja*, *kuṇḍalinī*, etc. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (II.i.12) says that when one knows the Brahman hidden in the secretive place, Brahman does not want to conceal Himself for him alone. After Self-realisation, the duality goes for ever and non-duality alone prevails. But Self-realisation is very rare says *Kṛṣṇa*. "Hardly one among thousands strives to realise me and only rare among them knows me in reality" (*Bhagavad Gīta* VII.3).

There is an *Upaniṣad* called *Guhya Upaniṣad* and *Kūrma Purāṇa* says that She is *Guhya Upaniṣad*. *Viṣṇu Sahasranāma* nāma 542 is *Guhyā*.

Sarvopādhi-vinirmuktā सर्वोपाधि-विनिर्मुक्ता (708)

She is free from all limitations. This is also known as *upādhi*, due to which condition an unlimited thing appears to be limited. Another interpretation for *upādhi* is acquiring the character of an object in the vicinity. For example, *Śiva* is in crystal complexion and *Śaktī* is red complexioned (please recall *dhyāna* verse). When *Śaktī* sits by the side of *Śiva*, He also turns red. This is *upādhi*. *Upādhi* is of four types: Consciousness limited by - intellect, knowledge, individual and *māyā*. The true form of the Brahman is concealed by these *upādhi*-s. *Sarva* means entire, *upādhi* means conditions and *vinirmuktā* means free. This nāma means She is beyond all these *upādhi*-s. Brahman is beyond all *upādhi*-s.

The previous nāma-s limited Her attributes by saying that She is the mother of *Kārttikeya*, She resides in a secretive place, limitations by forms such as *Sarasvatī, Mahā Lakṣmī*, etc. Brahman is omnipresent. Brahman is interpreted in two ways. One is non-duality and another is duality. The explanation of the Brahman in dualistic way is for those who are still associated with worshipping forms by involving in rituals. Interpretation of Brahman in non-dualistic way is for the knowledgeable. But this dual interpretation does not mean that scriptures contradict each other. All of them convey the same Brahman, but the quality of the path is different.

This nāma again confirms Her stature as *nirguṇa Brahman*.

Sadāśiva-pativratā सदाशिव-पतिव्रता (709)

Śiva has many forms and *Sadāśiva* (*Sadāśiva* means always happy or prosperous) is one among them. Following are the few interpretations of *Sadāśiva*. *Brahma*, *Viṣṇu*, *Rudra*, *Mahādeva* and *Sadāśiva* are the five elements viz. earth, water, fire, air and *ākaś*. Out of all the forms of *Śiva*, *Sadāśiva* form is considered as supreme, as He is the cause for re-creation that happens after deluge (*mahā pralayā*). *Sadāśiva* is the thirty fourth principle or *tattva* and the next two principles are *Śaktī* and finally *Śiva*, thus making thirty

six principles. Principles are nothing but states of consciousness. *Sadāśiva* principle is the stage where the practitioner feels that *ahaṁ idaṁ*. *Ahaṁ* means I am and *idaṁ* means here. *Idaṁ* also refers to 'something that is immediately following'. In this context *ahaṁ idaṁ* means that 'I am here awaiting *Śaktī* and *Śiva*' (refer nāma 999). This is the penultimate stage to Self-realisation. In the stage of *Sadāśiva* 'I consciousness' is still predominant and associated with *icchā* or will. *Sadāśiva tattva* leads to *Śaktī* which ultimately culminates in *Śiva*. There is nothing beyond *Śiva*.

This nāma means She is the wife of *Sadāśiva*. *Śiva* is *nirguṇa Brahman* or the Brahman without attributes and *Sadāśiva*'s wife is *saguṇa Brahman*, as She is endowed with all the energies for creation, sustenance and dissolution.

Saṃpradāyeśvarī संप्रदायेश्वरी (710)

*Saṃpradāy*a means the knowledge imparted through traditions. This knowledge is mostly associated with rituals and generally taught through guru-disciple relationship. It can also be said that *Saṃpradāya* is sacred traditions. This nāma says that She is the *Īśvarī* (chief) of all types of traditions.

This nāma also means that Her *mantra*-s such as *Pañcadaśī* and *ṣodaśī* should be recited only after a proper initiation by a Guru. Here, Guru means a Self-realized person. In *Śrī Vidyā* worship, too much of importance is given to the rituals and devotees are made to spend more time in rituals rather than being with Her. Devotion is the one and the only factor that leads to realization. Rituals become a necessity only in the initial stages of knowing Her. Worshipping *Lalitāmbikā* should be done in privacy as everything associated with Her is secretive in nature (refer nāma 707). *Samaṣṭi* (group) *pūja* is not a good idea to realize Her.

Sometimes it becomes difficult to find a proper guru. In such a situation one can have self-initiation, provided one understands the meaning of the *mantra* and the associated procedures (like *nyāsa*,

etc). Guru is a must in *Śrī Vidyā* cult and in the case of self-initiation either *Śiva* or *Viṣṇu* can be contemplated as one's Guru. But this procedure is applicable only for rare cases. It is always better to get initiation through a guru in person as there are procedural formalities involved.

There is a higher level of interpretation for this nāma. In reality, the Brahman is One. Brahman is contemplated as *Śiva* and *Śaktī* as two different entities. Differentiating between *Śiva* and *Śaktī* is traditionally accepted and followed. The same tradition also says that the one without the other cannot independently act, implying that they are same. Tradition does not say anything that is different from Veda-s, but they have their own style of interpretation. Basically, tradition is meant for the beginners. Tradition should pave way to reality of *satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ brahmā* (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* II.i.1).

She is said to be the ruler of traditional knowledge.

Sādhu साधु (711)

In the poetic version of this *Sahasranāma*, verse 138 says *sādhvī*. This word has been split into two nāma-s – *sādhu* (711) + *I* (712). This is because nāma 128 is *sādhvī* . *Lalitā Sahasranāma* is unique because no nāma is repeated. Such repetition is known as *punarukti doṣa* (offence of repetition i.e. tautological) which is totally avoided in this *Sahasranāma*.

Sādhu has number of interpretations such as to complete, to accomplish, to overpower, to understand, etc. *Śaktī* is known as *parāhaṃta*, the highest form of egoism. Her *parāhaṃta* quality is the cause for sustaining this universe. Both intellect and ego evolve from three *guṇa-s* (*sattvic*, *rajas* and *tamas*). The Brahman stands covered by the sheath of ego. Ego is a functional quality and hence *Śaktī* is called *parāhaṃta*. *Śiva* is static in nature and *Śaktī* is functional in nature. Functionality is the inherent quality of *Śaktī*. She is the cause for accomplishments and dispelling ignorance.

Hence She is called *Sādhu*. *Sādhu* also means a person who does not cause any harm to others and has intent to do good things for others. This interpretation also suits Her quality.

ī ई (712)

Ī stand for *kāmakalā*. *Kāmakalā* has been elaborately dealt with in nāma 322. *kāmakalā rūpā*. *Kāmakalā* is Her subtle form and Her subtlest form is *kuṇḍalinī*.

The first vowel of Sanskrit is A (अ) and fourth vowel is Ī (ई). A means *Viṣṇu* and Ī means *Śaktī, Viṣṇu*'s sister. A+ Ī = Ī. *Viṣṇu* and His sister *Śaktī* is known by this *bīja*. There is another interpretation for this that is dealt with in nāma 715. Brahman becomes two, one is lineament and another is conditioned. Lineament is again divided into two masculine and feminine. Masculine is *Viṣṇu* and feminine is *Śaktī*, the consort of *Śiva*. Ī is a very powerful *bīja* as this is related to creation. *Īṃ* (ईं) *bīja* if properly used in *ṣodaśī mantra* gives *mantra siddhi* faster. This *bīja* gives the essence of *amṛta bīja*-s. *Amṛta bīja* s are ri, rī, li and lī (रि, री, लि, ली). *Kāmakalā* in combination with *agni bīja* as *ātma bīja* gives innumerable benefits. *Kāmakalā* is complete only when three dots are placed on the top of Ī (ई) and when these three dots are connected a triangle is formed and resultant *bīja* is pronounced as *Īṃ*. These three dots are referred to in various *Upaniṣads* in the form of various triads. For example, *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VI.3.3) says 'of those three elements, he made each one of them three fold.' Numeric three has great significance in creation and this is represented by the three dots in *bīja Īṃ*. (Please recall three *Śaktī-s icchā, jñāna* and *kriyā* - nāma 658.)

This nāma is pronounced as *yai* while performing *arcana*. *Lalitā triśatī* nāma 41 is *Īkāra rūpā* meaning that She is in the form of *Kāmakalā*.

Guru-maṇḍala-rūpiṇī गुरु-मण्डल-रूपिणी (713)

This nāma subtly conveys that the meaning and interpretation of *kāmakalā* should be learnt only from a guru as this has intrinsic and subtle meaning. Most of these interpretations have already been dealt with elaborately. *Guru maṇḍala* means lineages of guru-s. *Śrī Vidyā* attaches great importance to guru and his lineage. Whatever guru says should be final. Lineage of guru is stressed because, rituals and certain procedures differ from *maṇḍala* to *maṇḍala* (*maṇḍala* here means group) and each *maṇḍala* follows different customs and practices. Each *Śrī vidyā* student will have three categories of gurus - Guru, *parama guru* (guru's guru) and *parameṣṭhi guru* (*parama guru's* guru). During *navāvaraṇa pūja*, all these guru-s are worshipped along with many other guru-s. This nāma says that She is in the form of *guru maṇḍala*. There is no difference between guru and *Lalitāmbikā*, hence this nāma. The first guru or *ādi guru* is *Śiva*. Guru is also worshipped in *sahasrāra*, where She conjoins *Śiva*.

Kulottīrṇā कुलोत्तीर्णा (714)

There are nine nāma-s beginning with *kula* and different interpretations were provided for them. In this nāma *kula* means the sum total of senses, both internal (*antaḥkaraṇa*) and external. This nāma says that She has transcended all the senses (*saguṇa Brahman* or Brahman with attributes, as *nirguṇa Brahman* or Brahman with attributes does not act and merely remains as a witness). This attribute of the Brahman is known as *vimarśa* form. *Prakāśa* is *Śiva* and *Vimarśa* is *Śaktī*.

Bhagārādhyā भगाराध्या (715)

Bhaga means solar disc (*sūrya maṇḍala*). She is worshipped in solar disc. It is not possible for humans to enter solar disc. This nāma indirectly says that She should be worshipped secretively. Nāma 275 already said that She is in the centre of solar disc. Brahman alone is contemplated in the centre of solar disc. This *Sahasranāma* repeatedly emphasizes that She is the Brahman and

this nāma is one among such affirmations. From the point of view of *Kāmakalā*, sun represents one dot and the other two dots are represented by moon and fire. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (I.vi.6) says "There is a deity within the orbit of the sun who is seen by yogis. His whole body glitters like gold."

The first alphabet of Sanskrit अ (a) in conjunction with ई gives rise to alphabet ए (e). *A* represents *Śiva* and *Ī* represents *Śaktī* (in contrast to nāma 712) and *ae* represents *Śiva - Śaktī* union and they are worshipped in *sahasrārā* secretively. The resultant letter ए almost looks like a triangle. *Śrī Cakra* is made up of triangles only and in the central triangle, She is worshipped. *Śiva* is in the form of *bindu* and *Śaktī* is in the form of triangle. Nāma-s 713, 714 and 715 are extensions of nāma 712.

Māyā माया (716)

She is *māyā*. *Māyā* is illusion. The root of *māyā* is *ma*. *Ma* means 'to measure'. It also means 'leading to the idea of illusion'. Brahman is immeasurable but due to the influence of *māyā,* Brahman appears to be measurable. In other words, Brahman is beyond time and space but due to the influence of *māyā* Brahman appears as if bound by time and space. For easier understanding, Brahman is said to have two aspects – *saguṇa* (with attributes) and *nirguṇa* (without attributes). *Nirguṇa* Brahman in conjunction with *māyā* becomes *saguṇa* Brahman. The appearance of the universe is due to the projection by *māyā*.

From the point of view of *Vedānta* consciousness is the subtlest of all existents. Pure consciousness is the basis of varied existence of the universe. All these variations are due to the superimposition of names and forms by *māyā* which is the principle of appearance that is neither real nor unreal. The Self-illuminating Brahman which is pure and limitless consciousness manifests as manifold souls in living organisms. The manifestation of the Brahman is noticeable only in the living beings, whereas it stands hidden in non-livings. In

the case of human beings, the pure and limitless consciousness manifest as self with independent mind. *Māyā* is a mystery of omnipresent power that works like a supreme faculty of self-transformation. It appears in the form of deceptive masks producing only illusionary effects. *Māyā* covers the Brahman that exists in all beings in this universe. This covering is like a sheath or a veil. Unless this veil is removed, the Brahman cannot be realized. For removing this veil, knowledge is required. As long as the veil continues to remain, one continues to remain ignorant (*avidyā*). Macro-cosmic reflection of the Brahman is *māyā*.

Śiva is the Brahman and *Śaktī* is *māyā*. Unless, *Śaktī* clears the path, *Śiva* cannot be realized and it is only *Śaktī,* who is capable of revealing *Śiva*. She reveals *Śiva* only if impurities of physical bodies, subtle bodies and casual bodies are totally removed. Hence, *Śaktī* worship is considered as important.

Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad Gīta* (VII.14) "For this most wonderful *māyā* of Mine, consisting of three *guṇa-s* (*sattva, rajas* and *tamas*), is extremely difficult to break through. Those who constantly adore me are able to cross it." *Lalitāmbikā* - *Viṣṇu* relationship has been personified in several nāma-s of this *Sahasranāma* (nāma-s 280, 339, 893)

Madhumatī मधुमती (717)

Madhu means honey and *mati* means intellect, knowledge, judgement, etc. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (III.i.1) says *asau vā ādityo devamadhu* which means 'sun over there is honey to the gods.' This Chapter of *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* is known as *madhu vidyā*. By drawing a comparison between honey and sun, the *Upaniṣad* proceeds to teach about self-realization. The *Upaniṣad* says that the sun represents the sum total of all auspicious work done by humans. That is why sun is liked by gods. Honey is the essence extracted from beehives. Honey is compared here to the essence of supreme knowledge, extracted from various sources. The source of honey to the beehives is innumerable bees and flowers. They are considered

as gross knowledge and the extracted honey is compared to the refined knowledge.

Patañjali says in his *yoga sūtra*-s (II.27) "his knowledge is of seven fold." (*Patañjali*'s *yoga sūtra*-s mention eight limbs of yoga (*aṣṭāṅga yoga*). The eighth limb is emancipation. These seven steps are different from eight limbs of yoga.) Seventh fold is *madhumati* and this stage is where one acquires complete knowledge and the resultant mental satisfaction. These seven steps are known as *bhūmikā* in *Yoga Vāsiṣṭha*.

Mahī महती (718)

Mahī means earth. This nāma means Her visibility. All along, *Vāc Devi-s* have been talking about Her subtle form. Earth is visible to our eyes, hence She is praised here as Mother Earth. *Prakṛti* is one of the two important *tattva*-s (principles), the other being *Puruṣa*. *Prakṛti* is unconscious and primordial matter which can be interpreted as planet earth. She manifests as planet earth. This nāma implies that those who cannot realize Her in subtle forms, can see Her in Her gross form. Contemplating Her subtle form requires the highest level of consciousness, for which mind is the sole factor.

Gaṇāmbā गणाम्बा (719)

Warriors of *Śiva* are known as *gaṇa*-s. *Gaṇa* is explained as certain troops of demigods considered as *Śiva's* attendants and under the special superintendence of the god *Gaṇeśa*. She is said to be the mother of such warriors. *Gaṇa* also means Lord *Gaṇeśa*. She is mother of Gaṇeśa who is the chief of *Śiva*'s *gaṇa*-s. Because of being chief of *gaṇa*-s, Lord *Gaṇeśa* is known as *Gaṇapati*.

Guhyakārādhyā गुह्यकाराध्या (720)

Guhyakā-s are the warriors of *Kubera*, the lord of wealth, who is one of greatest devotees of *Lalitāmbikā*. There is a *Pañcadaśī mantra* in his name (*Kubera* is one of the *riṣi-s* of *Pañcadaśī*

mantra. There are twelve *riṣi-s* for *Pañcadaśī mantra* (refer nāma 238).

There is another interpretation. *Guhya* means secret and *ārādhya* means worship. In this context, this nāma means that She is worshipped in a secret place known as *mūlādhāra*, in Her subtlest form *kuṇḍalinī*.

Komalāṅgī कोमलाङ्गी (721)

She has soft and tender body (recall nāma 460 *Nalinī*). She takes care of three primary acts of the *saguṇa Brahman*, creation, sustenance and destruction. She has won over innumerable demons. In spite of these tough assignments (assignments because, *Śiva,* the Supreme has assigned Her these duties) Her body is said to be soft and tender. She is not only soft and tender in Her bodily form, but alsi in Her mental arena. Because of being tender and soft She is flexible to Her devotees. This nāma could possibly mean Her subtlest form *kuṇḍalinī*.

Guru-priyā गुरु-प्रिया (722)

Guru here means *Śiva*. She is fond of *Śiva*. If *Śiva* is Guru, then She is known as *Guru patnī* (*patnī* means wife). *Guru patnī* (Guru's wife) is worshipful and should be given the same status, if not more, as that of Guru. *Śiva* is known as Guru, as He has taught entire tantra *śāstra*-s to Her.

This nāma also means that She is fond of those gurus who disseminate *Śrī vidyā* cult, by initiating Her well known *mantra-s* like *Pañcadaśī* and *ṣodaśī*.

Planet Jupiter is also known as Guru. He is the guru for gods and goddesses as opposed to Venus who is the guru for demons. She is fond of these guru-s. Nāma 603 *guru-mūrtiḥ* said that She is the Guru. Nāma 713 is *guru-maṇḍala rūpinī*.

Svatantrā स्वतन्त्रा (723)

Sva apart from meaning 'self' also means the highest authority, *Śiva*. Therefore, this nāma means that She is the embodiment of sixty four tantra-s, that have been described in nāma 236 *catuḥ-saśti-kalā-mayī*. Tantra *śāstra*-s do not fructify without invoking Her. *Tantra* also means dependence. *Sva* (*Śiva*) + *tantra* (dependence) = dependent on *Śiva*. This could mean the interdependence of *Śiva* and *Śaktī*. *Kālikā Purāṇa* says that "*Śiva* ever lives in that place sporting with His *Śaktī*." This nāma can also be considered as a reaffirmation of nāma 236.

Svatantrā also means the unobstructed Will of the Absolute. This is the Will Power of *Śiva,* the *prakāśa* form of the Brahman. *Śiva,* by means of Power of Attorney has transferred His Absolute and unobstructed Will to *Śaktī* and this transferred energy is called *svātantrya śaktī. Śaktī,* holding this energy is known as *vimarśa* form of the Brahman.

Sarva-tantreśī सर्व-तन्त्रेशी (724)

Sarva + *tantra* + *īśvarī* = She is the presiding deity of all *tantra*-s. This is an extension of the previous nāma. This nāma says that She is *sarva* (all) *tantra svarupinī* (form). As said in the previous nāma, tantra practice does not fructify without invoking Her, as She forms the foundation of all tantra-s. *Śrī vidyā* rituals can be classified under *vaidīga* (as per Vedic principles) as well as tantric methods.

Dakṣiṇāmūrti-rūpiṇī दक्षिणामूर्ति-रूपिणी (725)

She is in the form of *Dakśināmūrti*, the Guru form of *Śiva*. In this form *Śiva* sits facing South, hence He is known as *Dakṣiṇa* (South) + *mūrti* (form). This form of *Śiva* is considered as Guru for Lord *Brahma* and Lord *Viṣṇu*. The great *Ramana Mahariṣī* explained *Dakṣiṇāmūrti* as *Dakṣiṇa* + *a* + *mūrti*. *Dakṣiṇa* (capable) *a* + *mūrti* (formless), which means formless teacher of knowledge, the

Brahman. *Dakṣiṇāmūrti*'s *mantra*-s are widely available in tantra *śāstrā*-s. For *mahā ṣodaśī mantra, Dakṣiṇāmūrti* is the *riṣi*. The next two nāma-s are continuation of this nāma.

Dakṣiṇāmūrti is the only form of *Śiva*, who taught 'Self-realisation'. *Dakṣiṇāmūrti* form was taken by *Śiva*, after His consort burnt Herself with the fire of Self (*ātma agni*). After having lost His wife, He started meditating on His own Self (the Brahman) facing South. At that time *Sanaka* and others approached Him with a request to teach them about Self-realization. *Dakṣiṇāmūrti* at that time was observing silence. After knowing the quest of *Sanaka, Sana, Sanatkumāra,* and *Sanandana* (sons of *Brahma*, conceived in His mind) to know the Brahman, He taught them without breaking his silence. The teaching was done through *cin mudra*. Connecting thumb with index finger is *cin mudra*. These two fingers indicate Brahman and *jīvan*. When these fingers unite, it means the union of *jīva* (soul) with the Brahman. *Dakṣiṇāmūrti aṣṭkam* consists of ten verses authored by *Ādi Śaṁkara*. This is not a mere poetic composition but also conveys the principles of Self-realisation.

Sanakādi-samārādhyā सनकादि-समाराध्या (726)

Sanaka, Sana, Sanatkumāra, and *Sanāndana* are the four great sages who were initiated by *Dakṣiṇāmūrti*. There was a huge banyan tree under which was seated young *Dakṣiṇāmūrti* with his aged disciples mentioned above. The banyan tree is the symbolic manifestation of macrocosm from microcosm. From a tyny seed of banyan, a huge tree of banyan grows. This is compared to the formation of gross from subtle. Initiation takes place without any words being exchanged. They are great devotees of *Lalitāmbikā*.

There is a reference to *Sanatkumāra* in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VII.26.2) which says "The revered *Sanatkumāra* freed *deva riṣi Nārada* from all his shortcomings and led him beyond darkness. The wise say that *Sanatkumāra* is a man of perfect knowledge."

Śiva-jñāna-pradāyinī शिव-ज्ञान-प्रदायिनी (727)

She imparts the knowledge of *Śiva*, the Ultimate. *Śiva jñāna* (knowledge) means the knowledge of the Brahman, which is also known as the Supreme knowledge. To know *Śiva*, one should first know His *Śaktī*, who alone is capable of leading a person to the Brahman or *Śiva*. *Rāmāyaṇ*a says 'wind can be realized through movements, fire can be realised through heat and *Śiva* can be realized only through *Śaktī*.' It can also be said that *Śiva* is the source of knowledge for Her.

It is said *śaṁkaraṁ caitanyam* which means that *Śiva* is both *jñāna* and *kriyā*. He is the sovereign, pure free will in knowledge and action. Based upon this principle, *Śiva Sūtra*-s opens by saying *caitanyamātmā*. *Caitanyam* means consciousness of the highest purity and knowledge. There is no difference between Brahman and the highest form of consciousness. But how *Śaktī* alone is capable of unravelling *Śiva*? This is answered by *Śiva Sūtra* (I.6) again which says that by meditating on *Śaktī*, the universe disappears as a separate entity thereby unveiling Self illuminating *Śiva*. The process of such happening is described in *Spanda Kārikā* (I.8) (another treatise of *Kashmiri Saivism*) which says 'the empirical individual cannot ward off the urge of desires. But entering the energetic circle of the Self (*Śiva*), he becomes equal to that Self.' The seeker of *Śiva* becomes *Śiva* himself. This is known as *Śiva jñāna* and She imparts this kind of Supreme knowledge.

It is also said that *Śiva* cannot be attained without first realising *Śaktī.* She alone can lead one to *Śiva. Śiva* is inaccessible directly. Unless She chooses to impart the required Supreme knowledge, none can realise *Śiva.* Hence, She is called *Śiva-jñāna-pradāyinī.*

Cit-kalā चित्-कला (728)

Cit is foundational consciousness, the Brahman and *kala* means the power of consciousness that causes limitation in respect of activities (existence). If *Cit* is the Brahman, *kalā* (कला) is the power of divine. *Kāla* (काल) is different from *kalā*. *Kāla* means time. *Śaktī* is known

as *kalā* as She is the power of *Cit* or the Brahman endowed with total freedom. *Kalā* power of *Śaktī* is slightly lower than the power of Her *māyā*. *Kala* forms one of the five coverings of *māyā*. *Spanda Kārika* (III.13) says "Being deprived of his glory by *kalā*, the individual becomes a victim of the group of powers arising from the multitude of words, and thus he is known as the bound one." *Kalā* plays a major role in reducing the omnipotence of *Śiva* in an individual.

Brahman has got five important powers. They are *cit* (consciousness), *ānanda* (bliss), *icchā* (will), *jñāna* (knowledge) and *kriyā* (action). This *Cit* or *Śiva* (first person) betakes Himself into human (third person) and *Śaktī* (second person). Because *cit* is covered by many minute barricades and sheaths, we are unable to realize Him with ease. Knowledge makes us to understand these blockades and coverings, so that it becomes easier for us to remove them and move towards Him. Brahman is safely hidden amidst these covers. *Kṛṣṇa* says, (*Bhagavad Gīta* XV.7) "The eternal *jīvātma* (soul) in this body is a particle of my own being."

This nāma refers to the power of the Divine in a human being. Her presence in our body is known as *cit-kalā*.

Ānanda-kalikā आनन्द-कलिका (729)

She is in the form of bliss basked by humans. This bliss is attained when the sheaths and barricades mentioned in the previous nāma are removed with the aid of knowledge. *Ānanda* means bliss and *kalikā* refers to a bud. This is a stage where bliss is about to be enjoyed. The bliss in this stage is in the form of a bud that is about to blossom. The previous nāma discussed about *kalā*, the first among the five important powers of the divine. The next power is bliss. Brahman alone shines as *ānanda,* and *cit* (bliss and consciousness) in conjunction with *icchā, jñāna* and *kriyā śaktī*-s prevails in man.

Bliss is not a mere happiness. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (II.8) explains bliss in an elaborate manner. It multiplies several types of

happiness by one hundred and finally says that happiness of *prajāpati* (divinity presiding over procreation, protector of life) multiplied by one hundred times gives the happiness of (Lord of creatures, the Brahman, the Ultimate). *Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad* also explains bliss (IV.iii.32) thus: "This is the supreme attainment, this is its supreme glory, this is its highest world and this is its supreme bliss. On a particle of this very bliss, other beings live."

This nāma implies, that by establishing a divine link (devotion) with Her, She makes one realize the bliss at the right time to ultimately merge with *Śiva*.

Prema-rūpā प्रेम-रूपा (730)

Prema means love. She is the embodiment of love, the quality of being the Supreme Mother (*Śrī Mātā*). She emanates love.

Priyaṃkarī प्रियंकरी (731)

Because of being an embodiment of love, She causes love in humans. The cause of love is emanation, discussed in the previous nāma. Emanation is not possible if the source of emanation is not embodied with what is emanated. Sun cannot give light unless He is full of light.

It can also be said that She gives what is loved by humans. There are only two things that humans can love. One is salvation and another is material prosperity. She gives either one of them depending upon what is sought for. A man with knowledge asks for liberation and an ignorant man asks for material gains.

Nāma-pārāyaṇa-prītā नाम-पारायण-प्रीता (732)

Pārāyaṇa means repetition. This nāma could mean that She is fond of repeated recitation of *Lalitā Sahasranāma.* This can be inferred from the words of *Lalitāmbikā* when She asks *Vāc Devi*-s to compose and recite a verse in Her praise to Her liking. When *Vāc*

Devi-s completed the recitation of this *Sahasranāma*, *Lalitāmbikā* was immensely pleased and extolled them. The benefits of such recitations are given in *uttara bhāg* or the concluding chapter of this *Sahasranāma*.

From *a* (अ) to kṣa (क्ष) are Her names. They are known as *mātṛkā* that are infused with *tattva*-s or principles. Please refer nāma 577 *mātṛkā varṇa rūpiṇī*. From *ka* to *kṣa* there are thirty five (consonants) letters and the first letter *a* (first vowel) is the 36th. Multiplying this 36 with 16 vowels, we get 576 and again this 576 is multiplied by 36, we get 20,736. Add with this the first letter अ, 20737 is arrived at. There are 20,737 combinations of letters that should be recited in either in a day, a week, a month, in six months (*ayana*) or in a year. This recitation is also called *pārāyaṇa*. She is fond of this *pārāyaṇa* as well. This is known as *ghaṭikā pārāyaṇa*.

Nandi-vidyā नन्दि-विद्या (733)

She is worshipped by *Nandi*. There are twelve main *riṣi-s* for *Śrī vidyā* (refer nāma 238). Apart from them, there are few more *riṣi-s* and *Nandi* is one among them. There is no specific information available whether this *Nandi* is the vehicle of *Śiva* or a sage. The great Tamil sage *Tirumūlar* addresses *Śiva* as *Nandi*. *Śiva* is also one of the *riṣi-s* of *Pañcadaśī mantra*. Generally *Pañcadaśī mantra* is initiated with *Ānanda Bhairava* as *riṣi*.

Naṭeśvarī नटेश्वरी (734)

Śiva is a great dancer and known as *Natarājā*. His wife is *Nateśvari*.

Saundarya Laharī (verse 41) describes this dance as *nava rasa mahā tāṇḍava naṭam* which means the great dance with nine types of *rasa*-s (nine types of expressions). This probably means *Śiva*, as the dance by a man is known a *tāṇḍava* and dance by a woman is known as *nāṭya*. In this context, She is referred to as the consort of *Śiva*.

Following are certain sounds generated when *Śiva* performs *ānanda tāṇḍava:* (source: *Śiva tāṇḍava ilakkaṇaṁ* - an ancient Tamil Scripture)

Janda dugu dugudugudugu dugugudu dugudugu
dumakiṭa kiṭadaga
jaṇuda jaṇuda dagī jaṇuda jaṇuda daga
jagaṇaṁ jaridaga jaguṇam naganaga

Mithyā-jagadadhiṣṭānā मिथ्या-जगदधिष्टाना (735)

She is the cause for the illusionary universe, the effect of *māyā*. *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* opens by saying "We meditate on the transcendental reality from which the universe springs up .....in whom this threefold creation (three *guṇa*-s – *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*) though unreal, appears as real."

The cause for the illusionary universe is explained in *Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad* (IV.iv.19) which says "Through the mind alone It (the Brahman) is to be realized. There is no diversity, whatsoever in It. He goes from death to death, who sees difference as it were in It."

The illusion or duality is the superimposition of ignorance. *Mithyā* means false or incorrect, *jagad* means universe and *adhiṣṭānā* means support or basis. This nāma means that She is the basis for false appearance of the universe or She supports this delusive (illusionary) universe with the power of Her *māyā*.

There is another theory for this nāma. Universe is the manifestation of the Brahman. When Brahman is real, the universe also is bound to be real. A pot is made of clay, hence clay and pot are not different. In the same way, the Brahman and universe are not different. They are one. Though they are the same, because of illusion they appear as different. The illusion becomes a reality here. This is the argument of *Vedānta*. Suppose the illusion itself is considered as illusory then the universe and the Brahman become

different. This argument countermines the theory of *Vedānta*. In this case, the illusion itself becomes illusionary. Pot and clay are considered as different and the cause for the pot, the clay is ignored. The cause for the universe, the Brahman is ignored as illusion binds a person with visible objects.

Muktidā मुक्तिदा (736)

Mukti means salvation. She offers liberation to those who are worthy of it. Liberation is subject to law of *karma*. She will not offer liberation by overruling the law of *karma*. But salvation can be offered only by Her, as She alone is capable of taking a person to *Śiva* (refer nāma 727). The next nāma explains further.

Mukti-rūpiṇī मुक्ति-रूपिणी (737)

She is in the form of liberation. Acquiring knowledge alone does not give salvation, though it is a prerequisite. The happiness (bliss) attained with knowledge gives liberation. This is known as *kaivalya*, the fifth stage (refer nāma 625. *kaivalya pada dāyinī*). *Kaivalya* is the term used by *sāṁkhya yoga* and *mokṣa* or *mukti* is the term used by *advaitin*-s. When ignorance is removed by acquiring knowledge, one is getting rid of bondage. This does not mean liberation. Liberation happens during eternal bliss, the perpetual happiness, provided one's *karmic* account is favourable. She provides liberation (the previous nāma) because, She is the embodiment of liberation. Salvation is the culmination of the process of realising the Self. *Mukti* or *mokṣa* is different from salvation or liberation. Former is a temporary shelter in higher planes and the latter is merger with the Brahman Himself with no more births. These two nāma-s can be compared to nāma-s 730 and 731.

Lāsya-priyā लास्य-प्रिया (738)

Lāsya means dancing by women accompanied with instrumental music and singing. She is fond of such entertainments. Nāma-s 172 and 184 of *Lalitā triśatī* talks about Her interest in *lāsya*.

Laya-karī लय-करी (739)

It is said that *svara* (musical note) is the father and *laya* is the mother. *Laya* is the balancing act between the primary music and the supporting music. In this context this nāma means that She does this balancing act in sustaining this universe by making the living a pleasurable one.

Laya is a stage beyond meditation. It is known as interiorization of consciousness where dissolution of consciousness takes place. It is said "We bow to *Śaṃkara* from whose expansion and contraction of *Śaktī*, the world arises and dissolves."

Śiva Sūtra (III.31) says *sthiti-layau* which means "The universe is the expansion of His energy in objective impressions and in the dissolution of those impressions." Therefore, *laya* also means mental absorption. Only in total mental absorption, the Brahman is realized. This nāma also says that She is the cause for such absorption (*karī* means causing).

Lajjā लज्जा (740)

Lajjā means bashfulness. This is considered as one of the basic qualities of women. The *bīja hrīṁ* is known as *lajjā bīja* (*hrīṁ* is also known as *māyā bīja*). It is also said that She is bashful fearing conceited rituals. *Lajjā* is used in nāma-s 79 and 195 in *triśatī*. Her true devotee is compared to a tortoise, which shrinks all its body parts within its shell. She should always be worshipped in solitude. There is difference between joint prayers and conceited rituals. For example, gurus' birthdays are celebrated jointly by all his disciples. Community worship is another instance of joint prayer. Conceited rituals mean, invoking Her amidst pomp and vanity. She does not

look into material offerings. She is concerned about what is being offered from within.

Rambhādi-vanditā रम्भादि-वन्दिता (741)

She is worshipped by *Rambhā*, *Urvaśī* and other beautiful celestial damsels. *Rambhā* is the wife of *Nala-kūbara* (son of *Kubera*), who was carried away by *Rāvaṇa*. Some scriptures say that *Rambhā* also means *Gaurī*, the wife of *Śiva*. Possibly this nāma means Her unparalleled beauty.

The next eight nāma-s discuss about Her intentions of destroying evil acts to make one realize *Śiva*, the Brahman. Please recall nāma 727.

Bhava-dhāva-sudhā-vṛṣṭiḥ भव-धाव-सुधा-वृष्टिः (742)

She puts out the fire of materialistic life (*saṃsāra*) by raining nectar. While in the path of spirituality, there is no room for pleasures associated with material life. *Bhava* means *saṃsāra*, *dhāva* means forest fire. Material life is compared to forest fire and She extinguishes it by rain of nectar. Forest fire is ignorance and nectar is knowledge. Ignorance is the cause for indulging in material life. Ignorance is eradicated by acquiring knowledge.

This nāma could also mean that by showering on the forest, She makes the forest to grow. This means that She makes the ignorant to continue to suffer from the influence of *māyā*. A knowledgeable man alone is able to transcend the illusionary effects of *māyā*.

This nāma can be split into three words as *bhavadā* + *vasudhā* + *vṛṣṭiḥ*. *Bhava* also means *Śiva* therefore *bhavadā* means She is the giver of *Śiva*. Attaining *Śiva* means liberation. *Vasudhā* means wealth. She is the giver of wealth. *Vṛṣṭiḥ* means giver. In this context this nāma means that She is the giver of both liberation and material life. It is said that dedicated and sincere devotees of *Lalitāmbikā* get both salvation and material pleasure.

Pāparaṇya-davānalā पापरण्य-दवानला (743)

Pāpa means sins. She is the forest fire who blows away sins that cause miseries (refer nāma 167 *Pāpa-nāśinī*).

Rudra Yāmala says "*Indra*! This supreme secret which destroys all sins immediately is to repeat *Pañcadaśī mantra* 1008 times by standing in water after taking bath with total devotion and faith."

Lalitā triśatī nāmas 31 and 112 convey the same meaning. *Kṛṣṇa* says in *Bhagavad Gīta* (XVIII.66) "Resigning all your duties to Me, the all powerful and all supporting Lord, take refuge in Me alone, I shall absolve you of all sins, worry not."

Daurbhāgya-tūla-vātūlā दौर्भाग्य-तूल-वातूला (744)

Karma-s accrued in various births appear like a big bundle of cotton. She blows away the contents of the bundle like whirlwind. *Karma*-s are the cause for miseries and this nāma says that She removes these miseries like whirlwind blowing away thistledown.

This nāma does not mean that She will remove the sins that easily. She makes such sinners to perform good *karma*-s as a result of which the intensity of the *karma*-s is reduced. She is the cause for making a person to perform good *karma*-s to offset his evil *karma*-s. By not transcending the law of *karma*, She still shows ways to come out of committing sins and offsetting the *karmic* account.

Jarā-dhvānta-ravi-prabhā जरा-ध्वान्त-रवि-प्रभा (745)

Jarā means old age *ravi* means sun *dhvānta* means darkness and *prabha* means beginning to illuminate. She dispels ignorance like the sun dispelling darkness. The ignorance that is referred here is about the body. Body is different from *ātman* or soul. Body is subjected to decay whereas *ātman* is eternal. (*Ātman* here can refer both the soul and the Brahman. Soul may have an end whereas the Brahman has neither a beginning nor an end. In terms of Self-

realisation, first one has to understand his soul and then the Brahman. For easier understanding, soul and the Brahman are referred to as two separate concepts.) If one gives importance to his body, then he is said to be ignorant. Attachment towards perishables is ignorance. Like sun dispelling darkness by his rays, She dispels ignorance of attaching importance to body, by driving away fear about old age. One develops fear of death at old age.

Kṛṣṇa explains this in *Bhagavad Gīta* (II.22) "As a man shedding worn out garments, takes other new ones, likewise the embodied soul, casting off worn-out bodies enters into others which are new."

This nāma means that one should not attach importance to aging of the body, which is a natural phenomenon. By being devout to Her, one may not get the fear of old age and the ultimate death. Please refer nāma 851 also.

Bhāgyabdhi-candrikā भाग्यब्धि-चन्द्रिका (746)

Previous nāma referred to sun and this nāma refers to moon. Sun and moon are said to be Her two eyes. She is like moon light to the ocean of fortune. Sea water raises (high tide) with waxing moon and on the full moon day tides of oceans are high. This is a poetic comparison. On seeing Her, one's fortunes rise high.

Bhakta-citta-keki-ghanā ghanā बक्त-चित्त-केकि-घना घना (747)

The minds of Her devotees are compared to peacocks. *Ghanāghana* means rain bearing clouds (dark clouds). Peacocks dance on seeing dark rain bearing clouds. *Lalitāmbikā* is compared to dark clouds. On seeing *Lalitāmbikā*, the minds of Her devotees reach the stage of bliss.

Both in the previous nāma and this nāma the context of 'seeing' means staying connected with Her eternally through the higher level of consciousness fixed on Her perpetually. The term 'seeing' is not to be interpreted literally. It is visualising Her through mind. After

having denounced the importance of body, *Vāc Devi*-s highlight the importance of mind by these two nāma-s. The usage of *ghanāghana* means continuity of Her grace.

There is a verse (53) in *Śivānanda Lahari* more or less on these lines. In this verse, Goddess *Parvatī* is compared to clouds, *Śiva*'s hair to *ākaś*. On seeing the clouds the peacocks cry with the sound *keki*. *Keka* means the sound that peacocks make.

Roga-parvata-dhambholiḥ रोग-पर्वत-धम्भोलिः (748)

Roga means disease, *parvata* means mountain and *dhambholi* means thunderbolt. She is like a thunderbolt to diseases. Thunderbolt is very powerful and capable of even breaking the mountains. Thunderbolt also refers to the *vajrāyudha* of Lord *Indra*, a potent weapon that is capable of annihilating the opponents. This nāma says that She cures all the diseases of Her devotees.

Mṛtyu-dāru-kuṭhārikā मृत्यु-दारु-कुठारिका (749)

She is like an axe to the tree of death. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (I.ii.25) says 'death overcomes everyone, yet even death is mere condiment for the Self.' This means the fear of death that overcomes humanity is a mere condiment for the Brahman. The fear of death is the worst fear for a man. But if he has faith in Her, he does not get the fear of death. It is said that there are twenty eight types of pains in one's life. They arise due to nescience, ego, desire, anger, attachment, etc.

Maheśvarī महेश्वरी (750)

Nāma 208 is *Māheśvarī*. *Maheśvarā*'s (*Śiva*) wife is *Maheśvarī*. This indicates Her greatness or Supreme status.

Mahā-kālī महा-काली (751)

She is *mahatī* (nāma 774). *Mahat* is used to indicate anything that is supreme. This word originates from the word *mahā*. Both the

words give the same meaning. *Mahatī* can be used as an independent word whereas *mahā* is to be used with another word. This is the origin of the nāma.

Mahat also means intellect or *buddhi*. This is the third principle in *sāṃkhya yoga*, the first two being *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. *Kālī* has several meanings such as blackness, *Śiva*'s wife, black clouds, a woman with a dark complexion, mother of sage *Vyāsa*. *Sarasvatī* is also known as *Kālī*, a form of *Durga*, etc. *Mahā Kāla* means *Śiva* and *Mahā Kālī* is His *Śaktī*. *Liṅga Purāṇa* (Chapter 106) says about the origin of *Kālī*. "Having entered the body of the lord of *Deva*-s, *Pārvatī* made Her own body out of poison in the neck of *Śiva*..... *Śiva* created *Kālī*, the blue necked Goddess with matted hair from His third eye.....On seeing *Kālī* who resembled fire and whose black neck was embellished with poison....."

This nāma also says that *Lalitāmbikā* is the ruler of death in the form of *Mahā Kālī*. God of death *Yama* is also black in colour. *Lalitāmbikā* takes black complexion when She destroys evil doers. Please refer nāma 756.

{Further reading on *Kālī*: (as told by *Śrī Kāñcī Mahā Svāmī* in the book *Voice of God* – Volume I.) "White *Śiva* gets to the task of *saṃhāra* after taking black coloured *Pārvatī* as *Śaktī*. When we refer to *Ambāl* (Tamil version of *Śaktī*) Herself as *saṃhāramūrtī*, we call Her as *Kālī*. The very word *Kālī* means a woman who is black.....

We do a lot of work. Then we become tired and go to sleep. This is caused by *tamas*. There, it is pitch dark –black only. But, it is in this sleep that man gets at least some peace. To the being who runs around the whole day and goes through hardships, *Parāśaktī*, as a consolation, gives them sleep every day and gives them some peace. Therefore, there appears to a lot of grace in *tamas* itself.

Saṃhāra is a long sleep. Just as we are in a state of peace during sleep, unaffected by sorrow, in the same way the *jīva* that undergoes *saṃhāra* is immersed in peace, free from the various kinds of

experiences arising out of activities, till it takes another birth. Lord *Śiva* performs *saṃhāra* in order to give us temporary rest, free from the bondage of *karma*. Only the *jñāni*-s who have lost the ego 'I am doing karma' can permanently escape from the cycle of *karma*. But, in order that even a sinner may, at least temporarily be free from the harassment of *karma*. *Parāśaktī* has, with great compassion designed *saṃhāra*.....

The colour of *Pārvatī,* the *Śaktī* of *Rudra*, who performs *saṃhāra* is black. Only if the worldly attachements are given up, one can get released from sorrows and miseries and attain eternal peace. To be aware that we are in a state of peace and remain peaceful is the state of *samādi*. This is the state which is granted by *Parāśaktī* through Her function of grace. The next state is being in a state of sleep without the awareness that we are in a state of peace. Therefore, next to the stage of grace (*anugraha*), what is pleasing to all beings is only *saṃhāra*.}

Mahā-grāsā महा-ग्रासा (752)

She is a devourer (one who eats voraciously). This nāma says that everything merges into the Brahman. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (I.ii.25) says "the best among all people are like food to the Self. Death overcomes everyone, yet even death is a mere condiment for the Self."

Brahma Sūtra (I.ii.9) also says "The eater (the Brahman) on account of the appropriation of all that moves and does not move."

This nāma refers to the act of annihilation or the great dissolution (*mahā pralaya*) of the Brahman.

Mahā-śanā महा-शना (753)

The great eater. There is no significant difference between the previous nāma and this nāma. Possibly the earlier nāma refers to the great dissolution (the deluge) and this nāma refers to destruction.

In the process of annihilation, the entire universe ceases to exist and in the case of destruction a part of the universe (evil doers) is destroyed.

This nāma is different from nāma 229 *mahā-sanā* (महासना).

Aparṇā अपर्णा (754)

She is without debts. When *apa* (negation) is prefixed to *rṇā* (debts) it means She is without debts. She repays the devotion of Her devotees by granting boons to them, thereby not indebted to Her devotees. She is not even indebted to *Śiva* because She takes care of His acts of creation, sustenance and dissolution. She is not indebted to *Deva*-s (gods and goddesses) because, She is saving them from the demons. She is not indebted to anyone in this universe.

Bhāskararāyā (who authored *Varivasyā Rahasya*) was a great devotee of *Lalitāmbikā*. He did not have enough money to perform even small rituals to Her. He borrowed money and performed daily rituals to Her. His creditors pressurised him to return the money. He did not have any money as his only job was to worship Her. He did not have any source of income. Suddenly, the pressure from his creditors stopped. Later he found out that *Lalitāmbikā* personally repaid all his debts in the form of his wife. Wealth and unfeigned devotion do not go together!

Aparṇa also means without leaves. It is said that She did penance for attaining *Śiva* without even taking leaves. *Aparṇa* as such means *Durga* or *Pārvatī*.

According to another interpretation *parṇā* means falling and *aparṇā* means She is devoid of fall. There is no fall for the Brahman.

Caṇḍikā चण्डिका (755)

She is *Durga*. She is said to be inaccessible because of Her anger. She is the combined form of *Durga, Lakṣmī* and *Sarasvatī*. Please refer nāma 704. *Caṇḍi* or *Caṇḍikā* does not like evil doers and becomes terribly angry on seeing them. She slays these evil doers without mercy. Her anger is expressed in *Śrī Devi Māhātmyam*.

Taittirīya Upaniṣad (III.viii.1) says, "The wind blows out of fear for Him (the Brahman). The sun also shines out of fear. Out of fear, fire, *Indra*, death all rush to do their respective duties." This clearly explains that making others fear for Him is the quality of the Brahman. *Śrī Rudraṁ* (I.1) opens by paying reverence to His anger. *Śrī Rudraṁ* says *nāmasthae rudra manyava .... nāmah*.

Caṇḍikā form of Her is said to be ferocious. She cannot tolerate evil acts. Because of Her anger, activities of universe take place in a disciplined manner.

A seven year old girl is known as *Caṇḍikā*

Caṇḍa-muṇḍāsura-niṣūdinī चण्ड-मुण्डासुर-निषूदिनी (756)

Caṇḍa and *Muṇḍa* are the two demons who were killed by Her and hence She is known as *Cāmuṇḍa* (the first letters of the two demons). In *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* (*Devi Bhāgavata*) (84.25) Devi *Caṇḍikā* addresses *Kāli* thus "Because you have killed *Chaṇḍa* and *Muṇḍa*, you shall be known as *Chāmuṇḍā* and be famed in the world." *Caṇḍikā* is different from *Chāmuṇḍā*. *Caṇḍikā* is the combined form of *Durgā, Lakṣmī* and *Sarasvatī*. *Cāmuṇḍā* is the form of *Kālī*. All these forms are only manifestations of *Lalitāmbikā*.

Cāmuṇḍa is one of the *sapta mātā*-s (seven mothers). In the previous nāma it is said that She is angered on seeing evil doers. To prove this point, She destroyed two demons, who were the great evil doers.

Kṣarākṣarātmikā क्षराक्षरात्मिका (757)

There are two interpretations to this nāma.

Kṣara means syllables and *akṣara* means alphabets. Syllable is formed by the combination of alphabets. This nāma means She is mono-syllable and multi-syllable. In other words, She is one as well as many. Nāma 577 is *mātṛkā varṇa rūpiṇī*. She is in the form all alphabets and words. She is *śabda Brahman*. Divine consciousness is identical with the Supreme word which is known as *parā-vāc*. All the alphabets and words are derived from this. Nāma 366 *parā* explains more on this. *Devi Upaniṣad* (9.6) says *mantrāṇāṁ matṛkādevī śabdānāṁ jñāna rūpiṇī* (मन्त्राणां मतृकादेवी शब्दानां ज्ञान रूपिणी) (She is in the form *matṛkā*-s in *mantra*-s and in the form of *jñāna* in sound. *Matṛkā* means source or origin. In this context it means the alphabets. The realisation of *matṛkā* by the soul means liberation to the soul. Soul realizes *matṛkā* by means of *mantra*, the origin of which is *matṛkā* or Sanskrit letters from *a* to *kṣa* (अ to क्ष). Mono-syllable means single alphabet which represents *māyā* or illusion and multi-syllable means *jīva-s* or souls. *Lalitā triśatī* nāma-s 22 and 23 explain this concept. *Bhagavad Gīta* (VIII.13) says 'OM (ॐ) is the mono syllable'. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (I.ii.16) also says "this *akṣaram* (ॐ) is Brahman with attributes and this *akṣaram* is Brahman without attributes." Either way, this nāma means that She is the Brahman.

