

Sri Dakshnaamoorti *Stotra* : Purport and Purpose

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Stotras in Sanskrit are devotional compositions like hymns. They are prayers to the deity. A *stotra* contains elaborate description of the deity, an obeisance, words of surrender, a list of the various attributes (*gunas*), descriptions of the physical form (*roopa*) besides an extensive listing of the many names by which the deity is known. The silent rendition is said to cleanse the mind. A vocal rendition has efficacy in cleansing the surroundings also. The sounds used in the utterance are supposed to have great healing effect, since *naada*, the articulated sound is an aspect of the Supreme Being, the Divine.

Sri Dakshnaamoorti *stotra* has a pictorial introduction. It is wondrous! On the ground under the great *banyan* sit the aged seers and sages at the feet of the youthful preceptor. The preceptor dispels their doubts with *chinmudra*, a gesture with the forefinger and the thumb joined with the other fingers raised. Shiva is THE *guru*, preceptor par excellence: the medic for the ailment of worldly life, and the treasure house of all knowledge and wisdom. He is ever calm and ever pleasant, an icon of all *jnaana*. He is the embodiment of *praNava*, the eternal *naada*, sound of *AUM*.

While offering salutations, the devotee describes the glory of the glory of the Supreme Being. It is HE who creates the illusion that what we see around is different from Him and His. As a small seed has in it the huge tree, the whole universe is in Him and with Him and the two are not different. He teaches silently the supreme truth. *TATWAMASI* - That Thou Art. The individual soul is part of Him and gets liberated by His grace from the endless cycle of Birth and Death.

It is His awareness and consciousness – *chaitanya* - that permeates all. He shines on all and everything like a lamp in the pot with innumerable holes. It is His *maaya* that makes things look different. He alone is capable of dispelling the illusory appearance. He is unaffected by *maaya*, being its lord. He is the TRUTH that lies hidden like the sun and the moon in eclipse for the one without *jnaana*. He is ONE but appears as many as young and old, women and children, etc. He has eight forms the Earth, the Sun, the Moon, Water, Air, Fire, Sky and *jeeva*. There is nothing that is not He or His.

He would bless the one who listens to this *stotram* in musical Sanskrit, sings it, or contemplates on it.