*Viṣṇu Sahasranāmam*a nāma 480 is *Kṣara* and 481 is *akṣara*. *Kṣara* also means perishables and *akṣara* means non-perishables. *Bhagavad Gīta* (VIII.4) says *kṣaro bhāvaḥ* which means all perishable objects. *Kṛṣṇa* further says (*Bhagavad Gīta* XV.16) that perishables mean the body and non-perishable means soul. In this way, this nāma means that She is the cause for both body and soul (the Supreme Creator. Both body and soul is necessary to unfold the *karmic* effects).

Sarva-lokeśī सर्व-लोकेशी (758)

She is *Īśvarī* for all the worlds. She rules all the worlds. *Gāyatri mantra* refers to seven worlds and each world is represented by one *vyāhṛti*. (*bhūr, bhuvar, svar, mahar, janar, tapar, satya*). These worlds represent the level of consciousness and She rules over all these mental planes. In other words, she rules over the universe. *Satya* is the highest level of consciousness. *Satya* also refers to the upper most of the seven worlds, the abode of *Brahmā* and the heaven of Truth.

Viśva-dhāriṇī विश्व-धारिणी (759)

She holds the universe. *Viśva* means the universe and *dhāriṇī* means holding.

Tri-varga-dhātrī त्रि-वर्ग-धात्री (760)

Tri-varga means *puruṣārtha-s*. She is the giver of *puruṣārtha-s*. *Puruṣārtha-s* are *dharma* (righteousness), *artha* (wealth or purpose), *kāma* (desire) and *mokṣa* (liberation). The last one, *mokṣa* is not included here, hence instead of *puruṣārtha-s*, the nāma only says *tri-varga*. Her act of liberating a soul was discussed in nāma 736. All the four *puruṣārtha-s* are discussed in nāma 291. *puruṣārtha-pradā.*

Tri-varga is also known as *trayīmaya*, intent only upon the three objects of man, *dharma, artha* and *kāma.*

Subhagā सुभगा (761)

Five year old girl is known *subhaga*.

Among others, *bhaga* also means sun, Goddess *Sāvitrī*, good fortune, welfare, prosperity, dignity etc. *Su* is used an adjective to the word *bhaga*. It means She is the incarnation of good fortunes of the highest order. She has dignity of the highest order.

If *bhaga* is interpreted as sun, then it means that sun shines due to Her. Sun derives energy from Her to shine and sustain the universe (the galaxy known to us). Please refer nāma-s 275 and 715 which further explain on this. *Subhaha* (सुभग) means possessing good fortune, very fortunate or prosperous, lucky, happy, blessed, highly favoured, beautiful, lovely, charming, pleasing, etc. In this context it means that She is the possessor of all such auspicious qualities.

(The very thought of Her is capable of conveying all auspiciousness.)

Tryambakā त्र्यम्बका (762)

She has three eyes. Sun, moon and fire are Her three eyes (Please recall *iḍā*, *piṅgala* and *suṣumna* of *kuṇḍalinī*). This nāma also means that She is the mother of *Brahma*, *Viṣṇu* and *Rudra*. Please refer nāma-s 453 and 477.

Triguṇātmikā त्रिगुणात्मिका (763)

Guṇa or qualities are of three types, *sattvic*, *rajas* and *tamas*. (Please refer nāma 984. *triguṇā*. *Guṇa-s* belong to *prakṛti* (nature) and is the cause of opposites. *Puruṣa* (soul) in association with *prakṛti* endowed with three *guṇa-s* cause creation. *Guṇa-s* belong to Her when She acts as Brahman with attributes. When She is the Brahman without attributes (*nirguṇa Brahman*) She is *nirguṇa* (nāma 139) and *gunātītā* (nāma 931).

Svargāpavargadā स्वर्गापवर्गदा (764)

She gives *svarga* or heaven and liberation. *Svarga* or heaven is a respite for the soul, if the soul is embedded with good *karmic* account. Apart from pains or pleasures through the gross forms that souls manifest, they have to undergo pains and pleasures in hell or heaven. *Kṛṣṇa* says in *Bhagavad Gīta* (IX.21) "Having enjoyed the extensive heaven world, they return to this world of mortals on the stock of their merits being exhausted."

Svarga is heaven and *apavarga* means liberation, the emancipation of the soul from bodily existence, exempted from further transmigration also known as *mokṣa*. Liberation is of two types. One is *jīvanmukti* which means he attains liberation when he is alive. Another is *videhamukti* which means liberation after death. Both these liberations can be attained only through knowledge. A *jīvanmukta*, however may still posses subtle hidden seeds of past actions that have not been totally destroyed by the fires of the wisdom. Some of them destroy these remnants of past material *karma* by certain work in the astral cosmos.

[For further reading: It is said that souls take strange forms in heaven or hell. It is also explained that such forms do not have mouths to eat and drink. They feed themselves through their nose. It is also said that they are fond of smell arising from roasting sesame seeds (It is known as *til* seeds or *sesamum indicum*). Annual ceremonial rites for ancestors are performed to appease the souls of the ancestors. During such rituals, sesame seeds are used to invoke the souls.)

Śuddhā शुद्धा (765)

She is pure. She is the embodiment of purity. Purity gives knowledge, that is required to attain liberation, discussed in the previous nāma. Stains are called as ignorance. She is devoid of any stains.

Japā-puṣpa-nibhākṛtiḥ जपा-पुष्प-निभाकृतिः (766)

Japā-puṣpa means hibiscus flower. She has the complexion of hibiscus flower (deep red or crimson) is mentioned in *dhyāna* verse.

Ojovatī ओजोवती (767)

Ojas means body vitality, the principle of vital warmth and action throughout the body. *Ojas* is said to be the eighth substance of a body. This is a sentient life energy prevailing in the spinal cord.

This is the combination of five cognitive senses known as *jñānendriya*. Whatever is consumed, food or perceptions first get transformed into *ojas* in the spinal cord.

Ayurveda says that there are seven *dhātu*-s (ingredients) in the body. They are chyle (lymphatic fluid), blood, flesh, fat, bone, marrow and fluids of procreation (Some say ten by adding hair and skin). *Ojas* is said to be the eighth *dhātu*. Ayurveda classifies *ojas* as *parā-ojas* and *aparā -ojas*. Again there are two different interpretations as to its location and quantity. Apart from what is detailed above, it is said that quantity of *ojas* is equal to half of the volume when both the palms are joined together in the little finger areas.

The other theory says that *ojas* which is the substratum of life is of eight drops only in quantity and is located in the heart. But it is accepted that there is no life possible without *ojas*. It marks the beginning of the formation of the embryo. It is also said that 'it is this *ojas* where the soul is lodged after the union of sperm and ovum' (*Charaka Samhita* XXX.9). This clearly explains the importance of *Śaktī* in human life. She is in the form of *ojas*. This also affirms that She resides in the heart.

Dyuti-dharā द्युति-धरा (768)

She radiates brilliantly. This illumination is due to initial and final stages of "I" consciousness. This I consciousness is known as *aham* in Sanskrit. *Aham* is the comprehension of the entire cosmos, which is the expression of the creative brilliance of *Śaktī*.

Yajña-rūpā यज्ञ-रूपा (769)

Viṣṇu is the Supreme authority for *yajña*-s. *Yajña* means fire ritual where oblations are offered with *mantra* recitations. *Agni*, the lord of fire is the carrier of oblations to the concerned deities. *Yajur Veda* says *Yajño vai Viṣṇuḥ* which means *yajña* is *Viṣṇu* (*vai* means certainly, the stressing factor. This is rarely used in *Rig Veda* and

often used in *Atharva Veda*). The purpose of *yajña* is sacrifice. *Kṛṣṇa* says in *Bhagavad Gīta* (X.25) "among *yajña-s* I am *japa yajña*" (super conscious chanting of *mantra-s* is *japa*). *Viṣṇu Sahasranāma* nāma 445 is *yajñaḥ*. Based on the above information, it is said that She is in the form of *Viṣṇu*.

Going by the Vedic interpretations, *yajña* means devotion. Vedic literature says that *yajña* means oblations or offerings. She is the most devoted or She is made up of sacrifices, because most sacrifices are done in Her favour (*Śaktī* worship and tantric rituals). It is said that the greatest form sacrifice is worshipping one's own self.

Priya-vratā प्रिय-व्रता (770)

She is fond of vows. Vows mean refraining from certain acts through *saṃkalpa* or determination. Mostly such vows are done for appeasing gods and goddesses. She is also pleased with vows made to other gods and goddesses. She is pleased on account of two reasons. The first point is that She is the Brahman (both *nirguṇa* and *saguṇa*). Second aspect is that the entire universe is the manifested form of *Śiva* and *Śaktī* (*puruṣa* and *prakṛti*).

Kṛṣṇa also says in *Bhagavad Gīta* (VII.21) "Whatever divine form a devotee chooses to worship with reverence, I stabilise the faith of that particular devotee in that very form."

Durārādhyā दुराराध्या (771)

She is difficult to attain. The process of attaining Her is difficult, as mind control is paramount in Her worship. Worshipping Her without controlling mind and senses, does not yield any result. *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 95) says "It is difficult for those who cannot control their senses, to come near your sacred feet and worship you." Refer nāma 871, which endorses this point.

Durādharṣā दुराधर्षा (772)

She cannot be controlled. She can be controlled only by unstained devotion. Pretentious worship is not liked by Her. *Kṛṣṇa* says in *Bhagavad Gīta* (IX.26) "Whosoever offers to me with love a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water, (*patraṁ, puṣpaṁ, phalṁ, toyaṁ*) I appear in person before that disinterested devotee of sinless mind and delightfully partake of that article offered by him with love."

She should be worshipped in seclusion. This aspect has been repeatedly stressed through various nāma-s in this *Sahasranāma* and elsewhere. 'The bliss of atman is Lalitai' says *Bhāvanopaniṣad* (29). Sage *Durvāsa* in his *Śrī śaktīmahimnḥ stotraṁ* (verse 53) says that one who worships Her through *prāṇāyāma* and meditation becomes one with *Lalitāmbikā*.

Pāṭalī-kusuma-priyā पाटली-कुसुम-प्रिया (773)

Pāṭalī (*Bignonia Suaveolens*) is red and white flower. Red represents *Śaktī* and white represents *Śiva* and hence this flower is said to represent both *Śiva* and *Śaktī*.

Śiva is fond of *bilva* tree and *Śaktī* is fond of *pāṭalī* tree.

Mahatī महती (774)

This nāma declares one of the important attributes of Brahman. *Mahat* arises from the union of *puruṣa* (soul) *prakṛti* (nature). *Mahat* is the second principle from *prakṛti* as per *Sāṃkhya* philosophy. *Puruṣa* is the self-intelligent subject and *prakṛti* is the non-intelligent potential cause of the objective universe. *Puruṣa-s* are innumerable in number, whereas *prakṛti* is one. The primal constituents of *prakṛti* are the three *guṇa*-s (*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*). As per *sāṃkhya yoga* principle all objects both physical and psychical are transformation of *prakṛti*, the first of which is *mahat*. She is addressed as *mahat* by *Vāc Devi*-s because She manifests in all living beings as She is also known as *prakṛti*. *Mahat* is also known as *buddhi* or intellect, the great and exclusive

principle of humanity. Intellect is an essential component for attaining knowledge.

Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad (I.i.1) says '*mahato mahīyān* (महतो महीयान्) which means greater than the greatest. This nāma says She is that *Mahat*. Without *mahat* (intellect or the principal factor of underlying self-consciousness) *Śiva* cannot be realized, hence it is said that *Śiva* can be realized only with the blessings of *Śaktī*.

Meru-nilayā मेरु-निलया (775)

She lives atop *Meru*. *Meru* is a fabulous mountain regarded as the Olympus of Hindu mythology and said to form the central point of *Jambu-dvīpa*. *Meru* has already been discussed in nāma 55 *sumeru madhya śṛṅgasthā*. Three dimensional form of *Śrī Cakra* is known as *Meru* or *Mahā Meru*. *Meru* also means the condensed form of *Pañcadaśī mantra*. There are only nine *bīja-s*, if repeated *bīja-s* are removed (The nine *bīja-s* are: *ka, e, ī, la, sa, ha, ra, ma* (क, ए, ई, ल, स, ह, र, म) and *bindu*).

Meru also means the spinal cord. She traverses up and down the spinal cord in Her subtlest form *kuṇḍalinī*. This nāma could also mean Her movements through *meru* (spinal cord).

Mandāra-kusuma-priyā मन्दार-कुसुम-प्रिया (776)

She is fond of *mandāra* flowers (*Erythrina Indica*). *Mandāra* tree is one of the five trees in *Svarga* (heaven).

There is a hermitage on the banks of river Ganges where there are eleven sacred pools. She is fond of this hermitage.

Mandāra flowers are also referred in Buddhism. When Buddha was preaching, it is said that *mandāra* flowers used to shower from heaven.

Vīrārādhyā वीराराध्या (777)

Vīrā-s mean warriors. Characteristics of *vīrā* are defined. He should have realized the Self, devoid of ego, opposed to dyads and should be brave as well. In this context *vīrā* means courageous devotee. When one realizes Self, he need not be afraid of anyone. She is worshipped by such warriors.

Virāḍ-rūpā विराड्-रूपा (778)

The concept has been already discussed in nāma 256. *viśva-rūpa*. In addition to what has been discussed there, *virāḍ* can also be explained as follows. *Virāḍ* is the consciousness which identifies itself with the individual gross body in the waking state. Consciousness can be broadly classified into microcosm and macrocosm. Microcosm is the individual consciousness and macrocosm is the universal consciousness. These can also be interpreted as the individual self and the cosmic Self. Microcosm or the individual cosmology is a miniscule of macrocosm or the sum total of all microcosms.

The individual self has four states of consciousness. 1. *Turya* or *avyakta* (for *avyakta* refer nāma 398), 2. *Īśvarā* (nāma 271 *Īśvarī*), 3. *Hiraṇyagarbha* (this has been discussed in various nāma-s in this *Sahasranāma.* Please refer nāma 638 *svarṇagarbhā*) and 4. *Virāḍ*. *Virāḍ* is also known as *virāj*. It is also known as *vaiśvānara*. The last of the above mentioned four states of consciousness is the all pervading metamorphosis of the divine being. It is the omnipresent universal form, encompassing the entire visible and tangible phenomenal world. This is the fully manifested macrocosm that appear to the human eyes as the universe. What we perceive is not the complete macrocosm, but only a minuscule deluded by *māyā* or illusion.

Virāḍ is the end product of the macrocosm within a fully developed universe that is realized from experiment and observation rather than theory. *Pañcikaraṇam*, a small treatise on *advaita* philosophy by *Śaṃkarācārya* says. "The *virāḍ* is said to be the aggregate of all the quintuplicate elements and their effects" (verse 1). Those subtle

elements produced the gross ones, from which again the *virāṭ* (the macrocosm) or the objective totality comes into existence." Again verse 11 says, "The gross elements are compounded. These produce, the sum total of all the gross bodies. This is the gross body of the disembodied *Ātman*." V*irāṭ*, *virāj* and *virāḍ* are the same.

Virajā विरजा (779)

Vi means without and *rajas* means impurity. She is without impurity. *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* (65.1) says *ahaṁ virajā vipāpmā* which means 'I am freed from sins and passions'. The devotee offers fire oblations seeking purity in his breath, gross body, etc. There is a fire ritual by name *virajahoma* to be performed before becoming a *sanyāsī*. When one becomes devoid of impurity, he becomes one with the Brahman. She, the Brahman, is devoid of impurity. She is pure (refer nāma 765). When one wants to merge with the Brahman, one should possess the qualities of the Brahman.

Viśvato-mukhī विश्वतो-मुखी (780)

She has faces in all directions. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (III.3) says, *viśvatomukhaḥ* which means 'all faces are His'. Faces of entire living beings are His. This nāma affirms the omnipresent nature of the Brahman.

Kṛṣṇa also says in *Bhagavad Gīta* (IX.15) "others worship me in my universal form in many ways taking me as manifested in diverse celestial forms (*viśvatomukhaṁ*)."

Puruṣasūkta opens by saying *sahasraśīrṣā puruṣaḥ* meaning that He has thousands of heads. Heads of the entire living beings are His own.

This nāma means that She resides in the entire living beings of this universe, an affirmation of Her omnipresence.

Pratyag-rūpā प्रत्यग्-रूपा (781)

She is visible to those who see inwardly. She can be realized only within and this is known as Self-realization. By disconnecting mind from sensory afflictions and looking within, She is realized.

Kaṭha Upaniṣad (II.i.1) explains this. "The Self-created Lord has created the sense organs with the inherent defect that are by nature outgoing. Which is why, beings see things outside and cannot see the Self within." It says, *pratyagātmānamaikṣat*.

Nārāyaṇa sūktaṁ (5) says *antarbahiśca tatsarvaṁ vyāpya nārāyaṇa-stithaḥ* (अन्तर्बहिश्च तत्सर्वं व्याप्य नारायण-स्तिथः) meaning *Nārāyaṇa* pervades internally and externally.

Why should one look within when the Brahman is omnipresent. Afterall, *Nārāyaṇa* pervades internally and externally. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (II.iii.9) answers this. "The Brahman is not an object of our vision. No one can see Him by his eyes. He reveals Himself, only when the mind is pure and constantly thinks of Him."

Parākāśā पराकाशा (782)

She is the supreme *ākaś* or ether or space. *Parākāśa* is often used to mean the Brahman. This is due to three factors. First the vast stretch of ether and secondly its purity, thirdly its imperceptibleness and finally its subtle nature. Both shine and rain come from *ākaś*. These are the reasons for comparing *ākaś* to the Brahman. Since She is the Brahman, She is compared to *ākaś*. When one is not able to comprehend subtle matters, normally a comparison is made to known things. Since the Brahman is the subtlest of all, a comparison is made to ether or *ākaś*.

Brahma sūtra (I.i.22) says *ākāś tat lingāt*. This means that *ākaś* is the Brahman owing to the indicatory mark of that. The indicatory mark is explained in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (I.ix.1). It says 'End of this earth is space, as everything arises from space and also goes back into space. Space is superior to everything. Space is the highest goal." The *Upaniṣad* again says (VIII.xiv) 'That which is

described as space manifests names and forms. These names and forms are within Brahman."

Taittirīya Upaniṣad says that Brahman is bliss (III.vi) "*Bhṛgu* (a great sage) came to know that bliss is Brahman, for it is from bliss that these beings are born. Having been born, they are supported by bliss and when they perish, they go back to bliss. It is *Varuṇa* who taught this Truth. This Truth is in the empty space of the heart."

The point driven home by the *Upaniṣads* is that Brahman is vast empty space. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* also confirms this by saying (II.ii.2) "The Self is everywhere.....It supports everything and is the air in the space between the earth and heaven."

This nāma says in a single word the teachings of these *Upaniṣads*. *Lalitā Sahasranāma* is in *mantra* form. Hence it is said that this should not be recited like musical notes (*rāga* and *svara*) or with any musical instruments. Veda-s should never be recited in notes form or accompanied by musical instruments.

Prāṇadā प्राणदा (783)

She is the giver of vital breath or *prāṇa*. Her subtle form continues to be discussed. Like *ākāś, prāṇa* also is subtle. Like *ākāś*, *prāṇa* is also life giving. Sun and rain come from *ākāś* that are under Her control. *Prāṇa* also is controlled by Her. The omnipresent nature of the Brahman is being explained by *Vāc Devi*-s. The next *Brahma Sutra* (I.i.23) says "On that very ground, *prāṇa* is Brahman". *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* also says (I.xi.5) says "In *prāṇa* all things that we see around us disappear. And at the time of appearance they appear from *prāṇa*."

Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad (IV.iv.18) says "those who have known the *prāṇa* of *prāṇa*" which means subtle of the subtlest, the Brahman, because 'Self is taintless and beyond the subtle ether.' (IV.iv.20)

Prāṇa-rūpiṇī प्राण-रूपिणी (784)

This is in confirmation of the previous nāma. The previous nāma said that She is the giver of *prāṇa* and this nāma says that She is the embodiment of *prāṇa*. Unless something is overflowing, it cannot be shared. She cannot be the giver of *prāṇa* unless She is full of *prāṇa* and *prāṇa* overflows from Her. These types of nāma-s are available in plenty in this *Sahasranāma*. For example nāma-s 736 *muktidā* and 737 *muktirūpiṇī*.

Chāndogya Upaniṣad (IV.x.5) explains these nāma-s (782-784). "'I know that *prāṇa* is Brahman. But I do not know that *ka*-क and *kha*-ख are Brahman.' The fire replies *ka* is *kha* and *kha* is *ka* (meaning both are same) and taught him that Brahman is both *prāṇa* and *ākāś*." This teaching of *Agni* goes to prove that Brahman is everything. *ka* and *kha* are only taken as examples. For example Mr. A and Mr. B are the same. Both of them are Brahman. If Mr. A realises this fact, he is known as knowledgeable and Self-realized. If B does not understand this, then he is called ignorant.

Mārtāṇḍa-bhairavārādhyā मार्ताण्ड-भैरवाराध्या (785)

She is worshipped by *Mārtāṇḍa-bhairava*. He is posited in the twenty fourth *prahāra* (wall) of *Śrī puraṁ*. *Śrī Cakra* is in the centre of this *Śrī puraṁ*. Anything associated with Her is prefixed with *Śrī*, a sign of auspiciousness. Some are of the opinion that *Mārthaṇda-bhairava* is the sun. Sage *Durvāsa* says that he worships him with his wife *Chāya Devi*. Sun's wife is *Chāya Devi*. Then this nāma means that She is worshipped by sun.

Others are of the opinion that *Bhairava* here means *Vaṭuka Bhairava*-s who are also great devotees of Her. They are also posited in *Śrī puraṁ* and constantly meditate on Her.

There are sixty four *Bhairava*-s and *Mārtāṇḍa-bhairava* is one among them. These sixty four *Bhairava*-s are grouped under eight categories and each category is headed by one *Bhairava* and these

eight *Bhairava*-s are called *Aṣṭāṅga Bhairava*-s. *Mārthaṇda-bhairava* comes under the first group headed by *Asitāṅga Bhairava*

Bhairava means *Śiva*. *Śiva Sūtra* (I.5) says *udyamao Bhairavaḥ* which means 'sudden realization like a flash is *Śiva*'. Realisation always happens suddenly. It is like a flash of light. When the light is not switched on, the place remains in darkness. Once the light is switched on, the room is flooded with light. Realisation also happens this way. We go on acquiring knowledge and we know that Brahman is present everywhere. This is only assumption and presumption. But, realisation is different. Realisation is understanding and personally experiencing the Truth. Truth means everything is Brahman. In this nāma *mārthaṇda* refers to the flash of light. Therefore, in this context *Mārtāṇḍa-bhairava* means *Śiva*. The one who has realized *Śiva* and merges with Him is also known as *Śiva*. She is worshipped by such devotees.

{Further reading of *Bhairava*: There are different interpretations on *Bhairava*. *Śiva* is worshiped in twenty five forms as per *āgama śāstra*. The important ones are *Liṇgotbhava, Ardhanārīśvara, Somaskanta, Dakṣiṇāmūrti, Kālasaṁhāra, Sarabeśvarā, Nīlakaṇṭa, Bhairava, Riśabhārūḍha, Candraśekara, Naṭarāja* and *Gangādhara*. Out of the twenty forms of *Śiva, Bhairava* form is considered to be important. *Ābhatuthtārana, Vaduga, Kṣetrapāla, Brahmasiraccheta* are said to be the other names of *Bhairava*. There is another school of thought which says that *Śiva* Himself crated *Bhairava*. There was one demon by name *Dahurāsuraṇ* who got a boon that he could be killed only by a woman. *Kālī* was created by *Śaktī* to kill him. The wrath of *Kālī* killed the demon. After killing the demon, her wrath metamorphosed as a child. *Kālī* fed the child with her milk. *Śiva* made both *Kālī* and the child to merge with Him. From this merged form of *Śiva, Bhairva* appeared in his eight forms (*aṣṭa Bhairava*-s). Since *Bhairava* was thus created by *Śiva*, he is said to be one of the sons of *Śiva*, others being *Gaṇeśa, Kārttikeya, Ayyanār* (said to be the God of villages) and *Vīrabhatra*.

Bhairava is the ultimate form of manifestation or pure I consciousness. This form is called *Mahā Bhairava* or *Śiva,* the Supreme. Others give Him terrifying forms.

The word *Bhairava* originates from the word *bhīru,* which means fearful. *Bhairava* means terribly fearful form. The right interpretation is that He protects His devotees from dreadful enemies, greed, lust and anger. *Bhairava* protects His devotees from these enemies. These enemies are dangerous as they never allow us seek Him within. There is also another interpretation. *Bha* means creation, *ra* means sustenance and *va* means destruction. Therefore *Bhairava* is the one who creates, sustains and dissolves the three stages of a life. Therefore, He becomes the Ultimate or the Supreme.

Bhairava is also called the protector. If *Bhairava* is manifested as a form of *Śiva*, He becomes the protector of the universe. In all the temples, there will be a *Bhairava* idol. This *Bhairava* is the protector of temples. In *Śiva* temples, when the temple is closed, the keys are placed before *Bhairava*. In some of the ancient texts, *Bhairava* is described as the protector of women. He is described as the protector of the timid and in general women are timid in nature, hence this description.

Purāṇa-s too give different versions of *Bhairava*. *Brahma* is the lord of creation. He thought that He is the Supreme and abused *Śiva*. *Śiva* created *Bhairava* who removed one of the five heads of *Brahma* and took away his skull. There is yet another version. There was a war between gods and demons. To eradicate the demons, *Śiva* created *Śiva* from whom *aṣṭa Bhairava*-s were created. These *aṣṭa Bhairava*-s got married to *aṣṭa mātā-s*. These *aṣṭa Bhairava*-s and *mātā-s* have dreadful forms. From these *aṣṭa Bhairava*-s and *aṣṭa mātā-s*, 64 *Bhairava*-s and 64 *yogini*-s were created.

There are eight types of *Bhairava*-s and they are called *aṣṭa Bhairava*-s. They are *Mahā-Bhairava, Saṃhāra-Bhairava,*

Asitāṅga-Bhairava, Ruru-Bhairava, Kāla-Bhairava, Krodha-Bhairava, Tāmracūḍa-Bhairava, or *Kapāla-Bhairava, Candracūḍa-Bhairava* or *Rudra-bhairava*. Apart from these eight forms there is yet another form called *Svarṇākarṣṇa Bhairava*. *Mahā-Bhairava* is said to be *Śiva* himself. Normally in *Śiva* temples idols of *Bhairava* are situated in the north facing, southern direction. He is also called *Kṣetrapāla*. He appears in a standing position with four hands. His weapons are drum, *pāśa* (noose), trident and skull. In some forms of *Bhairava*, there are more than four hands. He appears without dress and with a dog. His weapons, dog, protruding teeth, terrifying looks, garland with red flowers all these give him frightening appearance.

In all *Śiva* temples, regular *pūja* rituals begin with Sun and end with *Bhairava*. *Bhairava* likes ghee bath (*abhiṣeka*), red flowers, ghee lamp, unbroken coconut, honey, boiled food, fibrous fruits etc. If a *Bhairava* idol is facing west, it is good; facing south is moderate; facing east is not good. The right time to pray to *Bhairava* is midnight. During midnight it is said that *Bhairava* and His consort *Bhairavī* (nāma 276) are together and will give *darśana* to their devotees. The most appropriate time is Friday midnight. There are eight types of flowers and leaves used in *arcana* (अर्चन) to *Bhairava*.

The eight *Bhairava*-s are said to represent five elements viz. *ākāś*, air, fire, water and earth and other three being sun, moon and *ātman*. Each of the eight *Bhairava*-s are different in appearance, have different weapons, different *vāhana*-s and they bless their devotees with eight types of wealth representing *aṣṭa Lakṣmi*-s. Continuous worship of *Bhairava* leads the worshipper to a true Guru. There are separate *dhyāna* verses and *mūla mantra*-s to all the eight *Bhairava*-s.

Apart from the *aṣṭa Bhairava*-s there is one more important *Bhairava* called *Svarṇākarṣṇa Bhairava*. He has red complexion and clothed in golden dress. He has moon in his head. He has four hands. In one of the hands he carries a golden vessel. He gives wealth and prosperity. Performing *pūja* on Tuesdays gives quick

results. *Ākāśa Bhairava* is also known as *Sarabheśvara*. In some of the ancient texts he is said to have thirty two hands, shape of a bird, golden complexion, terrible teeth, and human form above the hip. Worshipping him destroys enemies.

It is generally believed that worshipping *Bhairava* gives prosperity, success and good progeny, prevents premature death and solution to debts and liabilities. Different forms of *Bhairava* evolve only from *Śiva*, who is called the *Mahā Bhairava*.}

Mantriṇī-nyasta-rājyadhūḥ मन्त्रिणी-न्यस्त-राज्यधूः (786)

She has entrusted the ministerial responsibilities of the universe to *Mantriṇī*. *Mantriṇī* is feminine gender for minister. Her minister is *Śyāmalā*. There is already a reference to *Mantriṇī* in nāma-s 69 and 75. *Śyāmalā* is also known as *Rāja-Mātaṅgī* and *Rāja-Śyāmalā*.

It is also said that one who worships Her through *mantra*-s is known as *mantriṇī*. Here *mantra*-s do not mean *Pañcadaśī* and *ṣodaśī* alone. They are *mantra*-s of the highest order. Since She is *mātṛkā varṇa rūpiṇī* (nāma 577), all the alphabets belong to Her. All the letters originate from Her. Therefore, there is no distinction between Her and *mantra*-s. This is confirmed by nāma 204. *sarva mantra svarūpiṇī*. *Mantra* is defined as 'power in the form of formulated and expressed thought.' This power is known as *Śaktī*. *Mantra*-s are useful only if the deeper meaning of the *mantra*-s is understood. *Mantra-s* in combination with meditation give quicker results. *Japa mantra*-s do not fructify unless one understands the significance of *mantra*-s. *Mantra*-s are nothing but *bījākṣara* (combination of alphabets). A *bīja* is a monosyllabic sound that contains one or more consonants with a vowel and ends with a *bindu*. *Vāmakeśvara Tantra* (refer nāma-s 351 and 945) elaborates on *mantra*-s.

Śiva Sūtra (II.1) says *Cittam mantraḥ* (चित्तम् मन्त्रः). *Cittam* means limitation of the highest consciousness in the individual self. This can also be interpreted as the limitation of the Supreme

Consciousness (the Brahman) in self (an individual). After having said that mind is *mantra*, the next *sūtra* (II.2) says that continuous effort leads to attainment (*mantra siddhi* or fructification *mantra*). The third *sūtra* (II.3) says the fructification *mantra*-s mean non-dualism or Oneness with the Brahman (Realisation). *Mantra* is nothing but a secret tool in the hands of a practitioner that first enables him to establish a link with the Brahman and ultimately making him to dissolve into the Brahman. When mind and *mantra* are well connected, one realises the Brahman.

This nāma also means that She is in the form such intricate and potent *mantra*-s. She is the sum total of all *mantra*-s.

Tripureśī त्रिपुरेशी (787)

Śiva had burnt *Tripura*, a place of *asura*-s (demons) fortified with gold, silver and iron forts. These are nothing but stages of ignorance. *Śiva* who burnt this place is known as *Tripura* and His wife is *Tripureśī*. This also means *Bhairavī*, the Goddess of Tantra *śāstra*-s. She is adored by all tantra *śāstra*-s.

Or this could mean that She is the chief of three *loka*-s of *Brahma*, *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva*. These *loka*-s (worlds) are situated around *Meru*, where She resides (refer nāma 775. *Meru-nilayā*). (*Tripura atipaṭhī* (*atipaṭhī* means chief).

Jayatsenā जयत्सेना (788)

She has a victorious army. She is capable of winning over demons (evil acts). In Hindu scriptures, often references are made to demons. These demons are embodiment of wickedness and gods who win over them represent virtues. Virtues always prevail.

Nistraiguṇyā निस्त्रैगुण्या (789)

She is devoid of three *guṇa*-s. These *guṇa*-s in association with *prakṛti* are responsible for creation. Please refer nāma-s 139, 397, 398 and 399 for further details.

Parāparā परापरा (790)

There are three forms of the Brahman, *para*, *apara* and *parā-para*. This nāma discusses about the third form. All the three forms of the Brahman has already been discussed in nāma 366. *Parā*.

A brief portion of discussion on nāma 366 is reproduced here. "*Parā* has three stages. Its original *para* form is considered as supreme and is full of energy. In order to manifest, it loses its supremacy and energy level gradually and becomes *parā-para* the mediocre level of supremacy. It further loses its strength at the exact time of manifestation and becomes *apara* where it loses its supremacy and become manifested."

When Brahman is omnipresent, He has to have both superior and inferior qualities. *Śrī Rudraṁ* beautifully explains this concept. Brahman is not only a master, but also a servant. He is not only the giver, but also the taker. He is not only the creator but also the destroyer. All the qualities that exist in this universe are placed between the two aspects of the Brahman *para* and *apara*. This is the unique quality of the Brahman. Unless this quality of the Brahman is fully understood, Brahman can never be realised. To put it more simply, both a deadly snake and a sage of the highest order are Brahman. We are deluded by the respective forms and fail to realise the Brahman 'within' (universality of the soul) due to the influence of *māyā*. *Ramaṇa Mahariṣi* says "the ignorant perceive only name and form" (*Ramaṇa Gīta*. Verse 33). *Kṛṣṇa* says In *Bhagavad Gīta* (IX.29) "I am equally present in all beings; there is none hateful or dear to me."

Praśna Upaniṣad (V.2) says *paraṃ cā paraṃ ca brahma* which means Brahman without attributes (*para*) and Brahman with attributes (*apara*). Brahman remains the same and for the purpose

of our convenience and easier understanding, we have categorised Him as *saguṇa Brahman* and *nirguṇa Brahman*. This can be explained this way to avoid confusion. *Śiva* is *nirguṇa Brahman*, *Śaktī* is *saguṇa Brahman*, and *Śiva-Śaktī* is *Para-Brahman*. This is further explained in nāma 792.

Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad (II.i.4) says "there are two kinds of knowledge, *Para*, the Superior cosmic knowledge, and *apara* inferior knowledge relating to the phenomenal world." The next verse explains still further. It says "*Apara* knowledge comprises of the four Vedas, rituals, grammar, phonetics, etymology, etc and *para* is that by which one knows the Brahman which always remains the same and never decays." It is made very clear that realising the Brahman is important than knowing Vedas and other rituals. Once Brahman is realised, nothing else required to be known.

Śaktī is known as *Parā-Śaktī* based upon these factors. *Parāpara* is the intermediate stage between the highest and lowest, a sort of mediocre stage. This is based on the fact that the Brahman is omnipresent. This nāma refers to Her mediocre stage.

{Further reading: Nāma-s commencing from 156 explain *nirguṇa Brahman* and *saguṇa Brahman*. For example nāma 162 is *nir-mohā* which means 'She is without confusion and the next nāma 163 *moha-nāśinī* which means She destroys confusion in the minds of Her devotees. Nāma 163 refers to *nirguṇa Brahman* or *para* and the next nāma refers to *saguṇa Brahman* or *parāpara* and *apara*.}

Satyajñānānanda rūpā सत्यज्ञानानन्द रूपा (791)

Satya is truth, *jñāna* is knowledge and *ānanda* is bliss. She is the combination of truth, knowledge and bliss.

Taittirīya Upaniṣad (II.1) says, *satyaṃ jñānaṃ ananthaṃ brahma*. This refers to the Brahman. Truth, knowledge and infinity is the Brahman. Attributes of the Brahman is being described by the *Upaniṣad*. There is a difference between the saying of this

Upaniṣad and this nāma. *Upaniṣad* says *ananthaṃ* (everything or infinity) and the nāma says *ānanda* (bliss). The compassionate form of the Divine Mother makes this difference. Bliss is one of the important qualities of *Lalitāmbikā*. When we reach the stage of *ānanda* (bliss), we tend to forget *ananthaṃ* (all other extraneous matters).

Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad (III.ix.28.2) says that knowledge, bliss and Brahman are the same. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VII. xxiii) says "that which is infinite that is happiness."

This nāma says the nature of the *nirguṇa Brahman*. While the previous nāma discussed about the *saguṇa Brahman*, this nāma confirms Her as *nirguṇa Brahman* once again.

Sāmarasya- parāyaṇā सामरस्य-परायणा (792)

Parāyaṇa means devoted to or engaged with chief authority. She is devoted to the principle of equality. With whom She is equal? Of course, with *Śiva*. Without each other, they cannot function. They have attained each other after performing rigorous penance.

Śiva is Self-illuminating Brahman and *Śaktī* is His *svabhāva*. *Svabhāva* means nature, innate or inherent disposition. The nature of *Śiva* is reflected through *Śaktī*. *Śiva* can realise His Self only in *Śaktī*, who acts a mirror to Him. *Śaktī* is the power of doership of *Śiva*. It is said that the ultimate reality were to be merely *Śiva*, He would become inert. Brahman cannot become inert. Though *Śiva* continues to be inert, *Śaktī*, the power holder of *Śiva* acts as the energetic force in creation, sustenance and dissolution of the universe. Therefore *Śiva* without *Śaktī* or *Śaktī* without *Śiva* becomes torpid. They are known as the parent of the universe.

This nāma says that She is equal to *Śiva*. If *Cit* is *Śiva*, *ānanda* (bliss) is *Śaktī*. *Cit- ānandā* is *Śivaśaktī*.

Kapardinī कपर्दिनी (793)

Hair of *Śiva* is known as *Kaparda*. *Kaparda* means braided and knotted hair (*Śrī Rudraṁ* V.4). His wife is *Kapardinī*.

In *Lagustava* of *Kālidāsa* (verse 11) there is a reference to Her with braided and knotted hair (referring to Her *Kāli* form).

Kalāmālā कलामाला (794)

She wears a garland made out of sixty four *Kalā*-s (arts or tantra-s) that are referred to in nāma 236. *Kalā* is different from tantra-s. *Kalā* means art and tantra means tantra *śāstra-s* involving rituals.

Kalā also means arts. There are sixty four types of arts or *Kalā-s*. *Kalā* also means beauty, *ma* means limitless, and *la* means to bring. Based on this, it can be interpreted that She is of limitless beauty. In fact, anything associated with Her is limitless.

Kāmadhuk कामधुक् (795)

She gives whatever is desired by Her devotees. The same meaning is conveyed in nāma 63. *Lalitā triśatī* nāma-s 43 and 240 also convey the same meaning.

However this is subject to the condition laid down in *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (III.i.10) which says "A person with pure mind can obtain whatever worlds or whatever things he wishes for."

Saundarya Laharī (verse 4) says that "She is an expert in granting more than what is asked for. That too She does not give through Her hands, as with other gods and goddesses. She gives through Her lotus feet."

Kāmarūpiṇī कामरूपिणी (796)

Kāma means *Śiva*. She is in the form of *Śiva*. They are not different. They have everything in common, except the complexion. *Śiva* is crystal white and She is dark red. Both of them sitting together appear like rising sun (Her red complexion is transfused

with the colourless and translucent complexion of *Śiva* appearing like the rising sun. The dark red colour gets diffused making it appear as orange colour).

Brahman has the desire (*kāma*) to create the universe. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (II.vi.3) says "He (the Brahman) wished (thought within Himself) 'I will be born as many'." She becomes the source of desire for creation.

This nāma could also mean that She is capable of assuming various forms at Her will. *Kāma* means desire and *rūpiṇī* means form.

Kalānidhiḥ कलानिधिः (797)

She is the source of *kalā*-s that have been discussed in nāma 794. *Śiva Sūtra* (I.3) says *kalāśarīram* which means 'whose form is activity'. Only through Her activity, the universe is administered. In this context, this nāma means that She is the source of all activities, the Brahman.

Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad Gīta* (IV.33) "all actions without exception culminate in Knowledge (Brahman)."

Kāvyakalā काव्यकला (798)

Kāvya is one of the arts. *Kāvya* means endowed with the qualities of a sage or poet, descended or coming from a sage, prophetic, inspired, or poetical. This nāma means She is the inspiration or the source for *kāvya*-s. All *kāvya*-s are composed by dedicating (feminism in general like *Sītā* of *Rāmāyaṇa*) an eminent place for Her.

{Further reading on *Rāmāyaṇa*: This is a wonderful epic in poetic form composed by sage *Vālmīki*. The epic contains 24,000 verses in Sanskrit in seven books known as *Kāṇḍa*-s. They are 1. *Bāla-kāṇḍa* or *Ādi-kāṇḍa*, 2. *Ayodhyā-kāṇḍa*, 3. *Araṇya-kāṇḍa*, 4. *Kishkindhā-kāṇḍa*, 5. *Sundara-kāṇḍa*, 6. *Yuddha-kāṇḍa*, and 7. *Uttara-kāṇḍa*. Part of the first *kāṇḍa* and the seventh *kāṇḍa* are thought to be

comparatively modern additions. *Rāma*'s character, as described in the *Rāmayaṇa*, is that of a perfect man, who bears suffering and self-denial with superhuman patience. *Rama*'s wife is *Sītā*}

Rasajñā रसज्ञा (799)

Rasa means essence or flavour. *Rasa* also means disposition of the heart or mind, religious sentiment (there are five *rasa*-s or *rati*-s forming the five degrees of *bhakti*, viz. *śānti, dāsya, sākhya*, *vātsalya*, and *mādhurya*. She is in the form of these five *rasa*-s.

Saundarya Laharī (verse 51) refers to eight types of *rasa*-s. They are love, resentment, anger, wonder, fear, grace, smile and kindness. In addition to the above eight two more *rasa*-s contentment and fondness are also referred.

This nāma means She is the finest of these *rasa*-s.

Rasa-śevadhiḥ रस-शेवधिः (800)

She is the treasure receptacle of rasa. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (II.vii.2) says *raso vi rasaḥ.* This translates into 'that which is, that is to be identified as the sweetness (*rasa*) in everything.' Anyone who has this sweetness knows the Self (the Brahman or bliss). The source of joy is the Brahman. When the source is realised, the joy transforms into bliss.

Puṣṭā पुष्टा (801)

Puśṭi means nourishment. Her form is made up of thirty six *tattva*-s and beyond. She does not need any nourishment. The entire nourishment emanates from Her or the universe is nourished by Her through these thirty six principles. It can also be said that She is nurtured by the love of Her devotees. Or it can also be explained that She is nourished by the essence (*rasa*) discussed in the previous nāma.

Purātanā पुरातना (802)

Purātanā means ancient (the oldest). She is so addressed because She is the first amongst creation. *Śiva* created Her and the entire creation originated from Her.

Pūjyā पूज्या (803)

Pūjyā means worshipful. She is worshipful because She is complete in everything. Generally, the form and inherent qualities make a person worshipful. This is because such a person is full of positive energies (due to positive thoughts and virtuous actions), which radiates through the bodily form. After all She is the embodiment of universal energy. Nāma 213 is *mahā pūjyā.*

(Further reading: A good meditation results in positive vibes. Apart from meditation, love for fellow living beings is the biggest source of positive energies. True love makes a person to communicate with plants and animals. Suppose, someone plucks a flower from a plant, he has to learn to express his apologies to the plant for plucking the flower. The flower belongs to the plant. Flowers and fruits are the children of plant kingdom. Such trivial things show the right path to reach the higher levels of spirituality.)

Puṣkarā पुष्करा (804)

She gives *puṣṭi* (nāma 801) to all Her devotees (*puṣṭi* means nourishment). Nāma 801 said that She is nourished and this nāma says She nourishes (compare this with series of nāma-s like 158 and 159, 162 and 163, etc).

It is said that there is no difference between *ra* and *la*. If the last two alphabets *ra* is replaced with *la* then *puṣkarā* becomes *puṣkalā*. *Puṣkal* means copious, abundant, full, complete, etc. Generally *puṣkal* is an epithet used for *Śiva*. *Puṣkalaṁ* means *Mount Meru*, where She resides. In these contexts, this nāma could also refer to Her nature such as full, complete etc. *Śiva* is omnipresent and

Śiva's wife *Śaktī* is also omnipresent. Or it could also refer to Her domicile, *Mahā Meru* (*Śrī Cakra*).

Puṣkarekṣaṇā पुष्करेक्षणा (805)

Puṣkar means several things such as lotus-eyed, blue coloured lotus flower, heaven, sky, earth, tip of the trunk of an elephant, etc. If a full moon falls on the nights of Monday, Tuesdays or Saturdays, that night is known as *Puṣkar*. The art of dancing, intoxication, etc are also known as *Puṣkar*. *Śiva* is also known as *Puṣkar*. It is difficult to say under what context this nāma is placed here by *Vāc Devi*-s. If this nāma is taken as description of Her eyes, then there are other nāma-s such as *Kamākṣī* (nāma 62), *Mṛgākṣī* (nāma 561), which describe the eternal beauty of Her eyes.

Puṣkara also means water that made the earth deluged. At the time of annihilation water surrounded the earth leading to annihilation. *Īkṣaṇā* means eye sight. In this context *Puṣkarekṣaṇā* could mean Her motherly look during this deluge for recreation. Contextually also, this interpretation seems to be appropriate.

Paraṃjyotiḥ परंज्योतिः (806)

Para means supreme, *Jyoti* means light and *paraṃjyotiḥ* means 'Supreme Light'. Supreme Light means the Brahman. Supreme light is Self-illuminating or the *prakāśa* aspect of the Brahman. From this Supreme light alone, sun get his light and illuminates the galaxy, that is known to us.

A number of *Upaniṣad-s* talk about this Light.

Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad (IV.iv.6) says "upon that immortal Light of all lights the gods meditate as longevity." This means that gods meditate on this Supreme Light for their immortality.

Kaṭha Upaniṣad (II.ii.15) explains this further. "In the presence of Brahman, the sun does not shine, nor do the moon and stars, nor does lightning, let alone this fire. When Brahman shines,

everything follows. By Its light, all these are lighted." This is the famous *dīpa ārādhana mantra*:

"na tatra sūryo bhāti na candratārakaṃ
nemā vidyuto bhānti kutoyamagniḥ
tameva bhāntamanubhāti sarvaṃ
tasya bhāsā sarvamidaṃ vibhāti|"

"न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं
नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोयमग्निः।
तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं
तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति॥

Chāndogya Upaniṣad (VIII.iii.4) says, *param joytiḥ upasampadyate* which means attaining the highest light. The *Upaniṣad* says "Then, this person, who is the embodiment of happiness, emerging from the body and attaining the highest light, assumes his real nature. This is the Self."

Realisation happens in a fraction of a second when a person is immersed in the highest level of spiritual consciousness with flashes of Light appearing within him. She is in the form of that self-illuminating light (the Brahman). To attain this stage no *japa* or meditation is required. It is only the thought construct that matters. This is why *Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad* (III.ix.10) says, "light is the mind".

Paraṃdhāma परंधाम (807)

Parama + *dhāma* = *paraṃdhāma*. *Parama* means the highest degree of excellence and *dhāma* means brilliance *(tejas*) or a class of super human beings or abode. *Bhagavad Gīta* (XV.6) says "Neither the sun nor the moon nor the fire can illuminate that supreme self-effulgent state, attaining to which they never return to this world. That is My Supreme Abode." *Kṛṣṇa* uses the word *paraṃdhāma* for Supreme Abode.

In the previous nāma it is said that She is self-illuminating. This nāma talks about the nature of the Light. From the Supreme Light emanates the Supreme brilliance. This Supreme Light and its *tejas* (Supreme brilliance or radiance) go together.

In the highest level of consciousness, the empirical individual through the process of thought constructs first, moves towards *paraṃdhāma* and after transcending *paraṃdhāma*, he reaches *Paraṃjyotiḥ*. This is the process of merging with the Brahman. When he enters the brilliance of light (*paraṃdhāma*) he is showered with bliss and when he moves still further, he merges with the Self-illuminating Brahman (*Paraṃjyotiḥ*).

This is an appropriate context where one can recall the famous saying of *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (I.iii.9) *'tad Viśṇoḥ paramaṃ padam'* (that state which is the highest, where the individual self merges with the Cosmic Self).

Viṣṇu is known as *Paraṃdhāman*.

{Further reading - A yogi's experience of effulgence: "If a person is not Buddha or awakened enough, he won't be able to resist His emergence as such, i.e. as Effulgence. It feels as if one is blasted by plasma cannon. I mean, it is like being shot by a powerful weapon. His Effulgence bombs you with short but continuous waves of energy. Shocking! People not duly trained and deserving couldn't tolerate this without becoming unconscious (stupefied). That's why the Lord is not appearing in that way to them yet. If He did so, they would think that they went into a deep coma or something. So, everything is working as it should and at the right time.

When His Effulgence appears in that pulsating manner, if you are awanened enough, you can resist and enjoy It such and as It is. As the shots impact on you, so to speak, you are forced to open the mouth (*vismayamudrā* or *mudrā* of amazement) and your eyes fill with tears. It is a stunning experience! After that, one wonders, what one was doing before. Living without that kind of experience is like being dead, but one doesn't notice that till he gets the emergence of

His Effulgence. But to resist It and accordingly enjoy It, one must be awakened enough or the mind automatically shuts down like a fuse. I suppose, due to the intensity of the experience, that a "usual" mind could be burnt up if it doesn't shut down in that way. Therefore, everything works as it should. One wants speed up but that's not possible unless one's system survives the experience. For that, one must be trained and deserving enough."}

Paramāṇuḥ परमाणुः (808)

She is the Supreme atom (the aboriginal matter). Supreme atom means smaller than an atom (smaller than the smallest). In today's context this can be compared to neutron (a sub-atomic particle). This is explained in *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (I.ii.20) which says, "*aṇoḥ aṇiyān'* meaning smaller than the smallest. Smaller than the smallest, gives bigger than the biggest. The entire creation originates from *paramāṇuḥ* or *aṇoḥ aṇiyān* (neutron).

Anu also means *mantra*. Then, the nāma means Her *Pañcadaśī mantra*. *Para* means Supreme and *anu* means *mantra*. The Supreme *mantra* is always Her *Pañcadaśī mantra*.

Parātparā परात्परा (809)

Para means supreme. *Parātpara* means the highest level of Supremacy. There is nothing superior to *parātpara*. During *navāvaraṇa pūjā*, in ninth *āvaraṇa*, there is a special ninth *āvaraṇa pūjā* that can be performed only by those who got initiated into *ṣodaśī mantra*. They worship Her by addressing Her as "*parayā* (nāma 366), *aparayā, parāparayā* (nāma 790)" by using *trikhaṇḍa mudra*. These three stages have been discussed in nāma 790. This nāma is '*parātparā*', the higher stage than *parā*. This stage is beyond the reach of verbal description as this is beyond human comprehension. This is subtler than the subtlest. Her subtlest form is *kuṇḍalinī* and *parātparā* is subtler than *kuṇḍalinī*. *Lalitā Triśatī* nāma 236 is *sāmānādhika varjitā* which means 'She is beyond comparison'. *Bhagavad Gīta* (XI.43) says "Lord of incomparable

might, in all the three worlds there is none else even equal to you. How then, any better?" Nāma 198 of this *Sahasranāma* also conveys the same meaning.

There is also an interpretation that She is superior to *Brahma, Viṣṇu* and *Śiva*.

Pāśa hastā पाश हस्ता (810)

She has a noose in Her hand. This has been already discussed in nāma 6.

Pāśa also means anything that binds a soul. This nāma could also mean that She helps in unbinding a soul from *karmic* afflictions for realisation. As long as *karma*-s remain, realisation is not possible.

Pāśa hantrī पाश हन्त्री (811)

She is the destroyer of *pāśa. Pāśa* here means bondage, attachment, etc. These are the negative factors in realizing *Śiva*. She destroys bondage and attachments for those who deserve to know *Śiva*. Please recall nāma 727 *Śiva jñāna pradāyinī.*

Paramantra-vibhedinī परमन्त्र-विभेदिनी (812)

Para means alien or hostile. *Para* is different from *parā*. *Para mantra* means *mantra*-s that cause enmity. These types of mantra-s are known as *ari mantra*-s. These *mantra*-s are used in witchcraft and black magic. *Vibhedini* means breaks apart. By destroying such evil *mantra*-s, She protects Her devotees.

This nāma is also split as *para* + *mantra* + *avi* + *bhedini*. *Para* also means chief matter or paramount object, *mantra* means those who chant *mantra*-s, *avi* means sins (this meaning is as per *Liṅga Purāṇa* – Chapter 92 – verse 143. Dictionaries do not convey this meaning. *Liṅga Purāṇa* refers to a place called *Avimukta*, an extinct place equivalent to *Vārāṇasī*, (so called after the names of two rivers,

varaṇā and *asī*. It is also known as Benares) a holy Indian city said to be free of all sins and *bhedini* means destroyer. This means that She destroys sins of those who recite supreme *mantra*-s like *Pañcadaśī* and *ṣodaśī*.

Mūrtā मूर्ता (813)

She is with forms. *Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad* (II.iii.1) says "Brahman has two forms – gross and subtle". Formless Brahman is made as *mūrtā* due to ignorance or *māyā*.

A-mūrtā अ-मूर्ता (814)

She is without forms. Subtle is not the right word to interpret this nāma. She is beyond Her subtlest form *kuṇḍalinī*. *Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad* (II.iii.3) describes this formless as "it is immortal, unlimited and undefined."

Brahman has two distinct characters – without form and with form. Without form is realised as Self-illuminating light (nāma 806) and with form is seen in places of worship such as idols, *Śrī Cakra*, etc. A devotee is said to be advancing spiritually only if he is able to migrate from the latter stage to the former stage.

These two nāma-s can also be interpreted as follows. Out of the five elements, *ākaś* and air are invisible (a*mūrta*). Earth, fire and water are visible (*mūrta*). She is in the form of these elements.

Viṣṇu Sahasranāma nāma 720 is *a-mūrtimān*. *Kṛṣṇa* says In *Bhagavad Gita* (IV.6) "Though birth less and deathless, and the Lord of all beings, I manifest myself through my own *yogamāyā* (divine potency known as *māyā*), keeping my Nature (*prakṛti*) under control." This explains Divine incarnations. Forms are the result of *karma*-s. Since Brahman is devoid of *karma*-s, He is formless.

Anitya-tṛptā अनित्य-तृप्ता (815)

Nāma 556 is *nitya-tṛptā*. *A-nitya* means things that are perishable. She is happy with the offerings of perishables. In fact, She does not need either perishable or imperishable as everything originates from Her. What She needs is only the unstinted and untainted devotion. *Kṛṣṇa* says in *Bhagavad Gīta* (IX.26) "Whoever offers to me with love, a leaf, a flower, a fruit and water I appear in person to them".

(Further reading: This nāma should be interpreted as 'EVEN by perishable offerings'. She is too fond of blemishless or pure devotion in terms of nāma 118 than perishable offerings. One has to spend more time in realising Her than worshipping Her. In other words, one has to spend more time on meditating upon Her, rather than associating with rituals. However, rituals form the strong foundation to higher level of spirituality. But the transition from rituals to meditation should be at the earliest, as otherwise, one could be wasting his precious time.)

Muni-mānasa-haṃsikā मुनि-मानस-हंसिका (816)

She appears as swans in the minds of sages. *Muni* means sages, *mānasa* means expressed in mind and *haṃsikā* means swans. Please refer nāma 372. *bhakta-mānasa-haṃsikā* that conveys the same meaning. The difference is between *muni* and *bhakta*. *Muni-s* (sages) are referred here specifically as they are realised souls. *Bhakta* means everyone who is devoted to Her. All devotees are not realized souls. A *bhakta* transforms in the arena of his mind into a *muni*. This is true transformation.

Satya-vratā सत्य-व्रता (817)

She can be attained by the vow of speaking truth always. She Herself is the embodiment of Truth (nāma 693). Satyam means the Brahman (*satyam jñānam anantaṁ Brahma*).

Śiva sūtra (III.26) says *śarīravṛttir vratam* which means 'remaining in the body is a vow of pious act.' According to *Śiva sūtra*, result of such vows is *Śiva* realisation. Vow is mental determination. The

one who is spiritually bankrupt (mind) by exhibiting religious piety (body) never attains Her. The importance of speaking truth is emphasized in this nāma.

In *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* (VI.xviii.33) *Śrī Rāma* says "I vouchsafe security against all living beings to him who comes to me only once and seeks protection (from me), saying 'I am yours': such is my vow."

Satya rūpā सत्य रूपा (818)

She is the embodiment of truth. Truth prevails during past, present and future. *Rig-Veda* (VII.104.12) says "A prudent person easily discriminates between truth and falsehood, since the two words are mutually at variance. Of these two, the love-divine, cherishes truth and virtue. He, verily, destroys the falsehood." The next verse says "All such persons lie entangled in the chair of Lord of resplendence."

Truth is considered as one of the important aspects of spirituality. That is why She likes those who speak truth. Brahman has two aspects *sat* and *a-sat*. *Śiva* along with *Śaktī* sustains this universe by nurturing *sat* (truth) by destroying *a-sat* (lie).

Sarvāntaryāmiṇī सर्वान्तर्यामिणी (819)

She exists in the soul within or She exists as soul within. She is realised only by internal search. She is searched in all the places except the place where She actually resides. Ignorance is the cause for searching Her elsewhere in vain. All the *Upaniṣad-s* affirm uniformly that the Brahman is within.

Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad (*Āgama prakarana* – verse 6) uses the word *antaryāmi*. The *Upaniṣad* says "He (Brahman) knows everything. He is the indwelling controller (*antaryāmi)* of all. All things arise from Him and also merge into Him."

Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad (III.vii.3) says "...who controls the earth from within, is the Internal Ruler, your own immortal self."

Taittirīya Upaniṣad (II.6) says "He created them and then entered into them. Having entered into them, he in some cases assumed forms and in other cases remained formless."

All the *Upaniṣads* advise to look within for Self-realisation. She is already there in our body, well before our birth.

Satī सती (820)

She was born to *Dakṣa* as *Satī*. *Liṅga Purāṇa* (V.27) says "*Satī*, the mental creation of the Lord was adopted as his daughter by *Dakṣa*."

Sati reproached Her father for not inviting *Śiva* to the sacrifice and then as expiation of Her father's sin, She immolated Herself. The scene appears in *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* (IV.4.15-18). *Satī* addresses Her father thus: "You hate Lord *Śiva* of sacred renown, whose command is inviolable, nay, whose celebrated name of two syllables (शि व), uttered with the tongue even once and that too casually, immediately wipes out the sins of men who utter them. You are a coursed indeed. You bear enmity to that Befriender of the universe, whose lotus feet are not only resorted to by the bee-like mind of exalted souls, thirsting for honey in the shape of the joy of absorption in Brahman, but also shower the blessings sought after by interested people. So not people other than you, such as *Brahma* (the Creator) and others, who place on their heads flowers, etc dropped from His feet, know Him to be inauspicious, though bearing the appellation of *Śiva* (all auspiciousness) – Him who lived in the company of friends in crematories throwing about His matted locks and wearing on His person the wreaths lying there as well as the ashes (of funeral pyre) and human skulls? A man should shut his ears and leave the place where his master – a defender of righteousness – is being vituperated by unbridled man, in case he is powerless (to take the life of reviler of to lay down his own life); or, if he has the power, he should forcibly cut off the vile tongue that

indulges in such blasphemy, and then give up his own life as well, if need be. Such is the course of duty. Therefore, I shall no longer retain this body, begotten of you, a villifier of Lord *Śiva*. For the wise declare that one gets purified only by vomiting the impure food consumed through ignorance."

She destroyed the *yajñā* of *Dakṣa* (nāma 600) and then immolated Herself and was reborn as *Umā* to *Himavān* (nāma 633).

In *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 96), *Ādi Śaṁkarā* addresses Her as *Satī*. In this context, *Satī* means virtuous wife. He calls Her as *satīnammacarame* which means first among the virtuous women.

Brahmāṇī ब्रह्माणी (821)

She is the energy of the Brahman (*Śiva*). *Śiva* is *prakāśa* and *Śaktī* is *vimarśa*. The ultimate Reality is *Śiva* and the universal process is *Śaktī*. The one without the other cannot function.

Aṇī means the pin of the axle of a cart. Without this *aṇī* the cart cannot run. In this context, the nāma means that Brahman (*Śiva*) cannot function without *Śaktī* (*aṇī*).

Brahman is *Śiva* and *Brahmāṇī*, the wife of Brahman is *Śaktī*. This is like *Bhairava* and *Bhairavī*.

Brahma ब्रह्म (822)

She is the Brahman. Since there is no difference between *Śiva* and *Śaktī*, She is addressed here as Brahman. There are many nāma-s in this *Sahasranāma* which affirme Her Brahman status. One merges with the Brahman at the time of liberation, not to be born again.

This *Sahasranāma*, *Upaniṣads*, *Bhagavad Gīta* all try to explain the Brahman in their own way. Brahman can only be explained and cannot be revealed. Since the Brahman does not have a form, the experiences of realised persons differ (*Brahma Sūtra* III.ii.25).

Advita philosophy of *Śaṃkarācārya* says that the Self is the only Reality and others are false. The Self is made up of pure knowledge that ultimately leads to pure consciousness (*cit*). Since the Reality cannot undergo changes, It becomes eternal. The qualities of the Self (Brahman) are – *nirviśeṣā* (non-characterisation), *nirguṇa* (devoid of qualities), *nirvikārā* (without any modifications), *śuddha* (purity absolute) and *sat-cit-ānanda* (existence, consciousness and bliss). In the ultimate stage, during bliss the practitioner remains all alone with the highest level of consciousness. At this level, even *Śaktī* does not exist. Here *Śaktī* merges into *Śiva* who alone remains as that level consciousness. This is known as the Brahman.

This nāma says She is That. Spiritual consciousness, in the most concentrated form germinates and grows when sown in the right soil duly nurtured by mediation. She, the Brahman is attained at the end. When She becomes *nirguṇa* Brahman (without qualities), She merges into *Śiva* (union of *Śiva* and *Śaktī*) and the merged *Śiva* alone exists. When She becomes *saguṇa* Brahman (with qualities and attributes), She alone exists without *Śiva*.

Jananī जननी (823)

The Mother or *Śrī Mātā* (nāma 1). It also means the Creator of the universe. Nāma 264 is *srṣṭi-kartrī*. Nāma-s 295, 337, 457, 826 and 934 talk about Her universal Motherhood.

This nāma in conjunction with the previous nāma is recited as '*brahma-janani'*.

Bahu-rūpā बहु-रूपा (824)

She has multi fold forms. This aspect has been dealt with in various nāma-s. All that exist in the universe is Brahman. Due to the effect of *māyā*, Brahman is recognised in various shapes and forms through senses. When the thought process becomes devoid of experience of multiform existence, it is known as Self-realisation.

Bahu-rūpā because, She not only exists in living beings, but also prevails as sound (*Śabda Brahman*). *Śrī Devi Māhātmyam* refers to Her various forms while slaying demon *Bhaṇdāsura*.

In *Sūta Saṁhitā* it is said, 'She is the super most of the Supreme, who is one and two and sixteen and thirty two.' One means the Brahman. Two means vowels and consonants. Sixteen means the sixteen vowels. Thirty two means thirty two consonants. (Consonants are thirty five). In terms of nāma 804 *ra* and *la* are the same. Now it becomes 34. Generally the last alphabet *kṣa* क्ष (as it is a compound alphabet made up of *ka* + *śa*) is not reckoned with. Therefore it becomes thirty three. The letter *ha* is also not considered as it is the origin of letters. Now the consonants become thirty two. The numeric thirty two has relevance to this *Sahasranāma* as only thirty two alphabets are used at the beginning of each of the one thousand nāma-s.

Śri Rudraṁ (11.1) says '*sahsrāni sahasraśaḥ'* which means thousands of *Rudra*-s in thousands of forms. Their wives are known as *Rudrāṇī*-s. She is in the form all these *Rudrāṇī*-s and *Śiva* is in the form of all the *Rudra*-s.

{For further reading: The vowels are considered as *bīja* (*Śiva*) and consonants are considered as *yoni* (*Śaktī*). All the vowels and consonants are classified into eight divisions and each of the divisions give rise to one of eight *mātā-s* (*aṣṭa mātā-s).* These eight *mātā-s* along with Her original form make nine, which represent *nava rasa* (nine types of expressions: love, heroism, disgust, fury, mirth, terror, pity, wonder and tranquillity). If all the alphabets (fifty) are taken into account, then each letter shines as one *Rudra*, making the number of *Rudra*-s to fifty. Number of *Rudra*-s varies in different texts.}

Viṣṇu Sahasranāma nāma 721 is *aneka-mūrtī*.

She is worshipped in different forms and each form has certain specific qualities. For example, *Sarasvatī* is worshipped for

knowledge, *Lakṣmī* worshipped for wealth, etc. She becomes many (creation) and many become One (annihilation).

Budhārcitā बुधार्चिता (825)

She is worshipped by the knowledgeable. Knowledgeable are Self-realised persons. Still they perform actions to nullify their *karma*-s.

Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad Gīta* (VII.16) "Four types of devotees worship me, the seeker of worldly possessions, the afflicted, the seeker for knowledge and man of wisdom."

Prasavitrī प्रसवित्री (826)

She gives birth to universe. Literally it means that She has delivered the universe. The universe is born out of the conjugal bliss of *Śiva* and *Śaktī*.

This nāma can be attributed to Her *parā-devi* form. It is said "One should concentrate on the delightful mind, whether by itself or permeated by pranic breath leading to blissful state. It is the association of blessedness which is the worship of the heart, the essential nature of *parā-devi*." The creation takes place when *kriya śaktī* of *Lalitai* unites with *jñāna śaktī* of *Śiva*. *Netra Tantra* (VII.40) says "*Parā Śaktī* is the source of all the gods and all the *śaktī*-s (energies). Everything proceeds from Her."

Pracaṇḍā प्रचण्डा (827)

She is wrathful. Brahman is also wrathful to enforce discipline.

Taittirīya Upaniṣad (II.viii.1) and *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (II.iii.3) both say, "The wind blows out of fear of Him (Brahman). The sun also shines out of fear. Out of fear of Him Fire, Indra and Death, all rush to do their respective duties."

Brahma sūtra (I.iii.39) says, "universe emerges and vibrates because there is *prāṇa* that is a great terror, like an uplifted thunder."

Viṣṇu Sahasranāma 315 is *krodakrit* convey the same meaning.

Arjuna addresses *Kṛṣṇa* in *Bhagavad Gīta* (XI.20) "Seeing this transcendent, dreadful form of Yours, Oh! Soul of the universe, all the three worlds feel greatly alarmed."

Caṇḍi (the combined form of *Durgā, Lakṣmī* and *Sarasvatī*) is originated from the root word *caṇḍiman* which means to charge, make angry or violent.

Śrī Rudraṁ begins by offering obeisance to *Rudra*'s anger *(nāmaste Rudra-manyava udhota iśvae namaḥ)*

This nāma discusses one of the qualities of the Brahman with attributes. Anger is a quality of the *saguṇa Brahman* to enforce discipline for sustaining the universe.

Ājñā आज्ञा (828)

Ājñā means orders. She commands. If Her orders are not obeyed She is enraged as per previous nāma.

Śiva says in *Liṅga Purāṇa* (I.87.9-11) "She is *śruti* and *smṛti*. She is fortitude, stabilised by me. She is the power of knowledge, *kriya* (rite) and *icchā* (will). She is *Ājñā*. Undoubtedly we are the *vidyā*-s. The *prakṛti* (cause) does not belong to the *jīva* (embodied soul). Nor is She a v*ikṛti* (effect) on consideration. She is *māyā*. She is not a *vikāra* (effect only). Formerly She originated from my mouth at my behest. She is the eternal deity of five faces (possibly referring to *Gāyatrī*). She is highly blessed and bestows fearlessness of the worlds. At Her *ājñā* (here it means command), I think about the welfare of the worlds. I am *Śiva*."

Instead of *ājñā*, this nāma is alternatively referred to as *jñā*. *Jñā* means to know, to have knowledge. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (VI.2) says, *yenāvrtaṃ nityamidaṃ hi sarvaṃ jñaḥ kālakāro guṇī sarvavidyah*. This means "The universe is enveloped by Him. He alone knows that He is all knowing. He creates time. He is pure." Knowledge is considered as the prime quality of the Brahman. Hence, importance is given to the highest quality of knowledge to know Him. In this context, this nāma addresses Her as the source of knowledge or the embodiment of knowledge.

Pratiṣṭā प्रतिष्टा (829)

She is the foundation. *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* (79.7) says "*Dharma*, religious righteousness is the support of the whole universe. All are supported by *dharma*."

Sixteen syllable meter is also known as *pratiṣṭā*.

Liṅga Purāṇa (II.21.66) says "Combination of *kalā*-s in the order of destruction *is sāntyatītā, śānti, vidyā, amalā, pratiṣṭhā* and *nivṛtti."*

Tattva of water (*jala tattva*) is known as *pratiśṭa kalā*.

This nāma means that She forms the foundation of the universe. This foundation is made up of *dharma* and righteousness. (*Dharma* can be compared to cement and righteousness can be compared to sand. The one without the other cannot form a good foundation. The universe is created and sustained only on the principle of interdependence. The Supreme authorities, *Śiva* and *Śaktī* are also interdependent. Individual soul and body are interdependent for *karmic* unfolding.)

Prakaṭākṛtiḥ प्रकटाकृतिः (830)

Prakaṭa means evident, manifest, clear, public and *ākṛti* means form, figure shape. This nāma means that Her form or nature is made known to all. Brahman is present in all the living beings. But

due to the influence of *māyā*, a man considers himself as body, different from the Brahman. He recognises him only through his body and others also recognise him through his gross body. Here "I" consciousness prevails. But what one fails to understand is, that 'I' is *Śiva*.

Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad (29.1) says "Certainly all this is water. All created beings are water. The vital breaths in the body are water." Thus the *Upaniṣad* proceeds to say that everything is water. If interpretation is made this way, then She is in the form of holy waters (rivers). In this context, the nāma says that She is revealed to the universe in the form of water.

In *Śrī Cakra* worship, devi-s of first *āvaraṇa* are known as *prakaṭa yogini-s*. Possibly it can be said that these *prakaṭa yogini-s* are Her form or these *yogini*-s reveal Her true nature.

Yogini means a female fairy, witch, sorceress (represented as eight in number and as created by *Durgā* and attendant on Her or on *Śiva.*)

Prāṇeśvarī प्राणेश्वरी (831)

She is *prāṇa* or the chief of *prāṇa* -s. *Brahma Sūtra* (I.i.28) says *prāṇastathā'nugamāt* (प्राणस्तथाऽनुगमात्) which means 'Brahman is *prāṇa*, because It is comprehended thus'. It is also said that *prāṇa* is identified with consciousness and the purest form of consciousness is the Brahman.

Chāndogya Upaniṣad ((I.xi.5) also says "In *prāṇa* all things appear and disappear". Creation and dissolution are the exclusive qualities of the Brahman. Hence *prāṇa* is called as Brahman.

Kaṭha Upaniṣad (I.ii.14) says *sarve Vedā yat padam āmananti*. All the Vedas praise the goal (the highest, the Brahman). This interpretation is based on *pra* means exalted and *ana* means Vedas.

Individual consciousness bound by ego in association with *prāṇa* and senses manifest in a bodily form. Thus *prāṇa* being one of the vital forces of creation, She is addressed here as the chief of *prāṇa - s*.

Prāṇadātrī प्राणदात्री (832)

Prāṇa nourishes senses. Without *prāṇa*, senses and mind cannot function. The previous nāma said that She is the chief of *prāṇa* (possibly embodiment of *prāṇa*) and this nāma says that She is the giver of *prāṇa*. *Brahma Sūtra* (II.iv5) says, "*prāṇa-s* must have originated from the Brahman, since speech is preceded by them."

Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad (II.i.8) says, *tasmāt sapta prāṇaḥ prabhavanti* which means 'from That (Brahman) seven *prāṇa-s* (*prāṇa* here means seven organs - two eyes, two nostrils, two ears, and mouth) have come. This *Upaniṣad* confirms the statement of *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* referred in the previous nāma.

Taittirīya Upaniṣad (I.vii) discusses further on this. It refers to *prāṇa, vyāna, upāna, udāna* and *samāna* the five types of *prāṇa*-s. The *Upaniṣad* calls these five as *prāna pāṇkta* (*pāṇkta* means fivefold) meaning group of *prāṇa*-s. This *prāna pāṇkta* make *indriya pāṇkta* to function (functional senses).

Therefore, it is apparent that without *prāṇa*, senses cannot function. She gives that 'vital force' called *prāṇa*, without which life is not sustainable.

When She provides *prāṇa* to the universe, She becomes *Par*ā-*Śaktī* or *parā-prakṛti*. *Prāṇa* is subjective energy or vital force which is derived from the Brahman. This nāma again reaffirms Her as the Brahman that permeates and sustains.

Pañcāśat-pīṭha-rūpiṇī पञ्चाशत्-पीठ-रूपिणी (833)

Pancāśa means fifty, *pīṭha* means (lit) seat and *rupiṇī* means form. *Sāradā Tilakam* (an ancient treatise on tantra) opens by saying 'Let

the Supreme being embodied by ever-enduring bliss, pervaded the universe of movable and immovable objects, formed into words and their meaning by fifty alphabetical letters (*a to kṣa*) perennially emanating which is known as *Śabda Brahman*. In other words, this great tantric treatise opens by paying obeisance to Her. Only the next verse pays respects to *Śiva*. Sanskrit alphabets are fifty or fifty one depending upon the number of vowels or consonants (inclusion of ऌ (*lū*). Elsewhere, it is said that *kṣa* क्ष (consonant) is not to be included. There are a few who does not include 'la' in consonants). *Varivasyaa-rahasya* (II.35) says that each of the three *kūṭa-s* of *Pañcadaśī mantra* gives rise to sixteen alphabets, totalling to forty eight (क्ष and ह excluded). Therefore, this nāma means that She is in the form of fifty alphabets of Sanskrit. Her manifestation in alphabets is known as *Śabda Brahman*.

There are some interpretations that fifty one (or fifty) means the fifty one *Śaktī piṭha*-s. When *Śiva* was not invited by *Dakṣa* to participate in a *yajñā* organised by demon *Dakṣa*, father of *Satī* (nāma 820), an incarnation of *Śaktī*, She immolated Herself. *Śiva* carrying Her corpse was milling around. *Viṣṇu* cut the corpse into fifty one pieces that fell in fifty one different places. These places are known as fifty one *Śaktī piṭha*-s. Again, this is only for academic interest and this nāma has nothing to do with the *Śaktī piṭha*-s. *Śaktī piṭha*-s are only later developments.

{Further reading on Sanskrit letters: There is no consistency regarding the number of Sanskrit letters. In order to resolve the issue I wrote to Mr. *Gabriel Pradīpaka*, an exponent in Sanskrit. He owns an exclusive web site (www.sanskrit-sanscrito.com.ar) for Sanskrit literature and dedicated his life to the study of Sanskrit scriptures. His reply is reproduced here.

"The alphabet is normally including ḹ (I didn't include it because it is an invented letter in order to keep the sequence short-long). Sometimes it includes *kṣa* too. This conjunct is formed from *ka* + *sa* (NOT *ṣa*). The letter you quoted is the archaic Vedic l (written l̲ in

the IAST scheme) and only used in old Vedic scriptures. Now, it is generally replaced with ḍ if it is between "two vowels", i.e. "vowel + ಀ + vowel = vowel + ḍ + vowel (but only between vowels and not otherwise). Despite this possible replacement, I always prefer to write it as such, i.e. ಀ and l̲

But if you include ॡ, the number is forty-nine. Others add *kṣa* (e.g. *Kṣemarāja* in his studies) and the number amounts to fifty. And even others add the Vedic l (ಀ or l̲), which tantamounts to fifty one. The standard for grammatical studies would be forty-eight (the scheme I use). For philosophical studies, the number fifty is better. And if you need fifty one to develop some other studies, you can do it!

Anyway, the alphabet "in practice" is always composed of forty eight letters, hence my choice. You don't need more letters to write in Sanskrit "in practice". And this has been so for centuries. Of course, the sages added more letters to the "raw" alphabet for meeting some needs. But this is from the philosophical viewpoint, not from the practical one. So, you can choose the scheme you like better "for philosophical studies" but in practice you never need more than 48 characters. The vowel ॡ is practically never seen in practice. And *kṣa* is really a conjunct formed from two letters.

Well, there is all the time this matter with the quantity of petals in the *cakrá-s*. But there are some problems. Four petals (*Mūlādhāra*), six petals (*Svādhiṣṭhāna*), ten petals (*Maṇipūra*), twelve petals (*Anāhata*), sixteen petals (*Viśuddha*) and two petals (*Ājñā*) = fifty petals. So, one does the math and the number coincides with the amount of letters in the alphabet. Then some say that 50 x 20 = 1000 petals of the *Sahasrāra*, while others say that it should be 48 x 20 = 960 petals of the *Sahasrāra* (not including the two petals of *Ājñā* in the process).

But according to my findings, *Ājñā* has ninety-six petals not two. So, there are forty-eight petals looking like one petal on the left and other forty-eight looking like one on the right. Besides, its colour is

not white but very light pinkish. One could wonder how is this possible when all the time people say there are two petals. Because the forty-eight petals at every side are so tightly arranged that they look like one petal! Also, if you look at the sequence of the number of petals: 4 --> 6 --> 10 --> 12 --> 16 --> **2** ... Something is inconsistent there because the number of petals should continue increasing. But now, consider this: 4 --> 6 --> 10 --> 12 --> 16 --> 96 ... it is more consistent. Because 96 is not only a bigger number, but also because being equal to 48 + 48, it means that there are forty-eight connections with the respective forty-eight petals of the lower *cakrá-s* from both petals of *Ājñā*. This implies that *Ājñā* is doubly connected with the other five *cakrá-s* forming a circuit (hence the double connection).

Well, now the final number would be: 144 petals ... and yes, the teaching that 144 x 20 = 1000 petals is no more valid, since it is really 144 x 7 = 1008 petals. Well, what are 8 petals more or less? If you consider this you will notice that seven is exactly the number of major *cakrá-s* and that 144 is 12 x 12. The number 12 is sacred in *Triká*, especially to calculate the distances in the body (e.g. *Brahmarandhra* is twelve fingers above *Ājñā*, etc.).

Finally, one can use 48, 49, 50 or 51 (the number one likes), because the contexts of the studies vary. But "now in practice" (and it has been happening for centuries) forty-eight characters are "actually" used in Classic Sanskrit as ऌ is practically non-existent, *kṣa* is a conjunct formed from two letters and ॡ (ḷ) occurs in the ancient Veda-s only. And regarding the theory linking the number of petals to the letters of the alphabet, everything holds true except for that detail with the number of petals of *Ājñā*.}

Viśruṇkhalā विश्रुण्खला (834)

vi means without and *śṛuṇkalā* means bondage. She is without bondage. Bondage is the quality of man. Brahman is beyond bondage. Any action, be it good or bad, causes bondage. Bondage is caused by performing actions prescribed by scriptures with ego or

not performing the prescribed actions. Both have the same effect and cause *karmic* afflictions. This nāma says that She is beyond such *karmic* afflictions, while performing Her duties. This nāma says that She remains unfettered.

Viviktasthā विविक्तस्था (835)

She abides in reclusive places. Reclusive places mean the hearts of learned men. Learned men are those who can differentiate between the Self and self. Worshipping *Śaktī* should be done only in privacy. She will not manifest in crowd. Generally, crowd cause distorted vibes as different persons have different thoughts. But, in places where *bhajana* or spiritual discourses are performed, positive vibrations increase manifold due to unified focusing of thoughts, leading to ecstasy. She manifests only in places of purity (nāma 765 *śuddha*). Places of purity mean mental purity of Self-realized persons.

This nāma says that She manifests in the minds of Self-realized persons.

{For further reading: Mental purity is more important than physical purity. When mind is crowded with thoughts, it cannot be focused. Unless mind is focused on Her, it is not possible to attain Her. Mind is the only tool available to attain Her. The mind can be controlled by three means. One is through *prāṇāyāma*. The second is the focused consciousness using the internal tools or *antaḥkaraṇa*. The third is *samādhi*. This is realisation by personal experience. Sage *Patañjali* says in his *Yoga Sūtra* (I.4) "when the mind is not resolved, silenced and purified, the seer is indentified with modifications." *Yoga Sūtra* says that everything arises from the mind. Mind can be purified only if one becomes devoid of attachments, desires and ego. Spiritual progression can be measured only by the presence of three elements in one's thoughts. One's spiritual progression should not be ascertained from others. One has to be his own judge in measuring his spiritual progression.)

Vīra-mātā वीर-माता (836)

Vīra means Lord *Gaṇeśa* and His mother is *Vīra-mātā*. *Vīra* also means warriors. Since, She Herself is a warrior, She is addressed here as mother of warriors. Warriors are those who fight against evil. Nāma 777 says that She is worshipped by warriors. Nāma 899 is *Vīra* which means She Herself is a warrior. Her actions as warrior have been described in *Devi Māhātmyam*.

The best of devotees are also known as warriors. The one who conquers ego is known as warrior. She is the mother of such devotees. They call Her by different names such as *Ma*, Divine Mother, Mother, *Mātā* etc.

Viyatprasūḥ वियत्प्रसूः (837)

The creator of *ākāś* or ether element. The element of *ākāś* originated from the Brahman and from akash other elements originated. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (II.1) says *tasmāt vai etasmāt ātmanaḥ, ākāsaḥ saṃbhūtaḥ*. This means From the Self (the Brahman) originated space. The *Upaniṣad* continues to say that from space air, from air fire, from fire water, from water earth, from earth plants, from plants food and from food human beings originated. This *Upaniṣad* also compares a human being to that of a bird. A reference can be made to nāma 550 that convey the same meaning.

Mukundā मुकुन्दा (838)

She gives salvation to *jīva*-s. *Mahā Viṣṇu* is known as *Mukundā*. The one who gives *mukti* is known as *Mukundā*. *Mukti* means final salvation, after which an individual soul ceases to exist. It merges with the Brahman.

Mukti is of three types, *Krama mukti* (gradual liberation), *videha mukti* (final liberation), and *sadya mukti* (immediate liberation). *Mukti* or liberation can be explained as the cessation of all miseries and attainment of the absolute bliss of the Brahman.

Mukti-nilayā मुक्ति-निलया (839)

She is the embodiment of *mukti*. What She has, She shares with Her devotees (like nāma-s 172 and 173). *Mukti* is the stage where the self is completely disconnected from intellect causing liberation. It is the complete isolation of 'self' from the objective universe called *prakṛti*. Released from all physical and psychical limitations, the self becomes aloof from the realm of mind and matter and shines as omnipresent spirit ever pure and free. Please refer nāma 625.

Vedānta and *sāṁkhya yoga* provide different routes to liberation. *Vedānta* says that one should not dissociate the self from the mind and *sāṁkhya yoga* says that one should dissociate the self from the mind.

There is an *Upaniṣad* by name *Muktikoupaniṣad*, the last of 108 *Upaniṣads*. This *Upaniṣad* names all the 108 *Upaniṣads.* This *Upaniṣad* is said to have been told by Lord *Rāma* at the request of *Hanuman*.

Mūla-vigraha-rūpiṇī मूल-विग्रह-रूपिणी (840)

Lalitāmbikā is the root of all *śaktī*-s. *Vigraha* means to assume form and *mūla* means origin, original, foundation, etc. *mūla vigraha* means the original form. This is Her *Śrī Mātā* form.

There is an *Upaniṣad* called *Bahvṛcopaniṣad*. It is says that in the beginning She alone existed. From Her originated *Brahma, Viṣṇu* and *Rudra*. She is known as *Mahā Tripurasundarī*. The *Upaniṣad* proceeds to mention Her different forms such as *ṣodaśī, Pañcadaśī*, *Bālā*, *Caṇḍī*, etc.

This nāma says that She is the root of all energies. The root energy sourced from *Śiva* and known as *Śaktī*, manifest as different energies during creation, sustenance and dissolution.

Bhāvajñā भावज्ञा (841)

Bhāva has too many meanings: becoming, transition into, continuance, condition, character, intention, to make a firm resolution, learned man, universe, womb, superhuman power, meditation, etc.

This nāma can fit into any of the above meanings. Different scriptures have attributed different contextual interpretations to *Bhāva*. In the present context this nāma means that She is the knower of *bhāva* of all beings. She knows mental modifications of men. Some will have dual characteristics. What they think will be different from what they speak. She knows the thoughts of such men. If She happens to know that one's thoughts and actions differ, She punishes them in terms of nāma 827 *pracaṇḍā*.

The root of *bhāva* is *bhu*, the unconditioned. Nāma-s like 397, 398 and 399 have already discussed Her unconditioned state.

In an ancient treatise known as *Yogini hṛdaya* six types of interpretations are given to *Pañcadaśī mantra* and one among them is *bhāvārta*.

It can be said that this nāma refers to Her different lineaments and attributes.

Bhava-rogaghnī भव-रोगघ्नी (842)

Bhava is used here to mean *saṃsāra* or worldly life. *Saṃsāra* is referred to as a disease and She relieves the pains of *saṃsāra*. *Śiva* is said to be the alleviator of miseries of *saṃsāra*. *Bhava* (root word is *bhū*) also means *Śiva* and his consort *Śaktī*. Both of them alleviate the pains of worldly life. *Roga* means disease.

Śrī *Viṣṇu Sahasranāma* nāma-s 578 and 579 refer to this attribute of the Brahman. *Rig Veda* (II.33.4) says *bhiśaktamaṃ ava bhiśajāṃ sriṇomi* which means 'I hear You to be the most competent one among physicians.' Physician because, She cures the disease of *saṃsāra*.

Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad Gīta* (IX.1) "I shall now unfold the most secret knowledge of *nirguṇa Brahman* along with the knowledge of divinity, knowing which you shall be free from the evil of *saṃsāra*."

{For further reading: *Saṃsāra* (transmigration of existence) can be explained as the continuous process of birth and death. This is due to ignorance or *a-vidyā*. Due to the prevailing ignorance, *saṃsāra* is embroiled in full of pairs and opposites. It is unreal and full of unbearable sufferings and inconsequential pleasures. It is under the sway of *avidyā* or nescience, a soul undergoes endless births, bound by passions, fears, desires and pains. The psychophysical view of human existence is closely related to the doctrine of *karma* or the law of *karma*. As long as one is bound by *saṃsāra*, realisation and ultimate liberation is not possible. *Kṛṣṇa* gives solution to get away from the clutches of *saṃsāra*. He says "Desire, anger and greed, the triple gates of hell brings about the ruination of a soul. Therefore, one should avoid all these three." (*Bhagavad Gīta* XVI.21)}

This nāma says that She frees Her devotees from the adversities of *saṃsāra*.

Bhava-cakra-pravartinī भव-चक्र-प्रवर्तिनी (843)

Saṃsāra is compared to a wheel which is rotated by Her. Rotation of a wheel is compared to births and consequential deaths. A point in a wheel goes up and comes down and in the same way births and deaths happen like the rotation of a wheel, to those who indulge in *saṃsāra*. Remedial measure to get away from the hardships of *saṃsāra* is discussed in the previous nāma. It is said, 'Wise men worship *Hari* (*Viṣṇu*), the remover of pain of those who seek refuge in Him.'

Bhava means *Śiva*, *cakra* means mind (as per *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*) and *pravartini* means guide. This means that She is the guiding factor of *Śiva*, the Supreme. This nāma once again confirms Her Brahmanic status.

Chandaḥ sārā छन्दः सारा (844)

Chandas means meter, the study of poetic meter and the art of versification known as metrical science. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (I.i.5) says that *chandas* is secular knowledge (*aparā*). *Parā* knowledge is spiritual. *Sārā* means the substance or essence or marrow or heart or essential part of anything, best part, etc.

Rig Veda (X.xiv.16) says "All the sacred meters, the *tristubh* (heaven), the *gāyatrī* (earth) and the remaining ones converge in the Lord of Cosmic Order."

Chandas depends upon the number of letters in a word of a verse. *Chandas* also mean the Vedic hymns. The essence or the essential parts of Vedas are *Upaniṣads*. This nāma says that She is well established in *Upaniṣads*.

Gāyatrī chandas is considered as the most important of all *chandas*. *Varivasyā rahasya* (I. 6, 7) says "Fourteen *Vidyās* have been declared to be expedients in this world to understand Her. Even among them the most essential are the Vedas and therein *Gāyatrī*. She has two forms. One is recited in four Veda-s and other (*Śrī Vidyā)* is not clear, being esoteric." Therefore, it is apparent that *Pañcadaśī mantra* is superior than *Gāyatrī* (one recitation of *Pañcadaśī mantra* is equivalent to three recitations of *Gāyatrī mantra*), which is the form of all the four Vedas. Since, there is no differentiation between Her and *Śrī Vidyā* (*Pañcadaśī*), this nāma originated. This interpretation is further confirmed by another ancient tantric treatise *Pingala Tantra*, which discusses *Śrī Cakra*.

Śāstra-sārā शास्त्र-सारा (845)

She is the essence of all *śāstra-s*. *Brahma Sūtra* (I.i.3) says *śāstrayonitvāt*. It says that Brahman is the source of scriptures. In other words, Vedas originated from the Brahman. This is because Vedas have all good qualities and cannot possibly originate from

any other source, other than all-knowing Brahman. Yet another nāma that reconfirms Her Brahmanic status.

Śāstra can be explained as an order, command, precept, rule, teaching, instruction, direction, advice, good counsel. It is also said to be any instrument of teaching, any manual or compendium of rules, any book or treatise, especially any religious treatise, any sacred book or composition of divine authority applicable even to the Veda, and said to be of fourteen or even eighteen kinds.

Mantra-sārā मन्त्र-सारा (846)

Mantra is the combination of *bīja*-s. Since She is *Śabda Brahman* and all the alphabets originate from Her. This nāma therefore says that She is the essence of all *mantra*-s. Please refer to nāma 204 *sarva mantra svarūpiṇī*.

{Further reading on *mantra*-s: *Mantra* is of later classical Sanskrit tradition. They are said to be of traditional formulae whose value consists precisely in the fact that sages of the primeval past have handed it down. In *Rig Veda* alone, there are twenty one references to *mantra*. *Mantra*-s have the power and the source of that power is the truth and order that stands at the very centre of the Vedic universe. The pure power encapsulated in a *mantra* and released upon its utterance can work for or against whoever uses it. Should the user or beneficiary of *mantra* speak out of spite, malice or ignorance, the power unleashed by the even can be frightening, harmful, or even fatal. It is a tool of human intentionality and said to be protean. *Mantra* though is vital tool in the hands of humanity is also equally a troubling feature, as it is more often taken for granted. *Mantra*-s are of many types such as domestic *mantra*-s, sacrificial *mantra*-s, *pūja mantra*-s, devotional *mantra*-s, *japa mantra*-s and *bīja mantra*-s. The last two, if properly initiated and practiced will turn out to be highly potent.}

Talodarī तलोदरी (847)

She has slender waist. Nāma 35 also describes Her waist.

There is another interpretation. If *a* अ is added to this nāma, it becomes *atalodarī*. When She assumes *virāṭ* form (nāma 778 *virāṭ rūpā*), Her waist becomes *atala loka* (one of the fourteen *lokās* of cosmography. *Atala loka* is eighth from the highest (purest).

Udāra-kīrtiḥ उदार-कीर्तिः (848)

Her invigorated fame prevails everywhere. She also gives fame to Her devotees. She grants fame quickly if properly worshipped, devoid of ego.

ud is a prefix to indicate superiority, *a* means all pervading, *ara* means swift and *kīrti* means fame. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (I.vi.7) says "He is called *ud* because he is above all weakness".

Her fame is compared to two famous lakes *Ara* and *Nya* in *Brahma lokā*. This is described in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VIII.v.4) "When they attain the *Brahma lokā* (the abode of Brahman. This should not be construed as material plane. This is the place of no return for the soul as defined by *Brahma sūtra* (IV.iv.2) which says, 'The soul attains liberation') through silence (referred as *brahmacharya* in the *Upaniṣad*), they can freely move in all the worlds (omnipresence).

Uddhāma-vaibhavā उद्धाम-वैभवा (849)

Her glorification is not bound by limits. *Dhāma* means rope, which is used to bind materials. Her glory is beyond such bindings.

Varṇa-rūpiṇī वर्ण-रूपिणी (850)

She is in the form of letters. Please refer nāma 577 *mātṛkā varṇa rūpiṇī*.

According to *Śāmbhava School* (*Pāṇiniśikṣhā*, a treatise on correct pronunciation of words in Veda-s, particularly *Rig Veda*), the

number of alphabets is sixty four (possibly including some punctuations). She is said to be in the form of the sixty four alphabets referred here.

Pāṇiniśikṣhā (verse 52) says that any *mantra* without proper pronounciation does not convey the intended meaning and instead it destroyus the one who recites with improper pronounciation.

Janma-mṛtyu-jarā-tapta-jana-viśrānti-dāyinī जन्म-मृत्यु-जरा-तप्त-जन-विश्रान्ति-दायिनी (851)

Living beings are afflicted by birth, old age and ultimate death. She provides solace to such beings. Solace is in the form of salvation. Salvation or liberations is different from *mokṣa* or the heaven. Heaven is only a temporary sojourn for the soul, which has to re-enter earth for further births. A liberated soul is not born again as it merges with the Brahman. It loses its individual identity.

Sarvopaniṣadudguṣṭā सर्वोपनिषदुद्गुष्टा (852)

She is glorified in all the *Upaniṣads*. *ud* is used for implying superiority in place, rank or power and *guṣṭā* means announcing. This nāma says that all the *Upaniṣads* announce Her glory. *Upaniṣads* are the tools that impart knowledge. By attaining such knowledge one is able to realise the Brahman. *Śaktī* alone is capable of revealing the Brahman. Without Her aid, *Śiva* can never be realised. She takes Her devotes in front of *Śiva* for ultimately revealing Him to them. The blinding light and conflagration of the Brahman cannot be endured without Her grace. As *Śri Mātā*, She knows the extent to which *Śiva* can be revealed.

Upaniṣads are the latter part of Vedas and deals with the Supreme knowledge. *Upaniṣads* are also known as *jñāna kāṇḍa* that imparts Supreme knowledge and is capable of revealing the Brahman. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (I.i.10) says "Knowledge and ignorance produce different results. Anything done with knowledge, with

faith in teachers and in scriptures and according to the principles of the *Upaniṣads* is more fruitful."

The statement of *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* is endorsed by *Brahma Sūtra* (III.iii.1), which says 'Any excogitation imparted in all the *Upaniṣads* on account of the sameness of injunction, etc." The aphorism says that the main purport of *Upaniṣads* is to establish a connection with the Brahman. This nāma says that such vital connection between the Brahman and souls are established and maintained by Her.

Śantyatīta-kalātmikā शन्त्यतीत-कलात्मिका (853)

Śantyatīta is a kāla or time factor. *Śantyatīta* means transcending peace *(Śanti*). This is referred in *navāvaraṇa pūja* in the ninth *āvaraṇa*, applicable to those who are initiated into *ṣodaśī mantra*. This is the stage of *jīvanmukti*, (please refer notes at the end of nāma 764) the stage where *avidyā* has been totally destroyed by acquiring Supreme knowledge, referred to in the previous nāma. However, a trace of ignorance still prevails in this stage to undergo pains or pleasures of the balance in *karmic* account. But he continues to enjoy bliss, as he has already transcended duality. The next stage is liberation. Transcending the *jīvan mukti* stage is known as *Śantyatīta kalā*. She is said to be in that form.

Gambhīrā गम्भीरा (854)

She is abysmal. *Gambhīrā* also means reservoir. *Śiva Sūtra* (I.22) says "By uniting with the infinite reservoir of divine power (the pure consciousness), the power of Supreme I (the Brahman) is attained." Her *svātantra* (independent energy derived from *Śiva*) form merges with *Śiva* or in other words, the Supreme consciousness merges with the Brahman. Therefore, what is to be explored is the divine reservoir. She is said to be that divine reservoir. This augurs well with the previous nāma-s as well.

There is another interpretation for this nāma. *Gaṁ* (गं) is *Gaṇapati bīja*, *bhī* (भी) means fear and *ra* means drives away. The fear of Her devotees are driven away by making them worship Lord *Gaṇeśa* whose *bīja* is *gaṁ*.

Gaganāntasthā गगनान्तस्था (855)

The One who permeates the space. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (III.9) says "The same Self fills the whole universe". It also means the One (the Brahman) who prevails even after the dissolution of *ākāś* during the great deluge, also known as annihilation. Please refer nāma 571 *mahā pralaya sākṣiṇī*.

Gagana means the *ākāś*. From *ākāś*, other elements originated (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (II.1). The *bīja* for *ākāś* is *ha*. The *bīja-s* for other elements (air, fire, water and earth) *ya, ra, va, la* also originated from *ākāś*. Therefore, it is said that She represents the five elements. The same *Upaniṣad* says "from the Brahman came space" which again confirms Her as the Brahman.

Garvitā गर्विता (856)

She is proud. She has so many reasons to be proud. The correct explanation would be that She is the embodiment of "I" consciousness or *ahaṁ brahmāsmi* or 'I am That' or such *mahā vākya-s*. In various nāma-s, it was found that She gives whatever She is endowed with. This nāma should be interpreted in the same manner. This should not be confused with ego that is associated with human mind, a deterrent factor to realisation. Nāma 508 is *adi garvaitā* (extremely proud) and 158 is *nirmadā* (devoid of proud).

Gāna-lolupā गान-लोलुपा (857)

She is fond of songs. *Shyāmala Dhandagam* (4) says *jaya saṅgīta priye*. *Jaya* means victory and this means She is fond of songs that praise Her victories (like *Devi Mahātmyam*). She has a melodious

voice, says *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 66). It says that the sweetness of the strings of *vīṇā* of Goddess *Sarasvatī* is nothing before the soft eulogistic melody of *Lalitāmbikā.*

Kalpanā-rahitā कल्पना-रहिता (858)

Kalpana means formation of ideas and *rahita* means absent. She is devoid of approximations, as She is the endowment of Reality. When the ultimate Reality is known, there is no necessity for formation of ideas.

There is another interpretation. This *nāma* is split into *kalpa* + *nara* + *hita*. *Kalpa* means *pralaya* or the deluge, *nara* means human beings and *hita* means friend. Even during annihilation of the universe, She holds in Her womb (possibly *hiraṇya garbha* or the golden egg), pious souls for recreation. *Aṣṭāvakra Gīta* (II.25) says "Amazingly, in the infinite ocean of Myself, the waves of life arise, meet, play and disappear naturally."

[For further reading on *hiraṇya garbha*: – The Brahman imparted Vedas to the first created being known as *hiraṇyagarbha* or the cosmic soul, whose limiting adjunct is the universal mind. In case a person is not able to realise the *nirguna* Brahman (Brahman without attributes) and realises only *sagguṇa Brahman* (with attributes), after death he reaches *Brahmaloka*, the highest level of cosmic order. From there he is not reborn into the mortal world, but lives in *Brahmaloka* for an infinite period of time and attains liberation with *hiraṇyagarbha*, the presiding deity of *Brahmaloka*. This process is explained in detail in *Bhagavad Gīta* VI.40-44.]

{Further reading: *Aṣṭāvakra Gīta* (अष्टावक्रगीता) or the Song of *Aṣṭāvakra*, also known as *Aṣṭāvakra* saṃhitā is an *Advaita Vedānta* scripture which documents a dialogue between the Perfect Master *Aṣṭāvakra* and *Janaka*, the King of Mithila. *Aṣṭāvakra Gīta* states that there is no such thing as existence or non existence, right or wrong, or moral or immoral. In the eyes of the *Aṣṭāvakra*, one's true

identity can be found by simply recognizing oneself as pure existence and that as individuals we are the Awareness of all things.

Aṣṭāvakra Gīta teaches that one is already free once one realises one is free. It is in the form of conversation between two enlightened souls. It advocates non-action, the loss of desire and severing of worldly attachments. To free oneself from the cycle of life and death one should withdraw from all earthly desires and worries. To continue indulging in Earthly things even after one has realised their true nature is said to be foolish and time wasting. Instead it paints a picture of The Master as someone who continues to keep up their responsibilities in the world, not because they believe they have to or due to any worldly attachments, but simply that it is in their nature to do so. To avoid misinterpretation in this regard teachers traditionally recommend that *Aṣṭāvakra Gīta* be pursued by only those who have already advanced on the spiritual path.}

Kāṣṭhā काष्ठा (859)

Kaṭha Upaniṣad (I.iii.11) says "*sā kāsṭhā sā parā gatiḥ*" which means 'That which is the limit of growth is also the highest goal attainable by anybody.' (There is nothing higher than the Brahman, and that is the highest goal anybody can attain.) One's goal should be from the gross to subtle. In this context this nāma means goal.

Kāṣṭhā is time period consisting of 1.60 seconds. (One *nimeṣa* is equal to 0.088 seconds. One *nimeṣa* is equal to one blink of eye. Eighteen *nimeṣa* is equal to one *Kāṣṭhā* or 1.60 seconds.)

One of the forms of *Śiva* is *Bhīma*, representing ether (element *ākāś*) and His wife is known as *Kāṣṭhā*.

Kṛṣṇa explains to *Arjuna* (*Bhagavad Gīta* X.42) the ultimate goal "Suffice it to say that I stand bold this entire universe by a fraction of my yogic power." That yogic power is *Kāṣṭhā*. The one, who realises this *Kāṣṭhā* is known as Self-realized person.

But the path to the goal is full of thorns and hard to tread. It is like walking on razor's edge, says *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (I.iii.14).

Akāntā अकान्ता (860)

She is the destroyer of sins. Sins are destroyed by making one perform good *karma*-s. *Nāma* 167 *pāpa-nāśinī* and nāma 743 *pāpāraṇya-davānalā* convey the same meaning. *Triśatī* nāma-s 31 and 112 also convey the same meaning.

Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad Gīta* (XVIII.66) "Resigning all your duties to me, the all-powerful and all-supporting Lord, take refuge in Me alone. I shall absolve you of all sins, worry not."

Jesus Christ said "There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my sake and gospel's. But he shall receive an hundred fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life." (Mark 10:29, 30)

Nāma 329 is *kāntā* which said about Her vibrating and radiating beauty. Generally if '*a*' is prefixed to a word, it means the opposite meaning of that word. But, this *nāma* is an exception like *varadā* (331) and *avaradā* (639).

Kāntārdha-vigrahā कान्तार्ध-विग्रहा (861)

She has half the body of Her husband *Śiva*. *Kāntā* means *Śiva*. This form is known as *Ardhanārīśvara* form, half-male and half-female. This form was very popular in ancient sculptures. This form means the creation. Male form is known as *puruṣa* and the female form is known as *prakṛti*. Creation is caused by the union of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*

Liṅga Purāṇa (I.iv.28) says "At the beginning of creation, Brahma had created a Being (*Rudra*) possessed of a body half man's and half woman's and then the Creator said "Divide thyself". And He

being accosted thus divided Himself into two. It was then that She was born."

Saundarya Laharī (verse 23) also refers to this form. The verse says that after having obtained the left half of *Śiva*'s body, She still remains unsatisfied. She is so fond of *Śiva.*

Nāma 392 *śrikaṇṭhārdha-śarīriṇi* also refers to this form.

Chāndogya Upaniṣad (III.xii.6) says "The glory of *puruṣa* (*Śiva*) is still greater. All creatures constitute one quarter of Him. The remaining three quarters are nectar in heaven."

Kārya- kāraṇa-nirmuktā कार्य- कारण-निर्मुक्ता (862)

She is not subjected to cause and effect. Only the Brahman is devoid of cause and effect. *Kṛṣṇa* explains this in *Bhagavad Gīta* (III.22), "There is nothing in the three worlds for me to do, nor is there anything worth attaining, unattained by me, yet I continue to work."

(Some texts make a reference to *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (VI.8) saying "*na tasya kāryaṃ karaṇaṃ ca vidyate*". What this *Upaniṣad* says is *karaṇaṃ* and not *kāranaṃ*. The *Upaniṣad* means 'He has no body and no organs'. Some other texts interpret that *karaṇaṃ* and *kāranaṃ* are the same, meaning cause.)

{Further reading on cause and effect: The twenty five *tattva*-s are broadly categorized into four groups based on their cause and effect on creation. The most important factor is *mūlaprakṛti* (nāma 397) which is the primeval form of *prakṛti* which is 'not an effect'. *Mūlaprakṛti* is the primitive matter. *Sāṃkhya sūtra* (I.61) says "Primitive matter is the state of equipoise of three *guṇa*-s; from the primitive matter proceeds the 'great one' (the capacity of judging); from the great one the 'egotistical organ' (delusion); from the egotistical organ the five rudiments (five *tanmatrā-s)* and the two kinds of senses (faculties of action and faculties of perception); then

follow the gross elements (*ākāś*, air, fire, water and earth). These together with soul form the series of twenty five (*tattva*-s)."

The next is 'cause and effect' which includes intellect and ego out of *antaḥkaraṇa* and five *tanmatrā-s* or cognitive faculties viz. sound, touch, sight, taste and smell (totalling seven). These are classified as cause and effect because they originated from other causes and they in turn cause other effects. Thus, they become both cause and effect. For example, intellect is the product of *prakṛti*. Intellect in turn produces ego and ego produces the five cognitive faculties. Thus, they become both cause and effect. The next category comprises only of 'effects' (totalling sixteen). They do not produce anything and they are *jñānendriyā-s* or cognitive senses viz. ear, skin, eye, tongue and nose (5), *karmendriyā-s* or organs of actions viz. mouth, feet, hands, organs of excretion and organ of procreation (5), five basic elements viz. *ākāś*, air, fire, water and earth (5) and the mind (1) (out of *antaḥkaraṇa*) thus making a total of 16. The third category is 'no cause and no effect'. *Puruṣa* or soul alone comes under this category. Soul cannot manifest on its own. Soul can manifest only if it is associated with *prakṛti*. Thus from *mūlaprakṛti* the rest twenty four *tattva*-s originate, thereby unfolding creation. Some are of the view that *antaḥkaraṇa* includes only mind, intellect and ego thereby excluding consciousness. In that case, twenty five *tattva*-s are calculated as twenty (five elements, etc) + *antaḥkaraṇa* 3 + *puruṣa* or soul + *prakṛti*.}

Kāma-keli-taraṅgitā काम-केलि-तरङ्गिता (863)

She overflows with joy in the presence of *Śiva*. *Kāma* means *Śiva*. She is full of such joy as narrated in *nāma* 376 *śringāra-rasa-sampūrṇā* meaning essence of love. Love is one of the important attributes of *Lalitāmbikā*. This *nāma* refers to Her conjugal bliss that She derives while with *Śiva* that flows like waves (waves are known for their quick succession).

Kanat-kanaka-tāṭaṅkā कनत्-कनक-ताटङ्का (864)

She is wearing glittering ear studs made of shining gold. *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 28) says that it is due to the power of Her *tāṭaṅkā* (ear studs), *Śiva* becomes deathless, even after swallowing the terrible poison. It is also said that sun and moon are Her ear studs.

Ānanda Laharī (verse 16) says, "To the killer of *Manmatha* (meaning *Śiva*), the vehicle is an old bullock. Poison is His food. The directions are His dress. Burning ghat is His playground. The ornaments are poisonous snakes. Oh! Mother! Despite all these, if He still retains His *Iśvara* status, it is only because of Your greatness, *saubhāgya*."

Līlā-vigraha-dhāriṇī लीला-विग्रह-धारिणी (865)

She takes different forms, just like child's play. This *nāma* talks about the ease with which She takes different incarnations. *Nāma*-s 401 and 824 discuss the same subject.

Kṛṣṇa dwells at length, the reason for attaining various forms. "Though birthless and deathless, and the Lord of all beings, I manifest myself through my own *yogamāyā*" (*Bhagavad Gīta* IV.6). "Whenever righteousness is on the decline, and unrighteousness is in the ascensive, then I body myself forth." (*Bhagavad Gīta* IV.7). "For the protection of the virtuous, for the extirpation of evil doers, and for establishing Dharma on a firm footing, I am born from age to age." (*Bhagavad Gīta* IV.8, the famous Sanskrit verse is produced below.)

paritrāṇāya sādhūnāṃ vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām|
dharma-saṃsthāpanārthāya sambhāvami yuge yuge||

परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम्।
धर्म-संस्थापनार्थाय सम्भावमि युगे युगे॥

Līlā also refers to a Character in *Yoga Vāsiṣṭha* (second story in *Utpatti Prakaraṇa*). By Her penance Goddess *Sarasvatī* appeared before Her and answers *Līlā*'s questions on Realisation.

Ajā अजा (866)

She is unborn. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (IV.5) explains this state. *Prakṛti* is described in the *Upaniṣad* as *aja*. Though it (*prakṛti*) changes its form, It is without birth and without beginning.

Kṣaya-vinirmuktā क्षय-विनिर्मुक्ता (867)

She is free from decay. Decay here means death. When there is no birth, there is no death. Brahman is beyond birth and death as everything originates from Him. *Kṛṣṇa* says in *Bhagavad Gīta* (II.27) "death is certain for the born and rebirth is inevitable for the dead." Since She is the Brahman, She is devoid of birth and death.

This *nāma* also means that one need not go to isolated places to perform penance to realise Her. (This contradicts *Bhagavad Gīta* VI.9). True devotion is the only requirement to attain Her. It is also said that only Her devotees attain both material prosperity and total liberation (as narrated in *uttara bhāg* of this *Sahasranāma*).

Mugdhā मुग्धा (868)

She is beautiful. *Mugdhā* also means innocent. Innocence is a quality that lacks intent to injure others. She being *Śrī Mātā*, She cannot injure Her children. Quality of innocence makes Her beautiful.

She is beautiful because "She is the creator of appearance of self-power, the amazing *svātantrya śaktī* of *Śiva*." (*Tantraloka* I.71)

Other *nāma*-s that narrate Her beauty are 48 and 462.

Kṣipra-prasādinī क्षिप्र-प्रसादिनी (869)

Kṣipra means quickly. It is said that salvation is delayed if other gods are worshipped. But if She is worshipped, salvation is attained in this birth itself. To prove this point, Her *mantra*-s like *mahā*

ṣodaśī are said to give salvation in this birth itself. It is called *mokṣa sādana*, path to liberation. This is because, She is not different from *Śiva*, the Brahman and She alone is capable of taking a true devotee to *Śiva*.

It is also said that prayers, *japa* and oblations performed without continuity makes one eligible for salvation in the next birth (because of lack of continuity, salvation gets postponed to the next birth).

Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad Gīta* (XVI.6) "The divine gift is conducive to liberation." The divine gift is attained through pure devotion.

{Further reading on *mokṣa*: The *bīja sauḥ* (सौः) is known as *amṛta bīja*. The one, who fixes his constant attention on this *bīja* for forty eight minutes, brings under his control the entire multitude of *mantra*-s and *mudra*-s. If he continues this practice for nine hours, all gods and goddesses come to him and offer him moksha. (*Parā-trīśikā-vivaraṇa* 9-18)}

Antarmukha-samārādhyā अन्तर्मुख-समाराध्या (870)

She is worshipped by those who look within. She has to be realized by internal search and exploration. This is based on the theory that *Ātman* resides within.

{Further reading: *Kṛṣṇa* explains the concept of looking within exhaustively in *Bhagavad Gīta* Chapter VI consisting of 47 verses and a gist of which is reproduced here as explained by *Swami Chinmayananda*. *Karma yoga* practiced without regard to the fruits of actions, form an external aid to better meditation. The process by which lower is brought under the direct management and discipline of the higher are all together called spiritual techniques. No Guru can take the responsibility; no scripture can promise this redemption; no altar can, with its divine blessing make the lower the higher. The lower mist necessarily be trained slowly and steadily to accept and under the influence of the discipline of the higher. When a seeker has come in his life to the state explained as *yogārūdāḥ*,

and when in that state of equipoise, the mind is held steadfast in the contemplation of the Supreme, the self-controlled one, in all serenity is capable of maintaining his consistency on meditation in all circumstances, favourable and adverse, at all levels of his personality. In the right understanding of his own self and the resulting realisation of his own Self, he becomes Self everywhere. To him, who has realised himself to be Self which is all-pervading, the entire universe becomes his own Self, and therefore, his relationship with every other part of the universe is equal and the same. For this the seeker should try to withdraw himself from his mental and physical preoccupations.}

Bahirmukha-sudurlabhā बहिर्मुख-सुदुर्लभा (871)

Previous nāma conjoins with this nāma to declare the process of Self-realisation. She is very difficult to attain for those who are not able to look within. Mind is the prime factor to look within. Unless senses are controlled, it is difficult to control the mind. This nāma says that She cannot be attained only by external means.

Saundarya Laharī (verse 95) says "It is difficult for those who have not controlled their senses to attain you."

Kaṭha Upaniṣad (II.i.2) also explains this. "Immature people run after external objects and they invariably get caught in the widespread net of death. Wise people, however, know where true immortality is. That is why they reject everything in this world, knowing that these things are short lived."

This *nāma* says that She cannot be attained by those who continue to be addicted to sensory pleasures. Addiction is different from necessity.

Nāma 188 is *durlabhā*. *Durlabhā* means difficult and *su-durlabha* means very difficult.

Trayī त्रयी (872)

Trayī means three and here it refers to three Veda-s, *Rig*, *Yajur* and *Sāma*. In fact, She is revered as the mother of Veda-s (*nāma* 338 *Veda jañanī.* This *nāma* says that She is in the form of three Veda-s.

Śrī Śaktī Mahimnaḥ Stotram of sage *Durvāsa* (verses 5, 6 and 7) offers an explanation for this *nāma*. *vāgbhava bīja aiṁ* (ऐं) is the seed of Veda-s. *Rig Veda* begins with the letter *a* अ, *Yajur Veda* begins with the letter *i* इ and *Sāma Veda* also begins with the letter *a* अ. अ + इ + अ (*a* + i + *a* = ऐ. If a *bindu* is added to ऐ (i) it becomes ऐं *(iym*). It is the light ऐं that illuminates all the *mantra*-s and tantras. This *vāgbhava bīja* in turn gives rise to fifty one (or fifty as the case may be) alphabets, distributed amongst eight *Vāc Devi*-s, the authors of this *Sahasranāma* giving rise to words. Hence, *vāgbhava bīja* is called the seed of Veda-s. This can also be considered as the *vāgbhava kūṭa*, the first *kūṭa* of *Pañcadaśī.*

Trivarga-nilayā त्रिवर्ग-निलया (873)

Trivarga means past, present and future or *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma* (three of the four *puruṣārtha*, *mokṣa* is the other one). Since She is the provider of *mokṣa*, this *nāma* says that She prevails in other *puruṣārtha-s.* It can also be said that She prevails in all three factors of time, past, present and future.

Nāma 760 *trivarga dhatrī* conveys the same meaning.

Tristhā त्रिस्था (874)

This is a recapitulation of the previous *nāma*. This *nāma* says that She is present in all the triads. There are many triads. Past, present and future; *Brahma*, *Viṣṇu* and *Rudra*; Creation, sustenance and dissolution; the three letters of ॐ a, u and m; the three types of *karma*-s *prārabdha*, *sañcita āgāmya* or *kriyamāṇa*; three *guṇa*-s – *sattva, rajas and tams; icchā, jñāna* and *kriyā śaktī-s*, etc.

Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa (21.36 – 38) says "In you reside the three *mātra*-s of time (short, long and medium), O Goddess, all that exists and does not exist, the three worlds, the three Veda-s, the three sciences, the three fires, the three lights, three colours, the three qualities, the three sounds and the three *āśrama*-s, (house holder, anchorite and *sannyās*) the three times and the three states of life, the three types of *pitṛ-s* (*Vasu, Rudra* and *Āditya*), day-night and the rest. This trinity of standards in your form Oh! *Goddess Sarasvatī*."

{For further reading: When the third person (*nara* or a human being), the second person (*Śaktī*) and the first person (*Śiva*) are used together, simultaneously there is the absorption of the lower in the higher and higher because it is the higher that contains the truth of the lower. This means that *Śiva* aspect prevails in *Śaktī* aspect and *Śaktī* aspect prevails in *nara* aspect. Thus *Śiva* aspect prevails all over. *Nara-rūpa* (*rūpa* means form) first rises to *Śaktī rūpa* and then to *Śiva rūpa*. *Nara rūpa* cannot rise to *Śiva rūpa,* leaving aside the intervening *Śaktī rūpa*. This is the reason that *Śiva* always addresses *Devi* in the second person. This is known as *Trika* philosophy. *Śiva* is known as *prakāśa*, *Śaktī* is known as *vimarśa* and their *sāmarasya* (equipoise) is known as identity in difference, the living beings.)

Tripuramālinī त्रिपुरमालिनी (875)

Tripuramālinī is the presiding deity of sixth *āvaraṇa* of *Śrī Cakra*, known as *sarva rakṣāakara* (the Supreme Protector). She is assisted by other yogin-s known as *nirgarbha-yogini-s* (not born from wombs). This *āvaraṇa* represents *sṛṣṭi* (creation).

Mālini is also known as wife of *Kāma* (*Śiva*). *Tripura* could also mean three primary stages of consciousness (awake, dream and deep sleep). In this context this *nāma* means that She rules over the initial three stages of consciousness. The ultimate level of consciousness is *Śiva*.

There is one more stage of consciousness. This stage occurs immediately after one falls asleep and before entering his dream state. This is the stage when divine commune happens. This state also happens just before getting up in the morning. One can find answers for his spiritual queries during this state directly from God.

Nirāmayā निरामया (876)

She is devoid of diseases. *Maya* means medical treatment for diseases. Diseases are of two types; one pertains to the body and the other affecting the mind. She is beyond body and mind. She is the remedy to all diseases as indicated in *nāma* 551 *sarva-vyādhi-praśamanī* which means She cures all diseases.

Nirālambā निरालम्बा (877)

She is without support and everything is supported by Her. This *nāma* says that She is not dependent on anybody for actions of creation, sustenance and dissolution. She does not depend upon *Śiva*, as there is no difference between Her and *Śiva*.

Svātmārāmā स्वात्मारामा (878)

She rejoices in Her own Self.

Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad (I.iv.3) says "He was not at all happy. People are not happy when alone. He desired a mate. He became as big as man and wife, embracing each other. He parted this very body into two. From that came husband and wife. Therefore, this (body) is one-half of oneself, like one of the two halves of a split pea. Therefore, this space is indeed filled by the wife. He was united with her. From that men were born." Brahman divides Himself into two *Śiva* and *Śaktī* or static and kinetic energies. The *Upaniṣad* confirms that *Śaktī* was created by *Śiva*. This goes to prove that *Śiva* and *Śaktī* are not different from each other (*nāma* 53. *Śiva*). They are only a unified entity with multiple functions. *Śiva* does not partake in any of these functions and simply watches

the ongoing activities duly administered by *Śaktī*. *Śaktī* functions independently. Her independent nature is discussed in previous *nāma*-s.

Śiva is the sole possessor of *Śaktī*. The entire phenomenal manifestation is the varied form of His *svātantrya śaktī* (*nāma* 723), the sovereign autonomy. This is also known as freedom of will, held by *vimarśa* form of the Brahman.

It is also said that the creation was made from Her mind and at the time of annihilation, the universe is dissolved into Her mind. The universe is said to be Her playground. Since the universe was created from Her mind, Her own Self (Her own mind) has become Her playground. Please refer *nāma* 665 *ekākinī*.

Sudhāsrutiḥ सुधास्रुतिः (879)

She is the cause for the flow of nectar that was discussed in *nāma* 106 *sudhā sārābhi varṣiṇī* and 240 *candramaṇḍala madhyagā*.

The details have been provided in the above *nāma*-s. When *kuṇḍalinī* reaches *ājñā cakra*, it is endowed with rattling energy that normally radiates and gets diffused through either *ājñā cakra* itself, or back head *cakra* or *sahasrāra*. The diffusion of energy is a normal phenomenon. Alternatively, one can concentrate on the pineal gland just behind the *ājñā cakra*. However, this practice could cause nerve related problems, if done without guidance. When this gland is energised, it causes illumination. At the time of this illumination, one can feel the flow of nectar in the region of upper palate and throat. This region is called soft palate (inner tongue). Normally, this is felt when one enters blissful state. Since *kuṇḍalinī* is Her subtlest form, this *nāma* says that She is responsible for the flow of this divine nectar.

Samsāra-paṅka-nirmagna-samuddharaṇa-paṇḍitā सम्सार-पङ्क-निर्मग्न-समुद्धरण-पण्डिता (880)

She is capable of rescuing men who are entangled in *saṃsāra*. *Saṃsāra* means materialistic life. It is said that those who always think about Her, do not get entangled in materialistic life; instead they lead spiritual life. *Saṃsāra* originates from the word *saṃsārin* which can be explained as the transmigratory soul passing through various mundane states in the form of various sentient beings. *Saṃsāra* should not be confused with the life of householder (*grahasthya*). A man cannot perform fire rituals without his wife and this is prohibited in *śastra-s*.

Kṛṣṇa says "*Arjuna*! I speedily deliver from the ocean of birth and death, their mind being fixed on me." (*Bhagavad Gīta* XII.7)

Yajña-priyā यज्ञ-प्रिया (881)

She is fond of sacrifices. In *yājña*, oblations are offered to different gods and goddesses to appease them. The *navāvaraṇa pūja* itself is considered as a sacrificial ritual. *yājña* also means *Viṣṇu*. It is said that *yājñovai Viṣṇu* which means *yājña* is *Viṣṇu*. In this context it can be explained that She is fond of *Viṣṇu* Her brother.

Kṛṣṇa says (*Bhagavad Gīta* IV.24 and 25) "The process of offering and oblation itself, both are Brahman. The fire and the one who makes oblation into it are other forms of Spirit. By realising this, being absorbed in Brahman during all activities, verily such a one goes to Spirit alone. Yogis duly offer sacrifice only in the shape of worship to gods. Others pour into the fire of Brahman the very sacrifice in the shape of the self (individual endowed with ego) through the sacrifice known as the perception of identity."

Yajur Veda (III.v.11) and *Rig Veda* (I.164.50) say *yajñena yajñamayajanta devāḥ* which means 'by the sacrifice the gods worshipfully performed the sacrifice." (This forms the beginning of the last *mantra* of *puruṣa sūkta*.)

{Further reading on *yājña*: (in the words of *Dayananda Sarasvati* as appearing in *Rig Veda Samhita*) *Yājña* is not merely a sacrificial

ritual. It embraces all the achievements on a social plane to amend the conditions of our worldly living against poverty, miseries, sickness and disease and in the subsequent stage to assure a better future even beyond death. It is not the ritual that would lead to that goal, it is the hard, honest and sincere devotion in all department of knowledge – science, technology, philosophy and spirituality, that would assure the fruits of *yājña*.}

Yajña-kartrī यज्ञ-कर्त्री (882)

Yajña means sacrifice. She is in the form *yajamānā's* wife. *Yajamāna* is the one who performs the *yājña* or for whom the *yājña* is performed, or who funds the *yājña*. Wife of *yajamāna* holds an important place in an *yājña*. She is known as *yajamāna-patnī*. In the house of *yajamānā* three kinds of fires are kept. They are *gārhapatya* also known as the domestic fire; the second is *āhavanīya* where oblations are offered; and the third one is *dakṣiṇa* or the southern fire. All the three fires are installed in altars made of clay. A person who maintains all the three fires is known as *agnihotrin*. Wife of *yajamāna* is also empowered to maintain *gārhapatya* fire during short absence of *yajamāna*.

In an *yājña*, the performer is considered as *Śiva* Himself. His wife is *Śaktī*.

Yajamāna-svarūpiṇī यजमान-स्वरूपिणी (883)

She is in the form of *yajamāna*. In the eight forms of *Śiva*, His *Rudra* form is the form of fire. *Nāma* 769 *yājña-rūpa* said that She is the *yājña* itself. *Kṛṣṇa* says (*Bhagavad Gīta* IX.24) "I am the enjoyer and also the Lord of all sacrifices." In *Viṣṇu Sahasranāma* there are many *nāma*-s about *yājña*.

{Further reading: The eight forms of *Śiva* are *Sarva* – earth; *Bhava* – water; *Rudra* – fire; *Ugra* – mind; *Bhīma – ākāś*; *Paśupatī* – soul; *Īśāna* – sun; and *Mahādeva* – moon.}

Dharmā-dhārā धर्मा-धारा (884)

Dharma is the way of life, prescribed by scriptures. *Dharma* of one place may not suit the *dharma* of another place. The origin of the *dharma* is based on the cultural heritage and living conditions in a particular place. *Dharma* is explained as the way of life lived by those who were devoid of evil qualities and the way lived by sages and saints. Sages like *Manu, Āpastamba, Parāśara, Nārada* have explained *dharma* more or less in a unified voice. It is said that *dharma,* without following the prescribed guidelines does not yield desired results.

Viṣṇu Sahasranāma uttara bhag (verse 17) says, *ācāra prabhavo dharmo dharmasya prabhu acyutaḥ* which means that *dharma* is primary in all *śāstra*-s. *Ācāra* means custom, practice, usage, tradition or immemorial usage as the foundation of law. *Dharma* arises out of customs and practice only. *Dharma* originates from *ācāra* and Lord of *dharma* is *Viṣṇu* or *Acyuta*.

Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad says that everything is established in *dharma*.

This *nāma* says that She is in the form of *Dharma*.

Dhanādhyakṣā धनाध्यक्षा (885)

Dhanādhyakṣā is *Kubera*, the lord of wealth. *Yakṣa-s* are super human beings and generally considered as attendants of *Kubera*. *Kubera* is the chief of *Yakṣa-s.* He is one of Her twelve great worshippers. Since there is no difference between the worshipper and the worshipped, She is said to be the Lord of wealth.

Dhana-dhānya-vivardhinī धन-धान्य-विवर्धिनी (886)

She is the increaser of wealth and granary. This happens automatically for Her true devotees.

Vipra-priyā विप्र-प्रिया (887)

Vipra means learned. She is fond of the learned and wise. Knowledge alone is needed for Self realisation.

Vipra-rūpā विप्र-रूपा (888)

This is an extension of the previous *nāma*. After having said that She is fond of learned men, this *nāma* goes a step further and says that She is the embodiment of knowledge itself. A quality existing in the self is always liked.

The one who is purified by certain rituals, knower of Vedas, knower of scriptures, follower of *dharma* and *śāstra*-s and the one who has controlled his mind and senses is known as *brāhmaṇa*. She makes such *brāhmaṇa*-s become more learned. A comparison is drawn between a cow and a *brāhmaṇa*. The cow is nourished by fodder and a *brāhmaṇa* is nourished by *japa*-s and *homa*-s (fire rituals). One of the primary duties of *brāhmaṇa*-s is to help others, by performing rituals for their upliftment. They should, by way of discourses impart knowledge to others. *Kṛṣṇa* says in *Bhagavad Gīta* (IV.13) "The four orders of the society were created by me, classifying them according to the mode of their *prakṛti* predominance." *Kṛṣṇa* uses the order based classification in a number of places in *Bhagavad Gīta*. This order system is based on the predominance of *guṇa*-s, *sattvic, rajas* and *tamas*. If a person is highly *sattvic* in nature, it becomes one of the qualifications to become a *brāhmana*.

The words of true *brāhmaṇa* -s are said to purify the sinners (possibly referring to the blessings of the learned, who are close to attaining the Brahman). They should not subject themselves to extolment, which could lead to egotism. If a *brāhmaṇa* is worshipped he turns out to be a milked cow. *Brāhmaṇa -s* do not mean a community, caste or creed. *Brāhmana* is a qualification based on the knowledge acquired and its quality. The one who is

close to Brahman is a *brāhmaṇa* and his next stage is to merge with the Brahman.

Viśva-bhramaṇa-kāriṇī विश्व-भ्रमण-कारिणी (889)

Viśva means entirety and in this context all the universes or *brahmāṇḍa-s* (*brahmāṇḍa-s* mean more than one universe). There are many universes existing that are beyond human comprehension. Though universes are many, Brahman is One. She is always referred as *akhilāṇḍakoṭi brahmāṇḍa nāyakī* अखिलाण्डकोटि ब्रह्माण्ड नायकी which means that She is the creator of number of universes. She manifests as *prakṛti* by conjoining with *puruṣa* or soul in different universes.

Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (I.i.1) opens by asking, "Is Brahman the cause of this universe? Where have we come from?" The same *Upaniṣad* answers this question at the end by saying (VI.1) "Some scholars think this world came into existence naturally. They are wrong. Some again think time created it. This too is wrong. The power of Brahman is manifested as this cycle."

Kṛṣṇa says (*Bhagavad Gīta* XVIII.61) "Brahman abides in the heart of all creatures, causing them to revolve according to their *karma-s* by His illusive power, seated as those beings are in the vehicle of the body."

Viṣṇu Sahasranāma first *nāma* is '*Viśva*', conveying the same meaning as discussed above.

This *nāma* means that She creates, sustains and dissolves the universes like cyclic motion. When a universe is created it has to be sustained to ultimately dissolve into Her.

Viśvagrāsā विश्वग्रासा (890)

She devours universes. This refers to Her act of dissolution. This has been discussed in *nāma* 752 *māhāgrāsā* and repeated here.

Kaṭha Upaniṣad (I.ii.25) says "the best among all people are like food to the Self. Death overcomes everyone, yet even death is a mere condiment for the Self."

Brahma Sūtra (I.ii.9) also says "The eater (the Brahman) on account of the appropriation of all that moves and does not move."

She annihilates universes, as said in the previous *nāma*.

Vidrumābhā विद्रुमाभा (891)

Vidrumā means coral coloured. Coral is red in colour, which is Her complexion. *Vidrumā* also means tree of knowledge. Tree is compared to knowledge, as several trees originate from a single tree. In the same way a guru produces several disciples. She is addressed as Guru in *nāma* -s 603, 713 and 722. She passes on the knowledge and wisdom to Her devotees like a tree producing many other trees.

Vaiṣṇavī वैष्णवी (892)

She is in the power of *Viṣṇu*. *Viṣṇu* and *Lalitāmbikā* are said to be brother and sister. They both destroy demons, who cause trouble to virtuous men, they have the same types of weapons, etc. There are a lot of similarities between them. The next *nāma* explains further.

Viṣṇurūpiṇī विष्णुरूपिणी (893)

She is the form of *Viṣṇu*. There are other *nāma*-s in this *sahasranāma* that confirm that She is *Viṣṇu*'s form. *Nāma*-s 267, 298 and 838 convey the same meaning.

Śaktī is the Divine potency. *Kṛṣṇa* calls this as *yogamāyā*. *Kṛṣṇa* says "Though birthless and deathless and the Lord of all beings, I manifest myself through my own *yogamāyā* keeping my nature (*prakṛti*) under control." Nāma 339 is *Viṣṇu māyā* which says that She is the divine potency of *Viṣṇu*, the sustainer of the universe. The present nāma goes further and says that

She is *Viṣṇu*. *Śaktī* (*māyā*) is the mirror in which the Brahman realises His own splendour. But this nāma does not say that She is *māyā*, as this has already been said in nāma 339. This nāma says that She is the sustainer of the universe, as *Viṣṇu* is known for sustainment. A number of epics draw comparisons between *Viṣṇu* and *Devi*.

Ayoniḥ अयोनिः (894)

Yoni is generally used to indicate the divine procreative energy, also known as the source of origin. *A-yoni* means She is without origin. *Yoni* also means abode and *a-yoni* means She is without abode, which refers to Her omnipresence. The next nāma gives opposite interpretation.

Yoni-nilayā योनि-निलया (895)

Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad (III.i.3) says, *rukmacarṇaṁ kartāramīsaṁ puruṣaṁ brahmayonim*. This means 'the Brahman, the luminous Creator is the cause of *Brahma,* the *hiraṇyagarbha* or the Supreme Being.' Therefore, *brahmayonim* means the Nature or *prakṛti*. *Prakṛti* is the cause for creation, when it is associated with the soul.

Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (IV.11) also conveys the same message. It says Brahman presides over the source of everything. He sustains the world when it comes into being, and again when it perishes, it goes back into him. He controls everything.

Brahma Sūtra (I.iv.27) also says "Brahman is declared to be the *yoni* (source)".

All these scriptures point out that the Creator is the source of origin, which is known as *yoni*, the material cause. This nāma says that She is the Creator.

Saundarya Laharī (verse 11) while discussing about *Śrī Cakra*, subtly conveys the origin of the universe.

Kūṭasthā कूटस्था (896)

Kūṭ means unintelligible which means ignorance, an influence of *māyā*. Ignorance is the outcome of indulging in *saṁsāra* (worldly affairs) and *stha* means occupied with or engaged in. Therefore, *kūṭasthā* means engaging in ignorance. This nāma says that She abides in ignorance!

{Further reading on kūṭasthā: Brahman is reflected in countless facets of *māyā* or the innumerable individual *ajñāna* (unintelligible) also known as soul. Ignorance is the casual body of an individual. Under its spell the finite soul gets identified with mind and appears as the ego. Ego further identifies with sensory organs and becomes an individual being. The ego is always subjected to change. Behind this ever changing ego, the changeless Brahman shines as the immutable Self and this is known as *kūṭasthā*. When the individual soul functions as the experiencer (known as *bhokta*) and the doer (*kartā*), the immutable Self *(kūṭasthā*) stays behind as a witness (*sākṣi*) for all actions. The unchangeable Self is not affected by ignorance as it is only a witness and does not partake in both mental and physical actions. She is called as *Kūṭasthā* because She is not subjected to change. Changes occur only if associated with thoughts and actions. This is also known *Kūṭastha caitanya* or *Kṛṣṇa* consciousness or Christ consciousness.}

Kṛṣṇa also refers to *Kūṭasthā* in Bhagavad Gita (XII.3). He says "*Kūṭastha macalam dhruvam*" which means changeless, constant and immovable (the Brahman).

Kula-rūpiṇī कुल-रूपिणी (897)

Kula means noble, eminent or race or chief, etc. For *śākta-s* (worshippers of *Śaktī* are known as *śākta-s*) rights observed in Her worship is known as *kula*. It is also known as *kaula*, the philosophy and practice of left hand *śākta-s*.

Kula also means *mūlādhāra cakra*. There are many *nāma*-s in this *Sahasranāma* beginning with *kula* such as 90 to 96 and 439 to 441 that discuss Her various *kula* forms.

{Further reading on *kaula-s*: A *kaula* is himself a Guru. There are three divisions of *kaula*-s. The first category is supposed to be inferior who is always engaged in rituals such *japa*, *pūja* and *homa*. The mediocre one spends more time on meditation and reaches *samādi* stage. The superior *kaula* is a Self-realised person. He establishes a firm connection between Self and self. He is full of contentment, forgiveness and compassion}

This *nāma* says She is in different forms discussed above.

Vīragoṣṭi-priyā वीरगोष्टि-प्रिया (898)

Because of being *vīra-mātā* (*nāma* 836), She is fond of assembly of men with knowledge. *Vīra* also means overpower or subdue. Those who have overpowered their senses are known as warriors or *vīra*. Conquering senses is like fighting in a battle field. The victorious ones are called *vīragoṣṭi* (group of warriors).

Vīrā वीरा (899)

She is valorous. Her family is full of warriors. Her spouse *Śiva*, and Her sons *Gaṇeśa* and *Kārttikeya* are warriors. They have proved their valour while destroying demons (evil forces).

Kṛṣṇa explains the qualities of a demonic person thus (*Bhagavad Gīta* XVI.4): "Hypocrisy, arrogance, pride, anger, sternness and ignorance are the marks of him who is born with demonic nature." {*Kṛṣṇa* says in the next verse "The divine qualities bestow liberation and the demonic qualities lead to bondage.")

Viṣṇu Sahasranāma 658 is *vīraḥ*.

Naiṣkarmyā नैष्कर्म्या (900)

She transcends *karma*. Law of *karma* applies to those who are perishable. She is the Lord who has implemented the theory of *karma*. Brahman is not afflicted with *karma*-s. Since She is the Brahman as deliberated in this *Sahasranāma*, She is not afflicted by *karma*-s. *Karma* does not affect a Self-realised person, as he knows that his self is not responsible for his acts. *Kṛṣṇa* confirms this in *Bhagavad Gīta* (V.10) by saying "He who acts, offering all actions to the Brahman and shaking off attachment, remains untouched by sin."

Kaivalya Upaniṣad (II.3) says "I am devoid of both virtues and sins". This is the unique quality of the Brahman.

Sage *Patañjali* in his *Yoga Sūtra* (I.24) says "*Īśvara* (the Brahman) is a special *Puruṣa* untouched by misery, actions, their results and desires." (The previous aphorism says how to realise this: "by devotion to *Īśvara*.")

Nāda-rūpiṇī नाद-रूपिणी (901)

Apart from what is explained in *nāma* 299, *nāda-rūpā*, *nāda* also refers to the first movement of *Śiva-Śaktī* towards manifestation. The subtle sound is experienced in the spinal cord (*suṣumna*), when the *Śaktī* fills the universe with *nādānta*. Here She is known as *Nāda*, the unmanifest from of sound. At the highest level of *nāda*, *vāc* (speech) does not carry any denotation. At this stage, there is no difference between the designator and the designated. ॐ represents this *nāda* form of *Śabda Brahman*. The practitioner should learn to visualise *nāda* as luminous entity existing in his heart. This luminosity symbolises the nature of the Supreme knowledge that is required to realise the Brahman. This is the primary reason for avouching that *Śaktī* alone can reveal *Śiva* (*nāma* 727 *Śiva- jñāna-prādinī*).

In one of the best treatises of *Śaktī*, the *kāmakalāvilāsā* (verse 10) it is said 'from *nāda-bindu* originates the entire world'. This is confirmed in *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (I.i.7) which says, "*akṣarāt*

sambhavatīha viśvam" which means 'from *akṣara* (*Śabda Brahman*) the universe originates.' This *nāma* affirms that She is the *Śabda Brahman*, the creator of the universe. *Śabda Brahman* means primeval orphic sound.

{Further reading: *Śiva Purāṇa* says that ॐ has several components. Apart from others, ॐ has several types of *Liṅga-s* (a form of *Śiva*). *Liṅga Purāṇa* explains the origin of *Liṅga* (I.16). 'It was for both *Brahma* and *Viṣṇu* a brilliant *Liṅga* manifested Itself in the ocean. It had thousands of clusters of flames. It had neither beginning, nor an end and nor a middle. It was incomparable, inexplicable and indistinct. It was the source of the universe. There is a story that both *Brahma* and *Viṣṇu* wanted to find out the beginning and end of this *Liṅga*. There are several types of *Liṅga*-s and the subtle *Liṅga* is known as *sūkṣma-praṇava* (*sūkṣma* means subtle). In addition to the subtle *Liṅga*, there are many types of gross *Liṅga-s*. *Svayambhu Liṅga* is identified with *bindu*. *Svayambhu* means self existent. *Śiva Purāṇa* (I.16.113) says, *nādaliṅga svayambhuvaḥ*.}

Vijñāna-kalanā विज्ञान-कलना (902)

Vijñāna means knowledge that is required to realise the Brahman and *kalanā* means causing or effecting. This *nāma* is an extension of *nāma* 727 *Śiva-jñāna-pradāyinī*. She is endowed with knowledge as per *nāma* 643 *Jñānadā*.

This *nāma* says that She provides the highest knowledge to realise the Brahman. There are fourteen types of *vidyā*-s. They are, the four Veda-s (1 – 4), the six limbs of Veda-s (7 – 12) (*Śikṣā*, *Chandas, Vyākaraṇa, Nirukta, Jyotiṣa* and *Kalpa), Mīmāṃsā* (profound thought or reflection or Consideration, investigation, examination, discussion. Examination of Vedic texts divided into two systems, viz. the *Pūrva-mīmāṃsā* or *Karma-mīmāṃsā* by *Jamini* and the *Uttara-mimāṃsā* or *Brahma-mimāṃsā* or *Śārīraka-mimāṃsā* by *Bādarāyaṇa*, commonly styled the *Vedānta* and dealing chiefly with the nature of *Brahma* or the one universal

Spirit), *Nyāya* (13) (a logical or syllogistic argument or inference consisting of a combination of enthymeme and syllogism (enthymeme is argument consisting of only two propositions, an antecedent and consequent deduced from it; a syllogism with one premise omitted) and so having, according to the *Naiyāyika*-s five numbers, viz. *pratijñā, hetu, udāharaṇa, upanaya*, *nigamana*, or according to the *Vedāntin*-s three numbers. This system of philosophy delivered by *Gotama* or *Gautama*. It is one of the six *darśana*-s, so called, because it goes into all subjects, both physical and metaphysical, according to the above syllogistic method treated in one division of the system. Its branch is called *Vaiśeṣika*.) and *purāṇa*-s (14) or epics are the fourteen *vidyā*-s. It is said that knowing all these fourteen *vidyā*-s is known as *vijñāna*.

Kalyā कल्या (903)

Kalya has many meanings such as auspicious, healthy, perfect, ready or prepared, instructive, dawn, good tidings, etc. It can be said that She is in the form of above qualities.

Triśatī nāma 146 is also *Kalyā*. It is said that She is well versed in arts. She is the embodiment of *kalā*-s as per *nāma* 797.

Vidagdhā विदग्धा (904)

She is clever, shrewd, knowing, sharp, crafty, sly, artful, intriguing, etc. These qualities are required to create, sustain and dissolve the universe. These are the qualities of the Brahman and this *nāma* again reaffirms Her Brahmanic qualities.

Baindavāsanā बैन्दवासना (905)

Baindava means a *bindu* or dot and *āsana* means seat. This *nāma* says that She is seated on a *bindu*. There are two types of explanations for *bindu*.

The central point of *Śrī Cakra* is called *bindu*. It is placed in the midst of the inner most (top most in the case of *Meru*) triangle. This *bindu* is called *sarvānandamaya cakra*, also known as *baindava sthāna*. The presiding deity of this ninth *āvaraṇa* or covering is *Śrī Mahā Tripurasundarī* (*nāma 997)*. She is worshipped here with *yoni mudra*. Those who are initiated into *ṣodaśī* should worship Her here with *trikhaṇḍā mudra*. *Lalitāmbikā* is worshipped here in Her highest form. She is adored as *Parābhaṭṭārikā* (*bhaṭṭāra* means highly noble, worthy of worship) and *Mahā-kāmeśvarī*.

In *kāmakalā* (please refer *nāma* 322) there are three *bindu*-s. They are white, red and multi coloured. The white *bindu* represents *Śiva* and the red bindu represents *Śaktī*. They expand and contract thereby causing the creation of the universe. The multicoloured *bindu* represents the sun. *Kāma* refers to the sun and *kalā* refers to the red and white *bindu*-s. All the three put together is called *kāmakalā* (*nāma* 322). The red and white *bindu*-s are the Divine couple. Their union happens in equal degree. As already discussed in various *nāma*-s, *Śiva* is *prakāśa* form and *Śaktī* is *vimarśa* form. When *prakāśa* and *vimarśa* unite, the union is known as *ahaṃkāra* or ego. The *ahaṃkāra* consists of many alphabets which subsequently produce sound and its meaning. Since She is seated on the *bindu* (red coloured), this *nāma* calls Her *Baindavāsanā*, the Creative aspect of the Brahman.

The three *bindu*-s can be compared to the three *nāḍi-s*, *iḍā*, *piṅgala* and *suṣumna*. When the energies transported through these *nāḍi-s* merge in the *bindu* in the *ājñā cakra*, the practitioner transcends individual consciousness and enters universal consciousness. The meeting point of the three *nāḍi-s* is known as *bindu* and She is said to be seated here. A practitioner enters the universal consciousness, when his soul, individual consciousness and mind unite at this *bindu* point.

Tattvādikā तत्त्वादिका (906)

She is beyond *tattva*-s or principles (generally *tattva*-s are twenty four or thirty six). Please refer nāmā 424.

Tattvamayī तत्त्वमयी (907)

This is the continuation of the previous *nāma*. This *nāma* says that She is the embodiment of *tattva*-s. *Tattva*-s can be explained as the real essence or the ultimate principle underlying the phenomenal creation. A self realised person is called *tattvadarśin* which means the truth has been revealed. Knowledge about *tattva*-s is known as *darśana,* meaning spiritual revelation. *Tattva*-s are also known as *bāhyakaraṇa* (eternal tools or the breakdown of five basic elements *ākāś*, air, fire, water and earth) as opposed to *antaḥkaraṇa* (internal tools comprising of mind, intellect, consciousness and ego). The five basic elements break down into *tattva*-s comprising of organs of perception, cognitive faculties, organs of action and action faculties. These are the twenty *tattva*-s. *Antaḥkaraṇa*, which consists of four *tattva*-s make the total of twenty four *tattva*-s, known as *ātma tattva*-s. *Vidyā tattva* (consisting of another six *tattva*s) and *Suddha Vidyā tattva* (consisting of four *tattva*-s) make another ten *tattva*-s. The most superior *tattva*-s are *Śaktī tattva* and *Śiva tattva*. All these make thirty six *tattva*-s.

This *nāma* says that She is the embodiment of these *tattva*-s. She is asserted as the Brahman through various *nāma*-s of this *Sahasranāma.* The primary quality of the Brahman is omnipresence. *Tattva*-s relate to *prakṛti*. Since She is Brahman as well as *prakṛti*, this *nāma* says that She is the personification of *tattva*-s.

The previous *nāma* said that She is beyond *tattva*-s. Brahman does not get Himself associated with any actions. The previous *nāma*, considering Her as the Brahman says that She is beyond *tattva*-s and this *nāma* treating Her as *prakṛti* says that She is the embodiment of *tattva*-s.

Please refer *nāma* 991 for further details.

Tattvamartha-svarūpiṇī तत्त्वमर्थ-स्वरूपिणी (908)

Tat means the Brahman and *tvam* means the soul. The union of the two is called realisation or Self-realisation. This *nāma* says She is in the form of *mahā vākya* (the great sayings or the great pronouncements)such as *Tat tvaṁ asi* or "You are That". Her *tat-tvaṁ* form is the cause for Self-realisation. Without Her grace the explanation for *Tat tvaṁ asi* is not possible to comprehend.

Tat tvaṁ asi is the articulation of *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VI.viii.7). The *Upaniṣad* says "That which the subtlest of all is the Self. '*tat satyaṁ'* That is the truth, '*saḥ ātma'* that is the Self, '*Tat tvaṁ asi'* that is you." The *Upaniṣad* affirms that Self, the essence of pure spirit is the real identity of the Self.

Sāmagāna-priyā सामगान-प्रिया (909)

Sāma means the *Sāma Veda*, *gāna* means songs and *priyā* means fond of. This *nāma* says that She is fond of songs of *Sāma Veda*, or She is fond of those who render *Sāma Veda*,. The verses of *Sāma Veda*, are rendered in musical notes. It is said that *Śiva* is fond of *Sāma Veda*. *Rāvaṇa* of *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* got boons from *Śiva* by praising Him in *Sāma Veda*. This is said in *Vālmīkin Rāmāyaṇa* (*uttara kāṇḍa*.XVI.34): "*Daśānana* glorified *Śiva* by singing psalms from *Sāma Veda*." *Kṛṣṇa* says in *Bhagavad Gīta* (X.22) "Among *Veda-s*, I am the *Sāma Veda*."

Chāndogya Upaniṣad (I.vi.1) establishes firm connection between *Rig Veda* and *Sāma Veda*. "The earth is like *Rig Veda* and fire is like *Sāma Veda*. The *Sāma* is based on the *Rig Veda* and this is why the *Sāma* is sung based on the *Rig Veda*. The earth is *sā* and fire is *ama* which together make *Sāma*."

Chāndogya Upaniṣad and *Kena Upaniṣad* are the important *Upaniṣads* that belong to *Sāma Veda*.

{Further reading on *Sāma Veda*: *Sāma Veda samhita* has two parts. The first part contains text of the *rik mantra*-s that are to be sung. The second part is the texts of *mantra*-s which are actually sung. Thus every *mantra* in the first part is expanded to yield one or more *sāmangāna mantra*-s. There are said to be 1875 *mantra*-s in *Sāma Veda. Śikṣā*, a branch of Veda, deals with the science of proper articulation and pronunciation of Vedic texts. It is further classified into *varṇa, svara, mātra, balam, sāma* and *santāna* respectively representing syllable, accent, duration, effort, even tone and continuity and text. A typical *rik* of *Sāma Veda* is given here. The figures above the alphabets mean that the particular alphabet should be repeated that many times. १ is numeric 1, २ is numeric 2 and ३ is numeric 3.

१ ३ १ २ ३ २ १ ३ २ ३ २ १
अगने आ याहि वीतये गुणानो हव्य दातये

Saumyā सोम्या (910)

This *nāma* is also pronounced as *soumyā* (सौम्या). The word *soma* refers to *Śiva* with His consort *Umā*, who forms a part of *Śiva*. This has been already discussed in *nāma* 392.

Somyā also means 'resembling the moon', auspicious, happy, pleasant, cheerful, etc. All these characteristics apply to Her.

The *nāma* also means that She is worthy of adoration through soma sacrifice (*soma yāga*).

{Further reading on *Soma yāga*: The *śrauta sūtra*-s (for example *Āpastamba Śrauta Sūtra*-s) of the late Vedic period offer several definitions of ritual known as *śrauta sūtra*. The main components of the rituals are oblations (different substances offered into the fire), the deity (oblations are offered to the deity who is invoked in the fire) and the renunciation (renouncing the benefits accruing on account of the ritual). The *śrauta* rituals consist of three main

categories. They are *haviryajñā* also known as *iṣṭi*, the purported animal sacrifices and *soma* rituals. There are many restrictions for performing *soma yāga*. One has to be married and the *soma yāga* should come through lineage. *Soma* is a sacred plant that is grown in high mountains and juice is extracted from the plants and offered as oblations. The principle characteristic of soma *yāga* is the sequence of chants from *Sāma Veda*, sung in chorus by three priests.}

Sadāśiva-kuṭumbinī सदाशिव-कुटुम्बिनी (911)

The consort of *Sadāśiva* or belonging to the family of *Sadāśiva* (*Śiva*). *Lalitā triśatī* 231 is also *Sadāśiva*.

Sadāśiva is a principle or *tattva*, the pure element of *Śiva*, where one experiences the universe in an undifferentiated way, as the limbs of his own body of 'I' consciousness. In other words when one feels *ahaṁ idaṁ* or 'I am this universe' that stage is called *Sadāśiva*. There are five final elements in the path of Self realisation. They are (in the ascending order) *suddha vidyā*, *Īśvara*, *Sadāśiva*, *Śaktī* and finally *Śiva*, the Supreme.

Savyāpasavya-mārgasthā सव्यापसव्य-मार्गस्था (912)

This *nāma* is composed of three words, *savya* + *apa-savya* + *mārga*. *Savya* means right hand, *apa-savya* means the left hand and *mārga* means path (possibly referring to middle path between *savya* and *apasavya*).

Savya is worshipping through Vedic methods, where only right hand is used to perform rituals. *Apasavya* is worshipping through tantric methods, where only left hand is used. This *nāma* says that She is worshipped by Her devotees by either of these paths. These are also known as *dakṣiṇā mārga* and *vāma mārga*. The important difference between the worshippers following *dakṣiṇā* or *vāma mārga* is the object of worship. *Dakṣiṇā mārga* followers worship all gods and goddesses. In Hindu philosophy, all energy generating

objects are worshipped. For example, water, fire, earth, sun, moon, planets, rivers, oceans are worshipped as demigods. Such demigods and goddesses are important factors in sustaining the universe. However trivial the nature of these gods and goddesses are, they have their own role to play in sustaining the universe. In *dakṣiṇā mārga*, all these demigods and goddesses are worshipped and they are easily pleased when *pūja* and *homa* (fire rituals) are performed to assuage them. Though the followers of *dakṣiṇā mārga* have their own *iṣṭa devatā* (favourite or desired deity), they also worship other gods and demigods. *Iṣṭa devatā* is different from *kula devatā*. *Kula devatā* is the deity worshiped through one's lineage. *Śāstra*-s say that one's *kula devatā* should be worshipped as frequently as possible, at least once in a year. *Iṣṭa devatā* is one's preferred form of God. Since they invoke all demigods and goddesses, who have their own powers, they bless the invoker and make him prosper.

On the other hand, *vāma mārga* worshippers do not worship other gods and goddesses. They always worship their own *devatā*, in whose worship they should have been initiated by a guru. These worshippers ignore other *devatā* totally. Though the particular *devatā* (mostly feminine deities), who is invoked by them endows her worshippers with all her qualities, she does not confer final liberation. Though they also occasionally worship other deities, they invariably sacrifice the benefits of such worships to their own *devatā*, as they feel that their own *devatā* will confer on them the blessings of all other *devatā-s*. It is said in *Sandhyāvandana, sarva deva namaskāraḥ śrī keśavaṁ prati gacchati* (सर्व देव नमस्कारः श्री केशवं प्रति गच्छति) which means that the propitiation done to other *devatā-s* reach only *Viṣṇu* (*keśava*). They are deluded to recognise the individual powers of other gods and goddesses. They firmly believe that their own deity can bestow on them the energy of sun, fire, water, etc. They do not make any progress from their *iṣṭa devatā* to realise the Brahman, the Ultimate. Their ultimate liberation gets postponed on account of their inability to realise the Brahman. In their affinity to their own deity, they fail to perform rituals for their ancestors, *riṣi*-s and sages, etc. There are five types

of *yajñā* as referred in *nāma* 946. If one fails to perform these *pañca yajñā* , path to salvation is blocked. This means, he has to be reborn again to cross this blockade. The final liberation gets postponed for them.

In this context this *nāma* says that She is worshipped by both *dakṣiṇā mārga* and *vāma mārga*.

There is another interpretation. A soul, after leaving its gross body can go to the *deva loka* (where gods like *Indra*, etc live) or *pitṛ loka* (where ancestors live) depending upon the *karma* embedded in the soul. *Savya* is the name of the path that a soul takes in reaching *deva loka*. This path is full of illumination. The soul transcends the five basic elements and reaches higher planes without any difficulty. This path can be taken only by those who have acquired supreme knowledge. These souls are not generally reborn and enjoy the comforts of *deva loka*. *Apasavya* is the path taken by those souls whose *karmic* account is not so good. This path is dark and difficult to cross. They also reach the *deva loka* to be born again. Trampling this path is difficult and the soul undergoes pain while proceeding in this path. Those who have controlled their senses and mind, devoid of desire, attachments, lust etc continue to stay in the *deva loka* till *pralaya* or the annihilation. These Self realised persons transcend even the *deva loka* and reach the *Viṣṇu loka*, where all sages and saints inhabit. They always think about *Viṣṇu* and eternally dwell at his feet. *Rig Veda* (I.22.20) says, *tad viśṇoḥ paramaṃ padaṃ sadā paśyanti sūrayaḥ* meaning 'they see Him vividly in meditation'. This *nāma* says that She is in the form of both these paths.

To reach the solar disc there are three paths, *uttara* (north), *dakṣiṇa* (south) and *madhyama* (centre). Each of these three paths has three roads (3 x 3 = 9) making a total of nine. Each of these has three stars beginning from *Aśvinī* and ending with *Revatī* thereby making a total twenty seven stars of the galaxy. She is said to be in these three major paths and control the universe.

{Further reading on *sādanā*: *Sādana* is practice. Talking about religion does not give anything spiritually. To progress in spirituality, one must do *sādanā* (practice). Progression in spirituality is purely based on one's experience that can be attained only through *sādanā*. Both Veda-s and Tantra-s prescribe guidelines to attain liberation. It is the question of individual's degree of quest to understand and follow these guidelines. Faith is the single important aspect of spirituality. In order to develop one's faith, rituals have been prescribed. But if one continues only with rituals, he does not have time to search for the Brahman. One has to believe in "what is here is there and what is not here is nowhere." Spirituality says that one must act to know the Brahman. The action begins with rituals and culminates in meditation. Meditation is the most effective *sādanā* in Self-realisation. Religious ritual is either through *karma* (action) such as *homa* etc, or *upāsana* (engaging mentally). Perfection in these two lead to *jñāna* or knowledge. *Karma*, *upāsana* and *jñāna* form three fold division of Vedas. Ritual *karma* is effective only if it is done in total accuracy. The progress in psychological worship (*upāsana*) depends on the depth of devotion. Again, *upāsana* is of two types, gross and subtle. When one advances spiritually, his level of *sādanā* transforms from gross to subtle. *Kṛṣṇa* says in *Bhagavad Gīta* (IX.14 and 15) "Constantly chanting my names and glories and striving for my realisation and bowing again and again to me, those devotees of firm resolve, ever united with me through meditation , worship me with single minded devotion. Others, who follow the path of knowledge betake themselves to me through their offering of knowledge, worshipping me in my Absolute formless aspect as one with themselves. While still others worship me in my universal form in ways taking me as manifested in diverse celestial forms."}

Sarvāpad-vinivāriṇī सर्वापद्-विनिवारिणी (913)

She is the eliminator of all kinds of misfortunes. Misfortunes arise because of not following either of the two paths (*savya* and *apa-savya*) discussed in the previous *nāma*. Irrespective of the path

pursued, She is remembered by repeating Her *mantra*-s (like *Pañcadaśī*) or names* (like this *Sahasranāma*) depending upon ones cerebration. This is explained in *Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad* (VI.ii.16), "Those who do not know these two ways become insects and moths, etc." The same averring is also available in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (V.x.7) "Those who do not follow either of these paths are born as small animals and insects again and again." The *Upaniṣads* warn that if one does not follow either of these paths, he has to repeatedly undergo the pains of birth and death as life span of small insects and small animals is very short.

Devi Herself says "Those who forsaking attachment take refuge in me, and ever worship me with devotion, by the method of divine yoga, having compassion on all beings, tranquil, self-controlled, free from envy, humble, ascetic, of vows performed with their minds fixed on me, whose lives are in me, delighting in narrating my wisdom……and even those who are devoid of these characteristics, if they repeat my name ever devoted to me, I quickly destroy in the same birth, even mountains of misfortunes by the lamp of wisdom." Apart from pursuing any one of these paths mentioned in the previous *nāma*, their mental condition is also equally important. She says that it is not enough to merely pursue the ritualistic path. One has to attain knowledge to connect the individual self with the Supreme Self. Without attaining knowledge this connection is not possible. It is also said that one should always remember Her lotus feet in times of misfortune.

The one, who follows the above steps, never gets misfortunes and the one who does not follow these steps has to remember Her lotus feet in times of misfortune. But, liberation is possible only for those who meditate on Her.

This *nāma* says that irrespective of the depth of devotion, one does not face misfortune if she is properly worshipped.

{*Someone told *Ramana Mahariṣi* the she had done *pūja* with hundred thousand leaves. *Mahariṣi* retorted by saying "Instead of

pinching the plant, could you not pinch your own skin hundred thousand times and perform your *pūja*?"}

Svasthā स्वस्था (914)

Svasthā means being in one's natural state and as own natural self with a healthy body and mind without *upādhi*-s (*upādhi* means condition. Due to *upādhi* unlimited thing appears as limited). Sage *Nāradā* asks *Sanatkumāra* (one of the four noetic sons of Lord Brahma) in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VII.24.1) "Where does the Infinite reside?" *Sanatkumāra* replies "He rests on His own power, or not even on that power."

The pleasure and pain arise only if one thinks of a second object, as the mind now has the chance of choosing. Duality is one of the toughest enemies to tackle with in spiritual pursuit.

(There is a story about Lord *Gaṇeśa* and His mother *Pārvatī*. *Gaṇeśa* was playing with a cat and caused injuries in the body of the cat. Then He went to His mother *Pārvatī*. He saw bruises in Her body asked Her who had hurt Her. *Pārvatī* replied "You have caused these bruises. You beat the cat, but I am also in the cat. If you hurt the cat, you only hurt me.")

Her independent nature is also described in *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (I.iii.11) which says, "There is nothing higher than the Cosmic Self. That marks the end of all growth. This is the highest goal anyone can attain." Because of being the highest, She is *Svasthā*.

Svabhāva-madhurā स्वभाव-मधुरा (915)

She is sweet, pleasant, charming and delightful in nature. Because of these qualities everyone is attracted to Her.

This *nāma* can be split as follows:

sva + *bha* + *avama* + *dhura*. Sva means Her, *bha* means to shine, *avama* means the best among the wise, and *dhura* means yoke. In

this context this *nāma* means that She carries the yoke of the wise. She illuminates the path of the wise or by Her presence, the path of the wise is illuminated. They can tread their spiritual path with Her illuminating light. Brahman is Self- illuminating.

Svabhā(va) + vama + dhura. *Svabhā(va)* means the knowledge required for realising the Self, *vama* means imparting knowledge of the Self and *dhura* means the Chief. She is the Chief among those who impart knowledge of the Brahman (*Śiva*).

Sva + bhava + madhura. She pleasantly remains in Her devotees.

Sva + bhava + madhu + ra. By their own devotion, Her devotees get the best of knowledge.

It can be said that one can realise Her within, by knowledge (*jñāna*) and devotion (*bhakthi*).

Dhīrā धीरा (916)

She is the embodiment of strength. Strength here means the strength of knowledge. The non-duality is the knowledge. The knowledge of non-duality is attained through Her.

Dhīra-samarcitā धीर-समर्चिता (917)

She is adored by scholars. Scholars and poets praise Her. *Dhī* means the one who is not different from the essence of knowledge, *rasa* means happiness in plenitude and *arcita* means worshipped. This *nāma* means that the one who is in need of supreme knowledge worships Her. The supreme knowledge leads to bliss.

Caitanyārghya-samārādhyā चैतन्यार्घ्य-समाराध्या (918)

Caitanya is the foundational consciousness that has absolute freedom of knowing and doing. *Śiva Sūtra* (I.1) say,s *caitanyaṁ ātmā. Caitanya* is totally independent. Only *Śiva* alone possesses this totally independent Supreme Consciousness. All other living

beings depend upon this Supreme Consciousness. *Arghya* means the water offered to respectable guests. *Bhavanopaniṣad* (10) says, *jñānaṁ arghya* which means knowledge is the best *arghya*. When devotion is offered with knowledge, liberation is attained.

Bhuvaneśvarī mantra is also known as *Caitanya mantra*. The repetition of this *mantra* ten thousand times is said to absolve sins. There are two *Bhuvaneśvarī mantra-s*. One is single *bīja* (hrīṁ ह्रीं) and another has three *bīja-s* (*aiṁ-hrīṁ-śrīṁ* ऐं ह्रीं श्रीं).

{Further reading on *Caitanya*: *Caitanya* is the pure consciousness, which is the essence of the Brahman, who manifests in three forms. They are *Īśvara*, *Hiraṇyagarbha*, and *Virāt*. The fourth manifestation of the Brahman is *turya*. This is the non-dualistic consciousness that appears in different forms due to different preconditioned souls, based on their *karmic* afflictions. Consciousness limited by ignorance is *Īśvara* and consciousness conditioned by *antaḥkaraṇa* (mind, intellect, consciousness and ego) is soul. Both *Īśvara* and soul (also known as *jīvā*) act merely as witnesses (*sākṣi*). Consciousness is generally classified as four types: consciousness related to object, consciousness related to knower, consciousness related to means of knowledge and consciousness related to pure knowledge.}

This *nāma* says that She is worshipped with consciousness as offerings.

Caitanya-kusuma-priyā चैतन्य-कुसुम-प्रिया (919)

She is very fond of *kusum* flower. Here consciousness is compared to flower by poets. This is because flower is primarily responsible for the ultimate fruit (liberation). The *kusum* flower mentioned here represents eight qualities that are the basic requirements for spiritual progress. Each such quality is referred as a flower in the following verse.

ahimsā prathamam puṣpam puṣpam indriya-nigraha:

sarva-bhūta-dayā puṣpam kṣamā puṣpam viseśata: |
jnānam puṣpam tapa: puṣpam dhyānam puṣpam tathaiva ca
satyam aśṭavidham puṣpam viṣṇo: prītikaram bhavet ||

अहिम्सा प्रथमम् पुष्पम् पुष्पम् इन्द्रिय-निग्रहः
सर्व-भूत-दया पुष्पम् क्षमा पुष्पम् विसेशतः ।
ज्नानम् पुष्पम् तपः पुष्पम् ध्यानम् पुष्पम् तथैव च
सत्यम् अश्टविधम् पुष्पम् विष्णोः प्रीतिकरम् भवेत् ॥

This verse says non-violence is the first flower, conquering the senses is the second flower, pity on living beings is the third, compassion is the fourth, wisdom is the fifth, penance is the sixth, truth is the seventh and meditation is the eighth flower. There is another version of this version conveying the same meaning.

Caitanya is said to be the combination of eight flowers mentioned in the verse and these flowers together is referred as *kusuma* flower.

This *nāma* means that She does not need flowers picked from plants. Gross flowers are extraneous to one's consciousness. What She needs is subtle flowers comprising of the above qualities. *Kṛṣṇa* explicitly explains this in *Bhagavad Gīta* (IX.26). "Whosoever offers to me with love, a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or even water, I appear in person before him."

Saundarya Laharī (verse 3) says, *caitanya stabaka makaranda srutijharī* which means 'the sweetness of knowledge of the Self overflows from the blossomed flowers of *caitanya'*. The overflowing knowledge manifests as bliss.

Sudāma (also known as *Kucela- kucela* means badly clothed) and *Kṛṣṇa* studied together during their young age and were very good friends. *Sudāma* could not make a decent living. His wife compelled him to meet *Kṛṣṇa*. *Sudāma* carried with him parched rice in a worn out cloth. When they met, *Kṛṣṇa* forcibly pulled the pack of worn out cloth and the parched rice grains fell on the floor. *Kṛṣṇa* addressed *Sudāma* "Oh! Friend, this loving present brought

by you affords me supreme delight. The parched rice will satisfy me and the entire universe." By saying so, Krishna picked up the grains from the floor and consumed. *Sudāma* did not ask *Kṛṣṇa* any favours and returned to his place. On reaching his place he saw his small house had become a huge bungalow. The parched grains that *Sudāma* offered to *Kṛṣṇa* was filled with love for Him and *Kṛṣṇa* reciprocated his deep and true love by offering him material prosperity. This story appears in *Srimad Bhāgavata* and highlights the value of true devotion.

Sadoditā सदोदिता (920)

She is eternally shining (reference can be made to *nāma*-s 6, 275 and 596 where She is compared to sun). She shines in the mind of virtuous men.

Chāndogya Upaniṣad (III.xi.2) says "In *Brahma loka*, the sun never rose, nor did it ever set."

Sadā-tuṣṭā सदा-तुष्टा (921)

Sadā means always and *tuṣṭā* means pleased or satisfied. She always remains satisfied, because of the attributes mentioned in *nāma*-s 252 and 656. She always remains contended because of true devotion.

The quality of the Brahman is eternal contentment, as the Brahman does not partake in any actions and always remain as a witness. Actions alone cause discontentment, a quality of souls. When one realises the ever content Brahman, he also becomes contended.

Taruṇāditya-pāṭalā तरुणादित्य-पाटला (922)

Pāṭala means pale red, the colour of rising sun. This colour has more of red (Her complexion) and less of white (complexion of *Śiva*). This means that Her qualities are more predominant than that of *Śiva* while sustaining the universe.

She assumes different complexions depending upon the form in which She is contemplated. *Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad* (II.iii.6) describes the Brahman with limiting adjuncts. It describes the Brahman in various forms, "Like a cloth dyed with turmeric, or like grey sheep's wool, or like the insect called indigo, or like a white lotus, or like a flash of lightning."

The same *Upaniṣad* (III.ix.21) again says "Faith rests on the heart, for one knows faith through the heart". The one who needs salvation meditates Her in white complexion, the one who needs bravery meditates Her in red complexion. *Yama*, the Lord of death is dark complexioned. Goddess *Sarasvatī* is visualised sitting on a white lotus. White means knowledge. Every colour has got qualities. Each devotee visualises Her in different complexion based upon his needs.

Each *cakra* shines in different colours in *kuṇḍalinī* meditation. Such colours have different qualities and when *kuṇḍalinī* is predominant in a particular *cakra*, the qualities of that colour become predominant in the practitioner.

This *nāma* does not overrule Her red complexion as discussed in *dhyāna* verses. This *nāma* says that Her complexion changes depending upon what is prayed for.

Dakṣiṇā-dakṣiṇārādhyā दक्षिणा-दक्षिणाराध्या (923)

She is adored by right hand worshippers known as *dakṣināćāra.* Left hand worshippers are called *vāmācāra*. She is adored both by *dakṣināćāra* and *vāmācāra* methods as explained in *nāma* 912.

Dakṣiṇa also means knowledgeable men *adakṣiṇa* means ignorant men. She is worshipped both by wise and ignorant. Anybody who worships Her is a devotee. A devotee could be knowledgeable or ignorant. Knowledgeable means the one who pursues the Brahman mentally, expecting nothing in return from Her, except salvation.

Ignorant means the one who continues to be associated with rituals expecting something in return from Her.

Dakṣiṇa also means offerings made to one's Guru. It can also be interpreted that She is pleased when offerings are made to a Guru who initiates disciples into *Śrī vidyā* cult.

Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad Gīta* (VII.15, 16 and 17) "foolish and vile men of evil deeds do not adore me. Four types of devotees of noble deeds worship me: the seeker after worldly possessions, the afflicted, the seeker for knowledge and man of wisdom. Of these best is the man of wisdom, ever established in me and possessed of exclusive devotion. I am extremely dear to that man and he is extremely dear to me."

Darasmera-mukhāmbujā दरस्मेर-मुखाम्बुजा (924)

Her face is adorned with smile, comparable to fully blossomed lotus flower. Her entire form is described as a lotus flower in *nāma* 460 *Nalinī*. Even *Śiva* was attracted by Her smile as said in *nāma* 28 '*mandasmita-prabhāpūra-majjatkāmeśa-mānasā'*. *Nāma* 602 also describes Her smile. The cause of the smile is described in *nāma* 878 *svātmārāmā* meaning 'She rejoices in Her own Self'. Rejoicing in one's own self gives eternal happiness that gets beamed as smile.

Darasmera also means a shining conch shell. Here, Her teeth are compared to shining white conch shell. It also refers to Her neck where there are three lines. These three lines are said to be the three alphabets of OM (a, u, m). *Triśatī nāma* 157 compares Her neck to a conch shell. *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 69) refers to three lines in Her neck. The verse says *te gale tisraḥ rekhāḥ* meaning 'three lines on Your neck'.

Even during the times of fear (the great deluge also known as annihilation) Her face remains shining. When *Śiva* performs the cosmic dance causing annihilation, She remains as a witness without showing any signs of fear. Even during the terrible

annihilation, She continues to smile. This means that She is not afraid of anything. One does not fear for anything as long as he is *svātmārāmā* (*nāma* 878).

{Further reading on the cosmic dance of *Śiva*: At the time of annihilation, signalling the end of a cosmic cycle *Kālāgni Rudra* embraces the universe in dance of death and destruction. This is called *tāṇḍava* (refer *nāma* 232). *Śiva* dances to the drum beats causing every single object in all the universes merge into a divine unity. The fire that burns the universes dissolves into water, water into wind, wind into akash, akash into multitude of *deva*-s and *deva*-s into the Brahman. At this stage *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* are separated and merge into *Śiva*. *Śiva* alone exists witnessed by *Śaktī*. This dance of *Śiva* is called pulsating process of creation and annihilation.}

Kaulinī-kevalā कौलिनी-केवला (925)

Kaulinī has already been discussed in *nāma* 94 and *kevalā* has been discussed in *nāma* 623.

The knowledge of *Śiva* is known as *kevalā* or pure. *Śiva Sūtra* (III.34) says, *tadvimumtastu kevalī* which means "established in his real self, freed from pleasure and pain" (refer *nāma* 878 *svātmārāmā*). *Kevala* and *svātmārāma* are the terms that are used to refer a person whose consciousness is always established in the Brahman. In this stage, dualities do not exist. When the mind becomes devoid of dualities, it has the inherent capacity to stay connected with the Brahman perpetually. Opposites are the perceptions of the mind, when it gets associated with senses. Therefore *Kevala* means the doctrine of the unity of the Spirit.

Kaulinī is the one who follows *kaula mārga* (*nāma* 441). *Kaula* is the doctrine and practices of the left-hand *Śākta*-s.

This *nāma* can be explained on the basis of *Spanda-kārikā* (I.8) which says "The empirical individual (here referring to *Kaulinī*)

cannot derive the urge of desire. But by coming into contact with the power of the Self (*kevalā* – meaning *Śaktī* here), he becomes equal to that principle." In *śāktā* worship, *Śaktī* is called *kevalā*.

This *nāma* means that *Kaulinī*-s transform into *kevalā* because of worshipping Her. She helps this transformation.

Anarghya-kaivalya-pada-dāyinī अनर्घ्य-कैवल्य-पद-दायिनी (926)

Anarghya means invaluable, *kaivalya* means the stage of beatitude leading to emancipation and *dāyinī* means giver. *Nāma* 625 is *kaivalya-pada-dāyinī.* This *nāma* is the reconfirmation of *nāma* 625. The only difference between these two *nāma*-s is the prefix *anarghya* in this *nāma*. This prefix stresses the importance of *kaivalya* or ceasation of the process of transmigration. In addition to what has been explained in *nāma* 625, *kaivalya* also means the existence of soul in essence. The knowledge of understanding that soul and *prakṛti* are different from each other, leads to *kaivalya* or emancipation. *Kaivalya* is also known as *mokṣa* or *mukti*.

Kaivalya, a term used in *sāṃkhya* philosophy, is the perfect isolation not only in human existence but also in angelic existence. It is an unfettered, omniscient and perfect state of existence of soul or *jīva*. The isolated and pure spirit does not succumb to bondages of *saṁsāra* and hence released from transmigration. The final stage of discriminative knowledge is called *Kaivalya jñāna* and this is achieved in *nirvikalpa samādi* (*nirvikalpa* means devoid of changes), the highest state of consciousness. *Kaivalya jñāna* is also known as illumination, Self-realisation, enlightenment, emancipations, liberation, etc.

Sage *Patañjali* in his yoga sūtra (IV.36) says, *kaivalyam dharma dharmiṇaḥ puruṣasya*. The interpretation of this *sūtra* is 'The freedom of liberation is the very state of this substance or the being. It is not to be attained, not that you experience something new, that liberation is the very nature of the being." *Kaivalya* stage is already

embedded in the soul, but efforts are not initiated to realise it. Yoga teaches the path of realising it.

This *nāma* says that without Her help *kaivalya* stage cannot be attained.

Stotra-priyā स्तोत्र-प्रिया (927)

Stotra means praise, eulogium, a hymn of praise. Texts or verses, which are sung is *stotra* as opposed to the *śāstra*-s, which are recited. *Stotra* is classified into six types – salutation, benedictions, extolling the accomplishments, praising feats, rehearsing glory and prayer for prosperity. The entire one thousand *nāma*-s of this *Sahasranāma* are based on these six types. *Nāma*-s 627, 928, 735, 79, 658 and 692 are quoted as examples.

This *nāma* says that She is fond of praise by verses like *Śrī Devi Māhātmyam*, or Vedic verses like *Śrī sūkta*, *Durgā sūkta*, etc.

{There is a treatise called *Vanadurgā Vidhānā* also known as *Vanadurgā saptasatī* consisting of seven hundred verses. The recitation of this treatise is said to eliminate all misfortunes and miseries. Unfortunately, this is not widely prevalent now, though a few printed editions are available. The recitation will be difficult as it contains more *bīja*-s and *mūla mantra*-s than verses.}

Stuti matī स्तुति मती (928)

Stuti means praise, *mati* means knowledge. If She is praised through *stotra*-s as mentioned in the previous *nāma*, he gets knowledge that is required to realise the Brahman.

Matī can be split into *mati* + *i*. *Mati* means knowledge and *i* refers to wealth. If She is praised, one gets both knowledge and wealth.

Śruti-saṃstuta-vaibhavā श्रुति-संस्तुत-वैभवा (929)

Śruti means Veda-s and *saṃstuta* means experience. This *nāma* says that She is celebrated through Veda-s. The source of this *nāma* is *Bahvṛcā Upaniṣad* (107th of 108 commonly known *Upaniṣads*) which says that Devi (She is referred as *Mahā Tripurasundari* and *Lalitāmbikā*) is the Creator and from Her alone everything was created. The *Upaniṣad* reaffirms Her Brahmanic status. Brahman is praised in all the Veda-s and *Upaniṣads*.

It is also said that Devi has four types of powers, peace, knowledge, immutableness and restraint that are Her own. It is also said that *Śiva* enjoys His bliss through Her four independent powers. All other powers of Devi are given by *Śiva*.

Kena Upaniṣad (IV.8) says "Austerity, self-restraint and spiritual practice form the foundation of Self-knowledge. The Veda-s are its limbs and truth is its abode."

{Further reading: The following well known verse says that *Śiva* is the source of knowledge of Veda-s, *Upaniṣads* and epics.

śruti smriti purāṇām ālayam karunālayam
namāmi bhagavadpādam śaṅkaraṁ lokaśankaraṃ

श्रुति स्मिति पुराणाम् आलयम् करुनालयम्
नमामि भगवद्पादम् शङ्करं लोकशन्करं

Meaning of the above verse: I prostrate to Lord *Śiva*, who causes welfare to the universe, who is the repository of the divine Knowledge of Veda-s, *Upaniṣads* and texts of mythology and who is the embodiment of mercy.

Difference between *śruti* and *smṛti*: *Śruti* is sacred eternal sounds or words as eternally heard by certain holy sages called *Ṛṣi-s*, and so differing from *smṛti* or what is only remembered and handed down in writing by human authors.}

Manasvinī मनस्विनी (930)

Her mind is *svatantra* or self-dependence, self-will or freedom. This is also known as the doctrine of free will. This is the stage where the manifestation of existence has not yet started. It abides in transcendence, as designated will, in which that which is to be willed, has not yet become prominent. This will is only a state of consciousness of the transcendental being. The Brahman is always conscious of His own nature. This *nāma* says that She has equanimous mind.

She has *svatantra svabhāva* which means independence is Her essential nature.

Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad (IV.iv.20) says, "Through the mind alone the Brahman is to be realised."

Mānavatī मानवती (931)

She has a mind of high moral or intellectual value, elevated in nature and style. Because of this quality of the mind, She is adored as *Śrī Mātā* or the Divine Mother. This *nāma* says that She has high-mind that comprises of forgiveness and compassion.

Maheśi महेशी (932)

Wife of *Maheśvarā* (*Śiva*). She is also addressed as *Māheśvarī* in *nāma* 208 and *Maheśvarī* in *nāma* 750. This *nāma* also says that She originated from *Maheśvara.*

Maṅgalākṭtiḥ मङ्गलाकृतिः (933)

Mangal (मङ्गल) means auspiciousness, happiness, felicity, welfare, bliss, etc. This *nāma* says that She is the embodiment of these qualities. This *nāma* reaffirms the qualities discussed in *nāma*s 116 and 200.

Viśvamātā विश्वमाता (934)

She has all forms or one whose body is the universe and applied only to the Supreme Spirit. These are the qualities of *Viśvamūrti*. *Kṛṣṇa* says in *Bhagavad Gīta* (XIII.13) "Brahman stands pervading in the universe." This *nāma* confirms Her omnipresent nature, the exclusive quality of the Brahman. Because of being *Viśvamātā*, She is *Śrī Mātā* (*nāma* 1).

The first *nāma* of *Viṣṇu Sahasranāma* is *Viśvā* as He is *Viśvamūrti*. It is also said that She is the mother of *Viṣṇu*. *Viśva* means *Viṣṇu* and *mātā* means mother. Though *viśva* in general means all-pervading or all-containing, omnipresent, in particular it means Lord *Viṣṇu*. Based upon this explanation, it is said that She is the mother of *Viṣṇu*.

Jagaddhātrī जगद्धात्री (935)

She is the supporter of the universe as discussed in *nāma* 337 *Vidhātri*.

Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad (IV.iv.22) says "It is the lord of all, It is the ruler of all beings, It is the protector of all beings" (It means the Brahman). She supports and sustains the universe.

Viśālākṣī विशालाक्षी (936)

She has large eyes. *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 49) describes Her eyes. "Your eyes are expansive, auspicious, glittering with brilliance, full of compassion, etc".

The form of *Lalitāmbikā* does not have *abhaya* (*a* is used here to negate *bhaya,* which means fear) and *varada* (granting wishes, conferring a boon, ready to fulfil requests or answer prayers) hands. Generally, forms of gods and goddesses are described with more than two hands. One hand which is known as *varada hasta* (*hasta* means hand) is said to confer boons and another hand known as *abhaya hasta* removes fear, and offers peace, safety and security. But *Lalitāmbikā* offers these through Her eyes. Hence Her eyes are praised in many scriptures. *Saundarya Laharī* (verses 52 to 57)

extol Her eyes. In this *Sahasranāma nāma*-s 18, 362, 561 and 601 praise Her eyes.

Her eyes are large because She offers Her grace to the entire universe. Her eyes embellish Her whole form.

Virāgiṇī विरागिणी (937)

She is devoid of passion. *Virāgya* means freedom from all worldly desires. This quality has already been discussed in *nāma* 156 *nīrāgā*.

In this *Sahasranāma* there are certain *nāma*-s that convey the same meaning already described in some other *nāma*. Such usages are mainly to reaffirm certain qualities. For example, there are several *nāma*-s that affirm Her status as the Brahman.

Pragalbhā प्रगल्भा (938)

She is bold and confident and behaves resolutely. She is resolute because She governs the universe with the Law of *Karma* known as the law of the Lord. She does not transgress Her own laws.

Paramodārā परमोदारा (939)

She is extremely generous. She gives without asking or She gives more than what is asked for. *Udāra* means great and *parā* means Supreme. She is addressed as the Supreme greatness as She is beyond time and space.

This *nāma* can be split into *parā* (Supreme) + *moda* (bliss) + *ā* (all-round) + *ra* means gives. Then it means that She gives perpetual eternal happiness known as bliss. Bliss is the penultimate stage to final liberation.

{Interesting reading: Astrologically it is said that liberation is possible only if planet *Ketu* or planet Jupiter is associated with ninth house in the natal chart. Twelfth house is *mokṣa* giving house.

Placement of *Ketu* in the twelfth house is said to give liberation. *Ketu* in twelfth house from *ātma kāraka* planet in *navāṃśa* is said to give liberation.)

Parā-modā परा-मोदा (940)

Parā means supreme and *modā* means joy, delight, gladness, pleasure. This *nāma* says that She is the embodiment of supreme joy (bliss). The previous *nāma* said that She gives Supreme happiness (bliss) and this *nāma* says She is the embodiment of bliss.

Her gross form is described so beautifully in this Sahasra*nāma*m that enables one to visualise Her, that leads to bliss. Therefore, it becomes important that one should understand the meaning of each *nāma*. Since She is the embodiment auspiciousness, grace and compassion, She is said to be the embodiment of bliss.

Manomayī मनोमयी (941)

She is the embodiment of mind. *Patañjali yoga sūtra* (IV.24) says "The mind, though variegated by innumerable desires, acts for another, because it acts in combination." In his next aphorism he says "For the discriminating, the perceptions of the mind as *Ātman* ceases." That is why *Kṛṣṇa* said in *Bhagavad Gīta* (VI.35) "The mind is restless no doubt and difficult to curb. But it can be brought under control by repeated practice (meditation) and by the exercise of dispassion." *Kṛṣṇa* further says (*Bhagavad Gīta* VI.26) "Drawing back the restless and fidgety mind from all those objects after which it runs, he should repeatedly fix it on God."

The unobstructed consciousness (*khecari śakti**) is liberation. The unobstructed consciousness is due to the awareness of the essential nature of Reality (*anuttara*) that is constantly present and which arises from the bliss of recognition of the completion of the union of *Śaktī* with *Śiva*. It is not simply the knowledge of *Śaktī* or *Śiva* that brings about liberation. But the constant awareness in close embrace with them that brings in the real transformation. Liberation

happens only if the mind is transformed. Liberation is not attained through meditation alone. The presence of the Brahman should be felt in all the actions that one does. This is known as perpetual meditation or *khecari samyā* and is responsible for transmuting the mundane mind into Divine Consciousness, where *Śiva* is revealed.

Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad (IV.iv.20) says that Brahman can be realised only through the mind.

This *nāma* says that She is the One who is capable of causing the transmutation discussed above.

* *khecari śakti* is said to be a part of *Vāmeśvarī śaktī* connected with the empirical self. *Khecari* is one that moves in *Kha* or the vast expanse of consciousness. Please refer *nāma* 945.

Vyoma-keśī व्योम-केशी (942)

Vyoman means heaven, sky, atmosphere, air, ether, wind, etc and *keśā* means hair. Her hair is said to be *ākāś* element. This is said to be Her *virāt* form. *Virāt* refers to the first state of the Brahman in the form of the empirical universe. There are four states, waking, dream, deep sleep and *turya*. The first stage is the waking stage also known as *virāt* (*nāma* 778). *Virāt* is also known as *viśvā* (*nāma* 934). The *nāma* says that Her hair represents ether or atmosphere.

Śiva is known as *Vyomakeśā* (sky-haired) and His consort is *Vyomakeśi*.

Vimānasthā विमानस्था (943)

She is not different from other gods and goddesses who fly in the sky through celestial chariots. All the gods and goddesses have their own celestial vehicles known as *vāhanā*.

Vi (accord) + *māna* (protect) + *sthā* (occupied with). This way, the *nāma* means that She is occupied with protecting Her devotees. Devotees mean the entire creation. For Her all beings are devotees.

But a devotee is the one who always think about Her with the sole purpose of attaining liberation.

If *Vimān* is taken in literal sense, it could mean that She resides in *Cakra-rājam* chariot (*nāma* 68) and *Geya cakrā* chariot (*nāma* 69).

Vimā means the unconditioned Brahman and *sthā* means reside. She limits the Brahman into different manifestations. (The *nirguṇa* Brahman is beyond manifestation).

This *nāma* also means That She is immeasurable (Brahman is immeasurable).

She is adored by Veda-s and scriptures originated from Veda-s such as *Upaniṣads*..

Vajriṇī वज्रिणी (944)

Śiva is known as Vajrā and his consort is *Vajriṇī.* There is another interpretation to this nāma which says that She is in the form of *Indrāṇī*, wife of Lord *Indra*. *Indra* is the chief of gods and goddesses. God is different from Brahman. Brahman is the ultimate. Gods and goddesses are the functional heads. For example *Agni* is the Lord of fire; *Varuṇa* is the lord of water, etc. *Indra* is the chief of such gods and goddesses. *Indra* has a powerful weapon called *vajrāyudha* (said to have been formed out of the bones of the *Ṛṣi Dadhīca* or *Dadhīci*), the thunder bolt. This *nāma* says that *Lalitāmbikā* holds *vajrāyudha* in Her hand to destroy the sinners. The *nāma* could also mean that She is bedecked with diamonds and gems.

Kaṭha Upaniṣad (II.iii.2) says "The Brahman is like a thunderbolt (*vajra*) about to strike." Brahman strikes those who are delinquent in performing the prescribed duties. The sun shines fearing the Brahman, the air blows fearing Brahman. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (II.iii.3) explains this; "From fear of Brahman, fire gives heat. Out of terror, the sun shines. Afraid of it, *Indra*, *vāyu* and *Yama* rush to perform their respective duties." Every action that happens in this universe is

headed by a god or goddesses and when they do not perform their duties, as prescribed, She wields Her thunderbolt. This *nāma* also means that She ensures discipline in the universe for its sustenance.

Vajrayoginī and *Vajreśvarī* are the two Buddhist goddesses.

Vāmakeśvarī वामकेश्वरी (945)

There are two *nāma*-s in *Lalitā Sahasranāma* beginning with *vāmakeśā*. The other one is 351. *Vāmakeśi* Apart from what was discussed in *nāma* 351, following is the additional information.

Vāma has innumerable meanings such as beautiful, splendid, *Śiva*, *Durgā*, *Lakṣmī*, *Sarasvatī*, a beautiful woman, wife, left side, etc. *Keśi* means hair. Then *nāma* 351 said that She is the wife of *Vāmakeśvara*. But this interpretation did not go with the preceding and succeeding *nāma*-s there. *Nāma* 350 refers to Goddess *Sarasvatī* and *nāma* 352 could mean *Durgā*. If these interpretations are correct, *nāma* 351 should refer to Goddess *Lakṣmī*, which seems to be appropriate.

Vāmakeśvari here refers to *Vāmakeśvara tantra*. This tantra is said to be the sixty fifth tantra apart from the sixty four discussed in *Saundarya Laharī* verse 31 and *nāma* 236 of this *Sahasranāma*. *Vāmakeśvara tantra* is said to be the most important tantra for *Śrī vidyā* worship. This tantra discusses on internal worship of *Śaktī*. *Vāmakeśvari* is said to be the source of this Universe.

Śaktī asks *Śiva* in *Vāmakeśvara tantra* "Lord, you had revealed to me all the sixty four tantra-s. But you have not told me about sixteen *vidyā*-s." *Śiva* answers by saying that this has not yet been declared and begins declaring this tantra to *Devi*. Everything in this tantra has been revealed in a very subtle manner.

For example the *bīja hrīṁ* is declared as 'the form of *vidyā* protecting the self is *Śiva*, *agni*, *māyā* and *bindu*.' Unless one knows the *bīja*-s of these gods/goddesses, it is difficult to make out the hidden *bīja*-s. *Śiva bīja* is *ha* (ह), *agni bīja* is *ra* (र) and

kāmakalā (ईं) joined together give rise to *māyā bīja hrīṁ* (ह्रीं) is arrived. *Śiva* declares a number of uncommon yet powerful *bīja-s* in this tantra.

Vāmā-s mean those who worship Her through left hands. They do not follow the five principle *yajñā*-s discussed the next *nāma*. She is the Goddess for these left hand worshippers. She is also known as *Vāmeśvarī*, which refers to Her divine power which projects the universe out of *Śiva* (the Brahman without attributes) and produces the reverse (*vāma*) consciousness of difference.

Vāmadevā is the back face of *Śiva*.

Pañca-yajña-priyā पञ्च-यज्ञ-प्रिया (946)

Pañca means five and *yajña* means act of worship and devotion that prevailed during Vedic period and offerings, oblations and sacrifice prevailing in post-Vedic literature. *Yajña* actually means sacrifice personified.

There are two types of *yajna-s*, the one referred in Veda-s that has been heard or communicated from the beginning. It is the sacred knowledge orally transmitted from generation to generation. *Rig Veda* contains numerous references to rituals. *Yajur Veda samhita* on the other hand contains *mantra*-s that are to be recited at the rituals and prose passages explaining them, known as *brāhmaṇā-s*. *Brāhmaṇā* passages guide to execute and preserve the intricacies of Vedic rituals. The other type of *yajña* is referred in *smṛti*, the whole body of sacred tradition or what is remembered by human teachers in contradistinction to *śruti*. *Smṛti* includes the six *Vedāṅga*-s, the *sūtra*-s (both *śrauta* and *gṛhya*), the law-books of Manu, etc.

The five *yajña-s* referred in Veda-s are *agntihotra*, *darśapūrṇamāsa*, *cāturmāsya*, *paśubandha* and *soma*. Soma ritual includes all the other four rituals and considered as the supreme among the five.

The five *yajña-s* referred in *smṛti*-s are known as *pañca mahā yajña-s*. They are *Deva yajña* (appeasing gods and goddesses), *brahma yajña* (the knower of Vedas), *pitṛ yajña* (for ancestors), *bhūta yajna* (animals, etc) and *nara* or *atithi yajña* (*nara* means man and *atithi* means guest). *Atithi* is explained as a person who is entitled for hospitality). *Deva yajña* is the worship to one's *kula devatā* (the deity worshipped through lineage). The study of Veda-s is the next. Remembering our ancestors is the third. This is performed on the anuual death days of ancestors. The idea behind this *yajña* is not only to remember them, but also to remember and follow the family's culture and values. *Bhūta yajña* means sharing with other living beings. Feeding the hungry animals develops universal love. The last one also known as *manuṣya yajña* (*manuṣya* means friendly to man), traditional hospitality extended to fellow beings.

Pāñcarātra āgama-s prescribe five rituals for worshipping *Viṣṇu*. *Abhigamana* (approaching *Viṣṇu*), *upādāna* (collecting *pūja* materials), *ijya* (the *pūja* worship), and *svadhaya* (repetition of Veda-s, verses-s, etc). *Viṣṇu* is often praised with *gadya* (prose, composition not metrical yet framed in accordance with harmony, elaborate prose composition).

Chāndogya Upaniṣad (V.4 to 9) talks about five types of oblations that cause the birth of man. They are offered by gods as oblations. First gods offered water as oblation from which appeared *Soma* (moon). They offered *Soma* as the second oblation from which appeared rain. They offered water as third oblation and there appeared food. They offered food as the fourth oblation and there appeared fluids of procreation. They offered fluids of procreation as the fifth oblation and there appeared foetus.

This *nāma* says that She is fond of above *yajña-s*.

Pañca-preta-mañcādhi-śāyinī पञ्च-प्रेत-मञ्चाधि-शायिनी (947)

Preta means cadaver. When *prāṇa* leaves the body, the once existed physical body becomes *preta* or corpse and the soul immediately comes under the control of *Pretādhipati*, Lord *Yama*.

The intricacies of this *nāma* are discussed in *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 92). *Pañca-preta* means *Brahma, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Mahādeva* and *Sadāśiva*. This is a correlation between the conception, where mind is involved and the perception where senses are involved. She is seated on a throne whose legs are *Brahma, Viṣṇu, Rudra* and *Mahādeva* and whose seat is *Sadāśiva*.

There are two ways of looking at this *nāma*. The first way is look at the scene from philosophical doctrine. The omnipresence nature of the Brahman is the focal point of this *nāma*. Macrocosmic existence of the Brahman has been repeatedly stressed in all the *Upaniṣad-s*. *Brahma, Viṣṇu* and other gods mentioned in this *nāma* are only the manifestation of the Brahman. To enable us to understand the philosophy of creation, Veda-s have created distinct gods and goddesses to take care of each of the phenomenon in the process of creation. Considering *Lalitāmbikā* as the kinetic force in the process of creation, sustenance, dissolution, annihilation and recreation, the nāma aptly refers *Brahma, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Mahādeva* and *Sadāśiva* as parts of the throne where She is seated. It is not the name that matters, but the assignment given to them by the Brahman for effective equilibration of this universe is important.

The other way of looking at this *nāma* is to resolve on the basis that without kinetic energy, the predominant static energy does not become functional. In other words, *Śiva* cannot be said to be the functional head of the universe, unless ably aided by His consort *Lalitāmbikā*, the able dynamic energy, the energy created by *Śiva* Himself. *Tantra loka* (IV.6) says, "only by the union with *Śaktī*, subtle *Śiva* is known. She is the ultimate unified *Śaktī*, the *Parameśvarī*, the very Self of *Brahma, Viṣṇu*, and *Īśā*." This *nāma* says that the functional heads become ineffective (dead) without the presence of divine energy infused into them by Her. The five cadavers refer to a stage where the superior functional heads turn

into corpses in the absence of energy infused by Her. This *nāma* decisively and authoritatively confirms Her Bramanic status.

Please refer *nāma* 249 and 250 for further details.

Pañcamī पञ्चमी (948)

Pañcamī means the fifth. Out of five gods discussed in the above *nāma*, *Sadāśiva* is considered as the Supreme, as He recreates the universe after great dissolutions (*pralaya*). He is also known as *Pañcama* and His wife is *Pañcamī*. In *Sadāśiva tattva*, the experience of 'I' is more predominant than the experience of 'this'.

Vārāhi Devi is also known as *Pañcamī*. *Pañcamī* forms a part of one of *Vārāhi mantra*-s. *Vārāhi* has already been discussed in *nāma* 67. She is one among the seven *mātā*-s known as *sapta* (seven) *mātā*-s and fifth in that order. Hence *Pañcamī*.

The fifth oblation discussed in *nāma* 946 is also known as *Pañcamī*.

Kaivalya is the fifth and the last stage in liberation. The other four are *sālokya* (being in the same sphere of deity), *sarūpa* (assimilation to the deity), *samībhya* (very very close to the deity, but as a different entity) and *sayujya* (intimately united with the deity). *Kaivalya*, the fifth stage is where the soul is completely disconnected from the mind-stuff and the liberation is attained without further transmigrations. *Kaivalya* means the complete isolation of the self. Please also refer *nāma*-s 625 and 926.

This *nāma* could mean all these interpretations.

Pañca-bhuteśī पञ्च-भूतेशी (949)

She is the ruler of five elements. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (II.i.1) says, *satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ brahma* which means truth, knowledge and infinite is the Brahman. After having declared the Brahman thus, the *Upaniṣad* proceeds to say "From the Brahman comes space, from space air, from air fire, from fire water, from water earth..."

The *Upaniṣad* says that the five elements originated from the Brahman. Based on the fact that She is the Brahman, this *nāma* says that She is the embodiment of the five elements.

There is an ancient treatise known as *Pañcadaśī* by *Śrī Vidyānārāyaṇa Svāmī* (the Head of *Śrī Sringeri Math* from 1377 – 1386). This treatise says, (II.1) "Brahman according to *śruti*, the non-dual reality, can be known by the process of differentiation from the five elements."

Viṣṇu wears a garland known as *Vaijayanta*, made of five gems pearl, ruby, yellow sapphire, emerald and diamond. This is a kind of garland prognosticating victory. These gems said to represent the five elements. *Vaijayanta* is the garland prognosticating victory. Since She is not different from Vishnu, She is called *Vaijayanti*.

Pañca-saṃkhyopacāriṇī पञ्च-संख्योपचारिणी (950)

She is worshipped by five types of reverent offerings. *Saṃkhy* means to appear along with or connected with and *upacāra* means reverence. She is worshipped through five types of offerings such as *gandha* (sandal paste), *puṣpa* (flowers), *dhūpa* (incense), *dīpa* (light) and *nivedya* (food). Each of them represents one element. They are earth, *ākāś*, air, fire and water. Through these five offerings, communication is established between the worshipper and the worshipped.

Chāndogya Upaniṣad (VI.ii.1) says "Out of that non-existence (Brahman), existence emerged (through the five elements)." Hence, the Brahman is worshipped through these five *upacāra*-s, the reverence paid to the Brahman for His act of Creation (through five elements). It is an act of thanks giving to the Brahman for having created the universe of which the individual soul of the worshipper forms a miniscule part of creation.

Śāśvatī शाश्वती (951)

She is incessantly eternal (*śāśvatībhyaḥ samābhyaḥ, śāśvatīḥ samāḥ*). It also means frequently. In this context this *nāma* means She is worshipped again and again.

Kaṭha Upaniṣad (II.ii.12) says, "The cosmic Self (the Brahman) is one, yet It controls all. It is the inmost Self of all beings, and it manifests itself as many. Those wise people who see that Self within themselves are eternally happy and not others."

Śāśvataiśvaryā शाश्वतैश्वर्या (952)

Śāśvatīḥa (permanent) + *iśvarya* (wealth) is *śāśvataiśvarya* (permanent wealth). She is the embodiment of eternal wealth, the wealth of knowledge and prosperity.

Śarmadā शर्मदा (953)

Śarman means Joy, bliss, comfort, delight, happiness, etc. *Nāma* 125 is *śarmadāyinī* which means giver of comforts. . The joy or comfort that She gives is different from what is attained by the self. The happines gained by the self from material comforts is impermanent. The bliss that She gives is eternal. The same meaning is conveyed through these two *nāma*-s. It can also be said that one *nāma* refers to physical comforts and another refers to mental faculty (bliss).

The true joy is attaining liberation.

Śambhu-mohinī शम्भु-मोहिनी (954)

She entices Lord *Śambhu*. (Lord *Śiva*, Her consort). *Śiva* is the One who has controlled His senses. But, in terms of *nāma* 863 *Kāma-keli-tarangitā*, She infatuates *Śiva*.

Dharā धरा (955)

She is in the form earth. She is the Goddess Earth, *Prakṛti*.

Dhara means bearing, supporting, holding, carrying, wearing, possessing, having, keeping, sustaining, preserving, observing, etc. All these attributes pertain to Her act of sustenance.

(The *bīja akśara* of earth is *la* ल and usage of *la* refers to *prakṛti*.)

Dhara-sutā धर-सुता (956)

Sutā means daughter. She is the daughter of *Himavān* (the king of mountains). This has been already discussed in *nāma* 246 *Pārvatī*. *Dhara* also includes mountains, forests, etc.

Dhanyā धन्या (957)

Dhanya means bringing or bestowing wealth, opulent, riches, or fortunate, happy, auspicious etc. In this context this *nāma* means that She is the possessor of wealth and auspiciousness.

Dhanya also means an expression of thanks.

The last moments of human life, the hour of death is known as *caramakāla*. It is said that one will have four kinds of thoughts during this period. They are 1. *Ārta*, where one will have concupiscent thoughts as a result of which he is born as plants, animals or birds in the next birth. 2. *Raudra*, where even when he is seriously hurt and undergoing painful moments, he will not disassociate himself from the above thoughts and as a result of which he is born as smallest insects. (The process of birth and death is highly painful.) His soul will never have liberation. 3. *Dhanya* (the present *nāma*), where one fixes his consciousness on the teachings of Veda-s, *Upaniṣad-s* and compassionate thoughts. 4. *Śukla*, where he fixes his consciousness in *mahā vākya*-s such as "I am That" or *aham Brahmāsmi*. He enters the death hour with his consciousness fixed on the Brahman. He continues his perpetual meditative stage even at *caramakāla*. He is never born again and his soul attains liberation. In this context, this *nāma* means that She is in the form of *dhanya* stage.

This is best explained by *Kṛṣṇa* in *Bhagavad Gīta* (VIII.5 and 6). "He, who departs from the body, thinking of me alone even at the time of death, attains my state; there is no doubt about it. Thinking of whatever entity one leaves the body at the time death, that and that alone one attains, being ever absorbed in its thoughts."

Dharmiṇī धर्मिणी (958)

Dharma means that which is established, steadfast decree, statute, ordinance, law and usage and its customary observance.

She is said to be in the form of *dharma* described here.

Dharma-vardhinī धर्म-वर्धिनी (959)

She causes increase of righteousness in the minds of Her devotees. *Śiva* is known for control of senses, Sun is known for its purity and She is known for Her devotion to Her spouse, *Śiva*. The one who meditates on them is said to gain those qualities.

Vardha means cutting or dividing and in this sense She cuts (removes) the deceptive nature of materialistic world for Her devotees. Only through Her, *Śiva* can be attained.

Lokātītā लोकातीता (960)

She transcends all the worlds. *Loka*-s mean *Indra loka*, *Brahma loka*, *Viṣṇu* loka, etc. The *Loka*-s are different level of one's consciousness. She lives along with *Śiva* in *Mahā Kailāśa* also known as *Parā Kailāśa*. She transcends all the other worlds (lower level of consciousness) and dwells at *Mahā Kailāśa* (the highest level of pure consciousness where Self-realisation takes place).

It is also said that the place of *Śiva* is known as *Apada* which means no abode, meaning void. In the various techniques discussed in *Vijñāna Bhairava*, there are many techniques that discuss about meditation on the void. *Apada* also means fivefold state, an aggregate of five elements, viz. earth, air, fire, water and *ākāś*, and

dissolution into them i.e. death. This place is filled with souls that were associated with rituals. Souls reaching this place return back to earth. Above *Apada*, there are three sovereign eternal pure seats resorted by *Skanda*, *Umā* and *Śiva*. These seats are maintained by those who are devoted to the Brahman through meditation. They do not return to earth. They ultimately merge into *Śiva* not to be born again.

Guṇātītā गुणातीता (961)

She transcends attributes or *guṇa*-s. She is the Brahman without attributes also known as *nirguṇa* Brahman. *Guṇa* s are three, sattva, *rajas* and *tamas*. The whole universe remains in a potential state within *prakṛti* so long as the three *guṇa*-s (attributes) remain motionless and undisturbed as discussed in nāmā 397 *mūlapṛakrti*. This *nāma* says that She is beyond *mūlapṛakrti*.

Sarvātītā सर्वातीता (962)

She transcends all. *Nāma* 960 said that She transcends all the worlds and *nāma* 961 said that She transcends attributes. This *nāma* says that She transcends entirety which means that She is the Supreme. She knows the universe and the universe knows Her. *Śiva* does not interfere in the affairs of the universe. *Śiva* is the ultimate and beyond human comprehension. It is only through Her, *Śiva* can be attained.

The specific reference to worlds and attributes is based on the fact that realisation can be attained in the midst of pure consciousness (referred as worlds in *nāma* 960) and beyond the progression of *guṇa*-s from *tamas* to *sattvic*, and beyond. Consciousness and attributes are the most important tools in Self-realisation.

Śamātmikā शमात्मिका (963)

Śama means tranquillity that is attained through intense meditation or emancipation from all the illusions of existence. Tranquillity is Her nature.

This is best explained in *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* (7). "It is not conscious of all objects simultaneously. It is not unconscious either. It is invisible, not susceptible to any kind of usage, not within the reach of any organ of action. It is beyond perception by any organ, beyond thought, and not to be indicated by any sound. In it there is only consciousness of the Self and there is a cessation of the world as such. It is the embodiment of peace and of all that is good. It is one without a second."

The word *Śam* was frequently used in Vedic period to mean auspiciousness, happiness and fortunateness. But in post Vedic period its usage to mean the above qualities is almost negligible.

This *nāma* says that She is the incarnation of all these qualities.

Bandhūka-kusuma-prakkhyā बन्धूक-कुसुम-प्रक्ख्या (964)

Bandhūka is a tree (*Pentapetes Phoenicea*) whose flower is yellowish red in colour. This flower is said to be very bright and tender. She is compared to this flower.

Bālā बाला (965)

She is known as *Bālā* in Her manifestation as a young girl of nine years. In *nāma* 74 *Bālā* is referred as the child of *Lalitāmbikā*.

Generally. *Bālā mantra* is the first *mantra* that is initiated in *Śrī vidyā* worship. Bālā *mantra* is *aiṃ-klīṃ-sauḥ* (ऐं-क्लीं-सौः). *Bālā* is described as the one clad in red garments, whose forehead is decorated with a crescent moon, who has three eyes, whose brilliance is like that of the rising sun, who is seated on a red lotus and who holds in Her four hands a book, a rosary, *abhaya* and *varada mudra*-s. *Bālā mantra* will not fructify unless the curse on

the *mantra* is removed by reciting *Tripura Bhairavi mantra* one hundred times.

(Generally *mantra*-s have curses from *riṣi*-s and gods. One has to remove the curses by reciting the appropriate curse removing *mantra*-s to attain fructification.)

Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (IV.3) describes the Brahman, "You are a woman, you are a man, you are a boy and you are also a girl (*Bālā*)."

Līlā-vinodinī लीला-विनोदिनी (966)

Līlā means facility in doing anything. In the present context, *Līlā* means Her three primary actions of creation, sustenance and dissolution. *Manu smṛti* (I.80) says "Brahman creates and dissolves the different periods of *Manu*-s playfully."

Brahma Sūtra (II.i.33) says, "Creation is a mere pastime for the Brahman." The act of Creation, as if it is a play for the Brahman is based on logical reasoning. The Brahman acts in spontaneity without extraneous influence or motive. Activities concerned with names and forms arise out of ignorance and meant to propound the fact that everything is Brahman. Brahman plays hide and seek game with humans, using His potent tool known as *māyā* or illusion.

Līlā also refers to Goddess *Lakṣmī*.

Sumaṅgalī सुमङ्गली (967)

Maṅgala means anything auspicious. A faithful wife is also known as *maṅgala*. *Umā*, the consort of *Śiva* is also known as *Maṅgala*. *Su* means possession of supremacy. It also means good, excellent, right, virtuous, beautiful, etc. Therefore, this *nāma* says that She is the embodiment of supreme auspiciousness.

The one that drives away evilness is also known as *maṅgala*. Brahman is the everlasting auspiciousness.

Viṣṇu Sahasranāma verse 15 ends with *maṅgalānām ca maṅgalam*. It is said that *maṅgala* not only means auspiciousness, but also causes auspiciousness.

{Further reading: Tuesday is called *maṅgala vāra.* It is widely believed that Tuesday is an inauspicious day. This is based on the principle that Mars, the ruling planet of Tuesday is considered as one of the evil planets. There appears to be no strong reasoning for declaring Tuesday as inauspicious. Sanskrit texts call planet Mars as *Maṅgala* and *Kuja*. Yet another intriguing factor is *kuja doṣa*, analysed for marriage compatibility. There are a number of exceptions to *kuja doṣa* that are to be thoroughly understood. The one who truly believes Her, never looks into the planets which are under *Lalitāmbikā's* control. There is an ancient Tamil saying that day and planets will never cause harm to someone who reposes total faith in *Śiva*}

Following verse is from *Mūkapañcaśatī* - *Pādāravindaśatakam* verse 59. The verse says that all the nine planets are at Her lotus feet. The recital of this verse by simultaneously meditating on Her lotus feet will eradicate evil effects of all the planets.

दधानो भास्वत्तामम्रृतनिलयो लोहितवपुः
विन्म्राणां सौम्यो गुरुरपि कवित्वं च कलयन् ।
गतौ मन्दो गङ्गाधरमहिषि कामाक्षि भ्जतां
तमः केतुमार्तस्तव चरण्पद्मो विज्यते ॥

dadhāno bhāsvattāmamṛtanilayo lohitavapuḥ
vinmrāṇāṁ saumyo gururapi kavitvaṁ ca kalayan ।
gatau mando gaṅgādharamahiṣi kāmākṣi bhjatāṁ
tamaḥ ketumārtastava caraṇpadmou vijyate ॥

Sukhakarī सुखकरी (968)

She gives happiness. Her lineament of giving happiness to Her devotees is discussed in *nāma* 125, 192 and 953.

Suveṣāḍhyā सुवेषाढ्या (969)

Suveṣa means beautifully adorned. This is the symbol of Her auspiciousness in terms of *nāma*-s 51 and 967. The one who is thus adorned is described in the next *nāma*.

Suvāsinī सुवासिनी (970)

A woman who is auspiciously dressed and lives with her spouse is called *suvāsin*.

The qualities of a *suvāsin* are described by *Anasūyā* in *Vālmīki Rāmāayaṇa* (*ayodhākāṇḍa*, Canto 117, verses 22 to 24). "Oh! Proud *Sītā*! Worlds that are attended with great prosperity await those women to whom their husband is dear, no matter whether he lives in a city or a forest, whether he is propitious or adverse. In the eyes of women who are blessed with a noble disposition, the husband is the highest deity, no matter whether he is ill-mannered or licentious or entirely devoid of riches. Though deeply pondering, I do not see for a woman, a friend greater than her husband and more capable of yielding one's desired object at all places like the imperishable fruit of one's austerities."

Again in Canto 39 verse 22 says (*Rāma*'s mother *Kausalyā* speaks to *Sītā* thus) "Neither noble birth nor good turn, nor learning, nor gift nor even marriage ties capture the heart of such women, who are in fact devoted to good conduct, truthfulness and the percept of their elders and keep within the bounds of decorum laid down for their family, their husband is the most sacred object and he alone excels all."

Yet again *Sītā* says (*Sundarakāṇḍa* – canto 24 – verse 9), "I am devoted to my husband, *Śrī Rāma*, the foremost of the *Ikṣvākus*, in the same way as the highly blessed śacī waits upon *Indra*, as does *Arundhatī* upon sage *Vasiṣṭha* and *Rohiṇī* (the foremost of the twenty seven spouses of the Moon god, presiding over the same number constellations appearing in the sky) on the Moon god, as

does, *Lopāmudrā* upon sage *Agastya* and *Sukanyā* did upon sage *Cyavana*, as *Sāvitrī* did upon *Satyavān* and *Śrīmatī* upon Lord *Kapila*, as *Madayantī* did upon King *Saudāsa* and *Keśinī* upon King *Sagara*, and as *Damayantī,* daughter of *Bhīma*, was devoted to her husband, *Nala*."

Based on the above references in *Rāmāayaṇa*, *suvāsini* not merely means the one who is well dressed, but also endowed with good qualities.

Since *Lalitāmbikā* is not only auspiciously and graciously dressed but also is the embodiment of all good qualities, She is addressed *as suvāsini* by *Vāc Devi*-s.

Suvāsinyarcana-prītā सुवासिन्यर्चन-प्रीता (971)

She is pleased when She is worshipped by *suvāsini*-s discussed in the previous *nāma*. Such *suvāsini*-s are highly revered and worshipped at the end of *navāvaraṇa pūja*.

Āśobhanā आशोभना (972)

The alphabet *Ā* strengthens the word *śobhana*. *Śobhana* means beautiful and *āśobhana* means extremely beautiful.

Saundarya Laharī consists of two parts, *Ānanda Lahari* (1 to 41) and *Saundarya Laharī* (42 to 100). The first forty one verses talk about bliss and the next fifty nine verses talk about Her beauty.

Śuddhamānasā शुद्धमानसा (973)

She is pure minded. If the mind is associated with senses, it becomes impure. She can be realised only in the purest form of consciousness, a product of mind, where the mind becomes focused on Her alone, devoid of other thoughts. This is achieved through meditation.

She is not affected by *karma*-s and impressions (*vāsana*), hence She is pure minded.

Such descriptions are based on the fact that the Brahman is omnipresence and the great saying "I am That". When one considers himself as That (the Brahman), he should be aware of the qualities of the Brahman. This *nāma* says that purity of mind is one of the essential qualities of the Brahman. Such descriptions make a practitioner to understand the qualities of the Brahman, so that he can practice and implement them in order to become Brahman himself (realising the Brahman).

Bindu-tarpaṇa-santuṣṭā बिन्दु-तर्पण-सन्तुष्टा (974)

She is happy if offerings are made in the bindu. *Bindu* has already been discussed in nāma 905 *baindavāsanā*. The central point of *Śrī Cakra* is called *bindu*. It is placed in the midst of the inner most (top most in the case of *Meru*) triangle, that is discussed in nāma 976. *Bindu* is called *sarvānanda maya cakra*, also known as *baindava sthāna*. She is worshipped here with *viśeṣa argya* and flowers. Preparation and offering of *viśeṣa argya* is one of the important rituals of *Śrī Cakra navāvaraṇa pūja.* Offering *viśeṣa argya* on the bindu is called *tarpaṇa*. *Sudha Devi* is invoked in the vessel containing *viśeṣa argya*. This is an elaborate procedure involving a lot of rituals *and mantra*-s. *Viśeṣa argya* should be prepared purely according to the instructions of one's guru. Left hand worshippers add wine and other intoxicating materials to *viśeṣa argya*.

Pūrvajā पूर्वजा (975)

She exists even before creation. It is said that *Śiva* created Her and She created the universe. Brahman is the eternal reality. *Māyā* or illusion may be described as something that has the appearance of a transient reality. Brahman has no name and form, bur *Māyā* is full of names and forms and projected as the blunder of illusory phenomenal existence. *Māyā* is the creation of the Brahman. This

reasons out this *nāma*. This *nāma* can also be explained in terms of *nāma* 397.

Tripurāmbikā त्रिपुराम्बिका (976)

Tripurāmbikā is the presiding deity of eighth *āvaraṇa* or covering of *Śrī Cakra*. This *āvaraṇa* is the innermost triangle of *Śrī Cakra* in the midst of which is the *bindu*, the central point of *Śrī Cakra*, is placed. It can also be construed that towards the end of this *Sahasranāma*, the goddess of the eighth *āvaraṇa* is worshipped by *Vāc Devi*-s. This triangle forms Her subtler form *kāmakalā*. *Tripurāmbikā* means mother of triads. Triad refers to creation, sustenance and *mahat* (the great principle, the *buddhi*, Intellect, or the intellectual principle (according to the *Sāṃkhya* philosophy the second of the twenty three principles produced from *prakṛiti* and so called as the great source of *ahaṃkāra* (ego), self-consciousness, and *manas*, the mind). The three lines of this triangle represent all that is in the form of triads (for example creation, sustenance and dissolution; sleep, dream and deep sleep stages, etc)

Each corner of this triangle is guarded by *Vāmā*, *Vajreśvarī* and *Bhagamālinī*, the three important *Devi*-s of *Śrī Cakra*. *Vāmākeśvara tantra* (IV.9, 10) says "She is *vāmā, śikhā, jyeṣṭā*, the maker of triangles. As *Raudri* She swallows the universe. She is the ultimate unified *Śaktī*, the *Parameśvarī*, *Tripura*, the very self of *Brahma*, *Viṣṇu* and *Īśa*."

In the ninth *āvaraṇa*, She is worshipped as the sum total of all the triads as *Lalitāmbikā*. All the triads unite into a single *bindu* in the ninth *āvaraṇa*. *Sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*, all the three unite at the *bindu* to become the Supreme Brahman where She shines eternally as the *nirguṇa Brahman*.

Daśamudrā-samārādhyā दशमुद्रा-समाराध्या (977)

She is worshipped through ten types of finger gestures known as *mudra*-s. *Samārādhana* means worship.

Mudra-s are the configuration of fingers that represent the energy of the deity concerned. They are the secret signs of exchange between the practitioner and the deity and should never be used in public. *Mudra*-s are highly powerful. It is said that if one meditates on the radiance of the sun and of the moon and chants *mantra*-s, he is empowered by the triple mystery, then the rays of the universal will shine forth and all obstacles of ignorance will instantly dissolve in the ocean of mind.

Āgama śāstra can be broadly classified under three paths, *vāma marga, tantra marga* and *kaula marga*. They advocate three types of sacrifices, rites, worship and knowledge. There is another way of worship known as *pañcaṅga*, which consists of *nyāsa* (attribution of *mantra*-s in different parts of the body with fingers in order to sanctify the body), *mudra, japa, pūja* and worship of other gods and goddesses (such as *Varuṇa* for sanctifying the vessels, etc used in the rites). *Mudra*-s are also used to accomplish the mystical powers of various *bīja*-s. *Mudra*-s represent the union of *Śiva* and *Śaktī* (left hand is *Śaktī* and right hand is *Śiva*) and the potential auspicious energy arising out of their union.

Daśamudra-s or ten *mudra*-s are used in *Śrī vidyā*, the worship of the Divine Mother. *Śrī Cakra* has nine coverings or *āvaraṇa*-s and each of them is ruled by a *Śaktī*. Each of these *Śaktī-s* has a *mudra* and this accounts for nine *mudra*-s. In the ninth *āvaraṇa Lalitāmbikā* is worshipped with *yoni mudra*. Apart from worshipping the presiding deities of each *āvaraṇa*-s with the respective *mudra*-s, *Lalitāmbikā* is also worshipped with *yoni mudra* in all the *āvaraṇa*-s. Those who are initiated into *ṣodaśī mantra* worship Her with *sarva trikhaṇḍā mudra* (*nāma* 983). *Trikhaṇḍā mudra* means the union of various triads into single entity. For example, practitioner, his Guru and *Devi* or the knower, the known and the path of knowing, etc. This fact is highlighted in *nāma* 254. *Trikhaṇḍā mudra* is used to invoke the Goddess during rituals.

At the time of offering these *mudra*-s, the respective *mantra*-s along with the respective *bīja*-s should also be recited mentally.

Tripurā-śrivaśaṃkarī त्रिपुरा-श्रिवशंकरी (978)

Tripurāśrī is the name of the presiding deity of the fifth *āvaraṇa* of *Śrī Cakra*. This *āvaraṇa* is known as the accomplisher of all objects (*sarvārtha-sādhakā*). This *āvaraṇa* further strengthens the bondage between the guru and his disciple. While worshipping this *cakra*, the names and forms of various objects merge into *Ātma* (soul), an important stage in the path of Self-realisation. Ten *śaktī-s* are worshipped in the *āvaraṇa-s* indicating the ten incarnations of Lord *Viṣṇu*, who is the authority for sustaining the universe in the best possible auspicious way.

Śrī Cakra has nine *āvaraṇa*-s and each *āvaraṇa* is presided by a deity. All their names have been mentioned in this *Sahasranāma* as various *nāma*-s, either directly or indirectly. In the ascending order they are *nāma*-s 626, 787, 997, 970, 978, 455, 471, 976 and 234.

This *nāma* means that *Tripurāśrī* is a part of *Lalitāmbikā*. Alternatively, it can also be said that *Vāc Devi*-s pay obeisance to *Tripurāśrī*, the deity known for supreme knowledge before revealing *Lalitāmbikā* in the last *nāma*. The unique feature of this *Sahasranāma* is that it makes the devotee exited when he progresses towards the last *nāma*, where *Lalitāmbikā* is fully revealed. The revelation comes about only when one understands the meaning of each *nāma*.

Jñānamudrā ज्ञानमुद्रा (979)

This is also known as *cin mudra*. This *mudra* is made by connecting the tip of the index finger with the tip of the thumb, by keeping other fingers stretched. This gesture indicates the union of *jīvātma* with *Paramātma* (union of soul with the Brahman). This *mudra* is called *jñānamudra*, as knowledge means the realisation of oneness of *jīvātma* and *paramātma*. Lord *Dakṣiṇāmūrti*

(incarnation of *Śiva*. Also refer *nāma* 725) used *cin mudra* to initiate His young disciples *Sanaka* (refer *nāma* 726) and others (the psychical sons of Brahma).

This *nāma* calls Her as *jñānamudra* as She is the symbol of knowledge. It can also be said that She is the passport (*mudra* also means passport) to knowledge (*jñāna*). *Mud* means bliss and *ra* means gives and in this context, the *nāma* means that through knowledge She offers bliss to Her devotees.

Jñāna-gamyā ज्ञान-गम्या (980)

Gamya means approachable. She is approachable only through knowledge or She is perceived only through knowledge.

She can be attained through three means, either through *bhāvana* or meditation (*nāma* 113), second through *bhakti* or devotion (*nāma* 119) or though *jñāna* or knowledge (the present *nāma*). Ultimately, meditation and devotion merge into knowledge where Self-realisation takes place.

Following quotes of *Kṛṣṇa* confirm the above interpretation.

"Sacrifice through knowledge is superior to sacrifice performed with material offerings. For all actions without exception culminate in knowledge" (*Bhagavad Gīta* IV.33).

"On those ever united through devotion, with me and worship me with love, I confer that yoga of wisdom through which they come to me. In order to shower my grace on them I dwell in their heart and dispel the darkness born out of ignorance by shining the light of wisdom" (*Bhagavad Gīta* X.10, 11).

{Further reading: What is wisdom? Is it all knowingness? *Patañjali* in his *yoga sūtra* (I.25) says "In Him becomes infinite that all-knowingness which in others is only a germ". Let us assume that someone steals money from somebody, thinking that his action of theft is not known to anybody. But it will be known to a Self-

realised person, because his knowledge is not individualised but connected to cosmos. The sum total of individual knowledge is known as universal knowledge. All-knowingness is the very element of consciousness; where there is consciousness, there exists knowing. If consciousness is pervasive, then it is all-knowing. Knowledge is nothing but manifestation of consciousness through an appropriate mental mode.

*Vivekacūḍāmaṇ*i (408 - 410) says "The wise one realises in his heart the infinite Brahman, which is an ineffable something, of the nature of eternal knowledge and absolute bliss, who has no exemplar, which transcends all limitations, is ever free and without activity, which is like the limitless sky, indivisible and absolute. The wise one realises in his heart in *Samādi*, the infinite Brahman, which is devoid of the touch of cause and effect, which is the Reality beyond all imagination, which is homogeneous, matchless, beyond the reach of logical proofs, but proved by the experience of the wise and ever familiar to man as the basis of his Self-awareness. The wise one realises in his heart, in *Samādi*, the infinite Brahman, which is imperishable and immortal, the Reality which is the negation of all negations, which resembles the ocean when the waves have subsided, which is without a name, in which have subsided all the modification of the *guṇa*-s and which is eternal, pacified and ONE."}

Jñāna-jñeya-svarūpiṇī ज्ञान -ज्ञेय-स्वरूपिणी (981)

The importance of knowledge is being repeatedly stressed by *Vāc Devi*-s towards the end of this *Sahasranāma*. This *nāma* says She is the knowledge and the knowing. The previous *nāma* said that She can be approached only through knowledge. *Nāma* 979 said that She is the symbol of knowledge.

Kṛṣṇa explains this in *Bhagavad Gīta* (XIII.17) "The Supreme Brahman is said to be the light of all lights, and entirely beyond *māyā* and is knowledge itself, worth attaining through real wisdom and is particularly seated in the heart of all."

Jñāna means knowledge, the essential nature of the Brahman. *Jñeya* is a qualifying word here, with intent to reveal that the primary duty of a man is to know Her. It means 'to be learnt or understood or ascertained or investigated or perceived or inquired about'. She can be known only through knowledge as said in *nāma* 980.

Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (I.12) says, "You have to know that Brahman is always residing within. There is nothing higher than this knowledge. The *jīva* (the enjoyer), the *jagat* (that which the enjoyer enjoys) and the Brahman within, who directs – know these three as the Brahman."

Yoni-mudrā योनि-मुद्रा (982)

Yoni-mudra is the ninth *mudra* of ten *mudra*-s discussed in *nāma* 977. Yoni is the typical symbol of the divine procreative energy. Worshipping Her through *yoni mudra* means seeking Her authorisation to the divine procreative energy. Procreation here means the transformation of the practitioner after understanding the significations of the *nāma*-s so far discussed, and in particular, *nāma*s 978 onwards (attaining knowledge).

Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad Gīta* (XIV.3) "*mama yoni mahad brahmā* मम योनि महद् ब्रह्मा" which means 'my primordial nature known as the great Brahma is the *yoni* of all creatures. *Yoni* is the name attributed to *prakṛti*, as *prakṛti* is the material cause of creation.

Śiva says to *Pārvatī* (*Todala tantra* II.25) "My dear, this *yoni mudra* removes all illness. Oh! Goddess, without elaborating I can just say that it destroys great diseases and Oh! Goddess, without exaggerating I can say that this *mudra* causes the realisation of the *mantra*, brings about direct perception of one 's self and bestows on the practitioner the great liberation."

Yoni mudra is the secret communication between the practitioner and the Divine Mother where the former seeks to access knowledge

and consequent liberation. *Yoni mudra* should never be used publicly.

There are three types of *yoni mudra*-s. The first one is used during *navāvaraṇa pūja*. The second one is used during preliminary meditative practices. Five fingers of both the hands are used to plug the sensory organs in the head to listen to the subtle sound within. The third is a tougher one with the combination of breath control, posture and *mantra* and more to do with the movement of *kuṇḍalinī*.

This *nāma* says that She is in the form of *yoni mudra*.

Trikhaṇḍeśī त्रिखण्डेशी (983)

Trikhanṇḍa is the tenth *mudra*. This *mudra* is used to invoke Her during rituals. *Trikhanṇḍa mudra* also means the union of various triads into single entity. For example, practitioner, his Guru and Devi or the knower, the known and the path of knowing are triads. Merger of triads into a single entity is the supreme knowledge that the practitioner has asked for in the previous *nāma* using *yoni mudra*.

It is also said that this *mudra* refers to the three *kūṭa*-s of *Pañcadaśī mantra*. From the broader perspective, this *mudra* can be termed as the *Brahma mudra*. The extended pair of fingers point out to creation, sustenance and dissolution.

Tri-guṇā त्रि-गुणा (984)

She is in the form of three *guṇa*-s or qualities viz *sattvic*, *rajas* and *tamas*. *Sattva guṇa* means the quality of purity and knowledge. The presence of other two *guṇa*-s is not very prominent in *sattva guṇa* as this *guṇa* is endowed with the highest purity. *Rajo guṇa* is the activity of passion. *Tamo guṇa* is inertia or ignorance. These two *guṇa*-s have higher trace of other *guṇa*-s. *Guṇa*-s are the inherent qualities of *prakṛti*. Ego and intellect originate from *guṇa*-s that are present in all the evolutes of *prakṛti* at once, but

distributed in unequal proportions in each individual. The predominant *guṇa* that prevails in an individual is reflected through his thoughts and actions.

Kṛṣṇa explains *guṇa*-s in *Bhagavad Gīta* (IV.6 - 9) "*Sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* - these three qualities born of *prakṛti* (Nature) tie down the imperishable soul to the body. Of these, *sattva* being immaculate, is illuminating and flawless; it binds through identification with joy and wisdom. The quality of *rajas*, with is of the nature of passion, as born of avariciousness and attachment. It binds the soul through attachment to actions and their fruits. *Tamas*, the deluder of all those who look upon the body as their own self, are born of ignorance. It binds the soul through error, sloth and sleep. *Sattva* drives one to joy, and *rajas* to action, while *tamas* clouding the wisdom incites one to err as well as sleep and sloth." Chapter of *Bhagavad Gīta* XIV extensively deals with *guṇa*-s. *Kṛṣṇa* again says (*Bhagavad Gīta* XIV.20) "Having transcended the aforesaid *guṇa*-s, which have caused the body, and freed from birth, death, old age and all kinds of sorrow, this soul attains the supreme bliss."

Nāma 139 *nir-guṇa* said that She is devoid of *guṇa*-s and this *nāma* says that She is the embodiment of *guṇa*-s. This is not a contradiction. *Nāma* 139 refers to Her *nirguṇa Brahman* (without attributes) status and this *nāma* refers to Her *saguṇa Brahman* (with attributes) status. Please also refer *nāma* 397 *mūla-prakṛti*.

This *nāma* says that the three *guṇa*-s arise from Her. Creation cannot happen without *guṇa*-s. From this point of view, this *nāma* confirms Her *Śrī Mātā* status.

Ambā अम्बा (985)

This is an interjectory statement. The practitioner gets excited here and reaches a stage that is very close to ecstasy. *Ambā* means mother. It can be said that *Vāc Devi*-s while narrating Her various forms and qualities, overwhelmed with emotions, called Her as

Ambā. This can be experienced, while reciting this *Sahasranāma* with intent devotion.

There is a very rarely used term called *guṇa-dharma*, the linguistic representation of the Brahman. *Guṇa-dharma* means the mental and linguistic attribution, whose ontological content, however is nothing but the one undivided reality of the Brahman expressible by various attributions. Since She is the cause of such attributions in terms of the previous *nāma*, She is addressed as *Ambā*.

Trikoṇagā त्रिकोणगा (986)

Trikoṇā means triangle and this *nāma* says that She resides in a triangle. Triangle here means the innermost triangle of *Śrī Cakra*, known as *sarva-siddhi-pradā cakra*. While performing *Śrī Cakra pūja*, this triangle should be facing the performer. This is the eighth *āvaraṇa* or covering of *Śrī Cakra*.

This triangle and the *bindu* within, indicate creation. The triangle represents *Śaktī* and the *bindu* represents *Śiva*. This triangle is the creation of *Śiva*. This confirms the theory that *Śiva* is the creator of *Śaktī*. The *bindu* is also known as *parā*, the *bindu tattva*. The *bindu* exhibits a series of throbs known as *spanda* or divine pulsation, also known as the creative pulsation of *Śiva*. These divine pulsations manifest as a triangle. The triangle represents all the triads like *icchā*, *jñāna* and *kriyā śaktī-s* or three *guṇa*-s, or *paśyantī*, *madhyamā* and *vaikharī*, or creation, sustenance and dissolution, etc. It is said that the 'three *purā*-s of bindu (representing the three sides of the triangle) wherein abides the impenetrable transcendent greatness of all *devata*-s. *Devata*-s mean the different energies that are required to keep the universe afloat. The inner most triangle gives rise to all other triangles of *Śrī Cakra*. It is to be observed that the *bindu* is the cause of only the innermost triangle and other triangles emerge from the inner most triangle. This is in confirmation of the theory that *Śiva* created *Śaktī* alone and the rest of the creation was made only by *Śaktī*. *Śrī Cakra* is nothing but a graphical expression of the theory of creation. Pure knowledge is

also known as *trikona*. The three corners of the triangle refer to three types of manifestations, the experiment, the experience and the object of experience (*nāma* 254).

The *triangle* and the *bindu* represent *Liṅga* form of *Śiva*. *Liṅga Purāṇa* (II.47.9) says 'The pedestal of *Liṅga* is Goddess *Umā* and the *Liṅga* is *Maheśvara* Himself. By worshipping these two, the Lord and Goddess are worshipped.' When She embraces *Śiva* in Her subtlest form *kuṇḍalinī*, She is impregnated to manifest in the form of *icchā* (will), *jñāna* (cognition) and *kriyā* (action) *śaktī-s* disturbing the equal proportion of *guṇa*-s, thereby causing the creation. The entire universe arises from this triangle, the cause of which is the *bindu* within. She is extremely happy when Her consort is worshipped (*nāma* 974 *bindu-trarpaṇa-santuṣṭā*). After all, She is *Śiva-priyā* (*nāma* 409) and *Śiva-parā* (*nāma* 410).

Based on the above reasons, it has been repeatedly said that *Śrī Cakra* worship should be done in strict privacy. *Bhāvanopaniṣad* describes procedures that are to be performed through mentation (the root word of meditation). *Kṛṣṇa* also advocates mental worship. He says in *Bhagavad Gīta* (VI.25) "He should through gradual practice attain tranquillity and fixing on the Brahman through reason controlled by steadfastness, he should not think of anything else.

This triangle is called *Brahma Yoni* by *Kṛṣṇa*. He says (*Bhagavad Gīta* XIV.3) *mama yonirmahad brahmā* which means that the Brahman, the total material substance is the source of birth, making possible the birth of all other creatures. In the next verse He says "*Prakṛti* or Nature is the conceiving mother, while I am the seed-giving father." This is a typical example of the inner most triangle and *bindu* of *Śrī Cakra*.

Anaghā अनघा (987)

Agha means sin, impurity, suffering etc. This *nāma* says that She is devoid of these qualities. This *nāma* says that in spite of looking

after the three exclusive qualities of the Brahman, She continues to be pure. She is an extension of *Śiva*, who remains eternally pure.

Adbhuta-cāritrā अद्भुत-चारित्रा (988)

Adbhuta means extraordinary supernatural, wonderful, marvellous and *cāritra* means conduct, behaviour, manner of acting, etc. The previous *nāma* negated certain qualities and this *nāma* affirms certain qualities. Both these *nāma*-s describe Her sa*guṇa Brahman* form. This *nāma* says that Her behaviour is supernatural and wonderful. *Cāritra* also means chastity or purity of life of a woman. In this context, this means that She has a stupendous purity. This interpretation aligns well with regard to the placement of this *nāma*.

Vāñchitārtha-pradāyinī वाञ्चितार्थ-प्रदायिनी (989)

She gives, whatever is prayed for by Her devotees. This quality has been already discussed in *nāma*-s 63 and 567. In *Lalitā Triśatī* there are three *nāma*-s-, 43, 144 and 260 conveying the same meaning.

Saundarya Laharī (verse 4) explains this quality. It says. "You are the refuge of all the worlds. All gods except you protect their devotees and grant their desires by gestures of their hands. You do not offer them by hands as your feet are powerful to protect those in the grip of fear and grant more than what is desired for, by the devotees. This verse subtly conveys *Bālā mantra: aiṁ - klīṁ - sauḥ* ऐं-क्लीं-सौः.

Kānci Paramācārya says, "It is difficult to train the mind to the practice of meditating on a form or repeat a *mantra*. But, the first step has to be taken. It is only when it is pleasing to our mind that we will take the first step. In the spiritual path there is a first step which is pleasing. That is *Ambikai*'s feet. Without any difficulty, any one can start meditating on *Devi*'s lotus feet. If we think of the beauty and coolness of that Lotus Feet, the mind will get used to remain steady in that. If we worship like this always, by Her grace,

there will be end to birth. Or, one can first read the *stuti*-s (*stotra*-s) which speak of Her greatness. The first step is reading; then *japa*; then meditation. When meditating like that we should pray '*Parāśaktī*! Bless me, so that when life leaves this body, I should be meditating on you and join you on again.' If, everyday, we pray like this at Her lotus feet, even at the moment when life goes out of the body, meditation on Her will be there by Her grace. After this body goes, we can merge with Her totally, be freed from the cycles of birth and death and can become bliss ourselves." (Voice of God – Volume I)

Abhyāsātiśaya-jñātā अभ्यासातिशय-ज्ञाता (990)

Abhyās means to concentrate one's attention upon, to cause, to practice, etc. *Atiśaya* means pre-eminent, superior, abundant, etc and *jñāta* means to know or to comprehend. This *nāma* says that one should practice continuously to focus his entire attention to know Her supreme qualities. The importance of the mind is emphasised here to know Her. *Vāc Devi*-s subtly convey the supremacy of mental worship known as meditation.

Brahma Sūtra (IV.i.1) says, "Repetition is necessary, since *Upaniṣads* instruct repeatedly." It is explained that such repeated instructions as should be heard of, reflected on, and meditated upon. The repeated instructions of the *Upaniṣads* is "I am the Brahman" or "I am That" or such *mahā vācaka-s* or the great sayings.

Kṛṣṇa also highlights the importance of mediation In *Bhagavad Gīta* (IX.22). He says "Those who meditate on me as their very own (I am the Brahman), ever united to me by incessant worship, I bring full security and personally attend to their needs."

It is said that She is to be 'seen' by perpetual meditation. By constant practice of meditation, She becomes manifested through the union of self with the Self.

Having discussed Her gross, subtler and subtlest forms, *Vāc Devi*-s now directly advise Her devotees to practice meditation to be with Her always.

ṣaḍadhvātīta-rūpiṇī षडध्वातीत-रूपिणी (991)

ṣaḍadhva means six types of paths (*adhvan* – means, methods, paths) of worshipping Her and *atīta* means transcending. She transcends six methods of worship.

Six types of worship are *pāda* (a verse or a line), *bhuvana* (abode, referring to *Śrī Cakra*), *varṇa* (*varṇa* means outward appearance, exterior, form, figure, shape and this means idol worship. *varṇa* also means alphabets. She is *mātṛkā varṇa rūpiṇī – nāma* 577), *tattva* (principles as per *śivāgama*), *kalā* (sixty four types of tantra-s. *Kalā* also means time) and *mantra* (combination of alphabets). Out of the six, *pāda*, *varṇa* and *mantra* are the manifestations of sound or in the form of *vāc*. This is known as *vimarśa* form. The other three, *bhuvana* (earth), *tattva* and *kalā* are the manifestations of *artha* which means cause or reasoning. This is also known as *prakāśa* form. The universe is created when *prakāśa* form of *Śiva*, the eternal Self-illumination, without which no object can be seen, unites with *vimarśa* form of *Śaktī* (the power of autonomy given by *Śiva* to *Śaktī*, also known as the *svabhāva* (natural disposition of *Śiva*). This way, the *nāma* says that She is beyond all these and in order to attain Her, one has to meditate on *Śrī Cakra* using these six methods. The practitioner first attains *siddhi* in *mantra*-s and he gradually learns to transcend worlds, principles and time (*bhuvana*, *tattva* and *kalā*) to finally realise Her. Please refer *nāma* 907 for additional information.

This *nāma* begins the narration of *Śiva-Śaktī* union that culminates in *nāma* 999.

Avyāja-karuṇā-murtiḥ अव्याज-करुणा-मुर्तिः (992)

She is compassionate without partiality. *Avyāja* means not pretending. This means that She is not pretentious to be compassionate, but truly compassionate. This nāma subtly condemns pretentiousness. The prime quality of *Lalitāmbikā* is compassion and this has been discussed in nāma-s 197, 326 and 581. Compassion is the quality of a mother and She being the Supreme Mother, She is said to be the embodiment of compassion in these three *nāma*-s. *Śiva* is a disciplinarian (*Yajur Veda* IV.v.3.1 – *Śrī Rudraṁ* says, *nivyādhina āvyādhinīnām patayae nāmaḥ*, which means one who causes pains repeatedly to foes) and *Śaktī* is compassionate.

Saundarya Laharī (verse 6) says that Her eyes are compassionate.

Ajñāna-dhvānta-dīpikā अज्ञान-ध्वान्त-दीपिका (993)

She is the lamp that dispels the darkness of ignorance. The lamp here means the source of knowledge. She radiates the self illumination of *Śiva* as She is the *svātantraya śaktī* (the absolute autonomy known as *vimarśa*) of *Śiva* and brings about the world process. As a matter of fact, the light of wisdom dispels the darkness of ignorance and brings about Self-realisation at the same time. If however, some sequence is maintained between the two processes, it should be understood that the removal of ignorance takes place earlier and is immediately followed by Realisation.

Kṛṣṇa explains this lamp in *Bhagavad Gīta* (X.11), "In order to shower my grace on them, I, dwelling in their heart, dispel the darkness born of ignorance by the shining light freedom."

{Further reading on *ajñāna*: *ajñāna* means ignorance, particularly spiritual ignorance which is illusory, beginningless and removed by knowledge, neither real nor unreal. It is something positive. If it is not positive, it cannot be the material cause of the world. It is composed of three *guṇa-s*. Being positive, it is the cause of illusion. Ignorance is considered as not real, since it disappears at the dawn of knowledge. It is not unreal, since it is an object of experience.

As it is neither real nor unreal, it is called indescribable. Super imposition is the effect of *ajñāna*. The world is superimposed on the Brahman and this is due to ignorance. It disappears with the knowledge of ultimate Reality.

Bondage also is illusory and removed by knowledge but not removed immediately by knowledge, i.e. bondage is due to ignorance and ignorance is immediately dispelled by knowledge, so bondage is ultimately removed by knowledge. Although the desire of knowledge and prior non-existence of knowledge are immediately removed with the attainment of knowledge, they are not illusory. Hence it is sure that the definition of ignorance is not too wide, since it is not applicable to the bondage, desire and prior non-existence. Consciousness can never be illusory, as illusion is always negated.}

Ābāla-gopa-viditā आबाल-गोप-विदिता (994)

Ābālam means including children, *gopa* means cowherds (*gopa* also means a protector or a female guardian) and *vidita* means known, understood, perceived, etc. She is perceived or understood even by children and cowherds, who do not have spiritual knowledge. The word 'cowherd' is used in a broader sense to refer those who totally concentrate in the jobs they do, without trying to know the Brahman or do not have time to know the Brahman. In a way they are *karma-yogi*-s and are highly appreciated by *Kṛṣṇa*. *Karma yogi* can also attain Her, but pursuing Brahman through the path of *karma* takes more time than pursuing the Brahman through knowledge.

It is also said by the usage of *bāla-gopa,* it could mean to refer either *Sadāśiva* or *Kṛṣṇa*. Then the *nāma* means that She is perceived by the highest level of divinity to the lowest level of human existence, children. *Śrī Rudraṁ* (I.8) says, *utainam gopā adṛśan adṛśan udahāryaḥ* which means 'keepers of cows and bearers of water have seen Him.'

Sarvānullaṅghya-śāsanā सर्वानुल्लङ्घ्य-शासना (995)

Her commands are never disobeyed. Even if one realises Her, he too cannot disobey Her commands. Even *Brahma*, *Viṣṇu* and *Rudra* do not disobey Her. This *nāma* can be read along with *nāma* 274 *pañca-kṛtya-parāyaṇā*.

Saundarya Laharī (verse 24) says, "*Brahma* creates the universe. *Viṣṇu* sustains it and *Rudra* dissolves it. Annihilating them, *Īśvara* conceals Himself as well. *Sadāśiva* approves them, pursuant to your command conveyed through thy creeper (beautifully curved) like eye brows moved but for a moment."

{Further reading on the above verse: Brahma is the creator, *Viṣṇu* is the sustainer, *Rudra* is the dissolver, *Īśvara* is the cause for *tirodhāna* (concealment), and *Sadāśiva* is the ultimate in whom all the other four commingle. (*Sadāśiva* is explained as the stage where the experience of "I" is more pronounced than the existence itself. *Icchā śakti* is predominant in this *tattva*). This happens during annihilation or the great deluge *Śaktī* is eternal with *Sadāśiva*, who is also known as *Śiva*. Apart from the four stages, there is yet another stage called as re-creation. During the process of re-creation, *Īśvara* originates from *Sadāśiva* and from *Īśvara* originates *Rudra*, from *Rudra* originates *Viṣṇu*, from *Viṣṇu* originates *Brahma* and *Brahma* starts creation to get annihilated again.}

Śrī Cakra-rāja-nilayā श्री चक्र-राज-निलया (996)

She abides in *Śrī Cakra*. This is also known as *Śrī Yantra* and *Cakra-rājā*. This is the supreme amongst all the *yantra*-s. *Uttara bhāg* (the chapter containing the benefits of recitation, also known as *phalaśruti*) of *Lalitā Triśatī* elucidates *Śrī Cakra* in a comprehensive manner. *Śrī Cakra* is the body of *Śiva* and *Śaktī*. *Śrī Cakra* is compared to a human body and *Śiva* and *Śaktī* are compared to the soul within. *Śrī Cakra* is full of life and energy and should be worshipped with great reverence. Any god or goddess can be worshipped in *Śrī Cakra* as all of them have a place in it.

Saundarya Laharī (verse 11) describes *Śrī Cakra*. "Your abode (*Śrī Cakra*) is made up of nine *mūlaprakṛti*-s, the primary causative force of the universe, represented by the triangles in *Śrī Cakra*. There are four *Śiva* triangles, the apex of which facing upwards and five *Śaktī* triangles the apex of which facing downwards, the bindu, eight petal lotus, the sixteen petal lotus and three circles with four entries thus counting forty four."

In all *Śrī Cakra* has forty three triangles and the *bindu*. Apart from the triangles, there is an eight petal lotus and a sixteen petal lotus. All the forty three triangles and the *bindu* are within the two lotuses. Outside these two lotuses, there are three circular lines. Outside these circular lines there are three squares with four entries from each side. This is the formation of *Śrī Cakra*.

One has to enter the *Śrī Cakra* from the outermost square. All the three squares put together is known as *trailokaya-mohana* that deludes the three stages of consciousness. This is the first enclosure of *Śrī Cakra*. This enclosure is ruled by *Tripurā Devi*. Each *āvaraṇa*, known as enclosure is ruled by a presiding deity and has an independent *yogini*. *Yogini* of the first *āvaraṇa* is known as *prakaṭa yogini*. In the outermost walls there are ten goddesses representing ten *siddhi*-s (super human powers), in the middle wall, there are *aṣṭa māta*-s (eight *devi*-s like *Brāhmī, Vārāhi*, etc). Their spouses are the *aṣṭa Bhairava*-s (*Asitāñga, Ruru,* etc). In the inner wall there are ten goddesses representing the ten *mudra*-s (hand gestures) like, *yoni mudra* (*nāma* 982), *trikhaṇḍā* (*nāma* 983), etc. Therefore, in the first enclosure there are 10 + 8 + 10 = 28 goddesses. Entry into *Śrī Cakra* is to be made from the opening just below the apex of the innermost triangle, facing the worshipper. After worshipping all the twenty eight goddesses and after obtaining permission from them, one has to move to the next enclosure.

The second enclosure is known as *sarvāśa-pari-pūraka* that enlivens the spiritual hopes of the practitioner. This enclosure is ruled by *Tripureśī* and the *yogini* for this enclosure is *Gupta yogini*. The second enclosure is the sixteen petal lotus inside the three

circles and no worship takes place in the three circles. Each of the sixteen petals is ruled by a goddess and each petal has one vowel of Sanskrit (Sanskrit has sixteen vowels). After worshipping these sixteen goddesses and after obtaining permission from them, one has to proceed to the next enclosure.

The third enclosure is known as *sarva-saṁkṣobhaṇa* that crusades for spiritual aspirations. This is the eight petal lotus. The presiding deity of this enclosure is *Tripurasundarī* and the *yogini* is *Guptatara yogini*. There are eight goddesses in each of the petals. After worshipping them and after obtaining permission from them, one has to enter the first set of triangles of *Śrī Cakra*.

The fourth enclosure is known as *sarva-saubhāgya-dāyaka*, which provides all spiritual and material comforts. It has fourteen triangles and presided over by *Tripuravāsinī*. The concerned *yogini* is *Saṁpradāya yogini*. Each petal is ruled by a goddess. After worshipping them and after obtaining permission from them, one has to proceed to the next enclosure.

The fifth enclosure is known as s*arvārtha-sādhaka*, which makes the worshipper spiritually prosper and has ten triangles. The presiding deity is *Tripurāśrī* and the concerned *yogini* is *kulottīrṇa-yogini*. Each triangle is presided over by a goddess. After worshipping them and after obtaining permission from them one has to proceed to the next covering.

The sixth *āvaraṇa* has again ten triangles and is known as *sarva-rakṣākara cakra*, which protects the worshipper from the inflictions of *saṃsāra*. This enclosure is known as inner ten triangles and the previous triangle is known as exterior ten triangles. This *āvaraṇa* is presided over by *Tripuramālinī* and the *yogini* is *Nigarbha Yogini*. Each of the triangles is presided over by a goddess. After worshipping them and after their permission, one has to proceed to the next enclosure.

The seventh *āvaraṇa* is *sarva-roga-hara cakra* the remover of all mental afflictions. It has eight triangles also known as *vasu koṇa*

representing the eight *vasu*-s (according to *Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upaniṣad* (III.ix.) *aṣṭa vasu*-s or *eight Vasu*-s are *Āpa*, the water; *Dhruva*, the pole-star; *Soma*, the Moon; *Dhava* or *Dhara*; *Anila*, the Wind; *Anala* or *Pāvaka*, the fire; *Pratyusha*, the dawn; and *Prabhāsa*, the light). The presiding deity is *Tripurāsiddhā* and the *yogini* is *Rahasya yogini*. Each of the triangles is presided over by a *Vāc Devi*, the authors of this *Sahasranāma*. *Vāmakeśvarīmatam* (verses 60-63) says that all the Sanskrit alphabets are ruled by these eight *Vāc Devi*-s. Apart from what is said in the above scripture, all the triangles and lotus petals are inscribed with Sanskrit alphabets. This triangle is just outside the inner most triangle (*nāma* 986). After worshipping these eight goddesses, one proceeds to worship the armouries of *Lalitāmbikā*.

The eighth enclosure is just outside the central *bindu* which is the innermost triangle. This is where the spiritual attainments begin and culminate at the *bindu* within. Outside this triangle, the weaponries of *Lalitāmbikā* are placed. The weapons are described in *nāma*-s 8, 9, 10 and 11. After worshipping Her weaponries, one enters the eighth enclosure, known as *sarva siddhi pradhā* and is ruled by *Tripurāmbā* and the concerned *yogini* is *Atirahasya yogini*. There are three goddesses who are worshipped at the three corners of the triangle and *Lalitāmbikā* is worshipped at the central point, the *bindu*.

Outside this inner most triangle the fifteen *tithi nitya devi*-s are worshipped. Each *tithi* represents one lunar day. One's guru lineage is also worshipped in three parallel lines drawn outside the upper portion of the inner most triangle. In this place, one's guru, guru's guru and guru's guru's guru are worshipped. Along with them several celebrated gurus are also worshipped. Worshipping guru is an important aspect of *Śrī vidyā* cult.

The ninth enclosure is the *bindu*. This is known as '*sarvānanda-maya cakra*', the ultimate bliss, where self unites with ever existing and omnipresent Self (the Brahman) here. This is presided by *Śrī Mahā Tripurasundarī* also known through various other names such

as *Lalitāmbikā, Rājarājeśvarī, Mahā Kāmeśvarī*, etc who is the ultimate Goddess of this universe, the Supreme Mother. The concerned *yogini* is *Parāparāti rahasya yogini* (*Parāparāti rahasya* means the supreme secret). Beyond this point, those who are not initiated into *ṣodaśī* cannot proceed. Those who are initiated into *ṣodaśī* are blessed to worship Her again at the *bindu* with Her ultimate *mantra* and *trikhanda mudra*. This *cakra* or the enclosure or *āvaraṇa* is the highly secretive in nature, where the conjugation of *prakāśa* and *vimarśa* (*Śiva* and *Śaktī*) form of creation takes place. Here *Śaktī* sits on the left lap of *Śiva* and They together shower Their grace on those who seek Them.

When a practitioner is afflicted with worldly ties, known as *saṃsāra*, enters *Śrī Cakra*, he is gradually endowed with knowledge and by the time he reaches the supreme *bindu*, he is totally transformed. The *bindu* stands for both creation and absorption. A practitioner stands totally absorbed when he enters the *bindu* from the first *āvaraṇa*. If an absorbed practitioner again indulges in *saṃsāra*, he is re-created making his exit from the *bindu* to the outermost *cakra*.

Totally, one hundred and thirteen goddesses are worshipped in *Śrī Cakra*. *Śrī Cakra* is enclosed by *Śrī Nagara*, where exists twenty five forts. In between the forts there are huge places where all the other gods and goddesses reside. The nine coverings of *Śrī Cakra* are compared to six psychical *cakra*-s beginning from *mūlādhāra* to *ājñā*, *sahasrāra*, *kula sahasrāra* and *akula sahasrāra*. *Śrī Cakra* is not a mere geometrical representation of creation, sustenance, dissolution, concealing and re-creation; it is the known expression of evolutionary cosmology which is superimposed on a miniscule existence of a human being. Scriptures point out that human body is just a replica of *Śrī Cakra*.

This *nāma* says that She resides in this most perplexing *Śrī Cakra*.

***Śrī*mat-tripura-sundarī श्रीमत्-त्रिपुर-सुन्दरी** (997)

Śiva is known as *Tripura*. *Tri* means three and *pura* means fortress, castle etc. And *Tripura* means three fortresses. Three fortresses refer to the three unique acts of *Śiva*, the creation, sustenance and dissolution. Each of these acts is supervised by *Brahma*, *Viṣṇu* and *Rudra*. Since *Śiva* is the overall controller of all these acts, He is known as *Tripura-Sundarā* (*Sundara* is a suffix indicating his handsome appearance). It is said that *Brahma*, *Viṣṇu* and *Rudra* are the parts of *Śiva*'s body. His consort is known as *Tripura Sundarī* (*Sundarī* is the feminine gender of *Sundara*). This has been explained in *nāma* 787 *Tripureśī*.

In *Vāmakeśvarīmatam* (IV.4), *Śiva* addresses *Bhairavi* "Dear One! *Tripura* is the ultimate primordial *Śaktī*, the light of manifestation. She, as *Mātṛkā*, through Her gross and subtle aspects give birth to the three worlds. At dissolution, She is the abode of all things (meaning the *tattva*-s or principles), still remaining Herself (*nāma* 571). After She emanates, there is no need for the Lord (*Śiva*). Devoid of *Śaktī*, He cannot act."

Tripura also means *Vāmā*, *Śikhā* and *Jyeṣṭā*, the three deities presiding over the three lines of the innermost triangle of *Śrī Cakra* looking after creation, sustenance and dissolution. Each of the lines of this triangle is known as *pura* or a fort. Since She is the ultimate unified *Śaktī* controlling the three *pura*-s, She is known as *Tripura*.

She as the Brahman causes the process of manifestation through the three *kūṭa*-s of *Pañcadaśī mantra* referring respectively to *icchā śaktī*, *jñāna śaktī* and *kriyā śaktī*. Hence, She is known as *Mahā Tripura Sundari* (*mahā* means supreme).

{Further reading: She is *Ādi Śaktī* from whom all the triads (*tripura*) are derived. *Ādi Śaktī* is the sum total of all the energy forms, the cause of material creation. Time to time, this divine energy manifests itself in various forms and shapes that we are able to construe. The entire universe is filled either with matter or with energy. In other words, what we call as void is filled with gravitational force or electromagnetic fields. It has been proved

scientifically, that the universe was much smaller that it appears today and will expand further leading to the ultimate collapse known as annihilation. The expansion of the universe stops at some point of time and the universe begins its contraction. When the contraction is complete, the universe reaches its original state of Big Bang. *Śaktī* as the kinetic energy and as the Supreme administrator causes the conception, expansion and contraction (the three primary acts of *Śaktī*, each in the form of a *pura*; hence She is known as *Tripura Sundarī*). The kinetic energy is derived from the static energy or the original source of the Big Bang known as *Śiva*.}

***Śrī* Śivā श्री शिवा** (998)

The Supreme energy of *Śiva* personified as His wife. *Śiva* also means liberation. She has been addressed as *Śiva* in *nāma* 53. In this *nāma Vāc Devi*-s have prefixed *Śrī* to *Śivā* as they wanted to declare Her most auspicious form to the world. *Śrī* is the *Lakṣmī bīja* and the form of *Lakṣmī* is considered as one of the most auspicious forms. The one who is able to visualise Her as *Śrī Śivā* is drenched in bliss as he is going to have a view of *Śiva-Śaktī* (*Śiva-Śaktī sāmarasya*) combine in the next *nāma* and to ultimately merge with Her in the last *nāma* of this *Sahasranāma*. Realisation can take place only in the advanced stage of bliss.

The final phase of the worshipper is being portrayed through this *nāma*. The merger of the feminine energy known as *kuṇḍalinī* before its final union (the next *nāma*) with the masculine principle known as *Śiva,* indicating the culmination of spiritual practice.

Śiva means the purity of the highest order. *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* (7) says, "*prapañcopaśamam śāntam śivam*" which means the total cessation of the world as such, the sum total of that is good, one without a second is the Brahman (it means to say that *śivam* is all that is good).

Yajur Veda (IV.v.10) says, *yā te rudra śivā tanuḥ śivā viśvāhabheṣajī* (*Śrī Rudraṁ* 10.3) which means 'that auspicious

form of yours, Oh *Rudra*! Which is auspicious and ever healing.' *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* (21) also says "May the Supreme, who is the ruler of all knowledge, controller of all created beings, the preserver of the Vedas and the one overlord of *Hiraṇyagarbha*, be gracious (*Śivaḥ*) to me."

Vāc Devi-s should have chosen to place this *nāma* at the end as they would have liked to articulate the enlightened and transformed vision of the mystic for whom Her paradoxical omnipresence has become a perceivable experience. This *nāma* is the prologue to the next *nāma*, the most significant one as it discourses the macrocosmic conceptualisation.

Śiva-śakty-aikya-rūpiṇī शिव-शक्त्यैक्य-रूपिणी (999)

This is the most revered, admired, perplexed, incomprehensible and secretive form of the Divine Couple, the confluence of *Śiva* and *Śaktī*. The universe is created, sustained, dissolved and re-created by them at their will that is indentured by the law of *karma*.

Saundarya Laharī (verse 1) says, "*Śiva* becomes capable of creating the universe, only when united with *Śaktī*, otherwise He is incapable of even a stir (known as *spanda*)." *Śiva* is also known as *Parabrahman* and *Śaktī* as *Parāśaktī*. *Parabrahman* is the static energy and is *niṣkāma* (devoid of desire, disinterested and unselfish) in nature. The nature of *Śiva* is explained in *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* (7), which says, "It is neither consciousness of what is happening within nor the consciousness of what is happening externally. It is not conscious of all objects and it is not unconscious either. It is beyond perception of any organ, beyond thought and sound. In it there is only consciousness of the Self and there is a total cessation of the world as such. It is the embodiment of peace and all that is good. It is without a second." This is the typical explanation of the Brahman that is preternatural and interpenetrating.

Śaktī is primordial and latent energy of *Śiva* that alone manifests as the universe, its sustentation and disintegration and recreation. The consciousness referred by *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* is nothing but the domain of *Śaktī*. That is why it is said that *Śaktī* is the primordial and latent energy of *Śiva*. She exists along with *Śiva* and cannot be separated. If Brahman and consciousness are discriminately differentiated out of nescience, the question of creation and existence does not arise. In reality, such differential existence does not prevail. But for easier understanding of the complex issue of creation, *Śiva* and *Śaktī* have been perceived as two different aspects of the same entity. One cannot segregate the heat produced by the fire from the fire itself. The heat of the fire is primordially present in the fire. Neither fire, not heat can be of any use unless they subsist together. This is a typical example showcasing *Śiva* and *Śaktī*, the one without the other remain only an inert.

Śiva is Self-illuminating. Without His existence, the universe will be plunged into darkness. *Śiva* is present in *prakāśa* (illuminating) form. *Prakāśa* can be explained as visible, shining, universally noted, brightness, lustre, splendour, etc. *Prakāśa* also refers to *Śiva* and the Brahman. *Śaktī* is His *vimarśa* form. *Vimarśa* can be explained as reasoning, knowledge, consideration, reflecting etc. In spite of *Śiva* being the grandeur amongst the cognized existences, He cannot realise His own incomparable splendour without something that is able to reflect His grandeur. This is like a human not able to see his own self without an object that is capable of reflecting his image. *Śaktī* acts like a reflecting mirror where *Śiva* is able to realise His Reality, like a mirror reflecting the image of a person who stands before it. Pure consciousness is *Śiva* and realising the pure consciousness is *Śaktī*. If *Śiva* is not present, the consciousness itself does not exist. If *Śaktī* is not present, the presence of consciousness cannot be realised. In the state of *prakāśa* 'I' and 'This' stand united and in the *vimarśa* aspect 'This' is separated from 'I'. Therefore *prakāśa* aspect is 'I + This' and *vimarśa* aspect is 'This' alone. 'I' is the origin of the universe and 'This' is the expansion of the universe. *Śiva* is *cit* and *Śaktī* is *citi*.

Cit means foundational consciousness and *citi* means the consciousness that brings about cognitive operations. *Śaktī* segregates *I* and *This*. Without *Śaktī* this vital segregation cannot take place. *Śiva* causes the initial pulsation for creation that is carried forward by *Śaktī*.

Śaktī pushes forward the throb created by *Śiva* through different principles or *tattva*-s (thirty six) and sustains it through Her *māyā* or illusion. *Māyā* is the sole factor that separates a soul from the Brahman. She is the manifested conglutination of *Śiva* and *Śaktī* and therefore She is both the seed and the sprout. This also drives home the point that for creation, two objects are required. For example, a soul alone cannot be born on its own. It has to come into contact with *prakṛti* or Nature in order to manifest. Procreation is not possible without conjoining of masculine and feminine energies.

Moving on from the perceptible to subtle, a lot more is said about Their subtle conjugation. They are referred as two *bindu*-s (dots), white and red, denoting *Śiva* and *Śaktī* respectively. These two *bindu*-s, in mutual conjunction expand and contract. When they expand, the creation takes place by means of *vāc* (word) and *artha* (lit. meaning). *Vāc* means the *Śabda Brahman* and *artha* means thirty six *tattva*-s or principles. These two *bindu*-s which enter one another are known as *Kāma-Kāmeśvarī. Śiva*, the Supreme is in the form of the first alphabet of Sanskrit *A* (अ), is the cause of all sounds of Veda-s. He attains the form of a *bindu* after having entered His own *vimarśa* form, *Śaktī*, in whom the entire universe is dissolved. Like *prakāśa* form of *bindu* entering the *vimarśa* form of *bindu*, *vimarśa* form of bindu also enters *prakāśa* form of *bindu*, which is already within it. As a result of this conjugation, a third *bindu* called as *miśra bindu* is born. *Miśra* means combined. Now there are three *bindu*-s, white, red and *miśra*. These three *bindu*-s form a triangle, red and *miśra* are below and the white *bindu* is placed above them causing a perfect triangle. The *miśra bindu* has all the *tattva*-s or principles within itself and is the cause for further creation. This is the innermost triangle of *Śrī Cakra*. When these

three dots are connected, the three connecting lines represent all the triads such as three *guṇa*-s, three stages of consciousness, *icchā, jñāna* and *kriyā śaktī*s, etc. This triangle becomes the cause for creation beginning with *Brahma*, *Viṣṇu*, and *Rudra*. These three dots are also referred as sun (top), moon (right) and fire (left). There is an inverted triangle below the three dots. The three connecting lines of this lower triangle represent three *kūṭa*-s of *Pañcadaśī mantra* (nāmā 89). The upper most *bindu* (of the upper triangle) is the face of *Śaktī* (the third eye, denoting dissolution, the two lower dots represent Her bosoms (representing nourishment or sustenance) and the inverted triangle below mean Her procreative organ (representing creation). This is known as *kāmakalā* and is considered as the most secretive principle of *Śiva-Śaktī* union.

The explanation provided in *Varivasyā Rahasya*, the treatise on *Pañcadaśī mantra*, corroborates with the explanation offered for *Kāma Kalā Vilasa*, yet another treatise on *Śrī vidyā*. *Varivasyā Rahasya* (verses 69 to 72) says, "*Śiva* and *Śaktī* embrace each other. The Brahman (*Śiva*) with the desire to create glanced on His other half, His consort and assumed the form of a *bindu* (referring to male procreative fluids), into which *Śaktī* enters assuming the form of another *bindu* (representing female procreative fluids). The mixture formed by their aggregation is known as *aham* or *I*, the ego." This is the subtle form of the union of *Śiva* and *Śaktī*.

One more interpretation is possible for this most secretive nāma of this *Sahasranāma*. The scene goes like this. *Śiva* is sitting alone meditating, His usual posture. *Śaktī* enters the place of *Śiva*. *Śiva* wakes up. First, *Śaktī* sits next to *Śiva*. Later on She moves to His left lap and finally occupies His entire left side, blessing the universe with their *Ardhanārīśvarā* form causing creation and sustenance. When *Śaktī* moves away from *Śiva*, He starts His cosmic dance, causing annihilation. *Śaktī* witnesses His cosmic dance (nāma 232 and 571).

Saundarya Laharī (verse 34) says, "I consider your pure frame to be *Śiva*. Hence the relationship of the principal and the accessory

exists in common among you both who as transcendent bliss and consciousness are equipoised."

This nāma salutes Her undifferentiated form from *Śiva*, that is inseparable eternally. Their union is also known as *Śiva-Śaktī sāmarasya*, the identity of Consciousness, where identical state prevails in which all differentiation has disappeared.

Lalitāmbikā ललिताम्बिका (1000)

Śrī Mātā, Thy name is *Lalitāmbikā*. Her name is disclosed by *Vāc Devi*-s only in the last *nāma*. All along She was known to us as the Supreme Mother who was portrayed through Her gross and subtle qualities. *Lalitā* means sported, played, playing, wanton, amorous, innocent, soft, gentle, charming, lovely, wished for, desired, quivering. Every one of this meaning perfectly fits Her nature and form. She was described as sa*guṇa Brahman* (Brahman with attributes) and nir*guṇa Brahman* (Brahman without attributes with eternal purity). Though the Brahman is One, He has been demoed as two, merely to understand Him to the best possible level. If someone claims to know the Brahman thoroughly, he has to be dismissed as the Brahman is beyond comprehension by normal human mind. It is easier to say that the Brahman is without form, but the conceptualisation becomes difficult. In order to understand the Brahman, more has been said about His kinetic aspect rather than the static aspect. This *Sahasranāma* dwells more on the kinetic aspect of the Brahman rather than the witnessing aspect of the static Brahman, though both happen contemporaneously.

The first *nāma* of this *Sahasranāma* started with creation by addressing *Lalitāmbikā* as *Śrī Mātā*, the next *nāma* discussed about sustenance and the third *nāma* subtly conveyed the act of dissolution. *Vāc Devi*-s conveyed through *nāma*-s 4 and 5, the other two aspects of the Brahman, annihilation and recreation. Thus in the first five *nāma*-s, the primary qualities of the Brahman have been explained, though not explicitly. These three acts are again mentioned in *nāma*-s 264, 266 and 268.

Every energy that prevails in this universe has originated from Her and every action that happens in the universe happens because of Her (*nāma* 895). Even the most revered Veda-s not only originated from Her (*nāma* 338) but also worship Her (*nāma* 929). She is the embodiment of compassion (*nāma*-s 197, 326), yet She cannot be taken for granted. She is also tough at times and punishes the guilty (*nāma*-s 288, 608, 755). All the letters and their sounds (*nāma* 640) originate from Her (*nāma* 577). Hence She is called the embodiment of *mantra*-s (*nāma*-s 88, 204, 227, 846). All gods and goddesses worship Her (*nāma* 83, 629). She can be attained only though pure and unstinted devotional mind (*nāma*-s 118, 119 and 120). The one without devotion cannot even go anywhere near Her (*nāma*-s 188 and 189). The very thought of Her brings in auspiciousness (*nāma* 682). When She is worshipped with purity and dedication, She gives liberation (*nāma*-s 838, 839).

She should be worshipped in private. When one really wants to realise Her, he has to begin with Her ritual worship. He has to then proceed to recitation of Her *mantra*-s like *Pañcadaśī* and *ṣodaśī*. Finally, one has to visualise Her with the help of these one thousand *nāma*-s. Typically, one method of worship will lead to the next on its own. The mindset of the practitioner is more important than any extraneous considerations. She is subtler (*nāma* 322) and the subtlest (*nāma* 110). Her subtle manifestations have more to do with one's mind rather than involving in laborious rituals. She does not want to look at what one does, but She observes what one thinks. Attaining pure knowledge (*nāma* 416) is the only way to know Her. All the *Upaniṣads* repeatedly stress the importance of knowledge to realise the Brahman, as the mind alone is capable of knowing the Brahman. *Saundarya Laharī* (verse 98) prays, "Oh! Mother! Tell me when shall I, seeking knowledge, drink the water cleansing Your feet." The unique feature of the Divine Mother is Her holy feet. She wipes out pains and miseries of Her worshippers by Her feet. When She is worshipped through heart and mind, the worshipper is 'endowed with long life with his association with the

soul, and his ignorance cast away, he enjoys the sweetness of what is known as the Supreme Bliss' (*Saundarya Laharī* verse 99).

Adoring Her in silence within, is the only way to surrender to Her. Too much of speech, too much of thought and too much of action cannot subjugate the mind. When the mind is not subjugated, the senses cannot be controlled. Senses have to be necessarily used for our normal existence, but indulgence makes a person addictive. One has to be in the thick of the world, yet one has to maintain perfect serenity of mind. Any work performed with detachment to the end result of the work, does not cause mental affliction. An obnubilated thought process does not provide a serene environment to transform normal consciousness into pure consciousness, where alone She can be realised. The absolute consciousness which is Self-awareness destroys the ego and bestows liberation. When 'I' consciousness vanishes, direct vision of *Śrī Mātā*, the Creator takes place, bringing in contentment and compassion leading to interminable bliss.

This completes the interpretation on Her one thousand auspicious *nāma*-s that is now placed at Her sanctifying lotus feet praying for all-round happiness and prosperity and peaceful co-existence.

PHALA ŚRUTI OR UTTARA BHĀG

Thus *Hayagrīva* completed the recitation of one thousand nāma-s to sage *Agasthya*. *Hayagrīva* continues to address *Agasthya*.

In this *Sahasranāma* there are exactly one thousand nāma-s. (Shiva *Sahasranāma* has 1008 nāma-s and *Viṣṇu Sahasranāma* has 1000 nāma-s with repetition of the same nāma-s.) *Lalitā Sahasranāma* is most secretive in nature and *Lalitāmbikā* is very fond of this *Sahasranāma*. Any mantra is considered as secretive in nature because of the *bījākṣara*-s involved. It is said that each nama of *Lalitā Sahasranāma* has hidden *bīja-s* and therefore, the entire *Sahasranāma* attains *mantra* status.

The recitation gives the following benefits:

1. Gives disease- free life, eliminates poverty by providing materialistic wealth.
2. Prevents unnatural and accidental deaths.
3. Gives proficient progeny.
4. Gives liberation, if recited without any specific benefits.

Method of recitation:

After bathing and after completing the prescribed rituals, one has to worship *Śrī Cakra*. After worshipping *Śrī Cakra*, one has to do *japa*-s (*mantra* recitation) like *Pañcadaśī* or *ṣodaśī*. After reciting mantra *japa* for the prescribed number of times, one has to chant this *Sahasranāma*. After completing *Sahasranāma* one has to finally offer flowers to *Lalitāmbikā*. If one is not initiated into *mantra japa*-s or *Śrī Cakra* worship one can recite this *Sahasranāma* alone.

Further benefits accruing for one time recitation in one's life:

1. More beneficial than taking baths in holy rivers.
2. More beneficial than installing several *Liṅgas* in V*ārāṇasī* (*Kāśī*)
3. More beneficial than gifting gold in *Kurukṣetra* (the battle field where *Kṛṣṇa* told *Arjuna*, the *Bhagavad Gīta*) to a number of persons knowing the entire Vedas during solar eclipse.

4. More beneficial than performing *Aśvamedha yaga*-s on the banks of the holy river *Gaṅgā*.
5. If anyone of the one thousand nāma-s is recited, he is absolved of his sins.
6. The sins accruing out of non-performance of one's prescribed duties by the scriptures are also absolved.
7. The one who is initiated into *Śrī Vidyā* worship, should recite only this *Sahasranāma* instead of other remedial measures (*prāyacitta*). It is also said that by resorting to other remedial measures, one accrues further sin.
8. *Lalitāmbikā* is extremely pleased with the one who recites this *Sahasranāma* daily and fulfils all his desires. It is also said that one cannot be termed as devotee, if he does not recite this *Sahasranāma* daily. A devotee cannot be called as devotee unless he has the unqualified love of the deity whom he worships. *Lalitāmbikā* develops such a love, only if this *Sahasranāma* is recited fully on a daily basis.
9. If one is not able to recite this daily, he should at least recite it on festive days. Important days are *saṁkrānti* or *viṣu* (The sun's path north and south of the equator, the half year, the equinoctial and solstitial points). . The other important and auspicious days to recite this *Sahasranāma* are eighth lunar day, ninth lunar day, fourteenth lunar day and Fridays.
10. The most important among all is the full moon day. After watching the full moon, one has to recite this *Sahasranāma*.
11. The star birth days of self, spouse and children are also considered auspicious and one should recite *Sahasranāma* on these days.

Other benefits:

1. If one is having body temperature, it is said that one has to recite this *Sahasranāma* by keeping his hand on the head of the affected person. It is said that immediately, his temperature and other ailments will subside. If one is affected with body ailments, recitation of this *Sahasranāma* will subside his ailment.

2. If this *Sahasranāma* is recited by touching the sacred ashes and the sacred ashes are applied on the one who is suffering from ailments, his ailments will subside.
3. If one is afflicted with evil influences of planets, one has to keep water, sanctify the water and recite this *Sahasranāma* by touching the water pot, the evil influences of planets will ward off.
4. Those who do not have progeny, it is said that they should be given butter sanctified with this *Sahasranāma*, they are bound to beget progeny.
5. Lord *Śarabheśvara* annihilates the entire enemies of a person who recites this *Sahasranāma* daily.
6. *Pratyaṁgirā Devi* destroys those who cause evil inflictions on the one who recites this *Sahasranāma* daily. *Pratyaṁgirā Devi* is the consort of *Śarabheśvara*.
7. The one who frowns upon a person, who recites this *Sahasranāma*, is blinded by *Mārtāṇḍa Bhairava* (nāma 785).
8. The one who steals or causes the theft of the wealth of the one who recites this *Sahasranāma* daily is killed by *Kṣetrapāla* (nāma 344).
9. If one un-necessarily engages in wordy controversies with the one who recites this *Sahasranāma* daily, *Nakulīśvarī* spoils the speech of the person who indulges in such wordy controversies. *Nakulīśvarī,* who is also worshipped in *navāvaraṇa pūja* is one of the assistants of *Śyāmalā Devi* (nāma-s 69, 75).
10. *Daṇḍinī Devi* (*Vārāhī*) (nāma-s 70, 76), the chief of *Lalitāmbikā* army destroys kings' army on her own (without prayer from the worshipper and without any command from *Lalitāmbikā*), if the king develops enmity with the one who recites this *Sahasranāma* daily.
11. *Lakṣmī Devi*, the Goddess of wealth never leaves that person's place who recites this Sahasranamam daily for a minimum period of six months.

12. *Sarasvatī Devi*, the Goddess of speech dances through in his speech, who recites this Sahasranamam thrice daily for a period of one month.
13. If one recites this in the night for fifteen days, the concerned person becomes an attraction to the opposite gender.
14. Those who see the one who has at least recited this *Sahasranāma* once in his life time, are absolved of their sins.
15. Gifts and offerings should be made to a person who understands the meaning of this Sahasranamam to please *Lalitāmbikā*. Offering gifts (*dāna*) to the worthy is considered as one of the important duties of a person. If gifts are offered to a worthless person, it tantamount to accumulating more sins. Choosing the right person to receive the gift is more important than the gift itself.
16. The one who is initiated into *Śrī Vidyā*, performs *Śrī Cakra* worship and recites this Sahasranamam are considered as the most revered one. In the original verse, the word *Mantrarājaṁ* is used to mean *Śrī Vidyā*. *Lakṣmīnarasiṃha mantra* is also known as *Mantrarājaṁ* It is also said that a person cannot recite this *Sahasranāma* without proper initiation into *Śrī Vidyā*.
17. If this *Sahasranāma* is recited without understanding the meaning, it is equivalent to placing a wood stick in an extinguished fire. But, it is also said that one who is not able to understand the meaning of nāma-s can recite the sahasranamam. It should be understood that one who has the capacity of understanding, should make efforts to know the meaning. Those who do not have the required capacity alone are exempted to understand the meaning. He gets the required knowledge to understand the meaning in his next birth.
18. If one performs *pūja* ritual of *Śrī Cakra* with one thousand sweet smelling flowers at least once in his life time, the amount of propitious gains he derives cannot be described even by Shiva. This is called *archana*. One should suffix

namaḥ (नमः) at the end of each nāma. There are fifteen types of flowers that are referred. But, it is also said that any fragrant flowers can be used. One can use basil flowers also, but not the leaves. Best amongst the flowers is saffron.

19. *Archana* means prefixing each nāma with *om - aiṁ - hrīṁ - śrīṁ* (ॐ – ऐं – ह्रीं – श्रीं) and suffixing with *namaḥ*. For example the first nāma should be recited as follows.

    om - aiṁ - hrīṁ - śrīṁ śrī mātre namaḥ. ॐ – ऐं – ह्रीं – श्रीं श्री मात्रे नमः

    At the commencement of this *archana* one should make a sankalpa (vow), followed by *nyāsa*, *archana* and again should say Om at the end of last nāma *om - aiṁ - hrīṁ - śrīṁ Lalitāmbikāyai namaḥ om.* Importance is also given to the placement of flowers. They should be placed on the *Śrī Cakra* in the same way as they blossom. The petals of the followers should be facing upwards.

    The one who performs worship in the method described above on all the full moon days, attains the form of *Lalitāmbikā*. Those who do not consider such people as Her own form, get afflicted with sins.

20. The one who does the above referred *pūja* on the day of maha navami (the ninth day of dashara, attains liberation. *Mahā navami* day is the day of *Śiva* and *Śaktī.* It is also said that eighth lunar (*aṣṭami*) day is for *Rudra* and the ninth lunar day (*navami*) is for *Śaktī.* The conjunction of these two days is said to be auspicious time for worshipping *Śiva* He gets whatever is desired during this birth itself. He lives a long life with his grandchildren. Finally he attains the lotus feet of Lalithambigai (nama 912).
21. The one, who performs such a ritual on all Fridays, has to once offer a feast to the one who is well versed in *Śrī Vidyā.*

If he does so, *Lalitāmbikā* is extremely pleased with him and offers him whatever is desired. He is said to attain the powers of *Lalitāmbikā*. The connected procedures are quite elaborate.

22. The one who recites this *Sahasranāma* without any desires, he is absolved of bondage of *saṃsāra* and ultimately merges with Her.
23. This *Sahasranāma* is capable of bestowing both material and spiritual upliftment.
24. It is said that one is initiated into *Śrī Vidyā* only during his last birth. Such an opportunity arises because, in the earlier births, he should have worshipped many gods and goddesses.
25. If one is initiated into recitation of this *Sahasranāma* without initiating *Śrī Vidyā*, both the initiator and the initiated get afflicted. In the same way, if *Śrī Vidyā* is initiated to those who are devoid of mental purity, again both the initiator and the initiated are affected.

Finally *Hayagrīva* says that he has shared this secret with sage *Agastya* only at the orders of *Lalitāmbikā*. *Hayagrīva* asks *Agastya* to recite this *Sahasranāma* daily and that She would give him whatever is desired.

ALPHABATICAL INDEX OF NĀMA-S IN ENGLISH

Ābāla-gopa-viditā आबाल-गोप-विदिता (994)

Abhyāsātiśaya-jñātā अभ्यासातिशय-ज्ञाता (990)

Ābrahma-kīṭa-jananī आब्रह्म-कीट-जननी (285)

Acintya-rūpā अचिन्त्य-रूपा (554)

Adbhuta-cāritrā अद्भुत-चारित्रा (988)

Ādiśaktiḥ आदिशक्तिः (615)

Adṛśyā अदृश्या (649)

Agra-gaṇyā अग्र-गण्या (553)

Ajā अजा (866)

Ajā-jetrī अजा-जेत्री (663)

Ājñā आज्ञा (828)

Ājñā-cakrābja nilayā आज्ञा-चक्राब्ज निलया (521)

Ājñā-cakrāntarālasthā आज्ञा-चक्रान्तरालस्था (103)

Ajñāna-dhvānta-dīpikā अज्ञान-ध्वान्त-दीपिका (993)

Akāntā अकान्ता (860)

Akṣamālādi-dharā अक्षमालादि-धरा (489)

Akulā अकुला (96)

Amatiḥ अमतिः (537)

Ambā अम्बा (985)

Ambikā अम्बिका (295)

Ameyā अमेया (616)

Amṛtādi-mahā-śakti-saṁvṛtā अमृतादि-महा-शक्ति-संवृता (483)

A-mūrtā अ-मूर्ता (814)

Anādi-nidhanā अनादि-निधना (296)

Anaghā अनघा (987)

Anāhatābja-nilayā अनाहताब्ज-निलया (485)

Anākalita-sādṛśya-cibuka-śrī-virājitā अनाकलित-सादृश्य-चिबुक-श्री-विराजिता (29)

Aṅkuśādi-praharaṇā अङ्कुशादि-प्रहरणा (517)

Ānanda-kalikā आनन्द-कलिका (729)

Anarghya-kaivalya-pada-dāyinī अनर्घ्य-कैवल्य-पद-दायिनी (926)

Anavadyāṅgī अनवद्याङ्गी (50)

Aneka-koṭi-brahmāṇḍa-jananī अनेक-कोटि-ब्रह्माण्ड-जननी (620)

Anitya-tṛptā अनित्य-तृप्ता (815)

Annadā अन्नदा (669)

Antarmukha-samārādhyā अन्तर्मुख-समाराध्या (870)

Anugrahadā अनुग्रहदा (273)

Anuttamā अनुत्तमा (541)

Aparicchedyā अपरिच्छेद्या (642)

Aparṇā अपर्णा (754)

Aprameyā अप्रमेया (413)

Āraktavarṇā आरक्तवर्णा (476)

Aruṇaruṇa-kausumbha-vastra-bhāsvat-kaṭītaṭīअरुणरुण-कौसुम्भ-वस्त्र-भास्वत्-कटीतटी (37)

Āśobhanā आशोभना (972)

Aṣṭamī -candra-vibrāja-dhalika-sthala-śobhitā अष्टमी -चन्द्र-विब्राज-धलिक-स्थल-शोभिता (15)

Aṣṭamūrtiḥ अष्टमूर्तिः (662)

Asthi-saṁsthitā अस्थि-संस्थिता (516)

Āśvārūḍhā-dhiṣṭhitāśva-koṭikoṭibhi-rāvṛtāआश्वारूढा-धिष्ठिताश्व-कोटिकोटिभि-रावृता (67)

Ati-garvitā अति-गर्विता (508)

Ātmā आत्मा (617)

Ātma-vidyā आत्म-विद्या (583)

Avaradā अवरदा (639)

Avyāja-karuṇā-murtiḥ अव्याज-करुणा-मुर्तिः (992)

Avyaktā अव्यक्ता (398)

Ayi अयि (427)

Ayoniḥ अयोनिः (894)

Bahirmukha-sudurlabhā बहिर्मुख-सुदुर्लभा (871)

Bahu-rūpā बहु-रूपा (824)

Baindavāsanā बैन्दवासना (905)

Bali-priyā बलि-प्रिया (677)

Bandha-mocanī बन्ध-मोचनी (546)

Bandhinyādi-samanvitā बन्धिन्यादि-समन्विता (511)

Bandhūka-kusuma-prakkhyā बन्धूक-कुसुम-प्रक्ख्या (964)

Barbarālakā बर्बरालका (547)

Bhadramūrtiḥ भद्रमूर्तिः (116)

Bhadrapriyā भद्रप्रिया (115)

Bhagamālinī भगमालिनी (277)

Bhagārādhyā भगाराध्या (715)

Bhagavatī भगवती (279)

Bhāgyabdhi-candrikā भाग्यब्धि-चन्द्रिका (746)

Bhairavī भैरवी (276)

Bhakta-hārda-tamo-bheda-bhānumad-bhānu-santatiḥ भक्त-हार्द-तमो-भेद-भानुमद्-भानु-सन्ततिः (404)

Bhakta-mānasa-haṁsikā भक्त-मानस-हंसिका (372)

Bhakta-nidhiḥ भक्त-निधिः (567)

Bhakta-saubhāgya-dāyinī भक्त-सौभाग्य-दायिनी (117)

Bhaktha-citta-keki-ghanā ghanā भक्थ-चित्त-केकि-घना घना (747)

Bhakti-gamyā भक्ति-गम्या (119)

Bhaktimat-kalpa-latikā भक्तिमत्-कल्प-लतिका (353)

Bhakti-priyā भक्ति-प्रिया (118)

Bhakti-vaśyā भक्ति-वश्या (120)

Bhālsthā भाल्स्था (593)

Bhaṇḍaputra-vadhodyukta-bālā-vikrama-nanditā भण्डपुत्र-वधोद्युक्त-बाला-विक्रम-नन्दिता (74)

Bhaṇḍasainya-vadhodhyukta-śakthivikrama-harṣitā भण्डसैन्य-वधोध्युक्त-शक्थिविक्रम-हर्षिता (72)

Bhaṇḍāsura-vadhodyukta-śakti-senā-samanvitā भण्डासुर-वधोद्युक्त-शक्ति-सेना-समन्विता (65)

Bhaṇḍāsurendra-nirmukta-śastra-pratyastra-varṣiṇī भण्डासुरेन्द्र-निर्मुक्त-शस्त्र-प्रत्यस्त्र-वर्षिणी (79)

Bhānu-maṇḍala-madhyastā भानु-मण्डल-मध्यस्ता (275)

Bhāṣā-rūpā भाषा-रूपा (678)

Bhāvābhāva-vivarjitā भावाभाव-विवर्जिता (680)

Bhava-cakra-pravartinī भव-चक्र-प्रवर्तिनी (843)

Bhava-dhāva-sudhā-vrṣṭiḥ (742)

Bhāvajñā भावज्ञा (841)

Bhāvanāgamyā भावनागम्या (113)

Bhavanaśinī भवनशिनी (175)

Bhavānī भवानी (112)

Bhavāraṇya-kuṭhārikā भवारण्य-कुठारिका (114)

Bhava-rogaghnī भव-रोगघ्नी (842)

Bhayapahā भयपहा (121)

Bhedanāśinī भेदनाशिनी (179)

Bhoginī भोगिनी (293)

Bhūmarūpā भूमरूपा (666)

Bhuvaneśvarī भुवनेश्वरी (294)

Bindumaṇḍala-vāsini बिन्दुमण्डल-वासिनि (380)
Bindu-tarpaṇa-santuṣṭā बिन्दु-तर्पण-सन्तुष्टा (974)
Bisatantu-tanīyasī बिसतन्तु-तनीयसी (111)
Brahamopendra-mahendrādi-devasaṃstuta-vaibhavāब्रह्मोपेन्द्र-महेन्द्रादि-देवसंस्तुत-वैभवा (83)
Brahma ब्रह्म (822)
Brahmagranthi-vibhedini ब्रह्मग्रन्थि-विभेदिनी (100)
Brahmānandā ब्रह्मानन्दा (676)
Brahmāṇī ब्रह्माणी (821)
Brāhmaṇī ब्राह्मणी (674)
Brahma-rūpā ब्रह्म-रूपा (265)
Brahmātmaikya-svarūpiṇī ब्रह्मात्मैक्य-स्वरूपिणी (672)
Brāhmī ब्राह्मी (675)
Bṛhatī बृहती (673)
Bṛhat-senā बृहत्-सेना (679)
Budhārcitā बुधार्चिता (825)
Caitanya-kusuma-priyā चैतन्य-कुसुम-प्रिया (919)
Caitanyārghya-samārādhyā चैतन्यार्घ्य-समाराध्या (918)
Cakra-rāja-niketanā चक्र-राज-निकेतना (245)
Cakrarāja-rathārūḍha-sarvāyudha-pariṣkṛtā चक्रराज-रथारूढ-सर्वायुध-परिष्कृता (68)
Cāmeya-kusuma-priyā चामेय-कुसुम-प्रिया (435)
Campakāśoka-punnāga-saugandhika-lasat-kacāचम्पकाशोक-पुन्नाग-सौगन्धिक-लसत्-कचा (13)
Caṇḍa-muṇḍāsura-niṣūdinī चण्ड-मुण्डासुर-निषूदिनी (756)
Candana-drava-digdhāṅgī चन्दन-द्रव-दिग्धाङ्गी (434)
Caṇḍikā चण्डिका (755)
Candra-maṇḍala-madhyagā चन्द्र-मण्डल-मध्यगा (240)
Candra-nibhā चन्द्र-निभा (592)
Candra-vidyā चन्द्र-विद्या (239)
Cāracara-jagannāthā चारचर-जगन्नाथा (244)
Cāru-candra-kalādharā चारु-चन्द्र-कलाधरा (243)
Cāru-hāsā चारु-हासा (242)
Cāru-rūpā चारु-रूपा (241)
Catuḥṣaṣṭi-kalāmayī चतुःषष्टि-कलामयी (236)

Caturaṅga-baleśvarī चतुरङ्ग-बलेश्वरी (691)
Caturbāhu-samanvitā चतुर्बाहु-समन्विता (7)
Caturvaktra-manoharā चतुर्वक्त्र-मनोहरा (505)
Cetanā rūpā चेतना रुपा (417)
Chandaḥ sārā छन्दः सारा (844)
Chatuḥ-ṣaṣṭyupacārāḍhyā चतुः-षष्ट्युपचाराढ्या (235)
Cicchaktiḥ चिच्छक्तिः (416)
Cidagnikuṇḍa-saṃbhūtā चिदग्निकुण्ड-संभूता (4)
Cideka-rasa-rūpiṇī चिदेक-रस-रूपिणी (364)
Cinmayī चिन्मयी (251)
Cintāmaṇi-gṛuhāntasthā चिन्तामणि- गृहान्तस्था (57)
Citiḥ चितिः (362)
Cit-kalā चित्-कला (728)
Dadhyannāsakta-hṛdayā दध्यन्नासक्त-हृदया (512)
Dāḍimī-kusuma-prabhā दाडिमी-कुसुम-प्रभा (560)
Daharākāśa-rūpiṇī दहराकाश-रूपिणी (609)
Daitya-hantri दैत्य-हन्त्रि (599)
Daitya-śamanī दैत्य-शमनी (696)
Dākinīśvarī डाकिनीश्वरी (484)
Dakṣa-yajña-vināśinī दक्ष-यज्ञ-विनाशिनी (600)
Dākṣāyaṇī दाक्षायणी (598)
Dakṣiṇā-dakṣiṇārādhyā दक्षिणा-दक्षिणाराध्या (923)
Dakṣiṇāmūrti-rūpiṇī दक्षिणामूर्ति-रूपिणी (725)
ḍāmaryādibhi-rāvṛtā डामर्यादिभि-रावृता (498)
Daṁṣṭrojvalā दंष्ट्रोज्वला (488)
Daṇḍa-nītisthā दण्ड-नीतिस्था (608)
Darahāsojjvalan-mukhī दरहासोज्ज्वलन्-मुखी (602)
Darāndolita-dīrghākṣī दरान्दोलित-दीर्घाक्षी (601)
Darasmera-mukhāmbujā दरस्मेर-मुखाम्बुजा (924)
Daśamudrā-samārādhyā दशमुद्रा-समाराध्या (977)
Daurbhāgya-tūla-vātūlā दौर्भाग्य-तूल-वातूला (744)
Dayāmūrtī दयामूर्ती (581)
Deśa-kālā-paricchinnā देश-काला-परिच्छिन्ना (701)
Devakārya-samudyatā देवकार्य-समुद्यता (5)

Devarṣi-gaṇa- saṃghāta -stūyamānātma-vaibhavā देवर्षि-गण-संघात-स्तूयमानात्म-वैभवा (64)

Deveśī देवेशी (607)

Dhana-dhānya-vivardhinī धन-धान्य-विवर्धिनी (886)

Dhanādhyakṣā धनाध्यक्षा (885)

Dhanyā धन्या (957)

Dharā धरा (955)

Dhara-sutā धर-सुता (956)

Dharmā-dhārā धर्मा-धारा (884)

Dharmādharma-vivarjitā धर्माधर्म-विवर्जिता (255)

Dharma-vardhinī धर्म-वर्धिनी (959)

Dharmiṇī धर्मिणी (958)

Dhīrā धीरा (916)

Dhīra-samarcitā धीर-समर्चिता (917)

Dhṛtiḥ धृतिः (446)

Dhyāna-dhātṛ-dhyeya-rūpā ध्यान-धातृ-ध्येय-रूपा (254)

Dhyāna-gamyā ध्यान-गम्या (641)

Dīkṣitā दीक्षिता (695)

Divya-gandhāḍhyā दिव्य-गन्धाढ्या (631)

Divya-vigrahā दिव्य-विग्रहा (621)

Doṣa-varjitā दोष-वर्जिता (195)

Drśyarahitā द्रश्यरहिता (650)

Duḥkhahantrī दुःखहन्त्री (191)

Durācāra-śamanī दुराचार-शमनी (194)

Durādharṣā दुराधर्षा (772)

Durārādhyā दुराराध्या (771)

Durgā दुर्गा (190)

Durgamā दुर्गमा (189)

Durlabhā दुर्लभा (188)

Duṣṭadūrā दुष्टदूरा (193)

Dvaita-varjitā द्वैत-वर्जिता (668)

Dvijabṛnda-niṣevitā द्विजबृन्द-निषेविता (423)

Dyuti-dharā द्युति-धरा (768)

Ekākinī एकाकिनी (665)

Gaganāntasthā गगनान्तस्था (855)
Gambhīrā गम्भीरा (854)
Gāna-lolupā गान-लोलुपा (857)
Gaṇāmbā गणाम्बा (719)
Gandharva-sevitā ग़न्धर्व-सेविता (636)
Garvitā गर्विता (856)
Gaurī गौरी (635)
Gāyatrī गायत्री (420)
Geyacakra-rathārūḍha-mantriṇī-parisevitā गेयचक्र-रथारूढ-मन्त्रिणी-परिसेविता (69)
Gomātā गोमाता (605)
Goptrī गोप्त्री (266)
Govinda-rūpiṇī गोविन्द-रूपिणी (267)
Guḍānnaprīta-mānasā गुडान्नप्रीत-मानसा (501)
Gūḍha-gulphā गूढ-गुल्फा (42)
Guhajanma-bhūḥ गुहजन्म-भूः (606)
Guhāmbā गुहाम्बा (706)
Guhya rūpiṇī गुह्य रूपिणी (707)
Guhyā गुह्या (624)
Guhyakārādhyā गुह्यकाराध्या (720)
Guṇanidhiḥ गुणनिधिः (604)
Guṇātītā गुणातीता (961)
Guru-maṇḍala-rūpiṇī गुरु-मण्डल-रूपिणी (713)
Gurumūrtiḥ गुरुमूर्तिः (603)
Guru-priyā गुरु-प्रिया (722)
Hākinī rūpa-dhāriṇī हाकिनी रूप-धारिणी (527)
Hamsavatī-mukhya śakti-samanvitā हम्सवती-मुख्य शक्ति-समन्विता (525)
Haṁsinī हंसिनी (456)
Haranetrāgni-sandagdha-kāmasaṃjīvanauṣadhīḥ हरनेत्राग्नि-सन्दग्ध-कामसंजीवनौषधीः (84)
Haribrahmendra-sevitā हरिब्रह्मेन्द्र-सेविता (297)
Haridrānnaika-rasikā हरिद्रान्नैक-रसिका (526)
Heyopādeya-varjitā हेयोपादेय-वर्जिता (304)
Hrdayasthā हृदयस्था (595)
Hṛdyā हृद्या (303)

Hrīmatī ह्रीमती (302)

Hrīṁkārī ह्रींकारी (301)

Ī ई (712)

Iccāśakti-jñānaśakti-kriyāśakti-svaruūpiṇīइच्चाशक्ति-ज्ञानशक्ति-क्रियाशक्ति-स्वरुऊपिणी (658)

Indra-dhanuḥ-prabhā इन्द्र-धनुः-प्रभा (594)

Indragopa-parikṣipta-smaratūṇābha-jaṅghikāइन्द्रगोप-परिक्षिप्त-स्मरतूणाभ-जङ्घिका (41)

Īśvarī ईश्वरी (271)

Jaḍa-śaktiḥ जड-शक्तिः (418)

Jaḍātmikā जडात्मिका (419)

Jagaddhātrī जगद्धात्री (935)

Jāgariṇī जागरिणी (257)

Jagatī -kandā जगती -कन्दा (325)

Jālandhra-sthitā जालन्ध्र-स्थिता (378)

Jananī जननी (823)

Janma-mṛtyu-jarā-tapta-jana-viśrānti-dāyinīजन्म-मृत्यु-जरा-तप्त-जन-विश्रान्ति-दायिनी (851)

Japā-puṣpa-nibhākṛtiḥ जपा-पुष्प-निभाकृतिः (766)

Jarā-dhvānta-ravi-prabhā जरा-ध्वान्त-रवि-प्रभा (745)

Jayā ज़या (377)

Jayatsenā जयत्सेना (788)

Jñānadā ज्ञानदा (643)

Jñāna-gamyā ज्ञान-गम्या (980)

Jñāna-jñeya-svarūpiṇī ज्ञान -ज्ञेय-स्वरूपिणी (981)

Jñānamudrā ज्ञानमुद्रा (979)

Jñāna-vigrahā ज्ञान-विग्रहा (644)

Jvālāmālinikākṣipta-vahniprākāra-madhyagāज्वालामालिनिकाक्षिप्त-वह्निप्राकार-मध्यगा (71)

Kadamba-kusuma-priyā कदम्ब-कुसुम-प्रिया (323)

Kādambarī-priyā कादम्बरी-प्रिया (330)

Kadaṃbavana-vāsinī कदंबवन-वासिनी (60)

Kadhamba-mañjarī-klpta-karṇapūra-manoharāकधम्ब-मञ्जरी-क्लप्त-कर्णपूर-मनोहरा (21)

Kaivalyapada-dāyinī कैवल्यपद-दायिनी (625)

Kākinī-rūpa-dhariṇī काकिनी-रूप-धरिणी (513)

Kālahantrī कालहन्त्री (557)

Kālakaṇṭhī कालकण्ठी (464)

Kalālāpā कलालापा (328)

Kalāmālā कलामाला (794)

Kalānāthā कलानाथा (612)

Kalānidhiḥ कलानिधिः (797)

Kālarātryādi-śaktyaughavṛtā कालरात्र्यादि-शक्त्यौघवृता (491)

Kalātmikā कलात्मिका (611)

Kalāvatī कलावती (327)

Kali-kalmaṣa-nāśinī कलि-कल्मष-नाशिनी (555)

Kalpanā-rahitā कल्पना-रहिता (858)

Kalyā कल्या (903)

Kalyāṇī कल्याणी (324)

Kāmadāyinī कामदायिनी (63)

Kāmadhuk कामधुक् (795)

Kāmakalā rūpā कामकला रूपा (322)

Kāma-keli-taraṅgitā काम-केलि-तरङ्गिता (863)

Kāmakoṭikā कामकोटिका (589)

Kāmākṣī कामाक्षी (62)

Kamalākṣa-niṣevitā कमलाक्ष-निषेविता (558)

Kāma-pūjitā काम-पूजिता (375)

Kāmarūpiṇī कामरूपिणी (796)

Kāmasevitā कामसेविता (586)

Kāmeśa-baddha-māṅgalya-sūtra-śobhita-kandharāकामेश-बद्ध-माङ्गल्य-सूत्र-शोभित-कन्धरा (30)

Kāmeśa-jñāta-saubhāgya-mārdavoru-dvayānvitāकामेश-ज्ञात-सौभाग्य-मार्दवोरु-द्वयान्विता (39)

Kāmeśvara-mukhāloka-kalpita-śrīgaṇeśvarā कामेश्वर-मुखालोक-कल्पित-श्रीगणेश्वरा (77)

Kāmeśvara-prāna-nāḍīकामेश्वर-प्रान-नाडी (373)

Kāmeśvara-premaratna-maṇi-pratipaṇa-stanī कामेश्वर-प्रेमरत्न-मणि-प्रतिपण-स्तनी (33)

Kāmeśvarāstra-nirdagdha-sabhaṇḍāsura-śūnyakā कामेश्वरास्त्र-निर्दग्ध-सभण्डासुर-शून्यका (82)

Kāmyā काम्या (321)

Kanakāṅgada-keyūra-kamanīya-bhujanvitāकनकाङ्गद-केयूर-कमनीय-भुजन्विता (31)

Kanat-kanaka-tāṭaṅkā कनत्-कनक-ताटङ्का (864)

Kāntā कान्ता (329)

Kāntārdha-vigrahā कान्तार्ध-विग्रहा (861)

kaṇṭhādhaḥ kaṭiparyantha-madhyakūṭa-svarūpiṇī कण्ठाधः कटिपर्यन्थ-मध्यकूट-स्वरूपिणी (86)

Kāntiḥ कान्तिः (449)

Kāntimatī कान्तिमती (465)

Kapardinī कपर्दिनी (793)

Karāṅguli-nakhotpanna-nārāyaṇa-daśākṛitiḥकराङ्गुलि-नखोत्पन्न-नारायण-दशाकृतिः (80)

Karpūravīṭikāmodha-samākarṣi-digantarā कर्पूरवीटिकामोध-समाकर्षि-दिगन्तरा (26)

Karuṇārasa-sāgarā करुणारस-सागरा (326)

Kārya- kāraṇa-nirmuktā कार्य- कारण-निर्मुक्ता (862)

Kāṣṭhā काष्ठा (859)

Kaṭākṣa-kiṅkarī-bhūta-kamalā-koṭi-sevitā कटाक्ष-किङ्करी-भूत-कमला-कोटि-सेविता (590)

Kātyāyanī कात्यायनी (556)

Kaula-mārga-tatpara-sevitā कौल-मार्ग-तत्पर-सेविता (441)

Kaulinī कौलिनी (94)

Kaulinī-kevalā कौलिनी-केवला (925)

Kāvyakalā काव्यकला (798)

Kāvyālāpa-vinodinī काव्यालाप-विनोदिनी (613)

Kevalā केवला (623)

Khaṭvāṅgādi-praharaṇā खट्वाङ्गादि-प्रहरणा (478)

Kiricakra-rathārūḍha-daṇḍa-nāthā-puraskṛtāकिरिचक्र-रथारूढ-दण्ड-नाथा-पुरस्कृता (70)

Klīṁkārī क्लींकारी (622)

Komalākārā कोमलाकारा (437)

Komalāṅgī कोमलाङ्गी (721)

Kośanāthā कोशनाथा (690)

Krodhākāraṅkuśojvalā क्रोधाकारङ्कुशोज्वला (9)

Krodha-śamanī क्रोध-शमनी (169)

Kṛtajñā कृतज्ञा (374)

Kṣarākṣarātmikā क्षराक्षरात्मिका (757)
Kṣaya-vinirmuktā क्षय-विनिर्मुक्ता (867)
Kṣaya-vṛddhi-vinirmuktā क्षय-वृद्धि-विनिर्मुक्ता (344)
Kṣetra-kṣetrajña-pālinī क्षेत्र-क्षेत्रज्ञ-पालिनी (343)
Kṣetra-pāla-samarcitā क्षेत्र-पाल-समर्चिता (345)
Kṣetra-svarūpā क्षेत्र-स्वरूपा (341)
Kṣipra-prasādinī क्षिप्र-प्रसादिनी (869)
Kṣobhiṇī क्षोभिणी (466)
Kṣtreśī क्ष्त्रेशी (342)
Kulakuṇḍālayā कुलकुण्डालया (440)
Kulāmṛtaika-rasikā कुलामृतैक-रसिका (90)
Kulāṅganā कुलाङ्गना (92)
Kulāntasthā कुलान्तस्था (93)
Kula-rūpiṇī कुल-रूपिणी (897)
Kulasaṅketa-pālinī कुलसङ्केत-पालिनी (91)
Kulayoginī कुलयोगिनी (95)
Kuleśvarī कुलेश्वरी (439)
Kulottīrṇā कुलोत्तीर्णा (714)
Kumāra-gaṇanāthāmbā कुमार-गणनाथाम्बा (442)
Kuṇḍalinī कुण्डलिनी (110)
Kūrma-pṛṣṭha-jayiṣṇu-prapadānvitā कूर्म-पृष्ठ-जयिष्णु-प्रपदान्विता (43)
Kurukullā कुरुकुल्ला (438)
Kuruvinda-maṇiśreṇī-kanat-koṭīra-maṇḍitāकुरुविन्द-मणिश्रेणी-कनत्-कोटीर-मण्डिता (14)
Kuśalā कुशला (436)
Kūṭasthā कूटस्था (896)
Lajjā लज्जा (740)
Lākinyambā-svarūpiṇī लाकिन्यम्बा-स्वरूपिणी (503)
Lakṣya-roma-latādhāratā-samunneya-madhyamāलक्ष्य-रोम-लताधारता-समुन्नेय-मध्यमा (35)
Lalitāmbikā ललिताम्बिका (1000)
Lāsya-priyā लास्य-प्रिया (738)
Laya-karī लय-करी (739)
Līlā-klṛpta-brahmāṇḍa-maṇḍalā लीला-क्लृप्त-ब्रह्माण्ड-मण्डला (648)
Līlā-vigraha-dhāriṇī लीला-विग्रह-धारिणी (865)

Līlā-vinodinī लीला-विनोदिनी (966)

Lobhanāśinī लोभनाशिनी (171)

Loga-yātrā-vidhāyinī लोग-यात्रा-विधायिनी (664)

Lokātītā लोकातीता (960)

Lolākṣī-kāma-rūpinī लोलाक्षी-काम-रूपिनी (454)

Lopāmudrārcitā लोपामुद्रार्चिता (647)

Mada-ghūrṇita-raktākṣī मद-घूर्णित-रक्ताक्षी (432)

Madanāśinī मदनाशिनी (159)

Mada-pāṭala-ganda-bhuḥ मद-पाटल-गन्द-भुः (433)

Mada-śālinī मद-शालिनी (431)

Madhumatī मधुमती (717)

Madhu-prītā मधु-प्रीता (510)

Mādhvīpānālasāमाध्वीपानालसा(575)

Mattā मत्ता (576)

Madhyamā मध्यमा (370)

Mahā- yāga-kramārādhyā महा-याग-क्रमाराध्या (230)

Mahā-balā महा-बला (222)

Mahā-bhairava-pūjitā महा-भैरव-पूजिता (231)

Mahā-bhogā महा-भोगा (219)

Mahā-buddhiḥ महा-बुद्धिः (223)

Mahā-catuḥ-ṣaṣṭi-koṭi-yoginī-gana-sevithāमहा-चतुः-षष्टि-कोटि-योगिनी-गन-सेविथा (237)

Mahādevi महादेवि (209)

Mahāgaṇeśa-nirbhinna-vighnayantrā-praharṣitāमहागणेश-निर्भिन्न-विघ्नयन्त्रा-प्रहर्षिता (78)

Mahā-grāsā महा-ग्रासा (752)

Mahaiśvaryā महैश्वर्या (220)

Mahā-kailāsa-nilayā महा-कैलास-निलया (578)

Mahā-kālī महा-काली (751)

Mahā-kāmeśa-mahiṣī महा-कामेश-महिषी (233)

Mahā-kāmeśa-nayana-kumudahlāda-kaumudī महा-कामेश-नयन-कुमुदह्लाद-कौमुदी (403)

Mahālakṣmī महालक्ष्मी (210)

Mahā-lāvanya-śevadhiḥ महा-लावन्य-शेवधिः (48)

Mahā-mantrā महा-मन्त्रा (227)

Mahā-māyā महा-माया (215)

Mahānīyā महानीया (580)

Mahāpadmāṭavī-saṃsthā महापद्माटवी-संस्था (59)

Mahā-pāśupatāstrāgni-nirdagdhāsura-sainikāमहा-पाशुपतास्त्राग्नि-निर्दग्धासुर-सैनिका (81)

Mahāpātaka-naśinī महापातक-नशिनी (214)

Mahā-pralaya-sakṣiṇī महा-प्रलय-सक्षिणी (571)

Mahāpūjyā महापूज्या (213)

Mahā-ratiḥ महा-रतिः (218)

Mahā-rūpā महा-रूपा (212)

Mahā-śaktiḥ महा-शक्तिः (217)

Mahāsaktiḥ महासक्तिः (109)

Mahā-sāmrājya-śālinī महा-साम्राज्य-शालिनी (582)

Mahā-śanā महा-शना (753)

Mahāsanā महासना (229)

Mahā-sattvā महा-सत्त्वा (216)

Mahā-siddhiḥ महा-सिद्धिः (224)

Mahā-tantrā महा-तन्त्रा (226)

Mahatī महती (774)

Mahā-tripura-sundarī महा-त्रिपुर-सुन्दरी (234)

Mahā-vidyā महा-विद्या (584)

Mahāvīrendra-varadā महावीरेन्द्र-वरदा (493)

Mahā-vīryā महा-वीर्या (221)

Mahā-yantrā महा-यन्त्रा (228)

Mahā-yogeśvareśvarī महा-योगेश्वरेश्वरी (225)

Maheśi महेशी (932)

Maheśvara-mahākalpa-mahātāṇḍava-sakṣiṇīमहेश्वर-महाकल्प-महाताण्डव-सक्षिणी (232)

Maheśvarī महेश्वरी (750)

Māheśvarī माहेश्वरी (208)

Mahī मही (718)

Maitryadi-vāsanā-labhyā मैत्र्यदि-वासना-लभ्या (570)

Majjā-saṁsthā मज्जा-संस्था (524)

Malayācala vāsinī मलयाचल वासिनी (458)

Mālinī मालिनी (455)

Mamatā-hantrī ममता-हन्त्री (165)

Māṁsa-niṣṭā मांस-निष्टा (500)

Manasvinī मनस्विनी (930)

Mānavatī मानवती (931)

Mandāra-kusuma-priyā मन्दार-कुसुम-प्रिया (776)

Mandasmita-prabhāpūra-majjatkāmeśa-mānasāमन्दस्मित-प्रभापूर-मज्जत्कामेश-मानसा (28)

Maṅgalākṭtiḥ मङ्गलाकृतिः (933)

Māṇikya-mukuṭākāra-jānudvaya-virājitāमाणिक्य-मुकुटाकार-जानुद्वय-विराजिता (40)

Maṇipūrābja-nilayā मणिपूराब्ज-निलया (495)

Maṇipūrāntha-ruditā मणिपूरान्थ-रुदिता (101)

Manomayī मनोमयी (941)

Manonmanī मनोन्मनी (207)

Manorūpekṣu-kodaṇḍā मनोरूपेक्षु-कोदण्डा (10)

Mano-vacāmagocarā मनो-वचामगोचरा (415)

Mantra-sārā मन्त्र-सारा (846)

Mantriṇī-nyasta-rājyadhūḥ मन्त्रिणी-न्यस्त-राज्यधूः (786)

Mantriṇyambā-viracita-viśaṅgavadha-toṣitāमन्त्रिण्यम्बा-विरचित-विशङ्गवध-तोषिता (75)

Manu-vidyā मनु-विद्या (238)

Marālī-manda-gamanā मराली-मन्द-गमना (47)

Mārtāṇḍa-bhairavārādhyā मार्ताण्ड-भैरवाराध्या (785)

Mātā माता (457)

Matiḥ मतिः (445)

Matṛkā-varna-rūpiṇī मतृका-वर्न-रूपिणी (577)

Māyā माया (716)

Medhā मेधा (538)

Medo-niṣṭā मेदो-निष्टा (509)

Meru-nilayā मेरु-निलया (775)

Mithyā-jagadadhiṣṭānā मिथ्या-जगदधिष्टाना (735)

Mitra-rūpiṇī मित्र-रूपिणी (565)

Mohanāśinī मोहनाशिनी (163)

Mohinī मोहिनी (562)

Mṛḍānī मृडानी (564)

Mṛḍapriyā मृडप्रिया (211)

Mṛgākṣī मृगाक्षी (561)

Mṛtyu-dāru-kuṭhārikā मृत्यु-दारु-कुठारिका (749)

Mṛtyu-mathanī मृत्यु-मथनी (181)

Mṛuṇāla-mṛdu-dorlatā मृणाल-मृदु-दोर्लता (579)

Mudgaudanāsakta-cittā मुद्गौदनासक्त-चित्ता (519)

Mugdhā मुग्धा (868)

Mukacandra-kalaṇkābha-mṛganābhi-viśeṣakāमुकचन्द्र-कलण्काभ-मृगनाभि-विशेषका (16)

Mukhyā मुख्या (563)

Muktidā मुक्तिदा (736)

Mukti-nilayā मुक्ति-निलया (839)

Mukti-rūpiṇī मुक्ति-रूपिणी (737)

Mukundā मुकुन्दा (838)

Mūlādhāraika-nilayā मूलाधारैक-निलया (99)

Mūlādhārambujā-rūḍhāa मूलाधारम्बुजा-रूढा (514)

Mūlakuṭatraya-kalebarā मूलकुटत्रय-कलेबरा (89)

Mūlamantrātmikā मूलमन्त्रात्मिका (88)

Mūlaprakṛtiḥ मूलप्रकृतिः (397)

Mūla-vigraha-rūpiṇī मूल-विग्रह-रूपिणी (840)

Muni-mānasa-haṃsikā मुनि-मानस-हंसिका (816)

Mūrtā मूर्ता (813)

Nābhyālavāla-romāli-latā-phala-kucadvayāनाभ्यालवाल-रोमालि-लता-फल-कुचद्वया (34)

Nāda-rūpā नाद-रूपा (299)

Nāda-rūpiṇī नाद-रूपिणी (901)

Naiṣkarmyā नैष्कर्म्या (900)

Nakhadīdhiti-saṁchanna-namajjana-tamoguṇāनखदीधिति-संछन्न-नमज्जन-तमोगुणा (44)

Nalinī नलिनी (460)

Nāma-pārāyaṇa-prītā vनाम-पारायण-प्रीता (732)

Nāma-rūpa-vivarjitā नाम-रूप-विवर्जिता (300)

Nandinī नन्दिनी (450)

Nandi-vidyā नन्दि-विद्या (733)

Nārāyaṇī नारायणी (298)

Naṭeśvarī नटेश्वरी (734)

Navacampaka-puṣpābha-nāsadaṇḍa-virājitāनवचम्पक-पुष्पाभ-नासदण्ड-विराजिता (19)

Navavidruma-bimbaśrī-nyakāri-radanacadāनवविद्रुम-बिम्बश्री-न्यकारि-रदनचदा (24)

Niḥsaṃśayā निःसंशया (172)

Niḥsīma-mahimnā निःसीम-महिम्ना (429)

Nijājñā-rūpa-nigamā निजाज्ञा-रूप-निगमा (287)

Nijāruṇa-prabhā-pūra-majjad-brahmāṇḍa-manḍalāनिजारुण-प्रभा-पूर-मज्जद्-ब्रह्माण्ड-मन्डला (12)

Nija-sallāpa-mādurya-vinirbhartsita-kacchapīनिज-सल्लाप-मादुर्य-विनिर्भर्त्सित-कच्छपी (27)

Nikhileśvarī निखिलेश्वरी (569)

Nīlacikurā नीलचिकुरा (185)

Nirābādhā निराबाधा (177)

Nirādhārā निराधारा (132)

Nīrāgā नीरागा (156)

Nirahaṃkārā निरहंकारा (161)

Nirākārā निराकारा (137)

Nirākulā निराकुला (138)

Nirālambā निरालम्बा (877)

Nirāmayā निरामया (876)

Nirañjanā निरञ्जना (133)

Nirantarā निरन्तरा (151)

Nirapāyā निरपाया (186)

Nirāśrayā निराश्रया (147)

Niratyayā निरत्यया (187)

Niravadhyā निरवध्या (150)

Nirbhavā निर्भवा (174)

Nirbhedā निर्भेदा (178)

Nirdvaitā निर्द्वैता (667)

Nirguṇā निर्गुणा (139)

Nīriśvarā नीरिश्वरा (155)

Nirlepā निर्लेपा (134)

Nirlobhā निर्लोभा (170)

Nirmadā निर्मदा (158)

Nirmalā निर्मला (135)
Nirmamā निर्ममा (164)
Nirmohā निर्मोहा (162)
Nirnāśā निर्नाशा (180)
Nirupādhiḥ निरुपाधिः (154)
Nirupamā निरुपमा (389)
Nirupaplavā निरुपप्लवा (143)
Nirvāṇa-sukha-dāyinī निर्वाण-सुख-दायिनी (390)
Nirvikalpā निर्विकल्पा (176)
Nirvikārā निर्विकारा (145)
Niścintā निश्चिन्ता (160)
Niṣkalā निष्कला (140)
Niṣkalaṅkā निष्कलङ्का (153)
Niṣkāmā निष्कामा (142)
Niṣkāraṇā निष्कारणा (152)
Niṣkriyā निष्क्रिया (182)
Niṣkrodhā निष्क्रोधा (168)
Niṣpāpā निष्पापा (166)
Niṣparigrahā निष्परिग्रहा (183)
Niṣprapañcā निष्प्रपञ्चा (146)
Nistraiguṇyā निस्त्रैगुण्या (789)
Nistulā निस्तुला (184)
Nityā नित्या (136)
Nitya-buddhā नित्य-बुद्धा (149)
Nitya-klinnā नित्य-क्लिन्ना (388)
Nitya-muktā नित्य-मुक्ता (144)
Nityā-pārākramāṭopa-nirīkṣaṇa-samutsukā नित्या-पाराक्रमाटोप-निरीक्षण-समुत्सुका (73)
Nityā-ṣoḍaśikā-rūpā नित्या-षोडशिका-रूपा (391)
Nitya-śuddhā नित्य-शुद्धा (148)
Nitya-tṛptā नित्य-तृप्ता (566)
Nitya-yauvanā नित्य-यौवना (430)
Niyantrī नियन्त्री (568)
Oḍyāṇa-pīṭha-nilayā ओड्याण-पीठ-निलया (379)
Ojovatī ओजोवती (767)

Pada-dvaya-prabhā-jāla-parākṛta-saroruhā पद-द्वय-प्रभा-जाल-पराकृत-सरोरुहा (45)

Padmanābha-sahodarī पद्मनाभ-सहोदरी (280)

Padma-nayanā पद्म-नयना (247)

Padmarāga-sama-prabhā पद्मराग-सम-प्रभा (248)

Padmarāga-śilādharśa-paribhāvi-kapolabhūḥ पद्मराग-शिलाधर्श-परिभावि-कपोलभूः (23)

Padmāsanā पद्मासना (278)

Pañca-bhuteśī पञ्च-भुतेशी (949)

Pañca-brahmāsana-sthitā पञ्च-ब्रह्मासन-स्थिता (58)

Pañca-brahma-svarūpiṇī पञ्च-ब्रह्म-स्वरूपिणी (250)

Pañca-kośāntra-sthitā पञ्च-कोशान्त्र-स्थिता (428)

Pañcakṛtya-parāyaṇā पञ्चकृत्य-परायणा (274)

Pañcamī पञ्चमी (948)

Pañca-preta-mañcādhi-śāyinī पञ्च-प्रेत-मञ्चाधि-शायिनी (947)

Pañca-pretāsanāsīnā पञ्च-प्रेतासनासीना (249)

Pañca-saṃkhyopacāriṇī पञ्च-संख्योपचारिणी (950)

Pañcāśat-pīṭha-rūpiṇī पञ्चाशत्-पीठ-रूपिणी (833)

Pañcatanmātra-sāyakā पञ्चतन्मात्र-सायका (11)

Pañca-vaktrā पञ्च-वक्त्रा (515)

Pañca-yajña-priyā पञ्च-यज्ञ-प्रिया (946)

Pāpanāśinī पापनाशिनी (167)

Pāparaṇya-davānalā पापरण्य-दवानला (743)

Parā परा (366)

Paradevatā परदेवता (369)

Parākāśā पराकाशा (782)

Paramā परमा (618)

Paramānandā परमानन्दा (252)

Paramantra-vibhedinī परमन्त्र-विभेदिनी (812)

Paramāṇuḥ परमाणुः (808)

Paraṃdhāma परंधाम (807)

Parameśvarī परमेश्वरी (396)

Paraṃjyotiḥ परंज्योतिः (806)

Parā-modā परा-मोदा (940)

Paramodārā परमोदारा (939)

Parā-niṣṭhā परा निष्ठा-(573)

Parāparā परापरा (790)
Parāśaktiḥपराशक्तिः (572)
Parātparā परात्परा (809)
Pārvatī पार्वती (246)
Pāśa hantrī पाश हन्त्री (811)
Pāśa hastā पाश हस्ता (810)
Paśuloka-bhayankarī पशुलोक-भयन्करी (482)
Paśu-pāśa-vimocanī पशु-पाश-विमोचनी (354)
Paśyantī पश्यन्ती (368)
Pāṭalī-kusuma-priyā पाटली-कुसुम-प्रिया (773)
Pāvanākṛitiḥ पावनाकृतिः (619)
Pāyasanna-priyā पायसन्न-प्रिया (480)
Pītavarṇā पीतवर्णा (507)
Prabhārūpā प्रभारूपा (394)
Prabhāvatī प्रभावती (393)
Pracaṇḍā प्रचण्डा (827)
Pragalbhā प्रगल्भा (938)
Prajñāna-ghana-rūpiṇī प्रज्ञान-घन-रूपिणी (574)
Prājñātmikā प्राज्ञात्मिका (261)
Prakaṭākṛtiḥ प्रकटाकृतिः (830)
Prāṇadā प्राणदा (783)
Prāṇadātrī प्राणदात्री (832)
Prāṇa-rūpiṇī प्राण-रूपिणी (784)
Prāṇeśvarī प्राणेश्वरी (831)
Prasavitrī प्रसवित्री (826)
Prasiddhā प्रसिद्धा (395)
Pratipan-mukhya-rākānta-tithi-maṇḍala-pujitā प्रतिपन्-मुख्य-राकान्त-तिथि-मण्डल-पुजिता (610)
Pratiṣṭā प्रतिष्टा (829)
Pratyag-rūpā प्रत्यग्-रूपा (781)
Pratyak-citī-rūpā प्रत्यक्-चिती-रूपा (367)
Prema-rūpā प्रेम-रूपा (730)
Priyaṃkarī प्रियंकरी (731)
Priya-vratā प्रिय-व्रता (770)

Pūjyā पूज्या (803)
Pulomajārcitā पुलोमजार्चिता (545)
Puṇyakīrtiḥ पुण्यकीर्तिः (542)
Puṇyalabhyā पुण्यलभ्या (543)
Puṇyāpuṇya-phalapradā पुण्यापुण्य-फलप्रदा (288)
Puṇya-śravaṇa-kīrtanā पुण्य-श्रवण-कीर्तना (544)
Purātanā पुरातना (802)
Pūrṇā पूर्णा (292)
Puruṣārtha-pradā पुरुषार्थ-प्रदा (291)
Pūrvajā पूर्वजा (975)
Puṣkarā पुष्करा (804)
Puṣkarekṣaṇā पुष्करेक्षणा (805)
Puṣṭā पुष्टा (801)
Puṣṭiḥ पुष्टिः (444)
Rāgamathanī रागमथनी (157)
Rāgasvarūpa-pāśāḍhyā रागस्वरूप-पाशाढ्या (8)
Rahastarpaṇa-tarpitā रहस्तर्पण-तर्पिता (382)
Rahoyāga-kramāradhyā रहोयाग-क्रमारध्या (381)
Rājapīṭha-niveśita-nijāśritā राजपीठ-निवेशित-निजाश्रिता (688)
Rājarājārcitā राजराजार्चिता (305)
Rāja-rājeśśvarī राज-राजेश्स्वरी (684)
Rājat-kṛpā राजत्-कृपा (687)
Rājayalakṣmīḥ राजयलक्ष्मीः (689)
Rājīvalocanā राजीवलोचना (308)
Rājñī राज्ञी (306)
Rājya-dāyinī राज्य-दायिनी (685)
Rājya-vallabhā राज्य-वल्लभा (686)
Rākenduvadanā राकेन्दुवदना (314)
Rākiṇyambā-svarūpiṇī राकिण्यम्बा-स्वरूपिणी (494)
Rakṣākarī रक्षाकरी (317)
Rākṣasaghnī राक्षसघ्नी (318)
Raktavarnā रक्तवर्ना (499)
Ramā रमा (313)
Rāmā रामा (319)

Ramaṇa-lampaṭā रमण-लम्पटा (320)

Ramaṇī रमणी (310)

Rambhādi-vanditā रम्भादि-वन्दिता (741)

Ramyā रम्या (307)

Raṇat-kiṅkiṇi-mekhalā रणत्-किङ्किणि-मेख़ला (312)

Rañjanī रञ्जनी (309)

Rasajñā रसज्ञा (799)

Rasa-śevadhiḥ रस-शेवधिः (800)

Rasyā रस्या (311)

Ratipriyā रतिप्रिया (316)

Ratirūpā रतिरूपा (315)

Ratna-graiveya-cintāka-lola-muktā-palānvitāरत्न-ग्रैवेय-चिन्ताक-लोल-मुक्ता-पलान्विता (32)

Ratna-kiṅkiṇikā-ramya-raśanā-dāma-bhūṣitāरत्न-किङ्किणिका-रम्य-रशना-दाम-भूषिता (38)

Raviprakhyā रविप्रख्या (596)

Roga-parvata-dhambholiḥ रोग-पर्वत-धम्भोलिः (748)

Rudhira-saṁsthitā रुधिर-संस्थिता (490)

Rudra- rūpā रुद्र- रूपा (269)

Rudragranthi-vibhedinī रुद्रग्रन्थि-विभेदिनी (104)

Sacāmara-ramā-vāṇī-savyadakṣiṇa-sevitāसचामर-रमा-वाणी-सव्यदक्षिण-सेविता (614)

Saccidānanda-rūpiṇī सच्चिदानन्द-रूपिणी (700)

Sadācāra-pravartikā सदाचार-प्रवर्तिका (356)

ṣaḍadhvātīta-rūpiṇī षडध्वातीत-रूपिणी (991)

ṣaḍaṅga-devatāyuktā षडङ्ग-देवतायुक्ता (386)

ṣaḍānanā षडानना (523)

Sadasad-rūpa-dhāriṇī सदसद्-रूप-धारिणी (661)

Sadāśivā सदाशिवा (272)

Sadāśiva-kuṭumbinī सदाशिव-कुटुम्बिनी (911)

Sadāśiva-pativratā सदाशिव-पतिव्रता (709)

Sadā-tuṣṭā सदा-तुष्टा (921)

Sadgati-pradā सद्गति-प्रदा (201)

ṣāḍguṇya-paripūritā षाड्गुण्य-परिपूरिता (387)

Sādhu साधु (711)

Sādhvī साध्वी (128)

Sadoditā सदोदिता (920)

Sadyaḥ-prasāidinī सद्यः-प्रसादिनी (383)

Sāgara-mekhalā सागर-मेखला (694)

Sahasradala-padmasthā सहस्रदल-पद्मस्था (528)

Sahasrākṣī सहस्राक्षी (283)

Sahasrapād सहस्रपाद् (284)

*Sahasrāra*mbujārūḍhā सहस्राराम्बुजारूढा (105)

Sahasra-śīrṣa-vadanā सहस्र-शीर्ष-वदना (282)

Śailendra-tanayā शैलेन्द्र-तनया (634)

Sakalāgama-saṃdoha-śukti-saṃputa-mauktikāसकलागम-संदोह-शुक्ति-संपुट-मौक्तिका (290)

Sākinyambā-svarupiṇī साकिन्यम्बा-स्वरुपिणी (520)

Sākṣivarjitā साक्षिवर्जिता (385)

Śakti-kūṭaikatāpanna-kaṭyadhobhāga-dhārinīशक्ति-कूटैकतापन्न-कट्यधोभाग-धारिनी (87)

Sāmagāna-priyā सामगान-प्रिया (909)

Samānādhika-varjitā समानाधिक-वर्जिता (198)

Sāmarasya- parāyaṇā सामरस्य-परायणा (792)

Samasta-bhakta-sukhadā समस्त-भक्त-सुखदा (502)

Śamātmikā शमात्मिका (963)

Samayācāra-tatparā समयाचार-तत्परा (98)

Samayāntasthā समयान्तस्था (97)

Śāṃbhavī शांभवी (122)

Śambhu-mohinī शम्भु-मोहिनी (954)

Saṃhārinī संहारिनी (268)

Saṃhṛtāśeṣa-pāṣaṇḍā संहृताशेष-पाषण्डा (355)

Śāṃkarī शांकरी (126)

Sampatkarī-samārūḍha-sindhura-vraja-sevitāसम्पत्करी-समारूढ-सिन्धुर-व्रज-सेविता (66)

Saṃpradāyeśvarī संप्रदायेश्वरी (710)

Sāmrājya-dāyinī साम्राज्य-दायिनी (692)

Samsāra-paṅka-nirmagna-samuddharaṇa-paṇḍitāसम्सार-पङ्क-निर्मग्न-समुद्धरण-पण्डिता (880)

Saṃśayaghnī संशयघ्नी (173)

Sanakādi-samārādhyā सनकादि-समाराध्या (726)
Sandhyā सन्ध्या (422)
Sāndrakaruṇā सान्द्रकरुणा (197)
Śantā शन्ता (141)
Śāntiḥ शान्तिः (447)
Śantimatī शन्तिमती (131)
Śantyatīta-kalātmikā शन्त्यतीत-कलात्मिका (853)
Śaraccandranibhānanā शरच्चन्द्रनिभानना (129)
Śāradārādhyā शारदाराध्या (123)
Sarasvatī सरस्वती (704)
Śarmadā शर्मदा (953)
Śarmadāyinī शर्मदायिनी (125)
Sarvābharaṇa-bhūṣitā सर्वाभरण-भूषिता (51)
Sarvādhārā सर्वाधारा (659)
Sarvagā सर्वगा (702)
Sarvajñā सर्वज्ञा (196)
Sarva-loka-vaśankari सर्व-लोक-वशंकरी (697)
Sarva-lokeśī सर्व-लोकेशी (758)
Sarva-maṅgalā सर्व-मङ्गला (200)
Sarva-mantra-svarūpiṇī सर्व-मन्त्र-स्वरूपिणी (204)
Sarva-mayī सर्व-मयी (203)
Sarva-mohinī सर्व-मोहिनी (703)
Sarva-mṛtyu-nivāriṇī सर्व-मृत्यु-निवारिणी (552)
Śarvāṇī शर्वाणी (124)
Sarvāntaryāmiṇī सर्वान्तर्यामिणी (819)
Sarvānullaṅghya-śāsanā सर्वानुल्लङ्घ्य-शासना (995)
Sarvāpad-vinivāriṇī सर्वापद्-विनिवारिणी (913)
Sarvārtha-dātrī सर्वार्थ-दात्री (698)
Sarvāruṇā सर्वारुणा (49)
Sarvaśakti-mayī सर्वशक्ति-मयी (199)
Sarva-tantra- rūpā सर्व-तन्त्र- रूपा (206)
Sarva-tantreśī सर्व-तन्त्रेशी (724)
Sarvātītā सर्वातीता (962)
Sarvatomukhī सर्वतोमुखी (532)

Sarvaudana-prīta-cittā सर्वौदन-प्रीत-चित्ता (533)
Sarva-varṇopa-śobhitā सर्व-वर्णोप-शोभिता (529)
Sarvāvasthā-vivarjitā सर्वावस्था-विवर्जिता (263)
Sarva-vedānta-saṁvedyā सर्व-वेदान्त-संवेद्या (645)
Sarva-vyādhi-praśamanī सर्व-व्याधि-प्रशमनी (551)
Sarva-yantrātmikā सर्व-यन्त्रात्मिका (205)
Sarvāyudha-dharā सर्वायुध-धरा (530)
Sarveśvarī सर्वेश्वरी (202)
Sarvopādhi-vinirmuktā सर्वोपाधि-विनिर्मुक्ता (708)
Sarvopaniṣadudghuṣṭā सर्वोपनिषदुद्घुष्टा (852)
Śāstramayī शास्त्रमयी (705)
Śāstra-sārā शास्त्र-सारा (845)
Śāśvataiśvaryā शाश्वतैश्वर्या (952)
Śāśvatī शाश्वती (951)
ṣaṭcakropari-samsthitā षट्चक्रोपरि-सम्स्थिता (108)
Satī सती (820)
Śātodarī शातोदरी (130)
Satya rūpā सत्य रूपा (818)
Satyajñānānanda rūpā सत्यज्ञानानन्द रूपा (791)
Satyānanda-svarūpiṇī सत्यानन्द-स्वरूपिणी (646)
Satyasandhā सत्यसन्धा (693)
Satya-vratā सत्य-व्रता (817)
Sāvitrī सावित्री (699)
Savyāpasavya-mārgasthā सव्यापसव्य-मार्गस्था (912)
Siddha-mātā सिद्ध-माता (473)
Siddha-vidyā सिद्ध- विद्या (472)
Siddheśvarī सिद्धेश्वरी (471)
Sindūra-tilakāñcitā सिन्दूर-तिलकाञ्चिता (632)
Siñjāna-maṇi-mañjīra-maṇḍita-srīpadāmbujāसिञ्जान-मणि-मञ्जीर-मण्डित-स्रीपदाम्बुजा (46)
Śiraḥsthitā शिरःस्थिता (591)
Śiṣṭapūjitā शिष्टपूजिता (412)
Śiṣṭeṣṭā शिष्टेष्टा (411)
Śiva शिवा (53)

Śivadūtī शिवदूती (405)
Śiva-jñāna-pradāyinī शिव-ज्ञान-प्रदायिनी (727)
Śiva-kāmeśvarāṅkasthā शिव-कामेश्वराङ्कस्था (52)
Śivaṁkarī शिवंकरी (408)
Śivamūrtiḥ शिवमूर्तिः (407)
Śivaparā शिवपरा (410)
Śivapriyā शिवप्रिया (409)
Śivārādhyā शिवाराध्या (406)
Śiva-śakty-aikya-rūpiṇī शिव-शक्त्यैक्य-रूपिणी (999)
Smṛtiḥ स्मृतिः (540)
Snigdhaudana-priyā स्निग्धौदन-प्रिया (492)
Śobhanā शोभना (462)
Śobhanā-sulabhā-gatiḥ शोभना-सुलभा-गतिः (683)
Somyā सोम्या (910)
Śrī Cakra-rāja-nilayā श्री चक्र-राज-निलया (996)
Śrī Mahārājñī श्री महाराज्ञी (2)
Śrī Mātā श्री माता (1)
Śrī Śivā श्री शिवा (998)
Śrīkaṇṭhārdha-śarīriṇī श्रिकण्ठार्ध-शरीरिणी (392)
Śrīkarī श्रीकरी (127)
Śrīmadvāgbhava-kūṭaika-svarūpa-mukha-paṅkajā श्रीमद्वाग्भव-कूटैक-स्वरूप-मुख-पङ्कजा (85)
Śrīman-nagara-nāyikā श्रीमन्-नगर-नायिका (56)
Śrīmat Siṃhāsaneśvarī श्रीमत् सिंहासनेश्वरी (3)
*Śrī*mat-tripura-sundarī श्रीमत्-त्रिपुर-सुन्दरी (997)
Śrī-ṣoḍaśākṣarī-vidyā श्री-षोडशाक्षरी-विद्या (587)
Śrī-vidyā श्री-विद्या (585)
śṛṅgāra-rasa- saṁpūrṇā शृङ्गार-रस-संपूर्णा (376)
Sṛṣṭi-kartrī सृष्टि-कर्त्री (264)
Śrutiḥ श्रुतिः (539)
Śruti-saṃstuta-vaibhavā श्रुति-संस्तुत-वैभवा (929)
Śruti-sīmanta-sindūrī-kṛta-pādābja-dhūlikāश्रुति-सीमन्त-सिन्दूरी-कृत-पादाब्ज-धूलिका (289)
Stanabhāra-dalanmadhya-paṭṭabandha-valitrayāस्तनभार-दलन्मध्य-पट्टबन्ध-वलित्रया (36)

Stotra-priyā स्तोत्र-प्रिया (927)

Stuti matī स्तुति मती (928)

Subhagā सुभगा (761)

Subhakarī सुभकरी (682)

Subhrūḥ सुभ्रूः (461)

Śuddhā शुद्धा (765)

Śuddhamānasā शुद्धमानसा (973)

Śuddha-vidhyāṅkurākāra-dhvijapakṅti-dvayojvalāशुद्ध-विध्याङ्कुराकार-ध्विजपक्ङ्ति-द्वयोज्वला (25)

Sudhā-sāgara-madhyasthā सुधा-सागर-मध्यस्था (61)

Sudhāsārabhi-varṣiṇī सुधासारभि-वर्षिणी (106)

Sudhāsrutiḥ सुधास्रुतिः (879)

Sukhakarī सुखकरी (968)

Sukhapradā सुखप्रदा (192)

Sukhārādhyā सुखाराध्या (681)

Śukla-saṁsthitā शुक्ल-संस्थिता (531)

Śukla-varṇā शुक्ल-वर्णा (522)

Śūkṣmarūpiṇī शूक्ष्मरूपिणी (467)

Śulādyāyudha-saṁpannā शुलाद्यायुध-संपन्ना (506)

Sumaṅgalī सुमङ्गली (967)

Sumeru-madhya-śṛṅgasthā सुमेरु-मध्य-शृङ्गस्था (55)

Sumukhī सुमुखी (459)

Supratiṣṭā सुप्रतिष्टा (660)

Suptā सुप्ता (260)

Suranāyikā सुरनायिका (463)

Suvāsinī सुवासिनी (970)

Suvāsinyarcana-prītā सुवासिन्यर्चन-प्रीता (971)

Suveṣāḍhyā सुवेषाढ्या (969)

Svabhāva-madhurā स्वभाव-मधुरा (915)

Svadhā स्वधा (536)

Svādhīna-vallabhā स्वाधीन-वल्लभा (54)

Svādhiṣṭānāmbuja-gatā स्वाधिष्टानाम्बुज-गता (504)

Svāhā स्वाहा (535)

Svapantī स्वपन्ती (258)

Svaprakāśā स्वप्रकाशा (414)
Svargāpavargadā स्वर्गापवर्गदा (764)
Svarṇa-garbhā स्वर्ण-गर्भा (638)
Svasthā स्वस्था (914)
Svastimatī स्वस्तिमती (448)
Svatantrā स्वतन्त्रा (723)
Svātmānanda-lavī-bhūta-brahmādyānanda-santatiḥस्वात्मानन्द-लवी-भूत-ब्रह्माद्यानन्द-सन्ततिः (365)
Svātmārāmā स्वात्मारामा (878)
Śyāmābhā श्यामाभा (486)
Taḍillatā-samaruciḥ तडिल्लता-समरुचिः (107)
Taijasātmikā तैजसात्मिका (259)
Talodarī तलोदरी (847)
Tāmbhūla-pūrita-mukhī ताम्भूल-पूरित-मुखी (559)
Tamopahā तमोपहा (361)
Tanumadhyā तनुमध्या (360)
Tāpasārādhyā तापसाराध्या (359)
Tāpatrayāgni-santapta-samāhlādana-candrikāतापत्रयाग्नि-सन्तप्त-समाह्लादन-चन्द्रिका (357)
Tārākānthi-tiraskāri-nāsabharaṇa-bhāsurāराकान्थि-तिरस्कारि-नासभरण-भासुरा (20)
Taruṇāditya-pāṭalā तरुणादित्य-पाटला (922)
Taruṇī तरुणी (358)
Tat तत् (425)
Tāṭaṅka-yugalī-bhūta-tapanoḍupa-maṇḍalāताटङ्क-युगली-भूत-तपनोडुप-मण्डला (22)
Tatpada-lakṣyārthā तत्पद-लक्ष्यार्था (363)
Tattvādikā तत्त्वादिका (906)
Tattvamartha-svarūpiṇī तत्त्वमर्थ-स्वरूपिणी (908)
Tattvamayī तत्त्वमयी (907)
Tatvāsanā तत्वासना (424)
Tejovatī तेजोवती (452)
Tirodhānakarī तिरोधानकरी (270)
Trayī त्रयी (872)
Tridaśeśvarī त्रिदशेश्वरी (629)
Tri-guṇā त्रि-गुणा (984)

Triguṇātmikā त्रिगुणात्मिका (763)
Trijagad vandyā त्रिजगद् वन्द्या (627)
Trikhaṇḍeśī त्रिखण्डेशी (983)
Trikoṇagā त्रिकोणगा (986)
Trikoṇāntara-dīpikā त्रिकोणान्तर-दीपिका (597)
Trikūṭā त्रिकूटा (588)
Trilocanā त्रिलोचना (477)
Trimurtiḥ त्रिमुर्तिः (628)
Trinayanā त्रिनयना (453)
Tripurā त्रिपुरा (626)
Tripuramālinī त्रिपुरमालिनी (875)
Tripurāmbikā त्रिपुराम्बिका (976)
Tripurāśrīvaśaṁkarī त्रिपुराश्रीवशंकरी (978)
Tripureśī त्रिपुरेशी (787)
Tristhā त्रिस्था (874)
Tri-varga-dhātrī त्रि-वर्ग-धात्री (760)
Trivarga-nilayā त्रिवर्ग-निलया (873)
Tryakṣarī त्र्यक्षरी (630)
Tryambakā त्र्यम्बका (762)
Turyā तुर्या (262)
Tuṣṭiḥ तुष्टिः (443)
Tvaksthā त्वक्स्था (481)
Tvam त्वम् (426)
Udāra-kīrtiḥ उदार-कीर्तिः (848)
Uddhāma-vaibhavā उद्धाम-वैभवा (849)
Udyadbhānu-sahasrābhā उद्यद्भानु-सहस्राभा (6)
Umā उमा (633)
Unmeṣa-nimiṣotpanna-vipanna-bhuvānavalīऊन्मेष-निमिषोत्पन्न-विपन्न-भुवानवली (281)
Vadanadvayā वदनद्वया (487)
Vadanaika-samanvitā वदनैक-समन्विता (479)
Vadanasmara-māṅgalya-gṛhatoraṇa-cillikā वदनस्मर-माङ्गल्य-गृहतोरण-चिल्लिका (17)
Vadanatraya-saṁyutā वदनत्रय-संयुता (496)
Vāgadhīśvarī वागधीश्वरी (640)

Vāgvādinī वाग्वादिनी (350)
Vahni-maṇḍala-vāsinī वह्नि-मण्डल-वासिनी (352)
Vaikhari-rūpā वैखरि-रूपा (371)
Vaiṣṇavī वैष्णवी (892)
Vajrādikāyudhoepetā वज्रादिकायुधोपेता (497)
Vajreśvarī वज्रेश्वरी (468)
Vajriṇī वज्रिणी (944)
Vaktra-lakṣmī-parīvāha-calan-mīnābha-locanāवक्त्र-लक्ष्मी-परीवाह-चलन्-मीनाभ-लोचना (18)
Vāmadevī वामदेवी (469)
Vāmakeśī वामकेशी (351)
Vāmakeśvarī वामकेश्वरी (945)
Vāma-nayanā वाम-नयना (332)
Vāñchitārtha-pradāyinī वाञ्चितार्थ-प्रदायिनी (989)
Vandāru-jana-vatsalā वन्दारु-जन-वत्सला (349)
Vandyā वन्द्या (348)
Varadā वरदा (331)
Varadādi-niṣevitā वरदादि-निषेविता (518)
Varṇa-rūpiṇī वर्ण-रूपिणी (850)
Varṇāśrama-vidhāyinī वर्णाश्रम-विधायिनी (286)
Vāruṇi-mada-vihvalā वारुणि-मद-विह्वला (333)
Vasudā वसुदा (670)
Vayo'vasthā-vivarjitā वयोऽवस्था-विवर्जिता (470)
Veda-jananī वेद-जननी (338)
Veda-vedyā वेद-वेद्या (335)
Vedyavarjitā वेद्यवर्जिता (652)
Vidagdhā विदग्धा (904)
Vidhātrī विधात्री (337)
Vidrumābhā विद्रुमाभा (891)
Vidyā विद्या (549)
Vidyāvidyā svarūpinī विद्याविद्या स्वरूपिनी (402)
Vighnanāśinī विघ्ननाशिनी (451)
Vijayā विजया (346)
Vijñānaghana-rūpiṇī विज्ञानघन-रूपिणी (253)

Vijñāna-kalanā विज्ञान-कलना (902)
Vijñātrī विज्ञात्री (651)
Vilāsinī विलासिनी (340)
Vimalā विमला (347)
Vimānasthā विमानस्था (943)
Vimarśa-rūpiṇī विमर्श-रूपिणी (548)
Vindhyācala-nivāsinī विन्ध्याचल-निवासिनी (336)
Vipra-priyā विप्र-प्रिया (887)
Vipra-priyā विप्र-प्रिया (887)
Vīrā वीरा (899)
Virāḍ-rūpā विराड्-रूपा (778)
Virāgiṇī विरागिणी (937)
Vīragoṣṭi-priyā वीरगोष्टि-प्रिया (898)
Virajā विरजा (779)
Vīra-mātā वीर-माता (836)
Vīrārādhyā वीराराध्या (777)
Viśālākṣī विशालाक्षी (936)
Viṣṇugranthi-vibhedinī विष्णुग्रन्थि-विभेदिनी (102)
Viṣṇu-māyā विष्णु-माया (339)
Viṣṇurūpiṇī विष्णुरूपिणी (893)
Viṣnurūpiṇī विष्नुरूपिणी (893)
Viśruṇkhalā विश्रुण्खला (834)
Viśuddhi-cakra-nilayā विशुद्धि-चक्र-निलया (475)
Viśukra-prāṇaharaṇa-Vārāhī-vīrya-nanditāविशुक्र-प्राणहरण-वाराही-वीर्य-नन्दिता (76)
Viśva-bhramaṇa-kāriṇī विश्व-भ्रमण-कारिणी (889)
Viśva-dhāriṇī विश्व-धारिणी (759)
Viśvādhikā विश्वाधिका (334)
Viśva-garbhā विश्व-गर्भा (637)
Viśvagrāsā विश्वग्रासा (890)
Viśvamātā विश्वमाता (934)
Viśvarūpā विश्वरूपा (256)
Viśva-sākṣinī विश्व-साक्षिनी (384)
Viśvato-mukhī विश्वतो-मुखी (780)
Vividhākārā विविधाकारा (401)

Viviktasthā विविक्तस्था (835)

Viyadādi-jagat-prasūḥ वियदादि-जगत्-प्रसूः (550)

Viyatprasūḥ वियत्प्रसूः (837)

Vṛddhā वृद्धा (671)

Vyāhṛtiḥ व्याहृतिः (421)

Vyaktāvyakta-svarūpiṇī व्यक्ताव्यक्त-स्वरूपिणी (399)

Vyāpinī व्यापिनी (400)

Vyoma-keśī व्योम-केशी (942)

Yajamāna-svarūpiṇī यजमान-स्वरूपिणी (883)

Yajña-kartrī यज्ञ-कर्त्री (882)

Yajña-priyā यज्ञ-प्रिया (881)

Yajña-rūpā यज्ञ-रूपा (769)

Yākinyambā-svarūpiṇī याकिन्यम्बा-स्वरूपिणी (534)

Yaśasvinī यशस्विनी (474)

Yogadā योगदा (654)

Yogānandā योगानन्दा (656)

Yoginī योगिनी (653)

Yogyā योग्या (655)

Yoni-mudrā योनि-मुद्रा (982)

Yoni-nilayā योनि-निलया (895)

Yugandharā युगन्धरा (657)

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